



Arab World English Journal

INTERNATIONAL PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ISSN: 2229-9327

مجلة اللغة الانكليزية في العالم العربي

Special Issue on Literature No. 1

AWEJ November - 2013

www.awej.org



AWEJ Special issue on Literature No.1

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Foreword

The Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) is a nonprofit, refereed, double-blind, peer-reviewed, and open-access e-journal for scholars, researchers, teachers, and officials of the English language in the Arab world, and other countries across the globe. It is a pioneer quarterly journal that has published, over the past four years, eleven regular issues on linguistics and proficient language teaching of English and two special issues on translation with the aim of promoting English scholarship in the region.

Through the dedication and sincere efforts of a team of more than ninety selected and distinguished academic scholars from all around the world, AWEJ has achieved wide readership and conspicuous presence in the academia that can be measured out by its encompassing more than 21.000 members and contacts of professionals in the field, as recorded in its regularly updated database. These enlisted members are mainly scholars in English departments, language centers, research centers, Arab education ministries, higher education ministries, universities and colleges (public and private), English teachers' associations, high schools and other educational institutions in the Middle East, North Africa, and other countries throughout the world. The journal's success is also evident in its expansion into partnership with several international universities in organizing their annual conferences and publishing their special referred proceedings. No less significant is the journal's launching of a project of publishing distinguished MA and PhD theses in the fields of its interest.

AWEJ's editorial board, however, has lately received numerous requests for a special issue on literature in addition to its long term interest in linguistics, language teaching and translation. Encouraged by the journal's achievement of national and international academic recognition and acclaim, the leading board has decided to undertake the task and reserve this fourteenth issue for the purpose. Focusing on forwarding the cause of authentic literary research,

the issue was able to attract a variety of papers written by distinguished scholars. It comes out in its finished form as a unique edition that brings together contemporary interests of research oriented scholars in the field of literature in addition to offering a platform for aspiring critics. The selection for the volume covers a wide range of topics between well established and canonized authors in the fields of English and American literature to newly discovered voices in the areas of colonial literature and world literature in English. The tools of analysis employed in the selected articles also vary between traditional methods of formalist, biographical, psychological and historical readings of literature to contemporary postmodern, postcolonial, new historicist, and feminist critical orientations. Besides such depth, variety and wide spectrum in the field of literature, the issue incorporates papers on literary contents in English textbooks, the future of the departments of English in the region and the use of literary language in translation. Such incorporation brings together literature, translation and education. In its special issue the journal maintains links with pertinent sides of its long term publication objectives.

Since AWEJ has been recognized, indexed and listed with high ranked universities, research centers, databases, libraries and educational associations around the world, this issue hopes to maintain the same wide range of readership in literature as well. Many universities' databases which are known for their credibility have chosen most of AWEJ's papers of previous issues and have downloaded them for international readers in the fields. The editorial board equally aspires to have the selection of this volume meet with the same acclaim and reach literature oriented readers in all Arab countries and beyond. It also hopes that participants in the current issue will also enjoy similar academic limelight visibility by being quoted in potential citations as did their precedents in linguistics, language teaching and translation.

We all endorse this special issue of AWEJ and anticipate positive reception to its content that would encourage similar ventures on regular basis in the future.

Prof. Dr. Ebtisam Sadiq
King Saud University
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Coleridge's "Ballad of the Dark Ladie": The Story between the Lines

Ebtisam Ali Sadiq
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract:

The focus of this article is "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie," a short fragment by the English Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). Critics often overlook the piece in their reading of Coleridge although it has an interesting story between the lines. Besides enriching the unfinished surface one, the submerged tale carries significant revelations about Coleridge's literary relationship with foreign cultures and elements, the Dark Lady in this particular case. The present study intends to divulge the hidden tale in the text and to use its revealed construct to throw light on Coleridge's engagement with the Other in his literary experience. It employs a formalist reading of the text and pays attention to point of view. It also invokes culture and allegory in the process of eliciting the significance of the embedded tale. My reading intimates that Coleridge's imaginative aspiration towards the exotic Other is more congenial to his poetic creativity than other modes of the imagination. It also suggests that this Other might as well be the Orient. However, despite such harmony, Coleridge has his own personal concerns about his romantic quest of the Orient.

Keywords: Coleridge, Dark Lady, Orient, Romantic

Introduction:

Coleridge's poem "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" (1798) is a fragment of sixty lines that was intended to be a full-fledged poem of one hundred and ninety (Perkins, 1967, p. 429). It presents a recurrent case in Coleridge: an ambitious poetic conception aborted before coming to full realization. "Kubla Khan" testifies to a similar process and "Christabel" is never satisfactorily concluded. However, unlike these two fragments, "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" has not received critical attention. The poem claims a story between the lines which is worthy of investigation particularly because it throws light on Coleridge's imagination and romantic aspiration towards other realms of being. This paper intends to unravel the story embedded in the text and to employ its revelations to comprehend Coleridge's literary relationship with the Other.

Title and Form:

The title informs of both the poem's form, a ballad, and its potential protagonist, a dark lady. J. T. Barbarese (1997) suggests that Coleridge's use of this poetic form in some poems, namely "The Nightingale" and "Alice Du Clos," indicates a kind of desire to escape introspection. The ballad form, Barbarese argues: "may have impressed Coleridge as a way out of the ethically confining habit of internalizing experience that dominates the conversation poems" (1997, p.673). It must have enabled the poet to produce a kind of "poetry formally rooted in public rather than private discourse" (Barbarese, 1997, p.673). This principle, I would suggest, might also be true of "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie." However, the question to ask in regard to this particular poem is what kind of personal experience does the poem embrace and why would Coleridge wish to objectify it? And how far does he manage to curtail the subjective and self-revelatory part of such experience in the poem? The second element of the title, the dark lady, is the poem's pronounced subject matter and ought to be of relevance to the experience that the ballad form is employed to simultaneously depict and objectify.

Who is the Dark Lady?

Rather than referencing a possible Coleridgean invocation of Shakespeare's Dark Lady of the Sonnets that has endlessly mystified critics,ⁱ this study takes another direction of suggesting the possibility of an Oriental interest on the poet's part. In the absence of direct critical references to the poem, the study invokes pieces of literary criticism on Coleridge and his poetry to read the poem in hand. Michelle Levy (2004), for example, points out among other critics a well-known fact in Coleridge's biography, his interest in Oriental tales. Levy attests to the commonplace that "by the age of six" Coleridge "has become obsessed with stories of the unknown, from *Robinson Crusoe* to the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*" (2004, p.693). Such "fascination . . . reflects a larger cultural obsession of the Romantic period" that "produced unprecedented quantities of gothic fiction and exotic tales with stories set in the Middle Ages, the Orient, or, . . . both" (Levy, 2004, p.649).

Is She the Orient?

To this early interest in the Orient, the presence of the dark lady in "The Ballad"ⁱⁱ can be attributed. She comes in as a result of an orientalized, exotic act of Coleridge's imagination much in common with his surrounding culture. Critics have pointed out other types of the imagination in Coleridge. Jennifer Ford, for instance, claims that the imagination in Coleridge is one "of medicine and disease" (1998, p.33). Ford also finds the type to be culturally inspired and

"firmly grounded in the psychology and medical science of the late eighteenth century" (1998, p.183). Harry White, for another instance, defines Coleridge's poetic mode as a "distempered or diseased imagination" (2009, p.811). The mode results in creations like "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" that "reveal the relationship between madness and guilt" and embody "religious melancholy" (White, 2009, pp.818,816). Coleridge's imagination in "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie," I would suggest, is Oriental, for upon creating a narrative poem, he opted for a dark woman to be the focus of his tale. Much in league with his culture in entertaining interest in the Orient, Coleridge, however, has his own individualized response to it in his poetry that he probably wishes to conceal by using the ballad form. His personal attitude towards what seems more like a common subject of literary interest in the nineteenth century is worth investigating. It has been repeatedly performed in relationship to his other poems, particularly "Kubla Khan," but will be conducted in relationship to "The Ballad of the Dark Lady" in this study. Coleridge's story with the dark lady as objectified in a medieval ballad poem will be unraveled in this paper.

Reading between the Lines

Taken metaphorically or literally, the dark lady is obviously the protagonist of the poem whose story the ballad form is employed to narrate. The poet calls her the "Dark Ladie" once at the start and then shifts into calling her the "Maid" (lines 6,33).ⁱⁱⁱ The text depicts the Maid waiting in eagerness and "silent pain" for her "betrothed Knight" who delayed making appearance on the scene and caused her to be ridiculed by "friends with rude ungentle words" and to be mockingly "bid" to "fly" to him (6,19,25,26). Both her psychological trauma and social predicament become evident upon his arrival. She passionately explains to him what she has been through and asks for his protection: "O give me shelter in thy breast! / O shield and shelter me" (27-28). The question that comes to mind is to shield her from what? The slanderous tongues that lashed at her during his absence would certainly be silenced by his return. There must be something else that calls for this excited plea.

A story between the lines begins to emerge in the poem and would be of use and relevance in understanding Coleridge's interest in the Orient. Several clues ought to be addressed to divulge the embedded tale in the text. The dark Maid is evidently well placed in life. She lives in a castle and can afford a "little page" that she sends "[u]p the castled mountain's breast" to see "[i]f he might find the Knight that wears / The Griffin for his crest," her long-awaited-for love (9-12). Quite secure on the social and economic level, the Maid raises suspicions as to her desperate wait and eager reception of the Knight. Greeting him on his return, she passionately exclaims:

My Henry, I have given thee much,
I gave what I can ne'er recall,
I gave my heart, I gave my peace
O Heaven! I gave thee all. (29-32)

Indeed, the lines suggest a moral dilemma involved in the case, a possible slip that might have compromised the Maid's virtuous stance among friends in her social circle. The passionate outburst of "O Heaven!" preceding "I gave thee all" hints in that direction and would help explain what is meant by "I gave thee all," and "I gave what I can ne'er recall" (6-8). It points to an unnamed, and perhaps unnamable, act of physical submission of the female to a masculine

appropriation of her body that transgresses beyond the emotional sphere of the heart. It explains the Maid's loss of peace of mind, the "silent pain," the "heavy tear in her eye" that "drops and swells again," her "[c]ounting" of "moments" during the Knight's absence, the "dreaming fear," the "sobs" of "a thousand hopes and fears" and the eager "kisses" that she "quenches with her tears" on his making appearance on the scene (15,22-24). The eagerness and the intensity definitely intimate more than mere worry over an uncertain love or a delayed return, for the Knight has actually "pledged his sacred vow" earlier "in the eye of noon" (48,47). He has openly declared his love. A breach of his vow is not likely to occur. Nothing seems to suggest it or to justify the excessive worry and the intense "fears" that obsess the Maid (22). Furthermore, the familiarity of passionate "kisses" and embrace, the "clap . . . round the neck" (21), all speak for the possibility of a moral slip that might have compromised the innocence of the Maid. It is very likely that the Knight has taken advantage of the Maid following his betrothal and that she is devastated by the possibility of his abandoning her. Further reading of textual signs would support this suggestion.

The Knight responds to the Maid's passionate plea in what seems, at the first while, a chivalric act of protection. He promises to give her the "fairest" of his sire's "[n]ine castles" that he has evidently inherited (38). However, the move to this gorgeous place, the "statelier in the land," he plans to undertake when "the stars peep out" at midnight (36,39). He asks the Maid to "[w]ait only till the hand of eve / Hath wholly closed yon western bars" (41-42). Then "through the dark" the two of them "will steal / Beneath the twinkling stars" to the promised castle (43-44). Had he not seduced the Maid earlier, the Knight obviously intends to do so now. However, I believe that he would not dare make such an offer had not a moral fall already been involved.

To his secret romance of elopement and clandestine joy, the Maid responds in astonishment and grief. Rather than being duped by the temptation of the fairest castle in the land and the charm of shining stars, she discerns the moral setback implied in the embellished romance of mystery and secret love. Sensing the intrigue of a planned act of seduction, she sadly laments his offer and rejects it:

The dark? The dark? No! not the dark?
The Twinkling stars? How, Henry? How?
O God! 'twas in the eye of noon
He pledged his sacred vow! (45-48)

The shift in address in the lines to the third person indicates the emotional distance that the Knight's offer has generated in the Maid. Against his disappointing proposal of secret elopement and illicit love, she voices her wish to be led from her "mother's door" in "the eye of noon" in a legitimate marriage ceremony with "Sweet boys and girls all clothed in white / Strewing flowers before" them, and with "nodding minstrels" preceding them "With music" fit for "lordly bowers" (50,49,51-52,53-54). It is significant that the Maid never abandons her dream of union with the Knight, despite her discomfort at his offer: "And then my love and I shall pace, . . . / Between our comely bachelors / And blushing bridal maids" (57, 59-60). Following the Maid's indulgence in the marriage fantasy, the narrative is interrupted. The Knight does not respond to her objection neither in the negative nor the affirmative. The indication is that Coleridge is having second thoughts regarding his knight's engagement with the Oriental Maid and is uncertain how to conclude the matter. Significantly, the Maid's vision of the desired event of

marital union seems to bask in the charm of her special dark Oriental beauty, her "jet black hair in pearly braids" (58). Such beauty is a matter of pride for her or, more likely, of endless fascination, or fixation, for the poet. Her sensitivity to her previous moral slip, and obsession with the value of chastity at the present as she envisions the wedding march "[b]etween our comely bachelors / And blushing bridal maids" (59-60) can also be indicative of a moral side to Coleridge's concern with his relationship with the Orient which this study will disclose later on in due time. At the present, it is important to note that the conclusion to this conflict of interest between what her betrothed Knight desires and what the Maid can accept remains unstated, for the poem is a fragment. Yet the question of why the story is not concluded or of why does Coleridge, or his bard, fail to conclude it will be addressed.

Invoking Other Poems on Fragmentation

In her discussion of Coleridge's poem "Christabel," Claire B. May traces "ominous references to the feminine and the maternal" (1997, p.701). In such references, the critic locates the roots of the narrator's psychological disturbances that culminate in his inability to properly conduct his narrative act or to satisfactorily conclude the story: "Union with the mother haunts the narrator as a bond he has rejected, a loss he never ceases to mourn" (May, 1997, p.706). The narrator's dilemma in relation to the mother figure in "Christabel" is, according to May, the cause behind "the appearance of these ambiguous female / maternal figures" which in turn farther "disrupts the symbolic signification attempted by the narrative voice" (1997, p.706). In brief, the maternal crisis of the narrator of "Christabel" results in his inability to master language (presumably an attribute of the Lacanian or, according to May, the Kristevian father figure), a failure that impedes him from accurately depicting significant moments in the story, in addition to causing him to leave off without finishing it.

Coleridge wrote part I of "Christabel" in 1798 and the poet was "haunted" for fourteen months by "what he had composed" and tried to figure out its "meaning" (Taylor, 2002, p.715). Finally, part II of "Christabel" came out in 1800. "In part II Coleridge shifts into a different voice, more assured that an evil had indeed occurred in the last section of part I" (Taylor, 2002, p.716). "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" was also written in 1798 at a time when Coleridge's was experiencing difficulties in stabilizing his narrator in "Christabel." The possibility of a parallel tension between the symbolic and semiotic in "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" ought not to be overlooked particularly because of the proximity of the time of its composition to the first part of "Christabel." The poem's bard ought to be investigated for possible signs of disturbances as those that blighted the narrator of "Christabel."

Has the Mother Caused Fragmentation?

Contrarily, "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" contains a positive reference to the maternal. The Maid is dependent on her mother's presence for protection and support. She asks her Knight to pick her up from her mother's door on the dreamt-of wedding day. In Anya Taylor's reading of Coleridge, Christabel is a deprived child whose "mother died in child birth" and the "infant has no known nurse or female relative to substitute for the mother" figure (2002, p.716). Moreover, her being a "motherless daughter with a grieving and distant father and no mentioned nurse" were enough causes to make her "lose self at the moment of sudden sexual quest"

(Taylor, 2002, p.718). "Her impulse misfires, and she is absorbed by the (M)other she has lured to her bed," which is Geraldine the lady in "distress"^{iv} that Christabel picked up in the forest (Taylor, 2002, p.720). As a result of such failed encounter with a substitute mother figure, Christabel "retreat[s] from personhood into paralysis" and becomes "a phantom soul" (Taylor, 2002, p.724). The Maid in "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" is more assured in her sexual orientation. Despite the possibility of an initial submission to passionate love, she does not fail to seek a proper marriage starting at the mother's door. Her relationship with her mother is obviously stable enough to lend her power to determinedly reject the mistress position proposed to her. She does so regardless of the precarious situation that her moral fall has placed her in. Yet despite this stability inside the tale, the bard of "The Ballad," much like the narrator of "Christabel," fails to conclude the story. His failure points at the possibility of other difficulties that he, or the poet behind him, might be experiencing and that have caused him to let go of the narrative line before bringing the tale to conclusion.

Is It the Father that Caused Fragmentation?

Taking into account the semiotic / symbolic conflict of May's reading of "Christabel" and the doubly orphaned child of Taylor's analysis of the same poem, a search for a possible sign of the bard's disturbance is worth conducting in relationship to the father figure in "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" besides the previous highlighting of that with the mother. If Christabel's problem, for example, seems to largely reside in the absence of the mother figure and the alienated presence of the father, the Maid in "The Ballad," though comfortably secure in the mother's presence is, as a matter of fact, deprived of the father figure. The fact that she intimates to the Knight to lead her away from her mother's, not her father's door, signifies the father's absence from the scene. His whereabouts and the significance of his absence from the Maid's life ought to be considered as possible causes for the bard's inability to finish his tale.

Further Reading between the Lines

The father's absence cannot be solely one of mere demise. Had he simply passed away, some replacement by another male relative would have taken place and would have been indicated in the medieval context of the story. The absent father, nevertheless, has bequeathed the mother and the daughter a castle in the land located on a mountain top complete with the medieval luxury of serfs and pages that the daughter can dispatch on missions to convenience. The story of how mother and daughter could have possibly come to the ownership of such castle is of relevance here.

It is most likely that the mother herself was a dark mistress of some lord in the past that he had kept in a castle and then abandoned her with her daughter afterwards. Otherwise, how would the absence of some male guardian in the case of the father's demise would be explained? The panic the Maid has experienced as a result of her loss of maiden innocence must have been intensified by her fear of falling into a terminal status of an exotic dark mistress to some rich lord, as did her mother. Despite the Maid's initial fall, she is keen to avoid its ultimate social disgrace and voices her dream of a lawful marriage as a rectifying act. She has her mother's example to inform her of the consequences of giving in to the temptation of the finest castle in the land and the elopement in the middle of the night offered by the Knight. This reading can be supported by the simple logic of how dare the Knight offer a well-placed, well-protected, native

girl a clandestine affair? Would he dare make the offer? Would he not think of the consequences of family feuds between their two houses and possible raids of revenge before offering to appropriate her in this anti-social fashion for life? Indeed, the Maid in this ballad is well placed but not well protected. She has a castle but no guardian. The father's absence must have caused a gap in her life and enabled the Knight to take advantage of her following his betrothal. It must have also encouraged him to propose an appropriation of her for life. But does this absence really affect the narrator? What is the significance of the Coleridge's dispensation with the father figure from the tale? What bearings does his absence have on the poet's relationship with the Orient?

Objectivity despite Fragmentation

Significantly, neither the Maid nor the narrator seems in the least concerned with the father's absence from the scene. For despite such absence, the security that the mother's presence affords seems sufficient to stabilize the Maid and to keep the bard objectively intact. The Maid does not experience Christabel's psychological and sexual disorientations in their terminal form. Nor does the bard seem to share "Christabel's" narrator's fear of the "alluring and horrible" in "the feminine" (May, 1997, p.707). The Maid seems to have put her mother's past behind and moved onward, and the bard never as much as alludes to such past. If "Christabel's" narrator ends up being "a subject constituted by discourse, rather than autonomously in control of thought and discourse" (May, 1997, p.705), the bard of "The Ballad" seems quite emotionally balanced and is in full control of the narrative flow. He manages to objectively handle the story of the dark Maid and never falters into self exposure or disclosure of his emotional responses to the events, as does the other narrator. The bard's inability to finish the tale cannot be a psychological dilemma developed in relationship to the father or the mother. What can the problem be?

Oriental Imagination and Narrative Stability

The subject matter in "Christabel" is that of the supernatural as an object of the poet's imaginative quest, while the subject in hand is the beauty and the charm of the exotic Other, the Orient that is to say. Coleridge seems more comfortable with the Orient as a source of imaginative inspiration than he is with the supernatural. The horrors of the supernatural, as they impinge on ordinary life experience, destabilize the narrator of "Christabel" through and debar him ultimately from finishing his tale. The exotic beauty of the Orient in "The Ballad," does not seem to have any negative effect on the bard apart from his inability to bring the tale to conclusion. If the story remains unfinished, it is because Coleridge's relationship with the Orient also does not go unchallenged. Despite the poet's comfort with the Orient as a source of imaginative inspiration, he has his own personal concerns about indulging that source.

The Divulged Tale and the Orient

Allegory in Coleridge's writings and poetry is a controversial issue among critics. Daniel Fried (2006) challenges the common notion that Coleridge is averse to allegory in his writings. He affirms that in Coleridge, "allegory is never championed, but it is often considered a potentially positive mode," all with the exception of *The Statesman's Manual* (Fried, 2006, p.764). Karen Fang also finds that Coleridge's reliance on "[f]eminine symbols of lyric inspiration such as a 'damsel with a dulcimer' and a 'woman wailing' also . . . lead[s] into the allegory on genius" in poems like "Kubla Khan" (2003, p.824). Since Coleridge seem likely to

entertain allegory in both theory and practice, the presence of this element in "The Ballad" might as well be safely invoked. Approached from this angle, the poem yields a valuable reading. It has two female characters, an announced and an implied one; the "Dark Ladie" of the title and the dark "Maid" inside the poem. The first is the mother who stands for the Orient, a common object of literary interest in the British culture of Coleridge's time. Just as the Orient has become an established topic of interest in that milieu, its cultural manifestation in the poem, the mother that is to say, is also taken for granted. Her story needs not be told. Her presence is overshadowed by that of her daughter. The poet's attention turns to the Maid. She comes in to embody Coleridge's personal interest in the Orient as a literary phenomenon of his time. Her unexplained foreign presence in an English medieval castle is that of the mysterious life of the Orient in the poet's imaginations. Her initial seduction by the Knight is Coleridge's romantic fascination with the Orient. Significantly, the Knight, Lord Henry Falkland, has a name in the poem whereas both mother and daughter remain nameless. They are more of a foreign presence in the culture, and in the poet's mind, than actual life and blood characters. The Knight's courtship of the Maid is more of a projection of Coleridge's imaginative interest in foreign exotic elements. With the Knight in the poem signifying the poet and the dark Maid suggesting an Oriental turn of his imagination, the relationship between the two of them can be most revealing of how Coleridge felt about his imaginative flight to the Orient and its moral consequences.

Challenges to Oriental Imagination

The Maid's rejection of the mistress status indicates that Coleridge is experiencing second thoughts regarding his imaginative embracement of the Orient. The tension in the poem between the Knight's desire for a clandestine affair and the Maid's dream of marital union suggests that Coleridge is not quite at ease with his own appropriation of the Orient. He depicts it as an act of sexual transgression that the Oriental Other determinedly rejects; for the dark Maid is the actual source of resistance of the illegal, asocial bond with the Knight in the poem. The Knight has betrothed and seduced but did not propose to marry. Inconsiderately, he wished to prolong possessiveness by offering elopement. The Maid's request to be domesticated into marriage leads to speculations as to what does Coleridge mean by having the Oriental entity ask for domestication and local merging with the British culture? Is the Orient defeating the poet's imaginative expectations of a wild, asocial and exotic union by proving to be of an ordinary and conventional type? Or is the poet apprehensive that fascination with the Orient would entail evasion of social and moral responsibility that he feels he has failed at and should now be aware of and attend to? Or is the practice of hegemonically appropriating the Other morally erroneous and ought to be discontinued? The tale is interrupted without clues. The bard abandons the narrative line at the point where the Maid is elaborately voicing her dream of a righteous marriage to the Knight. The Knight's silence in the face of her rejection suggests that Coleridge is uncertain how to respond to the Maid's reminder. The rising tension between the Maid and her Knight remains unresolved. Lack of resolution requires further investigation and perhaps some more speculations.

Against Imperial Appropriation

In a discussion of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan" Levy indicates how Coleridge is paradoxically "captivated by printed narratives of the unknown," though

"vociferously opposed to unregulated and irresponsible venturing into the unknown in the real world" (2004, p.694). Therefore, according to Levy, the poet "sought to eradicate, or at least, to mitigate, the damage caused by reckless discovery" through emphasizing the "importance of the domestic affections" between family members and relatives (2004, pp.694,696). The statement indicates that Coleridge fears the impingement of the Other on his own world and the subsequent overlap between the imaginary and the real worlds. The case of the Maid in "The Ballad" testifies to a different kind of concern. Her mother, the Dark Lady, has been introduced at some unspecified moment in the past into the British culture. The daughter equally dark, Oriental and exotic, is courted by Coleridge's Knight in the poem. The Maid's rejection of a mistress status attests to her refusal to be negatively stereotyped, appropriated and enslaved for life. This location of resistance in the Maid suggests that Coleridge seems more concerned about the damage done to other cultures in such encounters than to himself or to his own world. The poet's imperial self, the Knight in the poem, is held in check by the Maid's act of resistance. Coleridge seems less vigilant about being negligent to his own culture than about transgression on other cultures. It is Coleridge's Oriental imagination that refuses the illicit and demeaning bond not the Knight. With the Knight being the assailant in this context and with his silence kept unbroken in the face of the Maid's protest, the poet's moral and social concerns for his local culture, if any, remain too farfetched even for this highly speculative reading of the poem.

But Levy (2004) is not totally oblivious to Coleridge's moral concern for the Other though she gives it less priority and emphasis in her reading and traces it in relationship to other poems, mainly "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." This critic argues that Coleridge critiques geographical explorations, for he "could not help but observe that many of these discoveries inevitably led to conquest and exploitation" at a time when he was much opposed to their manifestations in "slave trade and British imperialism" (2004, pp.694,695). Therefore, Levy speculates, Coleridge calls for "sympathetic identification both within and beyond the domestic sphere" as an act of compensation for involvement in the unknown (2004, p.707).

Coleridge, I would say, seems more attentive in "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" to "sympathetic identification . . . beyond the domestic sphere" than to "domestic affections" between family members and relatives. His position, I believe, is clarified in his having the foreign Other speak. Coleridge does not only empower the Other to speak but also conceives of an ideal cultural merging of the foreign and the local through the Maid's dream of a marriage bond with the Knight. Oddly enough, however, he names the Knight Lord Falkland, an appellation that opens the door for more speculations instead of satisfactorily concluding the reading suggested in this article. Is Coleridge intimating that England is the land for all folks through such choice of name? Can the intimation be taken as a reflection of a genuinely sympathetic and receptive opening up to the Other and a viable step towards cultural amalgamation? Or is it an indication that such cultural fusion can only occur on the British Isles and is thus excluding the land of the Other from having such privilege? Such speculation would make the poem a fertile ground for further investigations about Coleridge's relationship with the Other beyond what this paper has attempted to do. Another set of questions also arises in relationship to the Knight's first name, Lord Henry. Is such name an invocation of Henry Wriothesley, the protagonist of Shakespeare's Sonnets of The Dark Lady that Saul Frampton (2013) has lately identified as part of the Shakespearean love triangle with such Lady? Has

Coleridge come across this fact earlier in the nineteenth century and utilized it before modern critical efforts discovered and reinstated names and relationships in Shakespeare's life? Such second set of questions would turn the analysis in the direction of another Dark Lady of Shakespeare's Sonnets, which this study decided to veer away from at the start.

Conclusion:

Though a neglected fragment, "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" is a poem that engages Coleridge's imaginative quest of the Orient. The story between the lines reveals that the poet's fascination with the exotic beauty of the Orient is curtailed by an act of conscientious resistance of aggressive conquest and selfish appropriation of the Other. His ability to objectify and disguise personal tension about the matter is signaled by his employment of the ballad form. The objective balladic frame, however, does not preclude an allegorical meaning from being embedded into the text and a subsequent reading from divulging it. On being unraveled, the story discloses the poet's opposition to the common practice of his culture in its hegemonic appropriation of the other.

Ebtisam Ali Sadiq is a Professor of English Literature at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She received her MA from Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California, USA and her PhD from Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA. Her areas of interest are poetry, novel and critical theory.

Endnote

ⁱ See Saul Frampton for one of the most recent attempts to identify Shakespeare's Dark Lady.

ⁱⁱ The title of the poem will be occasionally abbreviated into "The Ballad" in the course of this paper.

ⁱⁱⁱ "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie." Quotes from the poem in this article come from David Perkins's *English Romantic Writers*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967. References to line numbers in the paper will follow the quote in parenthesis.

^{iv} "Christabel" line 73 in Perkin's 1967 edition of the poem.

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Cultural Representations of Muslim Women in Contemporary Arab Anglophone Poetry:

A Study of Nimah Nawwab's *The Unfurling*

Hessa A. Alghadeer

Department of English Language and Literature- College of Arts

Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University

Riyadh- Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Against the backdrop of an extended history of misrepresentations of Muslim women that interrelate with Islam in a complex manner, this paper seeks to investigate diversity of contemporary poetic Arab Anglophone texts. Situating her work within a specific cultural context, the paper specifically focuses on the poetry of Saudi Anglophone poet Nimah Ismail Nawwab as a compelling case study in this field. It investigates three major archetypes among Nawwab's female Muslim characters: Muslim women as agents of social change, Muslim women behind the veil, and Muslim women as agents of peace and reconciliation. In examining the dominant prototypes in Nawwab's poetry, the paper seeks to highlight the poet's endeavor to introduce authentic cultural portrayals of Muslim women to dismantle the prevalent representations of Muslim women living in the Arab/Muslim world.

Keywords: Arab Anglophone poetry, cultural representations, , Middle East, Muslim women Orientalism, public space.

Introduction

Drawing upon the work of prominent anthropological scholars, Edward Saïd and Mohja Kahf, among others, this paper attempts first to map out the key recurrent cultural misrepresentations of Muslim women in Western discourse and culture. Next, it sheds some light on the significant role of Arab texts, specifically those written by Anglophone writers, and their role in dismantling the distorted cultural representations of Muslim women in the Western literary tradition.

The study then shifts its focus to the poetry of the contemporary Saudi-Anglophone poet Nimah Ismail Nawwab, presenting her work as an important case study that calls to attention the authenticity of traditions, values, and culture of Muslim women. The study analyzes a collection of selected poems from Nawwab's volume *The Unfurling* (2004 a) to examine three types of female characters: Muslim women as agents of social change, Muslim women behind the veil, and Muslim women as agents of peace and reconciliation.

Finally, I conclude by commenting on the vitality of Nimah Nawwab's poetic contribution, which not only saliently confronts distorted representations, but also articulates a genuine cultural identity of Muslim women that has continually been marginalized.

1.Exploring Representations of Muslim Women in Western Contexts

While mapping the representations of Muslim women in Western texts from medieval Europe through the Renaissance to colonial and post-colonial eras, one encounters overtly intimidating images that have been rendered predominant and archetypal over the course of history. In this section, I briefly review a number of influential critical studies that have investigated the cultural misrepresentations of Muslim women in Western discourse. Many historical and feminist contemporary writings, several travelogues, works of fiction, and popular culture and media products have contributed to the creation of this chain of false representations of Muslim women, particularly Middle Eastern Muslim women, in the Western literary tradition.

Muslim women are often depicted as victimized, veiled, secluded, and disempowered in Western literary texts, even in relatively recent texts written by women. Patricia Jeffery's *Frogs in a Well: Indian Women in Purdah* (1979), Juliette Minces' *House of Obedience* (1992), and Katherine Govier's "Shrouded in Black, Women Rendered Invisible, Voiceless," (1995) are only a few examples of the contemporary Western feminist writing that tend to reproduce representations of Muslim women as "victimized," "secluded," and "repressed" (Zine, 2002, pp. 3-13). According to Mohja Kahf, who wrote *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: from Termagant to Odalisque* (2008), this dilemma has become intrinsically connected to the political, ideological, and colonial relationships between the West and the Islamic world. On exploring some of the recurrent images of Muslim women within Western contexts, Sajidah Kutty (1997) underlines three prevalent personas: "the mysterious Muslim woman of the Orient"; "the oppressed Muslim woman," often represented in the *hijab* (headscarf); and "the militant Muslim woman" (p.14). These negative Oriental images have become not only universalized but also as what Homa Hoodfar describes as "mechanisms by which Western dominant culture re-creates and perpetuates beliefs about their superiority and dominance" (1993, p. 16).

Suha Sabbagh further observes various cultural misrepresentations of Muslim women when she points out that "[t]hrough Western eyes, Arab women" are often perceived by popular Western culture as "docile, male dominated, speechless, veiled, secluded, subdued, and unidentifiable beings" (2003, p. xi). She goes on to emphasize that these representations, among others, have become what "many westerners uphold as stereotypes of Arab women" (2003, p. xi). In addition

to these stereotypes, many scholars in various disciplines elucidate other ways in which the contentious positions of Muslim women are manifested and viewed through the cultural lens of the Western observer. Edward Saïd, for instance, discusses the role of media-propagated illusions in distorting the reality of Islam for the sake of political interests: “[t]his powerful concentration of mass media can be said to constitute a communal core of interpretations providing a certain picture of Islam and, of course, reflecting powerful interests in the society served by the media” (1981, pp. 48-49). Scholars Ghazi-Walid Falah and Caroline-Nagel present crucial readings of this issue in their effort to challenge such misrepresentations, writing that “[i]n the present political climate, in which Muslim women more than ever are subject to stereotypes, negative representations, and constant scrutiny within their own societies and by others, it becomes important to present more complicated readings of the Muslim women category” (Falah & Nagel, 2005, p. 5).

2. Arab Anglophone Texts: Role and Impact

Several critical studies have examined the impact and reception of Arabic texts in Western contexts in order to underline the vital role of Muslim women as representatives of their native cultures in theory and practice. Regarding such scholarship, many writers in cultural studies have noted that the emphasis on the local and cultural specificity of Muslim women’s lives may perhaps “deconstruct the hegemonic use of gender as a universal category and encourage interest in receptivity to other cultures” (Amireh & Majaj, 2000, p. 9). Accordingly, Anglophone texts by Arab writers have not only been welcomed for their “authenticity,” but perhaps they have also been admitted by the Western feminist circle in particular because understandings of their work were originally based on stereotypes and ignorance (2000, p.9). It is important to note that, in the words of Sabbagh, these misrepresentations will disappear “on the day that the titles and the text of articles about Arab women stress their strength, their resistance, and the commonality of their experiences with those of women in the West” (2003, p. xxi).

In practice, the current multicultural landscapes in which Muslim women appear call into question efforts that hitherto have been made to interrogate cultural misrepresentations and consider which prominent resolutions should be recognized and adopted. Furthermore, against the backdrop of multiple misrepresentations of Muslim women, scholars have begun to examine the role of Arab women writers—mainly Anglophone ones—and, more significantly, the elements inherent to relevant cultural contexts, in order to correct these problematic representations.

In recent years, interest in cultural representations has grown, stimulating a great deal of scholarly investigation by leading Arab women writers like Leila Ahmed and Lila Abu-Lughod, among others. However, a number of literary texts by contemporary Middle Eastern Anglophone women writers have still received little critical attention, and representations of Muslim women have continued to be hostile as superficial images of their societies as inferior and uncivilized have proliferated globally. These damaging views gained wide currency in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States. As such negative representations of Muslim women spread through Western culture and media, several Saudi women writers worked to gradually elucidate the authentic roles and identities of Muslim women. Regarding the Saudi scene, several Saudi female writers and poets have gradually begun to elucidate the vitality of the status and role of Muslim women. Samar Fatany, the author of *Saudi Perceptions and Western Misconceptions* (2005), argues that, due to negative media coverage in the West, Saudi Arabia has been seen as a refuge for terrorism and intolerance as well as a place inhabited by radical extremists. In her

documentary book, Fatany explains to the Western reader specifically the true reality of Saudi Arabia through historical allusions and compelling snapshots of women's issues and social reforms, among other aspects.

By journeying into the poetic world of Saudi Anglophone poet Nimah Ismail Nawwab (1966-), one recognizes the poet's endeavor to offer a variety of cultural representations that contradict the prevailing stereotypes and distorted representations shaping Western perceptions. Nawwab is considered one of the promising newly emergent woman poets and writers in Saudi Arabia. She published two volumes of poetry in English in the United States; *The Unfurling* (2004 a), and *Canvas of the Soul* (2012). In global and regional tones, Nawwab's work deals with culture, Muslim women agency and empowerment, and peace. Nawwab has gained an international acclaim where most of her poems have been translated into several languages. *The Unfurling* (2004 a) is published in English and addresses English-speaking readers. In three distinct sections—"Awakenings," "Contours," and "Crossroads" Nawwab reflects various Muslim women's experiences and tackles women's principal issues.

For the sake of this study, three major prototypes of Nawwab's female characters will be investigated: women as agents of social change, Muslim women behind the veil, and Muslim women as agents of peace and reconciliation. In the undertaken poems, these prototypes emphasize Nawwab's keen intention to dismantle the repertoire of subordinate representations of Muslim women so prevalent in Western discourse and media.

3. The Predicament of Cultural Representation: Muslim Women in *The Unfurling*

In dealing with the concept of "culture" in recent critical writing, one is likely to become overwhelmed by all the nuances of this immensely intricate term, considered "one of the most difficult concepts in human and social sciences" (Hall 2003, p. 22). The study of this concept grows even more complicated because of its correlations with crucial elements such as "representation," "meaning," and "language" (2003, p. 22). The element of representation itself is considered specifically significant, because it stands for "experiences, people, voices which are reinterpreted and represented and constitute our realities" (Howarth, 2002, p. 8). Thus, representations are products of the different interrelated aspects of "self, other, and the object-world" (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 11) that collectively shape our identities and are originally constructed within discourse through narratives told about us (Hall, 2003, p. 4). Particularly remarkable is that recent criticism once again acknowledges the significance of representation, as well as the vital role it plays: "the reality of the human world is in its entirety made of representation: in fact there is no sense of reality for our human world without the work of representation" (Jovchelovitch, p. 11).

In his noteworthy book, *Culture and the Customs of Saudi Arabia* (2005), David E. Long argues that "Arabia is not only the cradle of Islam but also of the Arabs." Discussing the challenge of depicting the Saudi cultural scene, Long observes that "having never been under Western colonial rule, they have not developed a feeling of cultural inferiority acquired by many colonial people" (2005, p. 26). Bearing in mind Long's comment, Nawwab attempts to address this peculiarity of the cultural predicament of Muslim women in Saudi Arabia in several poems. Fundamentally, she relies on the three categories that I have already introduced—namely, Muslim women as agents of social change, as behind the veil, and as agents of peace and reconciliation, which together enable the poet to render vibrant reflections of her personal experiences with Saudi women, her observations of them, and her knowledge of their history and culture. Her discussion of the above-mentioned character types therefore remains within a

specifically constructed cultural framework that represents a wide array of Muslim women depicted as living individuals with divergent values and attitudes regardless of their common environment and heritage. The poems that I will analyze below are among the most influential in Nawwab's oeuvre. More significantly, in them, she explores how various aspects of theme, language, and imagery can work to transform the predominant representations of Saudi culture into multifaceted portrayals. In this way, Nawwab attempts to dispel the recurrent, stereotypical misrepresentations of Muslim women from not only the Saudi community but also the larger Muslim and Arab world.

The concerns of women dictate the majority of Nawwab's provocative poems. Nawwab herself asserts that "writing about women is just as important as writing about an abused child, the homeless, the downtrodden, or the political and social life where women play a vital role" (Nawwab, 2004 b). The diverse nature of Nawwab's female characters enables her to examine a range of facets, complexities, and paradoxes affecting the Muslim woman's experience. She deliberately explores gendered contexts in varied settings, and probes beneath the surface to expose Muslim women's hidden experiences. The cluster of her women-centered poems discussed here are symbolic of the intricate worlds of actual women living in the Saudi milieu. The poems cover the past and present, addressing religion and culture, gender and family, war and peace. Nawwab therefore shares with her readers not only her own thoughts, emotions, and personal experiences but also reflections and creative reconstructions of the communal identity of Muslim women.

3.1. *Muslim Women as Agents of Social Change*

The Muslim women in this category are intellectual individuals eager to act as social agents in their community. The poem "The Road Taken" sums up the spirit of Nawwab's entire collection, expressing a yearning for positive social change and reform. As the title ironically suggests, the speaker in the poem is a Muslim woman whose life has been transformed into a journey defined by "twists" and "hollows." The introductory stanza introduces the speaker's struggle to survive despite the hardships that overshadow her life:

The valley of life,
Invites us to explore,
The valley of life,
With its twists, turns,
Its highest peaks, hollows
Draws one on the journey. ("The Road Taken"1-6)

This sense of perseverance becomes even more prevalent as the speaker proceeds to the next stanza, which captures the essence of her life as she continues to redefine her life in anticipation of a meaningful and significant future regardless of the "thrills," "dilemmas," and other challenges life may offer. This knowledge empowers the speaker to convert the challenges she often faces into a mature way of living despite the hardships associated with her life :

Living the stages, layers, phases
Evolving, changing, growing,
Taking on the thrills and dilemmas,
Each leaving its mark,
Shaping pieces of the puzzle,
Shaping life. ("The Road Taken"7-12)

Despite the agitated tone and gloomy landscape evoked, the poet interweaves visual images such as “valley of life,” “highest hollows,” and “pieces of the puzzle,” to modify the poem’s theme, which is, again, the speaker’s search for social transformation. Nawwab intentionally hides the identity of the speaker to allow the reader to wonder who this woman might be: an artist, a critic, a social reformer, or simply an enlightened individual. The poem hence reveals itself as an allegory of a woman eager to reduce the glaring cultural gaps others have recognized, as Long does when he notes, “[s]ocial change has occurred so rapidly that one could argue that there is not one but several generational Saudi cultural gaps” (2005, p. 26). Nawwab alludes to such gaps when she writes,

As we live several lives,
Each a different stage,
A stage with its goals, dreams, frustrations,
Touched throughout by the lives of others,
Joining us all,
Binding all in a circle of ever-changing lives. (“The Road Taken”13-18)

The poem ends without any sense of resolution for the dilemmas it broaches, leaving the reader with a tremendous feeling of anticipation and presumably urging him or her to share in the speaker’s anguish. The speaker’s predicament might only be resolved if Muslim women manage to restore the spirit of hope of their ancestors, who previously “navigated” the “rugged” valley of life:

The valley, will it be long and winding.
Will it be rugged and cut short?
Can our essence, spirit,
Leave a bit, a glimmer
In the hearts,
The memories of those left behind,
Those navigating,
The valley of life? (“The Road Taken”19–26)

Just as “The Road Taken” records the first chapter in the life of a Muslim woman caught between two worlds, “Equilibrium” presents an intricate, metaphorical scenario with a woman at its center who has witnessed the transformation of her former world. The gap between the speaker and her community lessens as she assimilates to the crucial changes that have taken place around her. The phase of integration she experiences yields internal conflicts:

As the world I know changes, alters, transforms,
Caught between two worlds,
The clamoring of each tugging at one,
Each pulling in a different direction,
The mind and heart at war. (“Equilibrium” 1-5)

An air of mystery overshadows this poem, contributing to the dramatic tension that characterizes each of its lines. Despite the strong implication that the speaker in this poem is more fortunate than her counterpart in “The Road Taken,” her experience still makes her ambivalent about the decisions she must make in the future. The use of seemingly random line lengths contributes to the foreboding effect of the poem, suggesting the psychological state of the speaker, who pours her conflicting emotions into the narrative:

Buffeted by the demands of opposites,
Balancing on a tight tangled wire,

Teetering as I look down at my feet,
Carefully placing each foot,
Weaving, wavering, peeking down at the looming abyss. ("Equilibrium" 6-10)

The above lines indirectly explain the poem's title. Amidst such murkiness, the speaker engages in a struggle to maintain her equilibrium as she balances between two opposing worlds. The abundant symbolism in the poem's stanzas further contributes to its ambiguous air. While "a tight tangled wire" could be read as suggesting the old world, "the looming abyss" could stand in for the hazy new one. The personality of the speaker suits the poem's theme: she is neither traditional nor liberal but has adopted a moderate attitude and is aware of the complexities inherent in her decision to do so. The speaker expresses a sense of bewilderment regarding the behavior of people in her community:

As people take up the banner
For a way of life,
For a way of thought,
Each puts forth arguments, logic, merits,
Espousing and advocating
New thoughts, entrenched thoughts,
Different outlooks, familiar outlooks,
I adjust internally, adjust externally,

The two worlds affecting the depth of my core. ("Equilibrium" 15-23)

In the above stanza, "Equilibrium" appears at first to paint a bright picture of people who absorb changes and advocate "new thoughts." However, its sense of mystery returns and the situation again becomes vague when "different" and "familiar" outlooks merge on the surface; the speaker recognizes her experience as an ordeal as it creeps into "the depth of [her] core." The poem concludes by presenting the woman as perplexed between two worlds and two prospects regarding her identity: "Will the two worlds finally converge, / Or will they tear the fabric of my identity/ Bringing forth a rebirth?" ("Equilibrium" 24 -26). The poem's concluding lines implicitly call out for change through exploring new paths and advocating potential thoughts much in tune with maintaining one's individual identity.

3.2. Muslim Women behind the Veil

The second category of Nawwab's female characters represents the majority of Muslim women in Saudi Arabia. Because they live behind the veil, shrouded from most people's view, these women have become especially compelling and fertile subjects of investigation. Despite obvious cultural, ethnic, and religious divides, the poems take multiple approaches to dialogue that not only correct several Western misconceptions but also preserve the integrity of Muslim identity. For instance, at the outset of "Shrouded Mystery," the reader meets a spectrum of Muslim women "cloaked in black." In this provocative poem, Nawwab attempts to dispel the mystery that surrounds the image of Muslim women wearing the *abaya* (a loose black, traditional garment that covers the wearer from head to toe). She does so by immediately depicting what the speaker calls "figures of mystery," codifying the Western misconceptions of Muslim women behind the veil:

Shrouded, cloaked in black,
Figures of mystery,
Tales abound of their lives,
True or false, that is the question.

What does one do
With masked figures

While looking deep into the hidden folds? ("Shrouded Mystery" 1-7)

The previous lines clearly adopt the attitude of the "other" towards the second category of Nawwab's women, namely, the masked figures. Representations of this group of Muslim women trap them in a complex, contested space in which "true and false" tales about them that proliferate in the West affect their cultural position. The narrative presents a series of relatively indirect, perplexing questions, attempting to arrive at a definite answer:

Are their lives as secluded as they appear?
Or are they full of personal successes,
Of strong family ties,
Unbreakable friendships,
Of an unshakeable faith? ("Shrouded Mystery" 11-15)

These lines evoke complex cultural experiences. The lives of Muslim women have always come under heavy scrutiny because of misleading perceptions of their personal relationships, accomplishments, and faith. The chain of questions in this poem not only echoes the vague nature of the title but also suggests disguise and deception by adopting a conventionally Western tone. The poem closes by drawing attention to the wealth of human relationships and cultural ties behind the veil.

Where "Shrouded Mystery" ends provocatively, "The Hidden Layers" presents a determined female Muslim character who reveals the hidden truths behind the "cloaked figures of mystery." Comprised of five stanzas, "The Hidden Layers" offers greater insight into Muslim women's prospects and status in a Saudi milieu. With an explicitly unwavering tone, the speaker seeks to build sturdy bridges of understanding between two opposing cultures. This figure begins with a confrontation between the speaker and the "other":

Some think I am hiding
Underneath my long black cloak,
With little narrow slits for my eyes,
Cloaked in mystery, medieval modesty,

Wondering, what is going on behind the mask? ("The Hidden Layers" 1-5)

These stanzas revolve around a crucial question, namely, how do we affirm and maintain our identities in a world that does not acknowledge we exist? In vividly portraying a Muslim woman wearing her traditional costume—namely, the black *abayas*—this poem also alludes to the mistaken Western tendency to associate the veil with a mask of deception or symbol of ignorance. The speaker grows more confident in the following lines:

Little knowing that I am proud,
Proud of my identity,
Proud of my femininity,
Proud of my spirit,
My faith,
My mind, not just my body,

Proud of my heritage, culture, long-entrenched traditions. ("The Hidden" 8-14)

These lines underline the speaker's pride in her "long black cloak" because it sustains her faith, identity, and culture, creating a distinct, powerful sense of identification between the speaker and her female counterparts. This identification is voiced in the following lines:

Does my cloak, my masked visage,

Long viewed by outsiders with pity,
 Barricade me from the world?
 Or does it open up vistas of wonder,
 Open up doors for exploration into the unseen,
 Open up the world through a different hidden sharp lens? ("The Hidden " 20-25)

The poem reaches its climax when the speaker attempts to bridge this cultural divide by questioning the significance of Saudi female identity that exists behind "cloak [and] masked visage." This group of Muslim women is caught between their "masked visage" as a barricade and a potential portal for "exploration into the unseen." The poem concludes by conveying a subtle awareness of the fact that the once-secluded women have transformed into spirits of freedom who aspire to reach "vistas of wonder" and knowledge.

In her examination of representations of Middle Eastern Muslim women in the Western press, Karin Wilkins argues that "[t]he Western view of Middle Eastern women serves to accentuate the differences between East and West, perpetuating negative stereotypes [...]." She proceeds to explain that these women are "portrayed as distant, shielded from direct view through the veil; as passive, reacting to events rather than actively participating in them" (1997, p. 60). Wilkins further observes that these images, among others, signify "the mystery that seems to shroud Western understanding of other cultural groups" (1997, p. 50). The poet is thus keenly aware of the negativity of these stereotypes and their impact on Western culture and media. Hence she not only articulates the issue of the veil in her poem "Shrouded Mystery" to respond to what Wilkins, among other writers, have acknowledged, but also to bring to light the essential status and roles of Muslim women behind the veil in the Saudi community and elsewhere.

3.3 Muslim Women as Agents of Peace and Reconciliation

The third category of Muslim women in Nawwab's poetry includes Muslim women who serve as concrete examples of true Muslim womanhood, representing the authentic spirit of Islam as the religion of peace and brotherhood. As Long remarks, "Islam as a political ideology is neither a doctrine of hatred nor of bloodshed, as has been often characterized." Unlike the image perpetuated by Western popular culture, Long continues, "Islam, and indeed all world religions, offer their believers a wide array of references on the virtue of maintaining peace" (p. 26). The Muslim women in this category develop local concerns in international settings and voice their concerns powerfully, rejecting global terror and violence.

The speaker of Nawwab's next poem speaks in such a voice. From its introductory lines, "Banishment" employs a classical tone immediately reminiscent of ancient elegies. The first set of stanzas creates a melancholic atmosphere, arousing in the reader empathy for this pained Muslim woman:

I let you out,
 Your rule is at an end,
 I let you out,
 With all that is in me,
 Grief,
 I let you go,
 Pent up wrath,
 Clawing at my heart,
 Clenching my hands . . . ("Banishment" 1-9)

The word “grief” is not only key in these lines but also a major theme around which the poem revolves. To heighten the dramatic effect, Nawwab does not initially reveal the cause of the speaker’s misery. The lines thus depict an ambiguous, pathetic struggle, which intensifies when the personification of grief devours the woman’s heart and body. The next set of lines does finally reveal the reality behind the conflict:

I give you back
To the oppressors,
Tyrants,
Soulless,
Callous of human decency,
Giddy with hysterical racism,
Puffed with blind arrogance,
Thriving on their mastery,
Stealing, raping, conquering,
The Arab world, African continent, Asian lands. (“Banishment” 12-21)

The speaker’s outrage undoubtedly comes from the fact that she has witnessed the atrocities of tyrannical powers who continue to steal, rape, and conquer “the Arab world, African continent, [and] Asian lands.” The speaker does not name any specific imperial power; however, she articulates this issue with the deep-seated wisdom of a Muslim woman who understands that the history of imperialism looms over the past and present. Unlike Nawwab’s previous poems, “Banishment” transcends personal dilemmas and regional borders to introduce a Muslim woman who feels entirely estranged from a world that has been shattered by wars and terrorism. Subsequently, the poem succeeds in depicting the distance between the speaker and her world. The speaker adopts the voice of the masses while still depicting the deeply felt agonies of the oppressed at the hands of the oppressor and the conflicts between the colonizer and colonized:

I let you out,
As the agony of generations
Birthed,
Matured,
Ingrown,
Stamp our collective memory,
Moaning mothers,
Massacred young innocents,
Shamed helpless males,
Weaved in and out of the centuries. (“Banishment” 22-31)

These lines bear broken images of a nation whose collective memory has been distorted by colonizing powers depict people who are among the world’s most wretched nations. The speaker observes that grief has characterized her people for many centuries, exposing a disturbing scene of devastated families crushed mercilessly by their oppressors. The speaker confronts her grief directly in the following stanza:

I let you go, Grief,
So you can no longer hold me in thrall,
Keep me from restful sleep,
Smothering my dreams,
With bleak, murky future for my loved ones. (“Banishment” 42-46)

These lines suggest the early phases of personal triumph over not only grief but also the sense of inferiority that burdens the speaker. One can easily detect the drastic change in her personality: her mood of fear and anxiety transforms into one of optimism and faith. She manages to overcome “a bleak, murky” stage in her life, as expressed in the following lines:

I let you out,
Grief,
And pick up the mantle of joy,
Pulling its swirling warmth tightly,
Deeply drinking up bubbling pleasure,
Dancing and twirling
To the ecstatic, mighty music of human bonding,
Soothing,
Supporting,
Succoring me,
Bringing me peace, peace, peace, peace. . . (“Banishment” 47-57)

These lines present the shift that leads to a remarkable episode in the female speaker’s struggle. A chain of images illustrate the state of overwhelming ecstasy the speaker enters, specifically describing her as wearing “the mantle of joy” and drinking up “bubbling pleasure.” Because of the almost musical richness of these words and verbal gestures, these lines read as more rhetorical than literal. The reader may feel as though he or she is sharing in the speaker’s joy and tranquility, especially since the poem depicts the speaker’s progress toward this point. The poem initially introduces a female character perplexed by the fragmented condition of her world. As it draws to a close, her dilemma has been resolved with certainty—she has found solace in “human bonding,” because it heals the wounds of the past and, more importantly, yields future prosperity. The speaker of “Banishment” thus manages to arrive at her lost harbor, where peace prevails over the acts of evil that result from racism, war, and colonialism.

In essence, the poet has largely occupied herself with the colonial predicament and its aftermath, as evident in several Arab and Muslim countries including Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The titles of her poems notably imply the common burden of warfare and colonialism. “Nightmare,” the final poem I will discuss here, presents the plea of another female speaker for deliverance from an outside power’s tactics of oppression and injustice. It vividly depicts the plight of the Iraqi people during and after the Second Gulf War, largely at the hands of the United States and Great Britain. The poem begins by describing a veritable whirlwind that ruins “the cradle of civilization”:

The bleak, owl-omened cloud thunders,
Peeling woes, worries, rage and rancor,
As the ‘mighty’ unleash their ferocity
At the helpless. (“Nightmare” 1-4)

The introductory lines describe a tyrannical war between what the speaker calls the “mighty” and “helpless.” The images of the war are absurd, described as causing feelings that range from “rage” to the only slightly less intense “rancor.” The following lines further explore the tale of this war:

Forgotten:
The richness of the past,
The milk of human kindness.
Bomber jets sweep the skies,

Raining their fatal bounties. ("Nightmare" 31-35)

The speaker laments the fact that human wickedness could triumph over one of the prominent, ancient Arab nations, which now stands "on the edge of obscurity." She is utterly aware that Iraq has been transformed into a colony stripped of its identity and culture: "Remnants of museums and mosques / Stand sentinel / Silent and bare", (24-26)

The speaker cannot hide her fury as she depicts the wasteland of the present:

All is laid to waste

As Baghdad, Basra and Mosul

Are assaulted yet again,

In the name of "good." ("Nightmare" 27-30)

Each one of the cities she cites had witnessed "a golden era / Of discovery, learning and science" (10-11). However, these cities as they once were have been erased from the map of the world. She draws an impactful analogy between two wars, both led primarily by the United States and Great Britain, one in the present and one with Mongolia in the past. For her, both wars were and are milestones in the collapse of human civilization. The female in "Nightmare," though different from the one in "Banishment," has also developed a remarkable political awareness of the clash between civilizations.

Conclusion

After several readings of the poems under discussion, the observation that remains is of a noteworthy woman poet with moderate views, whose poetry is a voice of her people and a vehicle for exploring their native culture. In so doing, these poems bring about the conspicuous vision of an Anglophone Saudi poet who is constantly caught within a poetic locale that blends faith and belief, past and present, gender and family, history and culture, and war and peace. By introducing these three major archetypes; Muslim women as agents of social change, behind the veil, and as agents of peace and reconciliation, Nawwab addresses vital cultural expressions that transcend current clichés. Woven into the very fabric of some of Nawwab's most influential poems, these three prototypes introduce a fascinating gallery of female Muslim speakers, captured in memorable snapshots that bear a fine resemblance to their real-life counterparts.

The first category of Nawwab's female characters negotiates the role of Muslim women as agents of social change. Regardless of the fact that they are caught grappling between two opposing worlds, they still preserve a moderate position neither liberal nor traditional towards the several acts of social transformation in their milieu. They are ordinary women torn between agonies and dreams, pains and joys, failures and triumphs. Nevertheless, they are aware of the perplexities of life and often appear independent individuals eager to maintain different modes of survival.

Muslim women behind the veil underlines the second category of Nawwab's female characters. These poems explicitly seek to build sturdy bridges of mutual understanding between two disparate cultures against the negative stereotypes associating the veil with a mask of deception and ignorance. Through introducing intellectual females characters wearing the veil, Nawwab seeks to sustain not only their pride, but also their faith, individuality, and national culture.

The third and last category of Nawwab's female characters are presented as agents of peace and reconciliation. The cultural representations of this group are not meant to arouse the empathy of readers regarding the agonies of wars and violence of the modern world, but rather sharpen

their perceptions of the role of Muslim women who advocate peace and reconciliation. In so doing, Nawwab introduces the true spirit of Islam as the religion of peace and tolerance.

Eventually, not only does Nawwab create a multifaceted portrayal of cultural representations of Muslim women in the Saudi milieu but also the Arab/Muslim world. The previous poems not only stand in confrontation against false representations but also articulate a genuine cultural identity of Muslim women that had been formerly marginalized. Against the complex artificial misrepresentations of Muslim women, specifically Saudi women, the poems evoke a sensuous twilight of lived experiences that blossom with countless tales of faith, endurance, and aspiration.

About The Author

Hessa Alghadeer, PhD is an assistant professor of English Literature at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. She has been teaching undergraduate courses in both English and American Literatures in the Department of English Language and Literature. Her research interests include Postcolonial Literature, Digital poetry, and Middle Eastern Literature.

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Macbeth's Motiveless Malignity: The "sweet discord" in Shakespeare's Craftsmanship

Mary Raj
An-Najah National University
Nablus- Palestine

Abstract:

Despite the enormous mass of critical scholarship available today to the student of Shakespeare, less has been said on the flaws that are inherent in the crafting of his plots compared with the enormous output we have on what I term his art: his vision, his poetry and the profound timeless truths that he has expressed about the human condition. Far from being the careful craftsman that many modern critics would have us believe he was, many of Shakespeare's dramatic plots suffer from the haste and carelessness with which they were often executed. In this paper, I focus on one of his great tragedies, *Macbeth*. My investigation into some of the play's oversights and structural weaknesses, especially with regard to the motives ascribed to Macbeth for the crimes he commits, sheds light on the flaws in Shakespeare's technique that we often overlook in our preoccupation with his artistry in this play.

Keywords: art, craft, artist, craftsman, plot, motive, flaws

Macbeth's Motiveless Malignity: The "sweet discord" in Shakespeare's Craftsmanship

Macbeth has a long history of criticism behind it. Since its initial performance in the presence of King James I in the summer of 1606, it has been staged and read countless times and its many excellences in terms of language and thematic profundity have been the subjects of endless praise, debate and comment. But *Macbeth*, like most of Shakespeare's plays, has suffered from a surfeit of acclaim that, while deifying its author in the literary world, has also resulted in an unfortunate imbalance of perspective. Put another way, too many scholars have ignored some serious textual defects in Shakespeare's plays in general and *Macbeth* in particular.

The problem, as I see it, arises when what I term for the sake of convenience as Shakespeare's art is confused with his craft. For the purpose of this paper, I define as Shakespeare's art his creation of an unforgettable array of powerful characters as well as the poetry with which he has given a profound and complex unity to theme, emotion and action, particularly in his great tragedies like the one under discussion. Shakespeare's craft, on the other hand, reveals itself in his skill as a dramatist to construct a tightly knit and credible plot. Plot brings together the characters in a sequence of events and situations and the subsequent interplay between them constitutes dramatic action. Plot is, quite literally, the bare bones of any play, and like a skeleton, it is not visible and so, it does not intrude on our consciousness but without it, the play like the body, would suffer from having no form or shape.

However, because of its relative imperceptibility, a plot may contain flaws, some trivial and others serious, that are at times overlooked or excused, particularly when the craftsman also happens to be an artist of unparalleled genius as Shakespeare is. In his case, it has resulted occasionally in blame being ascribed to those who perceive a problem with his plot rather than to him. For example, commenting on those who are unconvinced of the dramatic necessity of the interminable dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff in Act 4 Sc 3, H. C. Goddard states, "If a passage with such patterns behind it is wanting in dramatic tension, it is surely more the actors' or readers' fault than Shakespeare's" (Goddard, 1951, p.131). It is a remark that forecloses criticism on the unnecessarily long exchange between Malcolm and Macduff, which I contend is actually detrimental to the mounting tension in the play's swift action. But more importantly, this remark overlooks the unpalatable motives that had undoubtedly prompted the dramatist to insert the flattering tributes, vital in an age of noble patronage, to the "king-becoming graces", "miraculous healing touch" and the "heavenly gift of prophecy" of his royal auditor. Assessments such as Prof. Goddard's attempt to ignore any shortcomings in Shakespeare's craft that may threaten to detract from his greatness as an artist.

Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind this distinction between Shakespeare's art and his craft when reading a play because it enables us to regard an oversight at the level of plot as precisely that and nothing more, instead of elaborately explaining it away as an instance of Shakespeare's artistry at work. Consider Goddard's solution to the problem of the Third Murderer in Act 3 Sc 3 in this context. Shakespeare's inclusion of a third murderer at the last minute is puzzling since in Act 3 Sc 1, Macbeth hires only two men to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. Shakespeare's oversight at this point is only in failing to show when or why Macbeth felt the need for a third murderer, although the Second Murderer's surly rejoinder, "He needs not our mistrust" in the opening lines of Scene 3 reveals that Macbeth's intrinsically suspicious nature may be the reason why he chooses another, presumably more trustworthy henchman, to spy on the other two to their resentment. However, Goddard postulates a more fascinating theory. He contends that when Macbeth retires to his chamber to rest before the banquet, he is so

full of anxiety about the scene being enacted in the woods that he is actually capable, through the sheer force of his own imagination, of projecting his spirit into the embodiment of an accomplice beside the two murderers who already lay in wait for Banquo and Fleance. Goddard bases his argument mainly on the six separate utterances of the Third Murderer, in which he traces echoes of former speeches of Macbeth (Goddard, 1951, pp. 123-5). These traces serve as Goddard's proof that the Third Murderer is no more than the manifestation of the spirit of Macbeth himself. Now I can accept that Macbeth somehow accomplishes this mystic dissociation of his body and spirit by an extraordinary feat of imagination because it is true that his imagination is considerable, particularly when he is under great stress, as exemplified in the knives and ghosts it conjures up so effortlessly. However, if this is the case, then it follows that two dour, uncouth, illiterate men like the First and Second Murderers, who actually perceive simultaneously the materialization of Macbeth's spirit in a corporeal form beside them, have imaginations too of proportions on par with Macbeth's own, and that seems highly improbable to me. But readers who favor a prosaic explanation over a fanciful interpretation are themselves dismissed by Goddard in his concluding remarks, "All this about the Third Murderer will be particularly abhorrent to 'realists' who would bring everything to the bar of the senses, and logicians, whose fundamental axiom is that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time ..." (Goddard, 1951, pp.125-6).

Nor is Goddard alone in putting forward theories of the kind decried by the 'realists' and 'logicians' he deplores. Other critics have also contributed their share in building up Shakespeare's reputation for the thematic unity underlying his dramatic action and expressed through his imagery, by taking up and forcibly shaping every little incongruity at the level of plot to fit into a play's general scheme in the belief that everything in that play, however insignificant, has a dramatic purpose. "The creative imagination has an abundance and employs it lavishly, yet never casually, but always in contribution to the main design" (Evans, 1952). Ribner (1951) concurs by stating with reference to *Macbeth* that "*Macbeth* is a closely knit, unified construction, every element of which is designed to support an intellectual statement, to which action, character and poetry all contribute". Bloom (1998) echoes Ribner by remarking, "*Macbeth* is an uncanny unity of setting, plot and characters, fused together beyond comparison with any other play of Shakespeare." These words are expressive of the general direction taken by the critics and commentators who make little or no distinction between the artist and the craftsman in Shakespeare out of a desire to uphold the myth that Shakespeare is both a careful and conscious artist. The result is that at times even those among the critics who express opinions to the contrary come under attack themselves. Knights's criticism of Prof. O.J. Campbell is a case in point. In his essay entitled "Shakespeare and the 'New' Critics", Campbell challenged the proponents of New Criticism, Cleanth Brooks and D.A. Traversi, for their attempts to seek in the construction of each play "an integrated system of connotation based on the iteration of certain words" and in that "system of sequence and repetition of images all the poetry of the play ... fused into intense impression" (Knights, 1968, p.221). Campbell's attitude that "Shakespeare never seems to have manipulated his imagery in this consciously scheming fashion", forms much of the basis of L.C. Knights' counterattack in "Some Contemporary Trends in Shakespearean Criticism".

However, my intention here is only to give some samples of the kind of criticism that concerns itself almost exclusively with locating symmetrical patterns in Shakespeare's plays, and not to denigrate scholars who, in the main, have certainly done more to enlighten us about Shakespeare than that often-ambiguous gentleman himself. Despite the frequently arbitrary and

sometimes extreme critical stances adopted by many critics, concurrence must be absolute with Eliot who has been quoted as saying, "When a poet is a great poet as Shakespeare is, we cannot judge of his greatness unaided; we need both the opinions of other poets, and the diverse views of critics who were not poets in order to help us to understand" (in Halliday, 1949). Nevertheless, the onesidedness of this constant projection of Shakespeare as a deliberate rather than a spontaneous artist compromises much of that which is valuable in Shakespearean criticism. The danger in this for amateur readers in particular, is that it misleads them into thinking that if Shakespeare is a great artist it must somehow mean that he is a careful craftsman too. That this is not always true is the purpose of this investigation.

The unevenness of Shakespeare's craftsmanship in the matter of plot construction is apparent even in the examination of the first Folio of *Macbeth* that was published in 1623. Of this Folio it has been said,

"An unsatisfactory text. There has been cutting - apart from *The Comedy of Errors*, it is the shortest of the plays - adaptation, and interpolation: the Hecate scenes are probably by Middleton, for the songs indicated in the stage directions of III. 5 and IV. i, 'Come away' and 'Black Spirits' occur in full in his *THE WITCH*. F. was certainly printed from a prompt copy, for the bookkeeper's note Ring the bell (II.3) has been printed in the text:

Malcolme, Banquo,
As from your Graues rise vp, and walke like Sprights
To countenance this horror, Ring the bell.
Bell rings. Enter Lady"
(Halliday, pp. 449-450)

The fact that the first printed edition of *Macbeth* was published posthumously and in such a form (i.e., based on a promptbook that actors and directors alike, undoubtedly tinkered with, in the seven years that had elapsed between Shakespeare's death and the play's formal publication) in no way alleviated the problems that already existed in the text. Bullough (1973) feels that "the presence of loose ends and unexplained references, has led some critics to regard it as a shortened play" (p. 423), the commonly held theory being that James I, before whom it was performed was no lover of long plays. Whether or not the first performance of *Macbeth* was given before the king, the subsequent performances were based on the shortened text.

If Shakespeare wrote the play to meet the deadline for its performance before the royal audience, then he would have certainly written precipitately, and with little time, it would seem, for revision. Moreover, as Prof. Bullough and others have indicated, the ultimate shape of the story came from a bewildering range of versions of the original chronicle of Macbeth who reigned in Scotland for seventeen years until his death in 1057, and who for the most part was a good king, unlike his dramatic counterpart. Shakespeare took something from every source, and from this compilation, shaped his tragic masterpiece. But the problem in such an amalgamation of material being translated in rapid composition is the inevitable result of many "loose ends and unevenness of style" (Bullough, 1973, p. 423). Consider three of the errors noted by Bullough at this point. The first is the surprising exclamation of Lady Macbeth,

What beast was't then
That made you break this enterprise to me? (1:7, 18)

It is unclear precisely when, in fact, Macbeth had broken that "enterprise" to her. In his letter to her he mentions no more than the prophecies of the Weird Sisters, and in the brief

conversation between them after his arrival home and before the banquet for Duncan, the murder is never discussed openly with the exception of her own rather cryptic words,

" He that is coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom." (1:5, 65-9)

Even the more lengthy details of the plan and provisions for the conferment of blame are only made two scenes later in Act 1 Sc 7, soon after the speech of Lady Macbeth quoted earlier. Bullough notes that Shakespeare cannot have cut out a scene unless his plan originally began before Donwald's revolt (and so before the chroniclers supplied any material), and this being most unlikely, he probably "put in the suggestion, regardless of previous scenes, to show that Macbeth was already guilty of more than 'fantastical' ambition." (ibid, p. 423). The possibility indicated by Shakespeare himself, whether accidentally or in design, that the initial suggestion for the "enterprise" came from Macbeth opens up a range of important questions and tends to diminish considerably Lady Macbeth's role in the instigation of her husband's crime.

The second error is Macbeth's apparent ignorance of Cawdor's treachery in Act 1 Sc 3, 72-3, although Ross knows of it and suggests that he (i.e., Cawdor) was with the Norwegian King when Macbeth defeated the latter. The third inconsistency that appears between Act 3 Sc 6, 37-9 and Act 4 Sc 1, 139-143, has a more serious implication since "they make Macbeth aware of Macduff's flight before he is told (to his surprise) after the witches have vanished, that the thane has fled to England" (ibid. p. 52). In Act 3 Sc 6, in the conversation that takes place between Lennox and another lord, a speech transpires in which the nobleman informs Lennox that Malcolm is residing in the court of the English King and that "Thither Macduff/ Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid" and a few lines later, "And this report / Hath so exasperate the king (i.e., Macbeth) that he/ Prepares for some attempt of war." Despite this clear indication that Macbeth was already aware of and angered by Macduff's flight, yet, in the following scene, during his visit to the witches he seems ignorant of Macduff's flight when he decides to kill him after having already been warned against him. In addition, he displays surprise and chagrin when being told by Lennox shortly afterwards that "Macduff is fled to England." The earlier conversation between Lennox and the lord might have served as an excellent example of irony, had the line "And this report" been deleted, for then the audience alone would have known that Macbeth's victim has escaped before the tyrant is given pretended security by the witches in Act 4 Sc 1.

We can overlook discrepancies of this kind if they are too trivial to interfere with the action in the play. Take, for instance, the time element in the famous Banquet scene of Act 3 Sc 4 in which the nobles are invited to dinner at seven. However, the appearance of the ghost and the subsequent agitation of Macbeth disrupt the feast and force the guests to leave unceremoniously before they have a chance to begin their repast. Yet, in the brief conversation that ensues afterwards between husband and wife, Macbeth asks Lady Macbeth the time and she replies,

"Almost at odds with morning, which is which." (l. 127)

In other words, it is almost dawn already!

At this point, Macbeth decides to visit the witches, which raises an interesting question as to how he could have known where to find them, for presumably, as spirits of the air, they have

no fixed address. (Banquo: Whither are they vanished? Macbeth: Into the air; and what seemed corporal melted, / As breath into the wind....(1:3.80-3)) Nevertheless, because such inconsistencies do not impede the flow of action, nor do they detract from the overall impression the play leaves upon us, they can be set aside in a willing suspension of disbelief.

But other oversights can be significant especially if they occur at the level of the plot, for then, the resultant incongruities in the dramatic action can render much of the purpose of the play meaningless. Such is the case with the motives ascribed to Macbeth for the murders he commits. It is common knowledge among students of Shakespeare that *Macbeth* is a tragedy of ambition. Macbeth kills Duncan in order to become king. But for a general of his stature, who defeats two armies in one afternoon in Act 1 Sc 1, he and his wife plan a murder that is clumsy to say the very least. They also plan an equally crude ruse, whereby they daub the blood of Duncan on the faces and persons of his sleeping bodyguards after using their knives to kill him, seemingly unaware of the unlikelihood of 'murderers' to conveniently fall asleep by their victim's body after the commission of a crime of such magnitude. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's lack of foresight and psychological myopia results in a ruse that is so transparent in its child-like simplicity that it fools nobody. (For example, Lennox: Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done't. (2:3, 100, my emphasis); Macduff's suspicions covertly conveyed in his refusal to attend Macbeth's coronation; Banquo's conviction more overtly expressed: "... and I fear/ Thou play'dst most foully for't" (3:1, 2-3), and finally, Donalbain's observation to Malcolm "the near in blood, the nearer bloody." (2:3, 140-1))

So, in fact, Macbeth who has been powerfully described as "an icon of one of the great potentialities of life", whose "deed of revolt is a deliberate defiance of the whole work of nature and a conscious enlightenment under the powers of evil " (Holloway, 1961, p. 73) emerges strangely in the light of logic, as a man lacking the most mundane of human qualities: commonsense! Granted, the ideas are mostly Lady Macbeth's; nevertheless, they have Macbeth's full approval, and she receives for her pains, the highest accolade a medieval man could offer: "thy undaunted mettle should compose nothing but males." (1:7, 73-4)

It would seem that the haste for such a badly planned and ill-executed murder is in part instigated by the fact that Duncan has formally appointed Malcolm as the Prince of Cumberland and therefore, his successor to the throne. It is, as Macbeth thinks of at one point, " a step / on which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap, / For in my way it lies" (1:3, 48-50). How Macbeth proposes to 'o'er-leap' it is the question. This is what Prof. Bullough has to say about the old royal Scottish laws of succession. The great-grandfather of the historical Macbeth and Duncan, Kenneth II "had arbitrarily changed the law of royal succession. Previously, there had been a complicated system of alternate succession by different branches of a family whereby a member of the king's predecessor inherited when a monarch died. In addition, there was an elective custom, for if an heir seemed too young or incapable to bear the rigors of leadership in that wild age, a more competent relative could be elected by the nobility. Kenneth II, anxious that his own son Malcolm should succeed him, introduced a law of primogeniture which was not universally agreeable. This is important for our knowledge of the historical Macbeth." (Bullough, 1973, p. 431)

It is also important for our knowledge of Shakespeare's Macbeth, who agonizes over the killing of the king, when its commission would have gained him little, with an heir already appointed to the throne. A practical alternative would have been for Macbeth to depose the king and his heir in a military coup, as it has so often happened in history, but this of course, has little literary interest. Instead, Macbeth chooses the secret path of murder, and, as pointed out earlier,

lacking foresight into its more obvious consequences, he could hardly have had the prescience to predict that Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's sons, would so conveniently flee, leaving the way clear for him. It is dramatic expediency, of course, without which another murder, that of Malcolm, would have been necessitated in order to secure the throne for him. The argument that Malcolm is under age holds little conviction, for he is obviously not a child in the sense that Macduff's son is; and anyway, only a few months later within the encompassment of the dramatic time element, Macduff is pleading with him for his return. Had Macbeth seized the throne on the pretext of Malcolm's youth, the law still required him to be elected by the nobles. It is not certain whether he would have secured the support of the Scottish thanes who, already suspicious of him, would not have gone, in any case, against the publicly stated wishes of the dead and much-loved Duncan. The Prince of Cumberland is introduced as a spur to goad Macbeth and his wife into action; yet the irony is that had there been no Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth's spiritual indecision over the commission of regicide would have had greater plausibility, for the death of the king would have smoothed his path, as the elder kinsman, to the throne. It is true that Macbeth thinks that he has the prophecy of the witches on his side. But even then, when he takes matters into his own hands, he would have known that he would eventually have to contend with the hurdle posed by Malcolm. It is this opacity of vision that contradicts the earlier presentation of Macbeth as the general and leader of men.

Interestingly enough, most of Shakespeare's dramatic flaws, even major ones like this, seem to consist of brief sentences or phrases that hold up the logic of the action only momentarily and unobtrusively. It is for this reason that they are often passed unnoticed or sacrificed to the more profound excellences of the play as a whole. The Prince of Cumberland and Macbeth's reaction to him are mentioned only once in Act 1 Sc4. He does not figure thereafter in his official capacity as the heir to the throne in the subsequent moments leading up to his father's murder. Macbeth's myopia may have been accidental; the shortsightedness of the critic, however, who sees a credible design in this, is deliberate. Prof. Charlton says of this point, " ... But very soon afterwards, the easier way is barred. Maccolm, now named as hereafter to bear the title Prince of Cumberland stands in the road by which, should Duncan by course of nature prematurely die, Macbeth might have hoped to climb into the royal inheritance. This unexpected turn of events is decisive." (Charlton, 1948, p.165) But he stops short of speculating why Shakespeare does not explain to his audience precisely how this problem can be circumvented with the murder of Duncan.

That Prof. Charlton was aware of it is evidenced in another place where he has quoted from Holinshed upon whose Chronicles Shakespeare drew mainly for the plot of *Macbeth*. He says, "But shortly afterwards, Duncan promoted his elder son Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland 'as it were thereby to appoint him his successor in the kingdom.' Macbeth was sore troubled by this - and apparently it would seem to have been an attempt to forestall the old laws of the realm, which barred succession to a minor" (p. 158-9). Again, the point has been cursorily dismissed, for nowhere is there evidence that Malcolm is, in fact, a minor. Certainly, his very first speech in the play, "This is the sergeant, / Who like a good and hardy soldier fought / 'Gainst my captivity" (Act 1 Sc 2, 3-5) is hardly reminiscent of an adolescent, let alone a child. And this impression is almost universally borne out by the fact that stage and film directors alike generally present Malcolm as a young man. Moreover, without the concrete presentation of any information in the play, it would be doubtful if Shakespeare's mainly English audience would have been conversant with the intricacies of the centuries-old Scottish laws of accession which, in contradistinction to

the English law, permitted a relative rather than a legitimate son of the king to succeed the throne.

If Shakespeare's first flaw was to include the mention of the Prince of Cumberland, his next one was to exclude the mention of Macbeth's children, or at least, a son. In *Antony and Cleopatra* too, Antony's children by Cleopatra (despite the evidence in Plutarch that they existed) are absent in the action, but then, they were, strictly speaking, not necessary in a play that dealt emphatically with adulterous love and not, like *King Lear*, with the parent-child relationship. In *Macbeth*, however, the existence of a son would have greatly enhanced Macbeth's motives for killing Banquo. In this, of course, Shakespeare who borrowed his material from historical gossip, was not wholly to be blamed, for in none of the many and varied reports on his life is there ever mentioned that Macbeth had any children. The historical Macbeth was succeeded by his stepson Lulach, who was killed after a brief year-long reign. Lady Macbeth's famous "I have given suck" (Act 1 Sc 7, 54) may have referred to the children she bore her first husband Gillecomgain, for there is no evidence that she had any children by Macbeth. In fact, certain well-known Shakespearean essays such as Cleanth Brooks' "The Naked Babe And The Cloak Of Manliness" have been worked around the theme that because he was barren (a point echoed by Macduff in his cry "He has no children" {Act 4 Sc 3, 217}), Macbeth waged war against other people's children. Sigmund Freud underlined this when he said of the prophecy made to Banquo, the father of a future line of kings, "Macbeth is incensed by this decree of destiny. He is not content with the satisfaction of his own ambition. He wants to found a dynasty - not to have murdered for the benefit of strangers. This point is overlooked if Shakespeare's play is regarded only as a tragedy of ambition. It is clear that Macbeth cannot live forever, and thus there is but one way for him to invalidate the part of the prophecy which opposes him - namely, to have children himself who can succeed him." (p. 41). The child, in different forms, becomes one of the central motifs in the play.

The theme of childlessness may seem rather outdated today but it furnishes me with an illustration of how Shakespeare's art can be in conflict with his craft over the question of Macbeth's motives for murder. The explicit reason for the attempted murder of Fleance according to the plot is that Macbeth wants to secure his throne for his (albeit non-existent) line from Banquo's descendants. Yet, there is also credible evidence gleaned by the proponents of the theme of childlessness from the various dialogues in the play to support their argument that Macbeth wants to avenge his childless state and get back at men who are fathers by killing their children. However, in reality, essays like those of Freud, Mahood and Adelman that are elaborate studies of this theme are based on a wealth of imagery from the play liberally supplied by Shakespeare the artist but which Shakespeare the craftsman fails to sustain because the plot of *Macbeth* does not support the notion that the attempted murder of Fleance, in particular, is due to any cause other than political expediency.

But even in this matter Shakespeare the craftsman has been negligent. He could have utilized the license so freely granted the writers of his times and tampered with history at this point to invent a son for Macbeth, even if only in passing reference, in order to give credibility to his murderous intentions towards Banquo and his son Fleance. After all, as Hapgood has noted, "Shakespeare did not often invent his plots but usually drew them from other works, still his unvarying practice was to rework them in such a way as to make them his own. And in performance his plots remain his 'and his alone'(my emphasis)" (Hapgood, 1988, p. 64). Instead, at the crucial juncture in the play when Macbeth entertains the idea of killing Banquo and

Fleance, the artist in Shakespeare triumphs over the craftsman to produce yet another of Macbeth's powerful soliloquies:

"Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings."
(Act 3 Sc 1, 60-9)

Under the circumstances, Macbeth's stated motive for murder here is a curious one indeed, for he wants to remove Banquo and Fleance in order to secure the throne for a non-existent child; a child, moreover, which he cannot be sure of begetting even at this point in the story. Macbeth's directive to his wife "Bring forth men children only" (Act 1 Sc 7. 72) seems a fairly clear indicative that she has not already done so. In fact, in light of his childlessness, the other motive Macbeth mentions at the beginning of Act 3 Sc 1 when he speaks of Banquo appears more plausible, but it also makes it akin to Iago's diabolical "motiveless malignity". The lines,

" 'Tis much he dares,
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear; and under him
My Genius is rebuked " (3:1. 50-5)

recall Iago's jealous recognition that both Othello and Michael Cassio are better men than he, instigating him to plot against them. A similar sense of envy furnishes Macbeth with a better reason for plotting the destruction of Banquo, rather than the suggestion that in conniving in his murder, he was merely attempting to thwart the witches' prophecies that he will be succeeded by Banquo's descendants.

The points made by Hapgood in the following observation "... the witches' prophecies are the most consistently important in Duncan's death; but in that case they are one instigating factor among many whereas with Banquo they are a prime consideration: the prophecies are the principal reason given for Banquo's hopes and Macbeth's fears" (Hapgood, 1988, p. 69), do not add up because Macbeth's fears have little credibility in the face of the nonexistence of a son and heir.

The third murder, the most bloody and brutal one of all, that of Lady Macduff and her children, is a senseless murder - the word "massacre" or the phrase uttered by Ross, "savagely slaughtered" (Act 4 Sc 3. 5) being more apposite. Again, Macbeth displays a singular lack of judgment, and like Othello, rushes into action when a little forethought might have saved him much grief later. As an experienced general, used to military campaigns and knowing well the useful bargaining points prisoners-of-war make, it is strange that he does not consider that, with Lady Macduff and her children taken hostage, he will be in a stronger position to bargain with Macduff. The motive suggested by Hapgood for the massacre of Macduff's family lacks

conviction when examined against actual textual evidence. He has said, "The prophecies in Part Three provide a second set of influences that affect the rest of the play. For Macbeth is warned to beware not only Macduff but all future holders of his title ("the thane of Fife"). This logic is so lightly indicated though, that few commentators have noticed it" (p. 69). So lightly indeed, that it does not appear that Macbeth notices it, either! This occurs in Act 4 Sc 1, 70-83. The Apparition says: "beware Macduff, / Beware the thane of Fife." Now, the apparition does mention Macduff specifically by name, which weakens the theory somewhat. Macbeth's response is indicated in two places. In line 74, he says, "Thou has harped my fear aright ", which as an indicator, could be read either way, i.e., "You have spoken rightly of my fears of Macduff " or else, "You have spoken rightly of the threat the entire Macduff clan poses for my security." Yet lines 82-4 make it explicit which of these alternatives is actually on Macbeth's mind. He says: "Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee? / But yet I'll make assurance double sure, / And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live ..." Obviously, the annihilation of Macduff's bloodline is not what he is thinking about, at this point. That comes later as the result of thwarted fury and the outwitted tyrant's desire for vengeance. Hapgood (1988) has recapitulated Macbeth's motives thus, although the remarks in parenthesis are my refutations. He says: "... His prime motive in Part One is ambition for the glory of the crown; (but an ambition rendered pointless by the existence of the Prince of Cumberland.) in Part Two, he is most concerned with keeping safe the continuity of his line; (though such concern is meaningless to a childless man) while in Part Three he adds to that a concern for his survival (the subsequent events prove that the deaths of Lady Macduff and her children actually threaten his survival for they finally outrage his enemies into taking decisive action against him, an outcome which he should have been able to predict, knowing Macduff is in England to raise an army against him.)" (Hapgood. 1988, p. 67)

Yet, of all his murders, only Macbeth's massacre of the Macduff family, if taken as vengeance, is psychologically sound, based on the mentality of the despot. It also widens Macbeth's alienation from the audience. Goddard has said, "Deeds of violence that come exclusively out of the brute in man have no tragic significance and take their place in human memory with convulsions of nature and the struggle to survive of the lower orders of life ..." (Goddard, 1951, p. 115). The loss of his humanity disqualifies Macbeth as a worthy candidate for our pity, and as a murderer, he sinks in rank with the lower classes of the criminal. There is an interesting passage in *The Tempest* that recalls in many ways Macbeth himself and what he has become.

Sebastian : I remember / You did supplant your brother Prospero
 Antonio: True / And look how well my garments sit upon me, /
 Much feater than before: my brother's servants / Were
 then my fellows, now they are my men.
 Sebastian : But, for your conscience -
 Antonio : Ay, sir: where lies that? If 'twere a kibe / 'Twould put
 me to my slipper: but I feel not / This deity in my
 bosom: twenty consciences, / That stand 'twixt me
 and Milan, candied be they, / And melt ere they molest
 (Act 2 Sc 1, 2669-277)

This exchange carries the overtones of *Macbeth* perfectly, even to the echo of the clothes imagery that is one of the dominant motifs in the play (Spurgeon, 1930 and 1935 and Brooks, 1947). It illustrates the fact that Macbeth robbed by now of conscience and poetry, is about as

interesting a criminal as Antonio is. Goddard, of course, has defended Macbeth from the monstrous charge of being uninteresting. He says, in continuation of his previously quoted words, " ... But when a man of imagination - by which I mean a man in whom the image of God is distinct - stoops to crime, instantly transcendental powers rush to the scene as if fearful lest this single deed shift the moral center of the gravity of the universe, as a finger may tip an enormous boulder ... " (p. 115). This is powerful rhetoric but it fails to conceal the fact that the imagination that had characterized Macbeth earlier has been deadened completely in him now. For Lady Macduff and her children, he no longer has the sentiments once so finely expressed: "And pity, like a naked new-born babe, / Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubim horsed / Upon the sightless couriers of the air, / Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye, / That tears shall drown the wind." (Act 1 Sc 7. 21-6)

The tragedy of Macbeth is the isolation that all men who sacrifice honor and friendship to ambition, must eventually face from God and their fellow-men. Prof. Bamborough (1952) who has written a very interesting account of Renaissance psychological theory has mentioned among other things, that the Elizabethans believed that "to fall into Despair wherein the Soul loses faith in the infinite mercy of God would be a crime worse than any" (p. 51). The hellishness of the death-in-life situation of the pariah finds its final expression in poetry,

"My way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep. mouth-honour, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not."
(Act 5 Sc 3. 22-8)

When viewed within the context of the religious convictions of the Middle Ages, this is the ultimate crime of all, the only one in *Macbeth* to spring out of causes that are convincing. Macbeth dies damned, because he neither asks for nor receives forgiveness, either divine or human. And so, in the tragic darkness of his doom, his crimes have little significance and his motives even less. This is why it is possible to display an indulgence towards Shakespeare's carelessness in matters of plot, not usually extended to other writers, because by favoring art over craft, he seems to be saying in effect, "It does not matter what man does or why he does it. The consequences that he is left with are all that ultimately matters." And who can fault that?

About the Author:

Mary Raj has taught English language and literature for thirty two years at the English Department and the Language Center at An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine. She has written on subjects in literature and issues in teaching English to speakers of other languages. She is currently engaged in writing a book on medieval English literature in the context of contemporary culture and history.

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Speculative Writing and Environmentalist Politics: Ecocritical Readings of *Oryx* and *Crake* and *Der Schwarm*

Doris Hambuch

United Arab Emirates University
CHSS, Dept. of English Literature
Al Ain, U.A.E.

Abstract:

This paper provides a comparative ecocritical study of two contemporary novels, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) by Canadian Margaret Atwood and *Der Schwarm* (The Swarm; 2004) by German Frank Schätzing, in order to emphasize the global dimension of environmental concerns expressed by these authors on one hand, and the need for what Ursula K. Heise has termed a 'sense of planet' in the required scholarship on the other. While the two texts differ in style and format, they both represent natural disasters that are results of misguided scientific developments and political decisions. Both, *Oryx and Crake* and *Der Schwarm*, focus on the involvement of the so-called 'natural' or 'hard sciences', mostly genetic engineering in Atwood's story and oceanography, as well as marine biology along with petro-chemistry in Schätzing's. They likewise provide sources of suggested comfort, and through the diversity of settings underline a global urgency as it relates to concepts such as 'globalization', 'sustainability', and 'risk society'.

Keywords: Atwood, Ecocriticism, *Oryx and Crake*, Schätzing, Speculative Fiction

Introduction

When Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm edited their seminal *Ecocriticism Reader* about two decades ago, this area of literary studies was only about to be introduced. For the obvious reason that concerns about the planet's natural environments have unfortunately had no reason to decrease since then, the literary representation of these concerns has grown along with analyses in the field. Associations and journals have been established, and individual studies, such as Axel Goodbody's *Technology and Cultural Change in Twentieth-Century German Literature: The Challenge of Ecocriticism*, apply the critical approach to texts in a specific language or also by individual authors. The importance given to ecocritical studies, in particular in North America, may be measured by the fact that one of its main proponents, Ursula K. Heise, has been appointed Head of the editorial team by the American Comparative Literature Association to generate the next decennial report on the state of the discipline. My essay intends to add a comparative analysis of two contemporary novels, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and Frank Schätzing's *Der Schwarm* (The Swarm; 2004), to the existing body of ecocritical literary scholarship. I will demonstrate how to read the Canadian alongside the German author means to emphasize the global dimension of their environmental concerns. In my comparative analysis of the two texts, which the authors themselves situate between speculative and science fiction, I scrutinize three particular aspects of the imagined eco-disasters: the involvement of the so-called 'hard sciences', the sources of suggested comfort or hope, and the presence of what Heise describes as a 'sense of planet'. It is the last concept which firmly situates the two texts in question on the kind of early twenty-first-century globe that is grappling with phenomena such as 'globalization', 'global warming', variations of 'cosmopolitanism', and what Ulrich Beck has termed 'risk society'. It is therefore also the idea of a 'sense of planet' which most tangibly links my analysis to the kind of politics, at least in their literary representations, that are currently challenged to come to terms with problems pertaining to sustainability.

Comparative Analysis of *Oryx and Crake* and *Der Schwarm*

"In reality," Fromm writes in his review of Glen A. Love's *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*, "there is not and never has been such a thing as 'the environment.' Nothing 'surrounds' a human being who is made of some special substance that can be distinguished from the 'surroundings.' There is only one congeries of earthly substance and it comprises everything from eukaryotes to Albert Einstein" (Fromm, 2004). Such modification of the concept of 'reality' may lead the reader to assume that no actions of the likes of Einstein could possibly have a destructive effect on what is commonly referred to as 'the environment,' since the idea of aggregation, one should hope, implies constructive cooperation. On the other hand the statement emphasizes that environmental damage, developed to a considerable extent by Einstein's colleagues in the sciences, affects not exclusively 'the environment' but its inhabitants as a part of it. For the purpose of my ecocritical argument, to highlight some of the threats today's natural landscapes are exposed to through an analysis of ways in which these threats are represented in creative expression, I propose to hold on to the concept of 'environment' as the setting populated with characters who are either not at all or extremely worried about their setting's future.

Fromm's statement resonates in the Inuit "hishuk ish ts'awalk," which Schätzing chose as a motto for *Der Schwarm*. Indigenous collective memory plays a crucial role in Schätzing's novel since one of the main characters is born, though not raised, in a Native American community in Nunavut. This character is the one to eventually receive a translation, "all is one," for the "hishuk ish ts'awalk" the reader encounters before the beginning of the story. Leslie Marmon Silko has expressed the same idea of connectedness between all organisms and their locations in the sentence that "viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on" (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996: 266). This sentence is taken from an essay included in the *Ecocriticism Reader* referred to above. Analyses in this collection focus on texts either praising the earth's natural wealth and/or signaling due alarm about the increasing dangers of its destruction. It is the latter kind which usually looks to politics among the culprits responsible for environmental calamities. Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* as well as Schätzing's *Schwarm* are two recent novels belonging to this accusing kind of text and by implication challenge specific politics of their global settings. Playing with different notions of 'reality' and their involvement with environmental politics both authors are concerned with the ways in which Einstein's colleagues in the so-called 'natural' sciences have been treating their metaphorical outlook boulders. The importance of the unity of setting and characters as one "congeries of earthly substance" is more pronounced in Schätzing's text, but also implied in Atwood's. It is increasingly emphasized in the recently published closing part of the trilogy beginning with *Oryx and Crake*, the part entitled *MaddAddam* (2013). The connection between Atwood's three novels now referred to as the Maddaddam Trilogy and ecocriticism will become clear in the process of the present analysis.

Both *Oryx and Crake* and *Der Schwarm* present their readers with scenarios of environmental disasters. While the catastrophe in Schätzing's one-thousand-page piece could begin to unfold tomorrow, Atwood's novel is projecting a slightly more distant future. While the main focus in *Der Schwarm* is the ocean, Atwood's settings are exclusively located on land, albeit frequently on a coastline. Both authors depart from a common concern, which is the "sorry ecological state of the planet" (Fromm, 2004), to quote Fromm once more, and human involvement in it. Both, Schätzing and Atwood, represent an obvious reality concerned with contemporary threats for sustainability, and they weave this reality into imaginary but at the same time easily imaginable scenarios. Both texts in question can be categorized science fiction, though Atwood herself is reluctant to attribute her writing to this category.

Atwood has repeatedly stated her preference of the term "speculative" instead of "science" fiction for her writing that is set in the future. In a keynote address later published in *PMLA* she carefully explains not only her understanding of various prosaic genres but also the array of texts which inspired her to write futuristic stories (Atwood, 2004a: 513). The preference of the term 'speculative' signals the absence of, for example, aliens and spaceships. "I did not wish to promise –for instance- the talking squid of Saturn if I couldn't deliver them," Atwood writes in "*The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* in Context" (Atwood, 2004a: 513). Atwood's genre discussion thus implies a warning for potential audiences as it anticipates misguided receptions of her speculative texts. The concern revolving around definitions of related classifications, however, ultimately refers to questions of proximity: How soon could the imagined scenario become reality? How far-fetched do fictional elements seem compared to the reader's tangible reality? Atwood assures that *Oryx and Crake* "invents nothing we haven't

already invented or started to invent” (Atwood, 2004b: 330). Anything beyond present-day existence is presented as logical consequence of attempted developments. The same can be said for at least the first half of *Der Schwarm*. After detailed depictions of comparatively harmless and seemingly unrelated natural disasters in different parts of the globe, however, ‘the environment’ in Schätzing’s novel is given a new agency in the shape of another intelligent species. In her comparative analysis of *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* Carol Ann Howells uses the term “near-future novels” (Howells, 2006: 161) to emphasize that the reader’s reality might not be far indeed from Atwood’s speculations. *Der Schwarm* reads like a realist novel set in the current decade until the identification of the ‘Yrr’ as another intelligent species turns it into science fiction. Maybe to emphasize the proximity between fact and fiction, both Atwood and Schätzing use names of actual people in their fictional texts. Atwood invents a character for Amanda Payne who won this privilege in an auction to raise funds for a medical foundation (Atwood, 2003: 434). Schätzing includes Gerhard Bohrmann, Erwin Suess, and Heiko Sahling, scientists who assisted him with research and who are given credit in the extensive acknowledgements (Schätzing, 2004: 988). Like Atwood, Schätzing does not present spaceships or beings from a different planet. Some of the fictional scientist even hesitate to call the Yrr ‘aliens’ because of their origin in the Earth’s oceans.

A collective intelligence, the Yrr are defending their habitat against human pollution, deforestation, overfishing, and exploitation of other natural resources. As a result disaster strikes throughout the novel in various places. Examples of occurring calamities are whale attacks off the Canadian West coast, poisonous jellyfish in Australia, and a major tsunami in Northern Europe. In contrast, the catastrophe in *Oryx and Crake*, presented in retrospect, resembles an apocalypse as it nearly wipes out all humans, leaving a wasteland as habitat for the Crakers. The Crakers are genetically engineered human-like creatures designed by the ingenious scientist Crake. The wasteland in question is later described from the Crakers’ perspective, a point of view that is given more and more importance especially in last part of the trilogy. When referring to their creation story, they describe the post-apocalyptic Earth as the place from which their inventor eliminated “the chaos.” The Crakers are certainly no aliens; they are made by the same mastermind that also causes the apocalypse. His intention was to eliminate human traits he deemed responsible for all evil in the world. In “Liminal Ecologies in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*” Lee Rozelle defines the Crakers as “metonymic ‘floor models’ to exhibit alternative versions of humanity within millennial contexts” (Rozelle, 2010: 66). Rozelle’s focus in this essay is the fact that in light of ecocriticism Atwood’s novel projects survival options for life on earth, however gloomy its outlook might generally be. Schätzing’s outlook is more optimistic, as will be seen below. Both authors, however, go through great lengths to lay bare certain political responsibilities on their fictional way to avoid complete extinction. While Schätzing targets mainly oil and marine industries with regard to political participation detrimental to sustainability, Atwood’s focus is primarily on genetic engineering. Where Schätzing provides extensive details of the various ways in which (non-human) nature could possibly exercise its power, Atwood devotes comparatively little narrative time to the process, the actual catastrophe that leaves Jimmy, alias Snowman, not only to tell his ‘last-man’ tale but also in charge of his friend Crake’s creatures. More emphasis on the process during which Crake removes the world’s “chaos,” a process referred to as a “waterless flood,” is placed in Atwood’s succeeding novel *The Year of the Flood*.

Both *Oryx and Crake* and *Der Schwarm* can then be considered ‘dystopian’ in that they project major disasters, although not without leaving a however small possibility for human survival in the future. Howells writes about Atwood’s “near-future novels” that they are “an imaginative writer’s response to contemporary situations of cultural crisis...” (Howells, 2006: 161). The same can be said about *Der Schwarm*. A look at respective intertexts explains the different ways in which the two authors arrive at their individual responses. While there are references to James Cameron’s *The Abyss* and to *Star Trek* in *Der Schwarm*, *Oryx and Crake* begins with an epigraph from Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*: “I could perhaps like others have astonished you with strange improbable tales; but I rather chose to relate plain matter of fact in the simplest manner and style; because my principal design was to inform you, and not to amuse you.” The Swift quotation is followed by three questions from Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*, in which “the ways of the world” are shown in danger. These intertexts further illustrate generic classifications. To give Swift’s idea of “plain matter of fact” the prominent place of an epigraph emphasizes how Atwood’s speculative plot draws attention to existing, ‘real-life’ environmental damage and the threats thereof with the help of satire. Where Atwood relies on literary classics, Schätzing’s intertexts favor popular culture.

Besides references to indigenous collective memory, as in his motto quoting the Inuit “hishuk ish ts’awalk,” there are the evocations of films, and Schätzing has repeatedly stated that his novels are usually written with a screenplay in the back of his mind. Various online sources have linked first Uma Thurman with Ica and Michael Souvignier, then Dino and Martha De Laurentiis, and finally Till Grönemeyer to the attempted cinematic adaptation of *Der Schwarm*. The fact that almost a decade has passed since the novel was published and rights for a cinematic adaptation were sold, is probably due to matters of funding, as any production detail from the cast size to the special effects of such a projected thriller requires a rather large budget. There are critics who may be particularly frustrated by this delay because they hope that the extensive scientific research presented in the novel will no longer disturb the plot development on screen. Examples of such critics are Georges T. Dodds and Tony Chester whose reviews appear on ‘sci-fi’ web pages. While the review of the former provides some useful observations, the latter undermines its credibility early on: “Can there be a common cause behind all these phenomena? Well, duh! Seems like there’s this big super-intelligent hive-mind thingy, ...” (Chester, 2006). If a review thus crafted ends with the statement that the novel is “too poorly written” (Chester, 2006), then the problem certainly lies beyond the challenge of translation. Where *Der Schwarm*, then, owes more to the thriller, *Oryx and Crake* is twisting and speculating with reality in a more satirical way. In their accusations of political systems, however, the texts share a certain ‘Anti-(US-) Americanism’. This common plot element might be criticized as detrimental to readings in light of Heiseian ‘eco-cosmopolitanism’, a concept which rests on the premise that since environmental damage takes place everywhere in the world it has to be addressed in a cooperative manner involving representatives from across the globe. The Anti-(US-) Americanism portrayed in both novels in question may further be criticized as the respective authors’ blaming the ‘Other’ (environment/nation). The alternative, however, would have only been a completely unidentified setting which would have worked against the proximity to realism.

The Canadian author Atwood’s main setting is, although not extremely explicit but nevertheless unmistakably, in the United States where Crake finds the circumstances and

encouragement to develop his intellect to the extreme that ends with the successful plan to terminate the existing human world. It is in this setting, where “time was of the essence” (Atwood, 2003: 404), that the technological comfort of the information and gadget age, from “ChickieNobs” (Atwood, 2003: 400) fast food to the diverse media achievements, along with an institution like “Watson-Crick,” a palace compared to Jimmy’s liberal arts “Martha Graham” (Atwood, 2003: 234), provides sufficient stimulation and facilities for Crake’s master plot to be realized. The German author Schätzing, whose settings are more diverse, unites the mainly North-American and European scientists in a task force initiated as well as supervised by the US government. Not only is the work of the scientists controlled by CIA representatives, the former also remain uninformed of the conspiracy with which the US forces pursue the goal to terminate whoever or whatever will be identified as responsible for the crisis.

Scientific Progress

Both Atwood and Schätzing relate the present situations of cultural and socio-political crisis to the abuse of scientific knowledge, and ultimately to the kind of politics which render this abuse not only possible but to a certain degree even support or encourage it. As mentioned above the science focus in *Oryx and Crake* rests on genetic engineering. In *Der Schwarm* it revolves around marine biology, geology, and generally all scientific expertise invested in the oil industry. Earl Ingersoll reminds in his analysis of Atwood’s novel that *Frankenstein* was inspired by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron’s “excitement with the potential of science to improve the condition of humanity” (Ingersoll, 2004: 170). In “Writing *Oryx and Crake*” Atwood explains how growing up in a family of scientists has influenced her continuous interest in the so-called ‘natural’ or ‘hard’ sciences (Atwood, 2004b: 329). Social scientist Ulrich Beck shows how the juxtaposition of ‘nature’ and ‘society’ is a 19th-century construct with the aim to submit as well as ignore nature (Beck, 1986: 9). A parallel may be drawn, at this point, to Fromm’s anti-anthropocentric statement quoted at the beginning of this essay in order to challenge the connections between his ecocentric concept of “earthly substance” and academic methodologies to research this very matter. Following his explanations about the origin of the respective juxtaposition, Beck goes on to criticize that discussions revolving around sustainability are largely restricted to categories and equations pertaining to the natural sciences. “It remains unrecognized that a social, cultural, and political meaning is inherent in such scientific ‘immiseration formulas’,” Beck writes in *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (Beck, 1992: 31-2). Beck’s premise in this study is that one of the most burning questions at the turn of the millennium is how to limit the risks produced systematically through modernization to render them bearable (Beck, 1986: 26). It is puzzling that the significant sentence “‘Post’ ist das Codewort für Ratlosigkeit, die sich im Modischen verfängt” (12; “‘post’ is the code word for a cluelessness which gets tangled in the fashionable”) from the first paragraph of the preface is left out of the otherwise accomplished 1992 English translation by Mark Ritter. The cluelessness referred to in the sentence omitted by the study’s translation stands symbolic for the fact that solutions to the challenge of risk reduction are indeed hard to identify and even more so to realize. Reminiscent of Heise’s call for a sense of planet in ecocritical scholarship, Beck supports interdisciplinary and international cooperation which also departs from an ecocentric premise.

To look at contemporary crises more in light of Fromm’s concept of a unity of “earthly substance,” which is as collective responsible for as well as affected by their consequences,

might not merely be the best but only way to strive for risk limitations. A more ecocentric approach necessarily transgresses borders, and requires interdisciplinary scrutiny. With regard to creative expression, speculative fiction seems an appropriate possibility to bridge the gap between natural sciences and humanities. Both Atwood and Schätzing provide extensive lists of supportive scientists in their acknowledgments. Atwood's list continues on her web page oryxandcrake.com. At the same time, some of the harshest criticism hails from natural scientists who often sound suspiciously defensive. One example of such an attack is Anthony Griffiths' "Genetics according to *Oryx and Crake*." Griffiths could not have read the novel very carefully in order to call the narrator Jimmy (alias Snowman) a "shallow sidekick" (Griffiths, 2004: 192).

The potential threat of genetic engineering becomes very obvious in *Oryx and Crake* when Snowman remembers the work done in his father's company: "There'd been a lot of fooling around in those days: create-an-animal was so much fun, said the guys doing it; it made you feel like God" (Atwood, 2003: 57). The same power of creation linked with elimination accounts for the appeal of Crake's computer game 'Extinctathon':

Extinctathon, an interactive biofreak masterlore game he'd found on the Web. EXTINCTATHON, *Monitored by MaddAddam*. Adam named the living animals, MaddAddam names the dead ones. Do you want to play? That was what came up when you logged on. You then had to click Yes, enter your codename, and pick one of the two chat rooms – Kingdom Animal, Kingdom Vegetable. [...] It helped to have the MaddAddam printout of every extinct species, but that gave you only the Latin names, and anyway it was a couple of hundred pages of fine print and filled with obscure bugs, weeds, and frogs nobody had ever heard of. Nobody except, it seemed, the Extinctathon Grandmasters, who had brains like search engines. (Atwood, 2003: 92)

It is a large-scale version of 'Extinctathon' which Crake plays later in life when he invents a way to spread a deadly pandemic fast enough to discard the use of vaccines or cures. In Schätzing's scenario the apocalypse is only anticipated. The destruction is stopped much before the loss of even half the lives that Snowman recalls lost in Atwood's novel. Although the Yrr are held responsible for the destruction that does occur, they are, of course, reacting to human-made threats to sustainability. Much more grounded in today's reality, Schätzing's story is told through the eyes of various scientists, while Atwood's narrative perspective rests on Snowman, formerly Jimmy, the survivor of the epidemic who is then left in charge of the Crakers. In the recently published third part of the trilogy started with *Oryx and Crake*, and immediately preceded by *The Year of the Flood*, Jimmy is referred to as "Snowman-the-Jimmy," in conversations with the Crakers. Inspired by the computer game mentioned above, the last of what Atwood calls 'simultaneals' because the narrative time overlaps in the three novels, is titled *MaddAddam*. The point-of-view in *Der Schwarm* foregrounds scientists such as the Canadian oceanographer and whale expert Leon Anawak along with the Norwegian biologist Sigur Johanson. Furthermore, there is Samantha Crowe from the SETI center, an expert in the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence, and Karen Weaver, a journalist writing for popular science magazines. Anawak is the crucial link to Native American culture which I scrutinize in the following segment of this paper. Johanson stands out as the first to suggest the existence of a force that coordinates the various disasters, and Crowe provides the journal from which the

epilogue is taken. It is Weaver, the fictional link between science and society, who in the end achieves a symbolic peace with the Yrr and thus saves the world for the time being. It is revealing and rather ridiculous that Crowe and Weaver are not at all discussed in Rolf Löchel's attempt to accuse the novel of chauvinism and misogyny (Löchel, 2004).

Ecocentric Focus and Indigenous Collective Memory

While an apocalypse is thus prevented in *Der Schwarm* it has already taken place before narration in *Oryx and Crake* even begins. Atwood's novel opens with a description of what seems the only survivor of the pandemic, not counting the Crakers. Schätzing's text, on the other hand, first presents a prologue, set on the Peruvian coast, in which contemporary environmental threats, such as the rapidly spreading tourist industry and overfishing, are merely hinted at. Population explosion is implied in Atwood's image of the 'pleeblands' from which the 'compound people' need to be protected. Global warming is addressed briefly when Snowman remembers older people talk about the disappearance of the Eastern coastal cities and about the tsunami that followed a volcano eruption in the Canary Islands (Atwood, 2003: 71). It is, however, in *Der Schwarm* that the implications of human interaction with and abuse of the natural landscape is described in great detail and with scientific depth. Crowe's journal in the epilogue states clearly that humankind continues to damage the Earth, despite the efforts that are made to remedy damage done as well as to prevent an aggravation of the dilemma:

Many are trying, these days, to analyze the biological diversity in order to comprehend the true harmonizing principles and to understand what ultimately unites us beyond any hierarchy. [...] With the destruction of diverse life forms we ruin a complexity which we neither understand, nor can we recreate it. What we rip apart, remains ripped. Who wants to decide which part of nature we can dispose of in the great network? The secret of the matrix reveals itself only in its entirety. Once we have gone too far, and the web decided to expel us. There is truce for the time being. (Schätzing, 2004: 987; translation mine)

This passage demonstrates the importance of equilibrium between all existing elements on the planet, an importance emphasized in my introduction and throughout the preceding paragraphs. As Gabriele Dürbeck and Peter H. Feindt point out in "*Der Schwarm* und das Netzwerk im multiskalaren Raum," (*The Swarm* and the Network in Multidimensional Space) Schätzing's novel clearly favors Fromm's anti-anthropocentric perspective because the surviving scientists are those who also follow it (Dürbeck & Feindt, 2010: 223). The sense of and continued demand for equilibrium is traced back to Native American belief. Unable to explain the unfamiliar behavior of the whales he has studied for decades Anawak seeks the advice of the local indigenous population. One of the tribes whose descendants continue to live on Vancouver Island is known as 'Nootka'. A Nootka representative explains to Anawak the meaning of *hishuk ish ts'awalk*, which the reader already encounters in the place of an epigraph before the prologue: 'All is one'. What happens to someone or something, happens to everyone and everything (Schätzing, 2004: 309). The importance of interconnectedness is not limited to human vs. non-human nature, but also emphasized with regard to locations across the globe. Dürbeck and Feindt argue convincingly that it is worth considering the much challenged center/periphery distinction in order to highlight the ways in which increasing urgency of a threat

is still very much linked to how close it appears to potential victims. A Eurocentric center-periphery logic in the sense of Wallerstein's socio-economic world system represents, according to Dürbeck and Feindt, the main perspective of Schätzing's target audience. The logic in question builds up to the moment a task force of North-American and European scientists and government representatives is formed to prevent further escalation of the global crisis. Under the supervision of US General Judith Li, the scientists are called together once the disasters have reached their own immediate environments. Anawak's understanding of his ancestors' sense of 'all is one' becomes a crucial factor in the progress of this task force.

Although indigenous collective memory is absent from *Oryx and Crake* it seems to have played a role in Atwood's writing process. In the essay which describes this process, Atwood locates the impulse for this particular novel during her visit to Australia, during bird watching on the one hand, and during the encounter with Aboriginals on the other. She mentions visits to "several open-sided cave complexes where Aboriginal people have lived continuously, in harmony with their environment, for tens of thousands of years" (Atwood, 2004b: 328). As I have mentioned, Schätzing's character Anawak is himself Native American. He did not grow up in his parents' community in Nunavut, but visits it on the occasion of his father's death. This visit allows for extensive descriptions, including references to the population's harmony with their environment also sensed by Atwood during her visit to Australia. Although Anawak has grown up in an industrialized North American city, he is more capable of understanding and applying his ancestors' respect for nature than any of the other scientists. It is this respect for particularly non-human nature which guides those scientists who opt for communication with the Yrr and who therefore oppose the US general's choice for termination. Not only do the good scientists win, in Schätzing's scenario, they are also the only ones to survive and provide for a more or less happy ending. Crowe records in her epilogue journal how knowing about the existence of a second intelligence enforces not only the rethinking of human spirituality but along with it the necessary respect for 'un-researchable' parts of nature. By implication, it necessarily enforces a much more ecocentric worldview.

Since in *Oryx and Crake* the apocalypse can no longer be stopped the ending is accordingly less happy. In the closing chapter Snowman has discovered three other human survivors and contemplates different reactions to this changed situation. "Zero hour," so the last line in reference to Snowman's broken watch, "Time to go" (Atwood, 2003: 433). These are Snowman's thoughts as he is spying on the two men and one woman roasting a 'rakunk'. They have, in Snowman's absence, already seen the Crakers and run away from them. They are armed, and so is Snowman. If Snowman tried to kill them, he might get killed in the process. If he succeeded in communicating he would have to function as mediator between the humans and the Crakers. In the subsequent novels it becomes clear that the two men are evil "Painballers" with whom communication is futile. They are finally executed at the end of *MaddAddam*, the end of the trilogy, by survivors of a group called the God's Gardeners. *The Year of the Flood*, the second of the simultaneals, is devoted to Crake's removal of "the chaos," as the pandemic becomes known by the Crakers. The point-of-view switches between the first and second novel from two male (Jimmy and Crake) to two female voices, and the reader learns that there are other survivors than those identified at the end of *Oryx and Crake*. In the third text all of these individuals manage to gather in a community, which includes the Crakers and eventually even the 'Pigeons', to protect themselves and ultimately destroy the common enemy, the Painballers.

The closure of the trilogy provides many reasons for the kind of optimism Ingersoll correctly also sees at the end of the first novel (Ingersoll, 2004: 173). Four new babies combine traits of the remaining humans and the Crakers and, as mentioned above, cooperation is reached and maintained between these two groups and the ‘Pigoons’. While the two central characters in *Oryx and Crake* are male, Jimmy and Crake, they are female, Ren and Toby, in *The Year of the Flood*. The focus in *MaddAddam* rests on Toby and her romance with Zeb, but the Craker point-of-view is increasingly represented as well. Blackbeard, a young Craker who selects Toby as his human mentor, becomes literate and functions as mediator. The closing passage of the final chapter, titled ‘The Story of Toby’, is written by Blackbeard the way Toby has taught him. The last event “Blackb(e)ard” – as Atwood wittily has him once misspell his name – reports is the fact that he is one of the “fourfathers” of yet another expected baby: “And that is a thing of hope” (Atwood, 2013: 390). Rozelle, who agrees with Ingersoll that much ignored grounds for optimism are to be detected even at the end of *Oryx and Crake*, incidentally predicts a development which thus accelerates towards the end of the trilogy: “... life survives in increasingly diverse forms” (Rozelle, 2010: 68).

The emphasis on the unity of ‘earthly substance’, of the fact that ‘all is one’, as *Der Schwarm* paraphrases it, is less explicit in Atwood’s first novel of the trilogy, but one would have to agree with Ronald B. Hatch’s observation, even before the publication of *Oryx and Crake*, that there are parallels between Atwood and those “ecocentrist writers” whose goal it is “to re-position humanity as one species among many in a web of natural connections” (Rozelle, 2010: 63). Rozelle refers to Hatch’s study in support of his own argument that many literary analyses which “do not grant the ecological world any claims to ‘reality’” fail to recognize the environmental implications in Atwood’s texts (Rozelle, 2010: 62). With regard to the trilogy started with *Oryx and Crake* this failure may be related to the strong Christian context some may consider incompatible with an anti-anthropocentric world view. This context is obvious in references such as the above quoted to Adam’s task of naming. It is inherent in the Noah intertext with regard to the ‘waterless flood’. It is much more pronounced throughout *The Year of the Flood* in which the action revolves around the group called ‘God’s Gardeners’, and every chapter is preceded by one of their hymns explaining their theology. Through the use of biblical intertext on the one hand, and the suggested consequences of knowing about another intelligent species on the other, the novels by Atwood and Schätzing both seem to caution that religion should not be considered in conflict with ecocentrism.

In an interview on the occasion of her being awarded Dortmund’s Nelly Sachs Prize, Atwood explains the fairly long gap between *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009). It is in this interview that she labels these two very distinct parts of the extensive project ‘simultaneals’ (Bölling, 2010: 149 & 151), and explains how *MaddAddam* (2013) also falls into this category. An excellent comparative study of the first two parts of the trilogy is provided in William Deresiewicz’s “Honey and Salt.” Emphasizing Atwood’s stylistic achievements Deresiewicz is right in remarking that she “snaps her puzzle pieces together with admirable cunning” (Deresiewicz, 2009: 27). This skill continues throughout the final part which conveniently begins with short summaries of the two preceding novels/simultaneals and evolves into a compelling synthesis of the threads spun in *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*. It is in *MaddAddam* that the ecological world’s claim to reality is most pronounced, as indicated above, and communication with the “Pigoons” is established via the Crakers. One may want to

go as far as to compare such “inter-species co-operation” (Atwood, 2013: 373) with the acknowledgement of and search for contact with the Yrr in Schätzing’s novel.

‘Sense of Planet’

Howells points out how Atwood moved from the focus on a national disaster in *The Handmaid’s Tale* to the representation of a global catastrophe in *Oryx and Crake* (Howells, 2006: 161). Readers are first made aware of the global dimension when Jimmy is asking Oryx, who later becomes Crake’s companion and the first to educate the Crakers, about her youth in the “distant, foreign place” (Atwood, 2003: 133). Oryx’s country of origin is never specified: “Vietnam? Jimmy guessed. Cambodia? (134).” It is, however, clearly situated in East Asia. The alternation between settings in *Oryx and Crake* never reaches the extent it has in *Der Schwarm*, but when Jimmy becomes the surviving witness of the pandemic, a screen shows him how this “waterless flood,” as it is termed in *The Year of the Flood*, spreads across the planet: “Taiwan, Bangkok, Saudi Arabia, Bombay, Paris, Berlin. The pleeblands west of Chicago [...] more than a few isolated plague spots” (Atwood, 2003: 379). I find it useful especially with regard to this inclusion of a global setting to read *Oryx and Crake* and *Der Schwarm* alongside each other. To study both texts from a comparative point of view shows how it is precisely the strong emphasis of a Heiseian ‘sense of planet’ which distinguishes the two novels by Atwood and Schätzing from predecessors in the genre. “Rather than focusing on the recuperation of a sense of place,” writes Heise, “environmentalism needs to foster an understanding of how a wide variety of both natural and cultural places and processes are connected and shape each other around the world, and how human impact affects and changes this connectedness” (Heise, 2008: 21). Ecocriticism should prove to be an appropriate approach for transnational/-cultural studies with its focus on those elements of the ecosystem whose damage occurs regardless of boundaries. Comparative studies such as the present one can be taken to underline the significance of the global dimension with regard to this damage, its origins and effects. Emphasizing the need for “eco-cosmopolitanism” (Heise, 2008: 12), Heise proposes a re-evaluation of the concept of ‘deterritorialization’ and suggests that “ecologically based advocacy” may be shifted from a primary focus on the local to a type of inquiry which accounts for “territories and systems that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole.” Such a suggestion relates to Fromm’s ecocentric concept of the “congeries of earthly substance” as well as to Beck’s encouragement for interdisciplinary methodologies. It also implies added challenges in terms of knowledge generation for the writer, researcher and/or politician. As Dürbeck and Feindt emphasize, Schätzing’s fictional scientists need to articulate the relevance of their local perspectives as they engage in debates which require a capability of global interpretations (Dürbeck & Feindt, 2010: 220). In addition to the expertise regarding the familiar environments these kinds of debates, then, demand informed inquiry into the much less familiar ones. Ultimately, they might include inquiries into the environments of the Yrr in Schätzing’s scenario, and inquiries into the realms of Crakers and Pigoons in Atwood’s. They undoubtedly have to rely on the kind of cooperative intention as well as reliability exhibited by these and required from similarly diverse groups.

Conclusion

As much as both novels analyzed share an ecocentric ‘sense of planet’ in expressing their concern with current threats to sustainability, as much do they differ in style and format. While Atwood’s text is the first in a series of three ‘simultaneals’ written in a satirical tone, Schätzing’s is a single massive volume whose less sophisticated language matches its design as thriller. Although *Oryx and Crake* may well be studied independently, its plot is complemented by the action changing from a focus on two male to two female main characters in *The Year of the Flood*. Published exactly a decade later, *MaddAddam* finally provides the synthesis along with an explicitly hopeful, to avoid the somewhat exhausted and maybe in a dystopian context inappropriate term ‘happy’, end. As some critics have correctly stated, however, even the end of *Oryx and Crake* already provides grounds for optimism, and so does the conclusion of *Der Schwarm*. While both texts testify to their authors’ extensive research involved with the so-called ‘natural’ or ‘hard’ sciences, Atwood’s focus rests on genetic engineering and Schätzing’s on geology, marine biology, and petro-chemistry. Both authors represent links between the respective sciences, certain industries, and government politics. By embedding this kind of scientific research in fictional plots, by selecting the genre of speculative or science fiction, the authors also challenge the rigid division between academic disciplines.

Both Atwood and Schätzing point towards sources of comfort and hope, rather than solutions, mainly through their characters’ evaluations of spirituality along with the encounter of unknown life-forms. Although it is more pronounced in Schätzing’s references to indigenous collective memory, both texts make a clear statement against prevailing anthropocentrism in favor of more ecocentric approaches. They both suggest the necessity to consider all “earthly substance” beyond hierarchies as well as beyond localities. In so doing they support the kind of ‘eco-cosmopolitanism’ defined by Heise in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. The two novels lend themselves, I argue, to the comparative kind of analysis provided here which favors such considerations beyond geographical borders. Both *Oryx and Crake* and *Der Schwarm* were published before the current economic crisis began to unfold, as well as before the rather rapid succession of events such as the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, the volcano eruption in Iceland, and the tsunami with subsequent nuclear accident in Japan intensified environmental considerations. Assuming that these developments will increase not only the demand for but also the supply of texts with ecocritical focus one should be able to hope for their heightened impact on public politics not exclusively on a local but even more so on an international or global level. One of the final questions in the above mentioned interview refers to the “troubled relationship between writers and politicians,” and I would argue, without wanting to stretch the idea of amalgamation too far, that Atwood’s answer, “the relation is always uneasy” (Bölling 155), fails to acknowledge the overlap between the two categories.

About the Author:

Doris Hambuch is Assistant Professor at United Arab Emirates University. Her publications include articles on Caribbean literature and film. She is a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies* and to the *Who is Who of Contemporary Women Writers*. She is currently co-editing a collection of essays and interviews on Caribbean cinema.

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The Interplay of Identities in Jamal abu Hamdan's Novella *The Blood Line*

Shadi Neimneh

English Department, Faculty of Arts
Hashemite University
Zarqa, Jordan

Abdel Baset Zyoud

Arabic language Department
Hashemite University, Jordan

Abstract:

This paper argues the construction of identity in Jamal abu Hamdan's novella *The Blood Line* (خيط الدم). It is argued that identity is the product of many things other than the typical blood line. The novella, we contend, dramatizes the interplay of different identities within individuals and the multi-dimensional nature of identity. Although religion is a primal aspect of identity constitution, history, language, and past experiences are other factors that aggravate or mitigate the religious makeup of identity. Moreover, identity is often influenced by factors like gender and place. Hence, identity is the product of its sociocultural and sociopolitical environment, which should explain our claim that it is a construct rather than fixed or essentialized. Alternatively, this novella shows that one's sense of self, i.e. one's individual identity, is different from group identification, i.e. the collective identity. They often clash, with the latter proving to be stronger than the former—as the novella's end shows and since social demands are stronger than individual wishes. Past heritage, i.e. a common past, rather than acting as a marker of difference among people, can unify polar identities and bring the best out of them in a loving relationship, even if this relationship is doomed to fail due to sociocultural norms. The novella, thus, explores the contested nature of identity and its gamut from the personal—selfhood—to the collective—selflessness.

Keywords: Contemporary Arabic Novel; Identity; Jamal abu Hamdan; Jordanian Literature; World Literature

Introduction

Jamal abu Hamdan's novella *The Blood Line: A Novel* (Khayt Aldam: Riwayahis an example of the contemporary Arabic novel in Jordan. It was written years before its publication in 2005, namely during the civil war in Bosnia and after the civil war in Lebanon. The idea was inspired by a little journalistic column about the refugees escaping both wars to Europe. It was written, the initial brief description of the novella goes, for cinematic adaption (p.5). Hence, we have a short yet precise novella (or a long short story) that acts through symbolic suggestion rather than excessive details despite the illusive claim in the title that it is a novel. In fact, the writer may have intentionally retained the word novel (riwayah) in the title to hint at the fact that this short novel states much more than is given in its language. Its theme is universal, and the historical events it tackles are weighty. It remains our task to generalize its message and fill in the narrative gaps left to us as readers of a postmodern work written for cinematic adaption and with montage and collage effects.

Our reading of this novella is a timely and relevant one because in today's globalized age, the notion of identity continues to receive tremendous attention from literary scholars, theorists of culture, and sociologists. Moreover, postcolonial critics find in questions of identity a rich hunting ground for theorizing human transactions and political issues. In theory, our approach falls under the rubrics of identity theory studies. Practically, our study is an example of a literary and cultural studies critique.

Despite the scarcity of full-length studies of the novella, its reception in the Arab world (and in Jordan in particular) highlighted its romantic message of love and its protest message against religious bigotry, sedition, the revenge mentality, and patriarchal logic (خيط الدم "لجمال ابو" (جريدة الغد / "حمدان: نص رومانسي يؤسس لمرحلة عشق جديدة" (Al Ghad Newspaper / *The Blood Line* by Jamal abu Hamdan: A Romantic Text Recording a New Phase in Love). In addition, the critic Hikmat al Nawaiseh noted the novella status of abu Hamdan's work and presented this as a feature of modern novelistic production in Jordan and the Arab world in the last decade (صحيفة (Dr. Hikmat al Nawaiseh, *Al Ahd Cultural Magazine/ Essays: The Preoccupations of Jordanian Novel*). And because the novella is originally written in Arabic, readings or critiques of it in English are also scarce. Therefore, we take our study of the dynamics of identity in abu Hamdan's novella to be significant, original, and well-timed. And since we are presenting an Arabic novel in English, hoping for an international readership, our study is also affiliated with world/comparative literature. Whenever necessary, we give the original Arabic text and our translated version of this text. When we do not directly translate the Arabic text, we give adequate paraphrasing.

This paper argues the construction of identity in abu Hamdan's novella *The Blood Line* (خيط الدم). We argue that identity is the product of many things other than the typical blood line of the novella's title. Although religion is a primal aspect of identity constitution, history, language, and past experiences are other important factors. We contend that identity is the product of the interplay of different factors. Alternatively, this novella shows that past heritage, i.e. a common past, rather than acting as a marker of difference among people, can unify polar identities and bring the best out of them in a loving relationship, even if this relationship is doomed to fail due to societal norms. The novella, thus, explores the possibilities of hope within

hard times and the ultimate victimization of love—a personal and subjective experience par excellence—at the hands of religious dogmatism.

By identity construction, we mean that identity is the product of one's speech and actions; that it changes over time; that it is constituted by multiple factors. However, we should also distinguish between one's sense of self (what we call "individual identity" or one's distinct personality) and the obligations of group membership and ethnic identity affiliations. The novella, we will see, dramatizes the split between the two with Mawla Hasatovitch and Hala al Safi, despite their mutual love, ultimately unable to transcend the communal/collective side of identity. Against the constructionist theory of identity, we have essentialist notions of identity as fixed. Constructionist views see identity as the site of negotiation, social interaction, and linguistic performance. In this sense, identity is fluid rather than fixed. The essentialist view draws on the dichotomies of gender and binary logic. In this regard, the collective view of identity can fall victim to essentialist views and images because it treats identity in terms of "us" versus "them" and is resistant to accommodation. In the process, individual identity can get lost behind group membership. In the words of Karen Cerulo (1997), "Commitment to ethnic identity stems from a culturally based need for community—community lacking individual cost" (p. 389). We will see that in the course of the novella the collective sense of identity triumphs over personal preferences and wishes. Whenever identity is at issue, the individual is pitted against the community.

The idea of the novella revolves around a simple love relationship between a man and a woman of different religions and from politically turbulent regions. This reveals how identity is a mix of societal and historical factors and how group belonging triumphs over personal relations. It is no wonder, then, that Mawla and Hala, despite their mutual love, decide to separate from each other and return to their countries, as the novella's end seems to suggest. While at one level the novella deconstructs the notion of a pure, simple identity, it—on the other hand—negotiates the limitations inherent in the attempted hybridization of identities via its exposition of the heavy price individuals pay due to blood identity. To illustrate our thesis about the interplay of identities within and among individuals, we divide this article into three sections. Each should shed some light on a distinct aspect of identity. However, the sections by no means indicate that identity is free from the overlap of multiple factors. And since we are not sociologists, we are not claiming that we cover all potential factors that impact people's conception of identity. Before we start our analysis, we deem a review of identity theory helpful to the discussion to follow.

If identity is a construct, it should be noted that it is so via a process of negotiation and representation between the self and other. In fact, in identity theory—and with the aid of recent psychological and sociological research—we are past the thought that identities are fixed and unchanging (Ugbem, 2013, p. 2). And with the work of cultural and postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha, critics began to see identity in terms of hybridity, cultural ambivalence/diversity, and the intersection of place, time, and subject position. According to Bhabha (1984), in "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," the colonial subject occupies the ambivalent world of the "not quite/not white"(p. 132). Like many identity theorists, Bhabha assumes an anti-essentialist stance. As Caroline Howarth (2007) argues, "Identities are continually developed and contested through others' representations of our claimed social groups" (p. 20). According to the same scholar, identity acquires meaning in "the dialectic between how we see ourselves and how others see us" (p. 20). Identity should be seen from the

position of the other as it is more complex than people looking the same, behaving the same, speaking the same language, or having a common past. Moreover, self-identity gains meaning through our difference from others. Difference, not sameness, is at issue here. Sameness entails assimilation and loss of the individual self and characteristics. Difference entails deviation from group expectations and traditional roles in search of personal fulfillment. The love relationship across religion between Hala and Mawla is a case in point.

Ugbem (2013) defines identity as "a critical aspect of social interaction as it is the basis for individual and group definition in relation to others in the society" (p.2). Ugbem adds that identity "inherently connotes a principle of 'we' and 'them' in group interaction and defines boundaries between groups in the society" (p. 2). For Maya Miskovic (2007), identity can be understood as "'oneness,' 'one true self,' which people with a shared history and ancestry have in common, and yet, it is an entity which is constantly recreated, as people make sense of themselves and the world around them" (p. 515). For Jan Stets and Peter Burke (2000), identity as a sense of self functions in terms of categorization, i.e. belonging to social groups and occupying certain roles within these groups (p. 225). Hence, identity theorists distinguish between group membership and the content side of identity related to beliefs, desires, obligations, cultural attributes (i.e. language, religion, and customs), and even physical features of group members (Fearon and Laitin, 2000, p. 849). To sum up, identity theorists underscore group membership, which relatively weakens individuals' self-definition and individuals' sense of themselves as unique personalities, which, in turn, relatively mitigates group belonging. This contested, twofold nature of identity (self-identity and collective identity) is crucial to our discussion of the novella.

Discussion

1. Identity and Place

The action of the novella revolves around two characters: Mawla Hasatovitch and Hala al Safi. They move to live in Paris by way of escaping from wars. They are confused and disoriented because of the new life they start in Paris. It is as if this city has snatched them and engulfed their identities (p. 1). Both Mawla and Hala write about Paris in their diaries in terms of loss and confusion (p. 1). This immediately shows the relationship between place and one's identity and the correspondence between the characters' identities despite their apparent gender difference. Since identity can be defined in terms of relatedness to a place or a geographical locale, a new place can effect a sense of identity loss or dislocation. On the other hand, place can challenge one's sense of identity and allow for a new realization regarding the nature of identity.

The diaries Hala and Mawla write express their feelings of estrangement from Paris and the residue of former places in their identities. They are strangers in a city that is also strange to each of them (p. 2). The self and the other are in a state of loss and scattering. They look for each other but are destined to be distanced from each other. Each of them brings their own wounds to Paris (p. 2). For Mawla's mother, for instance, estrangement from her country is tantamount to death, and death in Paris is even harder (p. 20). Because of their alienation, the self apparently seeks the other, its other half, in a loving relationship and in a new place away from the birthplace of each identity.

Hala and Mawla develop a relationship in this strange city. It is as if the place is complicit in the hybridization of their love relationship. During a visit to the Louvre Museum, they notice that one picture they see uses only black and white colors; in reaction, they discuss its color symbolism. Mawla argues that white is all colors and black is the absence of colors (p. 15). Hala argues that gray is the real color while other colors are fake and meaningless (p. 15). The picture they discuss seems to be inspired by war. It is actually war that brings them together, the very war that is caused by difference and inability to tolerate this difference in ideology, behavior, skin color, style of living ... etc. The relationship between black and white is one of opposition and negation. Gray is the neutral hue and the middle ground between extremes. Similarly, Paris for Mawla and Hala is the intermediate position between different places and polar identities.

Hala expresses surprise that a small bullet can unite times and places and different people (p. 17). A bullet that misses someone and allows him/her to live also allows a life story to develop and proceed. It unites two people by missing them and sparing their lives (p.17, p.18). In a sense, place—Paris in this case as the new environment for their meeting and interaction—heightens the characters' sense of identity. Place brings together polar identities and simultaneously aggravates one's sense of one's original identity.

Each of the lovers was a stranger in their home. Their attachment to their original cities is part of their attachment to an inseparable history. For example, Mawla's mother feels that she is one with Sarajevo and cannot be separated from this city (p. 49). So, identity is rooted in place and cannot be simply compromised through distance from one's birthplace. Place, i.e. Paris, cannot make its inhabitants forget their past, although they try to do so (p. 55). Hala is a Christian in a dominantly Muslim country, and Mawla is a Muslim in a dominantly Christian continent (p. 45). In this novella, place is strongly linked to religion. In turn, both are essential for identity formation.

Mawla and Hala seek a Polonia forest to cleanse themselves from the dirt of their past (p. 57). This place is a hybrid, luminal space, a third-space in the words of Bhabha that negates polar/binary logic and allows for the negotiation of meaning. As Bhabha (1990) says, "hybridity to me is the 'third-space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" ("The Third Space" p. 211). The grove they visit is symbolically a neutral land where identity is free from spatial affiliations and thus a history of injustices. In other words, the authority of identity factors like religion and family is suspended in such a neutral place. The novella then moves toward an existential conclusion of fated death. Since their pure, simple, and innocent interaction as human beings is impossible away from the historical and cultural heritage of each of them, a tragic end to this relationship does not come as a surprise. Their thoughts in the forest about Adam and Eve as one body and soul get shattered (p. 61). In other words, their union is fated to end, and their (religious) identities remain different. Personal desire is not compatible with the collective identity we share by virtue of a common religion.

Paris fails to unite the lovers, and they remain estranged from others and themselves. Ironically, Paris is not the city of light, love, and freedom as we would think. Instead, Hala and Mawla unwillingly carry their blood identities and their bloody past to Paris (p. 45). Besides,

Paris is a harsh city for Mawla's mother and for him as well when he loses both his mother and his love Hala. He walks the streets of Paris aimless and lost (p. 91). In a changed place, characters do not lose their sense of the religious constitution of their disparate identities. Paris makes this novella not simply a romantic story in a sense but also a romantic tragedy of fated love. Although Hala and Mawla love each other and are ready to sacrifice or abnegate important sides of their identities—i.e. religious and cultural differences which are part of one's collective identity—to make their relationship prosper, the collective triumphs over personal wishes.

II. Identity and Gender

In addition to place, there is a gender aspect to identity the novella makes clear. And identity is the effect of the interplay of such factors. No single factor can negate the others. Hala's family objects to her relationship with a Muslim man. Their reasoning goes that man is different from woman, and consequently allowed different things. Strict gender differences between man and woman allow for essentialized identities rather than constructed ones. Hala's brother objects to her relationship with a Muslim man and tells her that she as a woman is different from him (p. 18), giving himself the right to make friends with women. Gender differences seem to allow for differences in behavior. But man and woman still seem as inadequate versions of humanity and seek to complement each other in mutual relationships of love.

Gender differences with relation to identity construction are more manifest in another scene. For Hala and Mawla, art is an escape from a difficult history. When they are in a Paris art exhibition, she claims that she looks at paintings of Matisse with a different eye from his (أسمع أنا) ("Listen, I look the paintings with an eye that is different from yours") (p. 27). And he claims that it is the same eye but with different emotions (p. 28). She asserts that she as a female is emotional and he as male is rational (p. 28). This dialectical play on identity between "I" and "eye" is significant. If they see things with different "eyes", this also means that the "I" associated with each eye is also different. Mawla stands for the masculine principle of Adam and Hala stands for the feminine principle of Eve. They separate from each other as Adam and Eve seeking a paradise not present on an earth that lost its innocence (p. 98). Gender differences remain unavoidable and insurmountable despite the characters' personal desire for oneness. Hence, gender is an essential aspect of identity (de)construction. Gender as fixed categories essentializes identity while gender as only one of multiple factors that constitute identity aids in its construction. And place (whether nature as with the Polonia forest Hala and Mawla resort to or the art exhibition) works with gender to set restrictions to the erasure of religious and social differences the characters seek. Or rather, attachment to a place and the history associated with that place make one unable to transcend their impact on one's identity.

III. Identity and Language

The estranged relationship of Mawla and Hala also gets complicated by the linguistic barriers separating them (p. 9). She is Eastern from Lebanon, and he is European from Sarajevo in Bosnia. She is an Arab, and he is European. His Arabic is poor, and she does not speak his native language. Hence, the language they use to communicate is French. She speaks fluent Arabic and French, and he speaks poor French and poor Arabic but good Slavic (p. 10). In the absence of a common language, they cannot find true communication or a sincere exchange of feelings. In other words, they cannot get to know each other. It is through the medium of French that they can hope for a prosperous relationship. The notion of language adds one more dimension to identity construction and the interplay of different identities within and among

people. Identity is the product of multiple factors like, among others, language, religion, place, and gender. As such, identity is a construct and dominantly collective. For instance, we tend to identify with those who speak a similar language or practice the same religion and social customs. On the other hand, a foreign tongue is immediately recognized as a marker of difference. Just like skin color, language serves to heighten one's sense of belonging to or exclusion from certain social categories. Linguistic variation is also a sign of cultural difference. Since language is the medium of culture, each language represents a cultural outlook to life and aids in the formation of a sense of identity. Contrary to its apparent meaning, identity is founded on the negation of the distinct and unique aspects of our emotional and whimsical being.

IV. Identity and Religion

Although identity is negotiated by factors like place, gender, and language, it is religion that emerges as the most significant aspect of identity construction in this novella. Significantly, Mawla is a Muslim and Hala a Christian. Such a religious difference, we will see, triggers the tragic chain of events in this novella. Just as with gender, religion can be used to essentialize identities by bringing out inherent/unchanging differences among people. Variantly, religion works with a constellation of different factors to make identity a dynamic, evolving entity.

The clash of identities happens on religious grounds. Actually, the blood line in the novella's title specifically refers to religious identity and the violence difference in religion can cause. The man Hala knows, it turns out and surprisingly for her family, is a Muslim from Bosnia (pp. 35-6). He is not a Serb or Croatian. When she says he is from Bosnia, her brother immediately asks if he is a Christian or a Muslim (p. 35). Actually, when she says that he is not Christian, her brother immediately answers "then a Muslim!" (p. 35), thus underscoring a binary relationship of opposition between the two religions. According to her brother, her relationship with this Muslim man is a deformed relationship and should be cut (p. 37). He asks her to end such a relationship because as a Christian she should not fall for a Muslim (p. 38). Her brother differs with her based on his awareness and realization that a Muslim guy should not love her. His judgment is based on his knowledge of the situation in Lebanon when Hala was young (p. 38). Her mother died in the war. The story goes that she was killed by Muslims. Religion is immediately made a factor in identity differences and makeup. Muslims supposedly killed her mother, which triggered Hala's family animosity against Muslims.

On the other hand, Christian Serbs killed Mawla's sister and raped her (p. 41). Mawla tells his mother that those who killed and raped his sister did this because they were Serbs not necessarily because they were Christians (p. 41). He pleads:

"أمي.. الذين اغتصبوا أختي، ثم قتلوها، ما فعلوا ذلك لأنهم مسيحيون .. بل هم صربيون" (41).

Mawla blames ethnic identity and political affiliations not religion and insists that both religions—Islam and Christianity—are religions of love and tolerance (41-2). He tries to reason with his mother:

"أمي، المسيحية، دين محبة .. مثلما الاسلام دين تسامح، الصراع ليس بين الدينين، بين فئات تحركها أطماع سياسية" (42).

The killing of Hala's mother and Mawla's sister apparently took place on religious grounds and because of their religious affiliation. In each case, identity was reduced to religion. Difference in

identity was in both cases a justification for violence. When this collective aspect of identity is dominant, humanism is relegated to a secondary status and religion comes to the fore.

Religion is thrown into ideological clashes among people and made a justification for hatred or a label of difference in identity. The heritage Mawla and Hala carry to Paris makes their love relationship impossible. Political conflicts are given a religious color. So, Mawla and Hala find it very difficult to convince their families about their serious relationship. A strange city unites them while religion separates them (p. 45). However, a bloody history behind them in Lebanon and Yugoslavia is another common thing between them. We are told that each of them brings to Paris the smell of blood; that they are tied to each other through the blood line; that Paris cannot cleanse them; and that it cannot untangle their blood association (p. 45). The narrative goes:

"كلاهما يحمل معه الى هذه المدينة راحة الدم. يوثقهما الى بعضهما خيط الدم فكيف لها أن تطهرهما منه و تفك وثاقهما"
(45).

Mawla and Hala, as a result, agree that they are just victims of an ugly heritage, an ugly war with no religion but that of destruction and killing (p. 56). Hala contends that the finger that presses a gun's lever has no religion (p. 56). In a line of logic that echoes Mawla's intervention on behalf of Christianity, she says that those who killed her mother did not do this because they were Muslims:

"أمي لم يقتلها مسلمون. وأختك لم يغتصبها و يقتلها مسيحيون. كلناهما كانتا ضحية الحرب. الحرب "قتلت أمي. و قتلت أختك. الحرب لا دين لها. دينها القتل و الدمار.. وكل بشاعة تصادف أن كانت الرصاصة من هذا اللون أو ذاك. أما الزناد .. فتضغطه أصابع وحشية لا دين لها." (56)

The novella, we have argued, sheds light on different aspects of identity: blood, language, religion, history/past, place, gender, relationship with the other or belonging to those we are connected to. On the other hand, affinity among sufferers is adequate grounds for relatedness and belonging, above all for mutual love. In other words, the novel continues to pit the collective nature of identity as group membership against the personal side of feelings and emotions. In this logic, a name can be a sign of group belonging and a marker of difference. Eager to know this Muslim man his daughter loves, Hala's father asks "Who is he?" (p. 66). Such a question is a direct interrogation of identity. She gives him the name asking if it means anything at all. He says that Mawla's name is significant to him as it indicates who he is (66). Within this logic, the name can indicate one's religious identity. The father says: "Of course his name means a lot to me; it indicates who he is" (p. 66).

"بالطبع يعني لي الشيء الكثير. اسمه يدل عليه." (66)

Therefore, Hala's father does not want her blood to be contaminated in such a relation (p. 66). As a humanist, Hala cares about the person not his religion (p. 66). Trying to convince her family, she says that they fled Lebanon because killing was taking place based on religious identity and they do not want to have the same apply in Paris (p. 66). The father says: "Your blood will not be contaminated with that of a Muslim" (p. 66) (66) "دمك لن يلوث قط بدم مسلم". His logic apparently defines identity in terms of blood purity, honor, and taint. In contrast, she retaliates: "We have not come here to choose friends based on identity. In Lebanon killing was carried out on the basis of identity. . And we fled that hell, not to pass it on" (p. 66).

"ما جئنا الى هنا لأختار صديقاً على الهوية. في لبنان كان القتل يتم على الهوية. ونحن هربنا من ذلك الجحيم، لا لنقله معنا." (66)

She reasons that war is to blame for killing and destruction. It is the war that made religious identity negate our innocence and purity as human beings per se. Her anti-violence stance continues in this vein, advocating a return to pre-war harmony:

"الحرب هي التي قتلت أُمي. حرب بشعة قذرة. قتلت الجميع. دمرت الجميع مسلمين و مسيحيين. ونحن هنا لننسى كل ذلك. لنعود الى براءتنا الأولى و الى طهرنا و نظافتنا الأولى. التي عرفناها قبل تلك الحرب." (67)

Religion, instead of being a sign of love and tolerance, is treated as a marker of difference. Mawla's mother does not want to hear Hala's name or know its meaning just because she is Christian and because Christian Serbs raped and killed her own daughter (p. 70). For the mother, Hala becomes "the Christian" (p. 70), which indicates how religious identity consumes one's humanity and nulls names or titles. His mother asserts that Hala's guilt is established since she is a Christian. The mother says: "Her guilt is that she is Christian. Isn't that enough?" (p. 71).

"ذنبها , أنها مسيحية. ألا يكفي." (71)

Just like Hala, Mawla insists that it is the war to blame for hatred, but she insists that Christian Serbs killed and raped his sister (p. 71). However, the son insists that their love has nothing to do with being Muslim or Christian (p. 72). However, the mother takes Christianity to be an adequate guilt and evil for rejection (p. 71). The mother takes this relationship as an adequate reason to cut off her relationship with her son and return to Sarajevo saying: "A hellish life there is better than what you put me through" (p. 72).

"الجحيم هناك أرحم من الجحيم الذي ترميني فيه." (72)

Hala also thinks that certain values of existence are crumbling in her life because of her clash with her family and the hatred in their lives (p. 75). Both families follow the religious barrier and ignore the personal preference of the lovers. Again, the collective is privileged over the personal.

And because France is Christian, a Muslim man is expected to leave as the father reasons (p. 76). For the father, place and religion combine to make some people in and others out. For him, France is a Christian country and a Muslim should not be allowed in (p. 76). For him, Muslims are enemies and a source of contamination (pp. 77-78). If her blood gets contaminated in this relationship, he thinks, she would incur death and shame on the whole family (p. 78). Hala defiantly sees Mawla as her choice and justification for life. She refuses to allow malice take away the innocence of her being (p. 79). She says:

"قد فكرت بالأمر .. ولن أنهي علاقتي به. صارت علاقتي به معبرا ا لعلاقتي بالحياة كلها. انه اختياري. اختياري لهذا الوجود. لن أسمح لهذا العالم، لهذا الحقد في العالم أن يغتصب مني براءة الوجود." (79).

This ideological rift leads to the violent end of the novella. The brothers and the father plot her murder. The youngest one stabs her with a knife to cleanse the family from the supposed shame of an inter-religion relationship. At the hospital, she complains about hatred, bigotry, dogmatism (p. 93). The violence she is submitted to is intra-ethnic violence at the hands of her brother and family. But it is done in the name of religious identity. It is significant to note that

the debates about religion Hala and Mawla have with their families are almost identical in the sense that Hala and Mawla use a similar logic of tolerance and anti-violence. This in itself signifies unity at the personal level between them in terms of emotions and reasoning. However, as individuals they remain weak before the driving forces of religion and traditionalism.

Ultimately, Mawla and Hala both view themselves as victims of an ugly heritage of war (p. 56). War, they think, has no God and no religion. It knows nothing but killing and destruction (p. 56). He becomes a surrogate Adam and she a surrogate Eve (p. 61)—two principles, the self and its counterpart, two parts of the same entity, a soul and a body (p. 61). At the end of the novella, she still accuses war, hatred, and bigotry as the cause of her suffering, as the victimizer (p. 93). Separation wins over union. The individual is defeated, and the communal will wins. In this tragic love relationship, the family wins over the family member. The individual self makes a sacrifice (i.e. becomes selfless) in favor of the group.

Coda: Religion in a Global Context

In searching for Hala, Mawla is looking for himself, for his lost self (p. 69). The novella shows how personal love and tolerance can momentarily, but not ultimately, transcend bigotry and provinciality. When in the hospital, Hala asserts that Mawla has to do with life and not death (p. 93). She refuses to press charges on her family or Mawla. Who is to blame, she asserts, is war, politics, hatred, and history (p. 93). Hala exonerates religion from negative projections coming from her family. While love is defeated, the romantic relationship of Mawla and Hala is still touching and meaningful. It delivers a clear message against religious prejudice and intolerance.

Mawla takes his dead mother back to Sarajevo, and Hala will go to Beirut after the hospital (p. 96). The blood line in the form of religious identity separates them, and place fails to unite them or dry this bloody past (p. 96). Real integration between them is on paper through their diaries. The parallel diaries they write and in which they express their pain, i.e. their individual identities, show that paper and ink, rather than blood, can unify disparate identities. Each returns home as they have no option (p. 97). As an Adam and Eve, they remain ethereal and too much for this world (p. 98). This is no paradise, and they have to separate to avoid further death among their progeny (p. 98). In this regard, identity emerges as a fate we cannot escape.

The novella acquires particular importance these days because of the sensitivity of its topic and theme. Jamal abu Hamdan successfully denounces religious bigotry in this novella without sacrificing the beauty of language and without reducing his work to explicit propaganda on behalf of Christianity or Islam. Nowadays, religious differences are used by politicians as subtle grounds for political action. Difference in religion is viewed as a sign of not belonging, of being ideologically different. Therefore, religion is used in a process of or as a justification for othering. The attacks on the World Trade Center in the USA in 2001 initiated a chain of negative reactions against Muslims inside and outside America. Islam began to be more explicitly associated with terrorism in western media, and the USA launched its so-called "War on Terror." Nowadays, Arab countries witnessing "the Arab Spring" suffer from religious clashes among members of differing religious sects within Islam. Christians in some Arab and Islamic countries have also suffered varying degrees of persecution and marginalization. Violence triggered by

religious bigotry can be observed in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. As in the novel, identity in real life scenarios is being judged dominantly from the viewpoint of religion. When religion becomes the decisive factor for identity definition, what is negated is our essential and shared humanity, a humanity that is being argued and advocated in the novella by Mawla and Hala. It is needless to say that the novella's presentation of religious bigotry in this negative light of killing (whether in the form of ending a life or ending a love relationship) simultaneously preaches religious tolerance as a virtue and yet as a difficult choice that can come at a heavy price. In the novella, Mawla loses his mother through sudden death and apparently loses his love, Hala, through departure.

About the Authors:

Dr. Shadi Neimneh is assistant professor of literary and cultural studies in the English language department at Hashemite University (Zarqa, Jordan). He is currently the chair of the department. He has published numerous articles in international journals on South African apartheid literature and diverse aspects of literary modernism.

Dr. Abdel Baset Zyoud is associate professor of modern literary theory in the Arabic language department at Hashemite University (Zarqa, Jordan). He is currently the dean of the Arts College. He has also assumed many administrative positions at the same university. He has published numerous articles on Arabic literature and literary criticism.

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(*Al Ghad Newspaper / The Blood Line* by Jamal abu Hamadan: A Romantic Text Recording a New Phase in Love)

Retrieved August 15, 2013 from <http://www.alghad.com/index.php/article2/30946/>

(د. حكمت النوايسة صحيفة العهد الثقافية_المقالات: انشغالات الرواية الاردنية)

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Retrieved August 15, 2013 from http://www.rashashnews.com/site/articles.php?article_id=1284

Reading and agency in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

Krystyna Golkowska
Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Abstract

The frequency with which the image of the female reader recurs in nineteenth century literary and cultural is striking but not surprising. At that time, middle class British women began to write novels and circulating libraries made written texts available to an unprecedented number of people. A heated debate that followed these developments was fueled by anxieties related to class, gender, and national character. While many Victorians considered unsupervised access to books harmful to middle-class girls' physical and mental health, major Victorian novelists, with Charlotte Brontë among them, were vocal supporters of female readership. This article explores the theme of reading in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë's most popular novel, by focusing on the scenes of solitary or communal reading that mark pivotal points in the narrative. It proposes that the novelist relates reading, both in the literal and metaphorical meaning of the word, to the protagonist's search for selfhood and agency.

Keywords: female reader, reading, selfhood, empowerment

Introduction

The end of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented growth of readership in England. Although access to books was still a function of wealth and leisure, serial publication, the shilling magazine, and the opening of circulating libraries made texts more accessible to people from various backgrounds. It was also in that period of time that women began to participate in the production and consumption of fiction. Describing the significance of this development Virginia Woolf compares it in *A Room of One's Own* to major events in European history. By the end of the eighteenth century, "the perception that the novel was a female field was already well established" (Ferris, 1991, p. 35) and the continuation of the trend lead to the nineteenth century being viewed as the "Age of the Female Novelist" (Showalter, 1977, p.13). Not surprisingly, these revolutionary changes sparked a public debate regarding the value and impact of literacy and resulted in a preoccupation with women as consumers of literature. Hence the presence of the figure of the female reader in a wide range of texts, from Gothic novels to conduct books and political and economic works.

From the very beginning, middle class girls found themselves at the center of a heated dispute over what, where, when and how they could read. As Jacqueline Pearson (1999) observes, "the argument about women's reading centered on the novel, with novel reading one of the most contested areas of cultural debate" (p. 196). And thus, for example, an essay "On Novels" published in August 1795 warns that for a young woman reading novels can become "a dangerous study, unless such persons have some kind instructor who can teach them, like the bee, to extract the honey, without being infected by the poison that often lurks beneath the foliage of many a seeming lovely flower" (*The Lady's Magazine*, p. 369). Those who read without such an instructor are "every moment liable to have their hearts perverted, or their tastes vitiated, by the weakness or wickedness of the authors they read" (p. 369). The age of Queen Victoria saw a continuation of this effort to regulate and censor female readership.

In general terms, the Victorian attitude to reading and the uneasiness about young female readers were to a large extent shaped by the prevailing attitudes to health, morality and the ideal of Englishness. To touch upon some of the common anxieties, it is well known that the Victorians were preoccupied with the topic of health and obsessed with work and duty. The worry about health was understandable and the way in which it was made part of the existing ideologies is very telling. Diseases and death were very much a part of the social reality and individual experience. Mortality rates for adults and children were high and the epidemics of cholera that plagued England periodically from 1830 to 1845 made an indelible imprint on the public consciousness. The century that saw the birth of medicine as science, considered mind and body as interdependent and governed by the same principles. At the same time, in the public discourse the health of the mind was given priority; in fact, it was believed that a healthy mind could compensate for bodily weakness. Furthermore, for an activity to be spiritually healthful, it had to include the component of work (Haley, 1978, p. 259). Likewise, working on staying healthy was perceived as not only a private concern and but also a patriotic obligation. This way of thinking, epitomized in Herbert Spencer's (1896) statement in *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*, "The preservation of health is a duty ... all breaches of the laws of health are *physical sins*" (quoted by Haley, 1978, p.17), reflected the Victorians' concern about the health of the nation and its role in the imperialistic project of colonial expansion.

Like their predecessors, the Victorians subscribed to the view of female nature being more sensitive, imaginative, and more empathetic. Hence, women were regarded as expert readers of emotions, signs of illness and interpersonal communication. At the same time, this delicate, more refined nature was supposedly also a source of their vulnerability that made them prone to emotional imbalance leading to physical illness. In this context, it is important to remember the extent to which the Victorians were aware of affective domain of reading fiction. Ordinary readers and scholars alike responded to texts in a more emotional way than we would expect today. Displays of feeling were frequently witnessed during public readings; they were also recorded in private correspondence at the time as well as in critical reviews. For that reason, it was feared that “excessive” solitary and uncensored reading could affect both young women’s physical health and their moral character. Seduced by romantic tales, they would end up sick, confused, and depraved, with no chance for a good marriage or a happy married life. Countless public tracts, personal letters and novels themselves warned against selfish pursuits and dereliction of womanly duty that threatened the social order. These beliefs were reflected not only in literature, where it impacted the ways women readers were constructed within texts, but also in periodicals and the visual arts.

In view of such warnings, it became self evident that the joy of reading, with its potential for violating the ethic of work or leading to sexual transgression, had to be monitored and scheduled to serve the goal of self-improvement. However, just as private consumption of works of art was more acceptable than female public and critical viewing practices, communal reading (women engaging texts in the family circle), was perceived as less threatening to the patriarchal order. In brief, the female reading practice was justified when it was incorporated into the cult of domesticity, in itself subservient to the nationalistic vision of Englishness.

At the same time, one would be amiss to ignore the other end of the spectrum, with its more enlightened views of reading as a source of autonomy for women, “an assertion of individuality, a separation from societal restrictions and expectations, a ‘declaration of independence’” (Badia & Phegley, 2005, p. 5). In the words of a contemporary critic, “Beginning with extensive reading experiences, women came to challenge and refuse reductive views and construct their own narratives and other choices” (Cervetti, 1998, p.10). And more often than not, it is in this context that Charlotte Brontë’s work gets recognition nowadays.

Reading and Agency in *Jane Eyre*

As the Brontë story would have it, Charlotte was a solitary, emotionally starved spinster and a confessional writer reliving her unhappy love affair. It is true that her home, Haworth parsonage, was a gloomy place where death was a constant presence, and excitement in the sense of social life practically non-existent but the view of the Brontës as naive, unschooled, and morbidly isolated has long been refuted. Although in some areas Charlotte’s views were parochial or simply typical of her times, she was also a progressive thinker and a consummate artist.

Reading and writing were absolutely essential in the lives of the Bronte siblings. The father, Patrick Brontë, considered the purchase of books a luxurious necessity. His home library contained works by Homer, Virgil, Milton, Johnson, Hume, Goldsmith, a collection of medical texts, Fraser’s Magazine, and subscriptions to two newspapers. As children, the Brontës spent

their time spinning tales and “publishing” miniature copies of their manuscripts. Although the parsonage collection had no books by Fanny Burney, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley or Jane Austen, and there is no indication that Charlotte was familiar with them, like her siblings, she was well read in the classics, science, biography, history, art, and current affairs. Her favorite texts were the works of Byron and Scott, and *Blackwood Magazine*.

In view of the climate Brontë grew up in, the pervasiveness of the narrated act of reading or the figure of the female reader in her fiction should not come as a surprise. Wherever one looks in her storyworld, one sees women perusing texts alone or in the company of friends, lovers or family members. There are many angles from which the preponderance of such scenes of reading can be approached. On the simplest level, it is very noticeable that the author frequently draws parallels between the reading habits of the inhabitants of her fictional reality and their moral character. Like other works by Brontë, *Jane Eyre* also shows skillful and sensitive interpreters and people who use books for other purposes. For example, Helen Burns reads *Rasselas* and the Rivers sisters read Schiller; it is also telling that John Rivers reads a grammar book, but Rochester reads Shakespeare. On the other hand, Lady Blanche Ingram does not really read the book she holds in her hands to pass the time in a fashionable manner and Georgiana Rivers falls asleep over the pulp fiction she attempts to peruse. Similarly, John Reed never touches a volume in his library except when it is to hurl it at Jane.

Critics and ordinary readers alike will agree that in the debate on female readership, Brontë sides with the progressive views. For the female inhabitants of her fictional world reading is associated with intimacy, comfort, independence, and self-determination. Understood metaphorically, in the sense of interpreting the immediate reality, it is posited as a skill required to stay well or even to survive. It is also intertwined with the theme of selfhood.

In relying on the trope of reading Brontë is not unlike other Victorian writers. The use of the term “reading” in the sense of interpreting immediate reality was part of the dominant cultural discourse in the nineteenth century. Obviously, the metaphors of people as “living books” and the world itself as a book, “the great book of the world,” are much older. The former can be traced back to early Judeo-Christian society and the latter to the Middle Ages. Prominent in Shakespeare, reinforced by John Locke, they were the basic way of thinking in the eighteenth century. As Juliet McMaster (2004) observes, eighteenth-century people “were trained to be intensely conscious of the process of reading bodies and, alert to the mind-body connection ... took seriously the business of interpreting the one through the other” (p. 11). The admonition to read the mind through the body is as forceful in the Earl of Chesterfield's *Letter to His Son, Philip Stanhope* (1774) as it is in conduct books for girls, where for example, (learning from Rousseau,) James Fordyce (1766) exhorts young women “your business chiefly is to read Men, in order to make yourselves agreeable and useful” (p. 273).

As Vrettos (1995) reminds us,

Many Victorians were deeply interested in reading bodies as texts. They developed elaborate theories for decoding physical details, symptoms and gestures – theories that assumed that people spoke through their bodies and interpreted the bodies of others in particularly structured, usually gendered ways. (p. 21)

It is a well-known fact that Brontë was deeply interested in phrenology and physiognomy. Her protagonists pride themselves on being able to read faces to read minds. More often than not,

their reading becomes another set of signs for us to interpret. This technique plays a crucial role in the author's last novel, her masterpiece *Villette*, but it is also important in her earlier works.

Before we focus on the theme of reading in *Jane Eyre*, let us touch upon one more characteristic of Victorian readerly sensibility. In his book *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* Meisel (1998) argues that in that period "writers, painters, and dramatists shared a common pictorial narrative style" (39). In his words,

The Victorian experience of reading was heavily visual: books, newspapers, journals, and other printed things were in fact multimedia events, heavily dependent upon images. The proliferation of visual images – illustrations, engravings, paintings in galleries, advertisements, photographs, and more – turned the Victorians into visual fanatics. (p. 39)

In other words, the Victorians believed that just as the visual phenomena should be read as well as seen, so should literary fiction be visualized when read.

Brontë's writing definitely has a pictorial quality. Herself an aspiring painter in her youth, she often included the act of viewing pictures in the plot of her novels. Although she rejected the proposal to have *Jane Eyre* illustrated, she composes her scenes with a painter's eye, which makes it easy for a reader to imagine such illustrations. Moreover, it appears that in *Jane Eyre* she relies on a series of vignettes embedded at pivotal points in the narrative to punctuate the development of her theme. If, like many would agree, the main theme in Brontë's novel is Jane's journey towards selfhood, at its center lies struggle for interpretative authority (Bock, 1992, p.102). From being marginalized and denigrated, the protagonist moves to the central position where she can redefine herself, tell her own story, and be in command of its interpretation.

The topography of the storyworld and movement in it serve to mark the protagonist's transformation - from a helpless abused orphan, to a governess, to a financially independent person who finds her family and marries on her own terms the person she loves. The four phases in Jane's life are linked to four different localities: Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, and Moor House. Interestingly, they are also allied with different types of reading and interpretation. It seems worthwhile to trace this progress.

The very first lines of *Jane Eyre* drop us in medias res. Beginning with the simple statement "There was no possibility of going out that afternoon" (p.3) the first person narrator proceeds to paint a scene of solitary and consolatory reading. In a window seat, hidden behind heavy curtains that frame it like a picture, Jane bends over Bewick's *History of the British Birds* (a copy of which, by the way, also stood on the shelf of Patrick Brontë's library). The bleak pictures the protagonist is looking at serve as an objective correlative for her life of emotional deprivation. Jane's contemplation of Bewick is soon interrupted. Her cousin, John Reed, the family bully, invades her secluded spot, assaults her and questions her right to read the books that he calls his property. The scene immediately establishes not only Jane's vulnerability but also her strength. She refuses to be beaten into submission. The understanding she has gained from her readings allows her to transcend the limitations of her position – of an impoverished orphan – and a girl at the mercy of her relatives. Drawing a parallel between John and Roman

tyrants, she exposes him for what he is and asserts her right to resist abuse. Even when she faces punishment for her defiance – being locked up in the red room and being publicly slandered, she holds on to the truth about herself and her basic rights. Thus from the outset Jane's private reading is posited as a source of inner strength and self-preservation rather than escapism or dangerous daydreaming.

The next stage in Jane's life begins when she is sent away to the school at Lowood. This part of the book continues the motif of "hostile readers and a disempowered audience" (Bock, 1992, p. 77). Put in the care of an abusive, hypocritical principal, Jane is introduced to the school community by being made stand on a chair with the sign "Liar" pinned to her body. Meant to be shunned and broken, she becomes "an abused text" to use Bock's term. Lowood is a traumatizing place that represents much of what was wrong with nineteenth century educational establishments, but Jane manages to survive it. Within the confines of the degrading communal life at the school she gains access to an inner circle. Helen and Miss Temple see past the slanderous label and offer their friendship and intellectual companionship. The sessions in Miss Temple's room offer Jane sustenance in literal and metaphorical meaning of the word – they revolve around food, warmth, and "an act of joint textual interpretation" (Bock, 1992, p. 79). Thus by contrasting reading as a mindless institutionally controlled activity (what the students are routinely required to do), with meaningful engagement with texts, the Lowood chapters posit that the latter builds space for introspection, spiritual growth, comfort, and intimacy. Jane leaves the place wiser and more sure of who she is.

When she starts working as a governess at Thornfield and falls in love with her employer, Mr. Rochester, Jane finds in him a skillful and sympathetic reader. This is the closest she gets to being acknowledged, understood, and loved. It is true that even in this relationship the protagonist is at a disadvantage as a reader of herself and others. She is still an inferior transcending social class and difference of experience. For all her mind reading skills, she is unable to correctly decipher the signs around her and resist manipulation. Privileged by social class and gender, Rochester, initially has an upper hand in the relationship. When Jane secretly perused *The History of British Birds* or was confined to Lowood, Rochester read Shakespeare and traveled in Europe. Thus, with his knowledge of the world and sexual experience, he can plant false clues and place Jane in a situation where she is in full view, open to his scrutiny while her vision is obscured and incomplete. For a while, the protagonist is caught in the web of half-truths. However, in the end, Rochester's plot unravels. Jane learns about the mad wife in the attic and she rejects the script Rochester is proposing. Even if nobody in the world cares about her, she cares about her integrity and refuses to become Rochester's mistress. Consequently, the part of the novel that explores the awakening of Jane's emotional self ends with her fleeing from it.

The Moor-House segment of the narrative begins with Jane at the most critical moment of her life, when she becomes a nameless fugitive whose very survival is at risk. It also marks the final phase of her personal growth. The scene that encapsulates this pivotal moment is worth a closer look in juxtaposition to the opening image in the novel.

Nearly dying of physical and emotional exhaustion, Jane manages to drag herself in the direction of a light emanating from a lonely house in the moors. Then hidden in the dark, she

watches a scene of blissful domesticity, the River sisters in the warmth of their kitchen, reading and discussing a text in German, a language she does not know. The scene presenting “ut pictura poesis a static image framed by the window casement” (Bock, 1992, p. 90) symbolizes everything she always was deprived of: a loving family, a comfortable home, and intellectual companionship. At first taken for a vagabond and sent away by a servant, Jane is soon given shelter by the kind inhabitants of the Moor house, who - as she will find much later- are in fact her long lost relatives. When she joins the reading circle at the Moor house, the extent of her self-knowledge and ability to resist manipulation or misinterpretation are challenged by the very opposite of a family bully, an abusive school principle or a Byronic figure. She encounters St. John Rivers, is being “read” by John Rivers, a principled ascetic man, shrewd and thorough, able to “leisurely read (her) face, as if its features and lines were characters on page” (p. 452). St. John does not read for pleasure. Passion is something he denies himself and others. As Jane observes, St. John uses the literal act of reading as a subterfuge for intense observation of others. Here is Jane reading St. John reading her:

Ostensibly engaged in studying his Hindustani textbook he “appeared ... quiet and absorbed... but that blue eye of his had a habit of leaving the outlandish-looking grammar, and wandering over, and sometimes fixing upon us with a curious intensity of observation. (p. 506)

Despotic and manipulative, St. John uses his skills to make Jane abandon German, learn Hindustani and consider his marriage proposal. He does not love Jane, but sees in her good material for a missionary's wife, “a useful tool” (p. 168). For a short while, Jane is tempted to let him bend her to his will, “to rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence and there lose (her) own” (p.370). After all, St. John's reading of her is not incorrect. But it is incomplete. There is a reservoir of readiness for self-sacrifice in the protagonist but there is also self-assertiveness. In their final confrontation, notably another “window” scene, Jane acknowledges her emotional self. Imagining she hears her lover's voice calling her name, she rushes to look for him.

The last pages of the novel show Jane in full control of her destiny and her story. Her journey ends when she finds Rochester blinded and maimed in a futile attempt to save his mad wife from the fire, and the words “Reader I married him” bring her story to its end. The rest is tidying up, tying loose ends. Much has been made of the reversal of roles evident in the novel's end. Jane is no longer poor or lonely. Having found her family and received her inheritance she is financially independent. She becomes her husband's guide and even though later Rochester regains some eyesight, he literally sees the world through her. But there is also emphasis on the understanding between them. It is their intellectual and affective affinity – the source of their attraction- the range and depth of their emotions that makes them such perceptive readers of each other and the world.

Concluding Thoughts

So what does this quick look at the scenes of reading in *Jane Eyre* tell us? Within the conceptual framework of *Jane Eyre* there is a parallel between the world of texts and the reality they are part of. Access to books is determined by class and gender. Texts – like people – and people like texts - can be ignored, misinterpreted or abused. They can also be understood and loved.

One of the most important themes in Brontë's fiction is the tension between reason and Romantic imagination, facing reality versus introspective dreaming grounded in delusion. Interestingly, female reading, whether private or shared, is never shown by the writer as dangerous. On the contrary, it is nourishing and empowering. In Brontë's fictional reality for an interpretation to be correct it should not be guided by flights of fancy, but neither should it be devoid of affect. Last but not least, the struggle for power and authority inherent in the act of reading does not preclude it from being a source of consolation and enrichment.

The fact that Brontë chose to create an unlikely Victorian heroine – a young woman who is plain – was meant to be revolutionary. More importantly in the context of the present discussion, she also created a female reader who resists male interpretative authority and who beats everyone at the reading game. Just as Jane does not read books to daydream or simply pass the time in a fashionable manner, she doesn't read men to please them. She reads them – and herself – to stay well.

In closing, let us consider one more point. *Jane Eyre* is Brontë's best-known book and one of the most popular novels even today. It scandalized some, enchanted others, but it never left anyone indifferent. Here is how two different readers describe their reaction:

... She rushes us through the entire volume, without giving us time to think, without letting us lift our eyes from the page. So intense is our absorption that if someone moves in the room the movement seems to take place not there but in Yorkshire. The writer has us by the hand, forces us along the road, makes us see what she sees, never leaves us for a moment or allows us to forget her... Think of Rochester and we have to think of Jane Eyre. Think of the moor, and again there is Jane Eyre. Think of the drawing room ... what is all that except Jane Eyre?
(Woolf, 1925, pp. 156-57)

The writer of these words is Virginia Woolf and her comments seem to echo an earlier reader who simply says: "took up *Jane Eyre* one winter's evening ... sternly resolved to be critical but found that as we read we forgot both commendations and criticism, identified ourselves with Jane in all her troubles, and finally married Mr. Rochester about four in the morning" (Clark, 1849, p.692). One of the reasons why the book sweeps the reader away is Brontë's careful handling of the distance between the fictional reality and the audience. In her first novel, *The Professor*, the writer's handling of the "Dear Reader" trope is clumsy and annoying. In her last novel, *Villette* the gradual movement from the initial intense involvement with the protagonist to the point where the Dear Reader is told to bid adieu to her from afar mirrors the trajectory in *Jane Eyre*. The difference is the narrating protagonist's ironic detachment from the very first makes identification with her difficult. To some extent this accounts for *Villette*'s lack of popularity with the common reader. In *Jane Eyre*, however, Brontë gets it just right. We **are** Jane and we read **with** Jane before we become aware of the increasing distance between the narrator and the experience she describes. Before the "Dear Reader" is given the signal to extricate herself from Yorkshire, she would have lived there – intensely and ardently. Isn't that what we all – as readers – always want?

About the Author:

Krystyna Golkowska is an Associate Professor at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, where she teaches writing seminars and serves as Writing Seminars Coordinator and ESL Course Director. Her research interests include English literature, sociolinguistics, pedagogy, and intercultural communication.

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Patterns of Representation of the Self in Modern Arabic Autobiographical Writing

Nedal Mousa Mahmoud Al-Mousa
The Arab Open University
Jordan

Abstract

It is often maintained that autobiography in Arabic writing lacks a defined status. In light of the elasticity and the wide scope of autobiography to accommodate disparate variety of patterns of the representation of the self, the paper examines examples of diverse patterns of the interpretation of the self in four Arabic autobiographical works: Tawfiq al-Hakim's *Sijn al-Hayah* (1964) (*The Prison of Life*) and *Zahrat al-Hayah* (1975) (*The Flower of Life*), Hisham Sharabi's *al-Jamr wa-al-Ramad: Thikrayyat Muthaqaf Arabi* (1978) (*Embers and Ashes: Memoirs of an Arab Intellectual*) and *Suwar al-Madi* (1988) (*Images of the Past*). In each of the four autobiographical works, the autobiographer's idiosyncratic impulses, peculiar motivations, and contextual factors act as significant determinants of the unique structural conduct and thematic concerns of the work. The final part of the paper provides interpretation for the characteristic tendency of Arab writers of autobiography to write more than one autobiographical work.

Key words: autobiography, diverse, idiosyncrasy, patterns, unique structure.

Patterns of Representation of the Self in Modern Arabic Autobiographical Writing

It is often maintained that autobiography is a cultural product unique to modern western civilization. One of the most prominent proponents of this notion is Georges Gusdorf (1980) argues:

It would seem that autobiography is not to be found outside our cultural areas; one would say that it expresses a concern peculiar to western man, a concern that has been of good use in his systematic conquest of the universe and that he has communicated to men of other cultures; but those men will thereby have been annexed by a sort of intellectual colonizing to a mentality that was their own....The concern, which seems so natural to us, to turn back on one's own past, to recollect one's life in order to narrate it, is not at all universal. It asserts itself only in recent centuries and only on a small part of the map of the world. (p.29)

Similar views are held by Roy Pascal (1960). Further illustrations of this claim abound. For instance, in his book *The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography*, Karl Weintraub (1978) establishes links between the emergence of the genre of autobiography and the celebration of the concept of realization of selfhood in western movement of Romanticism (p.xiii).

The deeply-held view by these European authors that autobiography is essentially European may explain to us the shared subscription of the two well-known orientalist George Misch and Franz Rosenthal to the notion that autobiographical writing is a rare phenomenon in Arabic literature.

Both of these two orientalist ascribe the absence of autobiography in Arabic literature mainly to the infinite poverty of a sense of the individual in Arabic culture, that is, in comparison with western culture's peculiar concern with emphasizing the great importance of individualism

But in a recently published book entitled *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Brustad et al., (2001)), a group of prominent scholars present a survey of one hundred and forty Arabic literary works which they claim belong to a well-established tradition of autobiography in Arabic literature which dates back to the ninth century A.D. "Part I" of this book, it is of interest to note, is given the title "A Thousand Years of Arabic Autobiography." The Arabic tradition of autobiographical writing includes a host of subgenres each of which is interested in one way or another in sketching the life experiences of the autobiographer. The list of subgenres includes *sira*, *tarjama*, *barnamaj*, *fahrasa* and *manaqib*. (1)

The most outstanding pre-modern Arabic autobiography is *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti al-Tahadduth bi-ni'mat Allah (Speaking of God's Bounty)* (1485). In the introduction to his autobiography, al-Suyuti places his text within what was for him a well established tradition of Arabic autobiographical writing. But in comparison with the recognized definition of western tradition of autobiography which is based mainly on autobiographical works of St. Augustine, Rousseau, Bunyan, Wordsworth, Benjamin Franklin, and Henry Adams, studies of Arabic autobiography do not provide a recognized defined status of the genre. Yet, in the introduction to his autobiography al-Suyuti, as a group of authors (2001) brilliantly point out, furnishes

invaluable description of the elasticity and the wide scope of autobiography to accommodate disparate variety of patterns of the representation of the self. The authors' illuminating comments are worth quoting at length:

Al-Suyuti's work does serve, however, to alert us from the outset that in exploring self-narratives of different historical periods and different cultures, we shall encounter not only different ideas about the self and about the structure of a human life but also a wide range of differing literary conventions and discourses in which these selves and lives are represented.

These encounters should provoke a series of complex questions concerning any specific culture or time period: What were considered the fundamental elements of a human individual? What were the purposes and motivations for the written representation of an individual life? Was the individual self deemed more truly represented by an account of an individual's personality (a set of psychological idiosyncrasies, habits, and internal emotions) or by an account of a person's acts and works? (p. 5)

Al-Suyuti's views on the elasticity of autobiography, its wide range of patterns of self-representation, and the multiplicity of motivations and purposes behind writing the self, provide a theoretical framework for examining diverse patterns of writing the self in four modern Arabic autobiographical works: Tawfiq al-Hakim's *Sijn al-Hayah* (1964) (The Prison of Life) and *Zahrat al-Hayah* (1975) (*The Flower of Life*), Hisham Sharabi's *al-Jamr wa-al-Ramad: Thikrayyat Muthaqaf Arabi* (1978) (*Embers and Ashes: Memoirs of an Arab Intellectual*) and *Suwar al-Madi* (1988) (*Images of the Past*). Tawfiq al-Hakim is the most outstanding Arab playwright and Hisham Sharabi is a well-known intellectual and political activist. The crucial differences between the titles of these authors' autobiographies are a reflection of the peculiarly undefined status of autobiographical writing in Arabic literature.

In each of the four autobiographical works, the autobiographer's "idiosyncratic" impulses and peculiar "motivations" for writing his autobiography act as the main determinants of the unique structural conduct and thematic concerns of each of the four works under consideration. Hence, I will deal with each one of them separately beginning with *The Prison of Life*.

The Prison of Life

In the opening paragraph of *The Prison of Life*, al-Hakim makes it clear that the main motivation behind his writing of his autobiographical work is self-interpretation:

These pages are not merely the history of a life. They attempt to account for, to interpret, a life. I am taking the lid off my human apparatus in order to investigate this 'motor' which we call 'nature' or 'character' - this motor which determines my ability and controls my destiny. (1964, p.3)

Throughout *The Prison of Life*, al-Hakim places particular stress on the impact of heredity as the main factor which determines his 'destiny' - his "nature or character". This is mainly what gives *The Prison of Life* its idiosyncratic quality. From his mother al-Hakim inherits

imagination and story telling, whereas from his father he inherits discipline, thrift, and sense of humor. Al-Hakim's numerous moments of self-revelation, which punctuate the constant process of self-scrutiny at work throughout his autobiographical essay, have led to his realization at a very early stage of his life that he is destined to be an artist. Simultaneously, he is attracted to drawing, music, songs, poetry, fiction, and drama. But it is the "demon" of drama as he describes it, which finally has had its grip on his soul. In his attempt to interpret and to explain how his attraction to drama gains the upper hand against rival inclinations in the course of his search for his genuine artistic mission, al-Hakim attributes his eventual option to become a playwright to hereditary factors: "But the question to be asked here is:

Why did I start my writing career with a play? Perhaps it is the essence of drama - i.e. the creation of a character through dialogue, not description, through his own words not those of another- that suits my temperament. Why? Is it a matter of heredity? Is the spirit of disputation, of logic, of concentration, of putting the right word in the right place, the inner debate, the judicial concern and balance found in my father- is all that closest to the essence of drama? I do not know. (1964, pp.154-155)

Al-Hakim is a prolific and versatile writer: his literary production includes several novels, short stories, and essays, but he wrote more than seventy plays of remarkable variety; he is considered the most prominent playwright in the Arab world. It is as a playwright that al-Hakim provides valuable reminiscences about the Egyptian theatre in the first quarter of the twentieth century in *The Prison of Life*. Al-Hakim's reflections and insightful comments on the development of the Egyptian drama and theatrical activities in the early decades of the twentieth century give *The Prison of Life* its lasting importance as an autobiographical work. The whole of section 10 of *The Prison of Life* is taken up with documenting the establishment of theatrical companies in Egypt. In sections 11 and 12, al-Hakim provides a precise record of theatrical activities undertaken by various companies, presenting invaluable insights into, particularly, the practice of adaptation of foreign plays to be put on the Egyptian stage:

The practice of adaptation rendered a worthwhile service to the Egyptian theatre in its earliest stage, for it trained writers in the most difficult aspect of play writing, which is characterization. The theme adapted was not in itself of major importance. Shakespeare, Moliere, and Goethe borrowed themes. What is truly important in the theatre is inventing the dialogue and recreating the characters in a live, new, original way. The Egyptian 'adapter' had not yet reached that stage, which in the theatre is among the highest reaches of creativity. His efforts were directed to another aspect, also important in his artistic development. That was just weaving an Egyptian atmosphere and tinging the foreign character with a local color. The effort that 'Uthman Galal exerted in Egyptianizing Moliere's *Tartuffe* into his al -Shaykh Matluf, for example, is sensed by the spectator from the first moment. (1964, pp. 154-155)

Al-Hakim goes on to draw instructive analogies between the act of adaptation as is practiced in Egypt and similar acts of "redrafting or acclimatization" of plays in Europe and America:

Yet adaptation in Europe and in America, which is called redrafting or acclimatization or 'new version,' is confined to changes in the dialogue necessitated by differences in the sense of humor or the character of irony or similes and proverbs and the like

between one country and another. Adaptation or redrafting or acclimatization there is limited to making the original text acceptable to the receiving country. It does not extend to altering the atmosphere or the names of characters, because the atmosphere in Europe and America are broadly similar.

Theatrical adaptation with us is therefore, in some circumstances, more complicated than it is abroad. It can be half-creation, especially in those distant days when we were writing before the abolition of the veil. In the sexually segregated society of our time, we had to alter the social relations which existed between men and women in an unsegregated one. (1964, p.155)

The first phase of al-Hakim's literary career was mainly based on his adaptation or redrafting of foreign plays to suit Egyptian's taste and interests. Through his acquaintance with masterpieces of world literature, al-Hakim was able to develop and improve his creative writing only after his travel to France.

Al-Hakim's direct experience of European culture played a major role in the formation of his intellectual make-up-the pivotal issue in *The Flower of Life*:

Yes, my thinking, my intellectual formation, this is where all my freedom resides. Man is free in thought and a prisoner in his nature. I do not know whether it is by sheer coincidence that I wrote about intellectual formation in *The Flower of Life* after I wrote about natural formation in *The Prison of Life*. The flower of our life is thought, and the prison of our life is nature. (p.201)

In his book *al-Tarjama al-dhatiyya fi al-adab al-arabi al-hadith (The Autobiography in Modern Arabic Literature)*, Yahya Ibrahim Abd al-Dayim (1975) argues that while *The Prison of Life* concerns itself with dramatizing the impact of heredity on the formation of al-Hakim's selfhood, *The Flower of Life* chronicles the influence of environment on his intellectual development. (p.127) Environment, as our following discussion of *The Flower of Life* reveals, is based in the main on al-Hakim's exposure to European culture during his stay in Paris.

The Flower of Life

Throughout this autobiographical work which is written in letter form, al-Hakim sets out to define his intellectual views and to describe the phases of his intellectual formation and development in a large number of letters written to his French friend Andre. The majority of the letters deal with the theme of the encounter between the East and the West. Al-Hakim experiences acute self-division between the East and the West. This conflict has already found its way as a major literary theme in al-Hakim's novel *Bird of the East* (1944). Mushin, the hero of this novel, is cast as a fictional representative of his creator. Al-Hakim passes on his own self-division between the East and the West to Mushin. While in *Bird of the East* al-Hakim deals with the East-West dichotomy in a fictional autobiographical form, *The Flower of Life* handles the issue in a pure autobiographical form. In the novel the action gravitates towards achieving reconciliation between the East and the West within the framework of what al-Hakim describes as a universal human civilization where barriers between cultures collapse and boundaries based

on ethnical differences can be transcended, whereas in *The Flower of Life*, al-Hakim's description of the impact of what can be described as European cultural environment on the construction of his intellectual orientation seems to be inspired by the self-representational practices which characterize the narrative in Arabic travelogues.

In this type of writing in Arabic literature, the author/ traveler records his observations of people and life in the foreign country viewing things from a cross-cultural perspective. The bifocal nature which characterizes the narrative in travel literature provides the reader with the traveler's image of the other and the self-image of himself which emanates from his reflections on the other. Travelogue in Arabic literature came into being as a result of the initial contact between the East and the West in the aftermath of Napoleon's campaign to Egypt. The most prominent practitioners of this type of literature are Ahmad Faris al-Shidyak, Ahmad Zaki, and Yaqub Sanu. (2)

Richard van Leeuwen's comments on the function of travelogue may illustrate the point I am trying to make:

The function of travelogues becomes especially significant in periods when contacts between more or less segregated communities are intensified. Obviously, when cultural exchange becomes more frequent and far-reaching, the need to reconfirm one's identity and to re-evaluate the mutual positions within the cultural framework becomes acute. Since in this process the 'other' serves as a mirror to construct a self-image, this 'other' would probably not be described as a total alien, but rather as a kind of alter ego, contrasting with the self-image in some respects, but supplementing it in others. By being described in this fashion, the other incorporated into the self-image; he is related to it and eventually becomes an inseparable component of it. Ultimately, the self-image cannot exist without some related image of an 'other' Although these influences may seem to belong to different categories, they are still part of the same mutual process of incorporating images of the other in an effort to formulate and refine definitions of identity. (1988, pp. 27,29)

In so far as it concerns itself with the "definition" of al-Hakim's intellectual "identity" in a typical autobiographical fashion, *The Flower of Life* derives a great deal of its representational practices, and its peculiar use of the other as a tool to construct self-image from the trajectory of travelogues as it is described in this quotation. Suggestively enough, in one of his letters to Andre in the first part of *The Flower of Life*, al-Hakim writes:

It is only the shock generated by the encounter between East and West that will contribute to opening closed eyes in both, the East and the West.... Each time they came into contact of each other they produced light illuminating the whole world, and each time their faces have met their eyes served as mirrors of each other. (p. 63)

For a full discussion of the distinctive narrative features of travelogue in Arabic literature, see Richard Van Leeuwen, *Autobiography, travelogue and identity*. In Robin Ostle, Ed de Moor and Stefan Wild (eds.) . *Writing the self : Autobiographical writing in modern Arabic literature*. (London : Saqi Books, 1998), PP. 27,30

The course of events throughout *The Flower of Life* seems to bear out this dictum. In other words, *The Flower of Life* furnishes a concrete dramatization of the impact of the encounter between the East and the West on al-Hakim's private life as he tries to define his identity and to construct his self-image.

For al-Hakim his encounter with the other (mainly as a symbol of modernism) contributes to his recognition of the necessity of his liberation from the powerful clutches of tradition which characterizes the mode of life and style of writing in Arabic literature. Al-Hakim's embracing of modernism is presented in *The Flower of Life* as the apogee of his intellectual and aesthetic development as an artist.

Al-Hakim's major concern with presenting the theme of the encounter between the East and the West in the context of tradition versus modernism dichotomy compares and contrasts with Hisham Sharabi's overwhelming preoccupation with handling the theme of the encounter between the East and the West in his two autobiographical works to which we shall now turn.

Embers and Ashes: Memoirs of an Arab Intellectual

As is the case with al-Hakim, Sharabi's treatment of the theme of the encounter between the East and the West has close affinities with the handling of the same theme in the travelogues.

As the full title of Sharabi's work reveals *Embers and Ashes* presents a record of the author's intellectual history. Sharabi's experiences at Chicago University as a student are marked with moments of reflections brought about by his initial exposure to Western culture. During his residence in America, Sharabi developed the habit of viewing things from a cross-cultural perspective.

Section (7) of *Embers and Ashes* presents a revealing description of Sharabi's initial reaction to his exposure to a foreign culture in the United States of America:

When I joined the University of Chicago, I discovered that there were English expressions whose meanings I understood but that I seldom used such as: *probably, somewhat, to some extent*. These expressions are used to lessen the absolute certainty or decisiveness of a statement and to lend it a measure of moderation and poise. Yet our professors at the American University of Beirut rarely used expressions of that sort in their lectures. I became aware of the phenomenon, in fact, only several weeks after I arrived at the University of Chicago. I noticed that my professors and classmates there never spoke without using modifiers. I also noticed that whenever I took part in a conversation I used decisive and categorical expressions of absoluteness and finality. (1978, p.6)

Sharabi even makes no secret of his overwhelming admiration for the westerners' mode of living, particularly their highly developed sense of independence and freedom hardly barred by inhibitions and patriarchal conventions which, as Sharabi repeatedly points out throughout *Embers and Ashes*, characterize life in the Arab world:

Tom and Lemming had a powerful influence on me, regarding not only vodka, but also many other things. They were the first foreigners

of my age group I was acquainted with who rebelled against their families and their milieu and began searching for a new life that they could shape as they wanted. I especially admired their freedom and their ability to live their private lives without any inhibitions. There was no subject that was forbidden to speak about as far as they were concerned. And perhaps what I admired most about them was their permanent thirst for every kind of new experience. (1978, p.34)

In the early stages of his residence in the USA Sharabi's fascination by American culture conflicts with his patriotic defense of the Arab culture. But gradually he becomes more critical of Arab culture, especially the conservatism and rigid values of patriarchy. This newly-developed mode of thinking culminates in a key statement made by Sharabi towards the end of *Embers and Ashes*: "My experiences in Chicago hastened my intellectual maturity: I became capable of critical thinking and more realistic in facing difficulties". (p.103)

For al-Hakim, as we have been seeing, exposure to European culture served as a stimulus for his construction of a new cultural and intellectual identity as well as the adoption of a new style of writing based on modernism. But for Sharabi, the exposure to western culture is utilized for developing his critical thinking, which lies at the heart of his intellectual formation.

In his description of his intellectual formation, Sharabi pays a great deal of attention to the impact made on him by two university professors at Chicago University who are presented as if they were his mentors. Charles Morris, professor of philosophy, helps him to get rid of all of the negative aspects of his previous education in the Arab world including the American university of Beirut where education, according to Sharabi, is marked with traditional, conventional mode of thought in compliance with the dictates of patriarchy. The other professor, Arnold Bergstraesser, professor of German history, directs his attention to the significance of objectivity and dialogue—the two main principles of critical thinking, as Sharabi repeatedly points out. Recording the impact of these experiences on his intellectual transformation, Sharabi writes:

In time, the objective methodology which I began to grasp in the first months after entering the University of Chicago enabled me to recognize and rid myself of the stains of my past education, and by means of it I took big intellectual steps forward. (p. 90)

Sharabi conceives the development of objectivity and critical thinking as two important prerequisites for seeing and understanding things from different perspectives and diverse viewpoints:

Hidden shackles that fettered my mind began to fall off. The darkness of many years began to disperse. My way of seeing things changed, not only regarding the content but also methods of understanding and analysis. It became possible for me (perhaps for the first time) to see matters from various viewpoints and in the light of different criteria and values. I suddenly felt I had penetrated an intellectual barrier that had prevented me from seeing things as they really were. It became possible for me to see my social self (perhaps for the first time also) from the "outside" and with an increasingly objective spirit. (p.103)

As this quotation seems to suggest, the function of “the other” in the course of Sharabi's reconstruction of his identity is comparable to its role as a self-representational device in *The Flower of Life* - a fact which suggests some form of generic coherence in autobiographies written by Arab intellectuals who happened to have lived between two cultures. It has been already pointed out that travelogues have provided a prototypical pattern of the function of “the other” operating in some of the autobiographies in question in this paper.

Sharabi's exposure to western culture during his stay in America gives his narrative throughout *Embers and Ashes* a bifocal nature. By viewing all of his life experiences from a cross-cultural perspective, Sharabi highlights his victimization by the rigid conventions and constraints of Arab patriarchal society. In no small degree *Embers and Ashes* can be read as a kind of a sociopolitical critique of the state of affairs in the Arab world during the second part of the twentieth century. The sociopolitical discourse which characterizes Sharabi's reflections on his personal life experiences testifies to the flexibility of the autobiography genre to accommodate self-representation in a sociopolitical context in which private experiences blend with public state of affairs.

As is the case in all of autobiographies *Embers and Ashes* sets out to recapture Sharabi's past in the light of which he tries to reconstruct the history of his intellectual development. Sharabi's recollection of the past is characteristically marked by his keen awareness of being victimized by the hegemony of the norms of the patriarchal society. Hence, we are told, his urgent need to transcend the past – as one of the main motives for writing his autobiography: “Reconstructing the past is a difficult proposition. But there is no escape from it. And if we want self-liberation, a return to the past is necessary- in order to expose it, and then transcend it”. (p.19)

To further expose his past and consequently to be more able to achieve a more satisfactory measure of its transcendence, so to speak, Sharabi wrote his second autobiography which has the suggestive title *Images of the Past*, the subject of our next discussion.

Images of the Past

In the introduction to this second autobiography, Sharabi points out that it is not meant to be a continuation of *Embers and Ashes*, it is rather an attempt to reflect on the formation of his personality retrospectively on the basis of his past private and public experiences. In another part of the introduction, Sharabi goes on to add that his decision to write a second autobiography came as a response to his physicians' diagnosis that he had prostate cancer. In these terms one is tempted to suggest that Sharabi's new autobiographical project may have been inspired by his hidden psychological attempt to deny or to defeat death. Here we are strongly reminded of the opening paragraph of Edward Said's preface to his autobiography *Out of Place: A Memoir*:

Out of Place is a record of an essentially lost or forgotten world. Several years ago I received what seemed to be a fatal medical diagnosis, and it therefore struck me as important to leave behind a subjective account of the life I lived in the Arab world, where I was born and spent my formative years, and in the United States, where I went

to school, college, and university. Many of the places and people I recall here no longer exist, though I found myself frequently amazed at how much I carried of them inside me in often minute, even startlingly concrete, detail. (1999, p. ix)

The following remarks made by an anonymous author seem also to be applicable to Sharabi:

The reader of autobiography makes a grave mistake to examine an author's self-defining endeavor without first considering the looming finitude that each person seeks to supercede. This literary genre takes its honorary place among the human race, for it allows reader and writer to both embrace and elude death; the autobiographer purposefully creates a representation of his life and times, impulsively thwarts his own demise, and frees his soul from extinction (www.gradesaver.com/classicnotes/titles/words/essay1.html. retrieval date 17/08/2006).

My argument that one of Sharabi's motivations for writing *Images of the Past* was his attempt to deny or defeat death is inspired by his tendency to identify himself with Ivan Ilych the hero of Tolstoy's short novel *Ivan Ilych* (1935) which provides an outstanding classical example of humans' attempts to defeat or deny death by illusory means. (3)

Images of the Past is divided into eight chapters each of which is devoted to reflecting on specific past events in Sharabi's life pointing out their role in shaping the intellectual, spiritual, and social aspects of his personality. The multiplicity of aspects from which Sharabi views his life is announced in the table of contents.

As is the case in *Embers and Ashes*, in *Images of the Past* Sharabi dwells at length on the impact of the conventions of patriarchal society on the development of certain negative aspects of his personality, describing how he managed by going through a prolonged process of psychological self-analysis and scrutiny to liberate himself from those negative aspects such as metaphysical idealism, lack of critical thinking and objectivity.

In other words, *Images of the Past* represents not so much an attempt to set down the record of Sharabi's life for others as it provides him with an opportunity to understand the meaning of his present self in the light of his past. Indeed he is interested less in providing a dispassionate account of outer events—reality—than in undertaking a reappraisal of his inner growth. A great deal of Sharabi's inner growth is brought about by his exposure to the writings of prominent western writers and intellectuals during his stay in America. The epiphanic experiences and moments of revelation which mark important stages in the course of his inner growth are described in terms of the immediate impact these writers and intellectuals had on him. For instance, under the influence of his readings of the writings of Karl Marx, Sharabi has developed intellectual interest in establishing relationship between abstract ideas and concrete reality. This, we are told, marks a tremendous shift from his early attraction to Kierkegaard's abstract philosophical views. Moreover Sharabi's gradual acquisition of the capacity for critical analysis which he never tires to point out is extremely essential for his development of a modern intellectual self, is nurtured and enhanced by his reading of the writings of Freud and Marx.

Sharabi's discovery of what he refers to as his natural self is inspired by his exposure to the writings of the French essayist Michel de Montaigne whose views, according to Sharabi, stand in sharp contrast with the mystical notions of Mikha'il Nuayma who in turn has had a tremendous impact on the construction of Sharabi's spiritual orientation. Sharabi's frequent references to prominent authors and philosophers in *Embers and Ashes* play a crucial role in giving his autobiography its distinct self-representational quality. The authors Sharabi refers to help him to arrive at a better self-knowledge-one of his main motivations for writing a second autobiography (Sharabi 12-13). Another important motivation for Sharabi's writing of a second autobiography is his attempt to atone for his lack of involvement in an active social or political role in the Arab World during his stay in America, the period which witnessed the establishment of the state of Israel. In many places throughout *Images of the Past*, Sharabi expresses his sense of guilt on account of his travel to America to take up higher studies instead of staying in Palestine to fight against the Jewish occupation of his country (Sharabi 20, 22).

It is in this context, I would argue, that we should interpret the peculiar emphasis Sharabi places on his engagement in politics which led to his joining of the Syrian Nationalist Party under the leadership of his political mentor Anton Saadah. However, Sharabi is not attracted to Saadah only as a political leader but also as a symbol of liberal modernism in comparison with the conservatism of Arab patriarchal society, the epitome of which, according to Sharabi, is Charles Malik, a professor of the American University of Beirut at which Sharabi got his first degree in history. For each one of these two important figures who play very significant roles in his life, Sharabi in *Images of the Past* devotes a whole chapter. A similar chapter is devoted to describing Sharabi's spiritual attraction to the well-known Lebanese writer Mikha'il Nu'ayma. While Sharabi expresses his spiritual attraction to the mystical philosophy and Sufism of Nu'ayma, he emphasizes the fact that he was at the same time keen to safeguard against embracing his Sufism which runs contrary to his political activism. Expressing his unwillingness to fall under the spell of Nu'ayma's spiritualism in unequivocal terms Sharabi writes:

I have no desire to achieve salvation by returning to that super spirit in accordance with Nu'ayma's philosophy... all what I aspire to be is to live the rest of my life accepting my self which knows me as I know it. (p.36)

This remark provides another motivation for Sharabi's writing a second autobiography, that is, his attempt at self reconciliation. As Stephen Shapiro (1968) rightly observes: "Men who had always felt at peace with themselves and the world around them would have no need to write autobiography". (p.448)

However, it is not uncommon on the part of autobiographers to write more than one autobiography. In his book *Autobiography and Imagination: Studies in Self-Scrutiny*, John Pilling (1981) writes:

James wrote two volumes of autobiography and an unfinished third; Yeats wrote four (some critics would say three or two); Pasternak rejected his first attempt at the genre and tried to substitute a second; Nabokov's autobiography was 'revisited' at least twice; and so on. Nor is this an exclusively modern

phenomenon: Franklin, Thoreau and Whitman (among American writers) and Stendhal and Tolstoy (among Europeans) were always going back to their self-portraits and retouching them. These examples, together with those considered in the bulk of this study, remind us that autobiography is always a transformational or metaphorical act, in which a version of the self, rather than the self per se, is being attempted. (pp. 118-119)

Sharabi, however is not unaware of the sterling value of writing a second autobiography as a vehicle for reconstructing the autobiographer's identity anew in light of a fresh perception of his past private and public experiences. In the introduction to *Images of the Past* we read: "The past is not mere memories, it is rather rereading of history both on the private and public levels. The contours of the self and the features of events change each time they are newly viewed." (Sharabi 12-13). Al-Hakim's *The Flower of Life*, in its turn, introduces new 'contours' of its author's self which have not been given sufficient attention in *The Prison of Life*.

To conclude, while the examination of the four autobiographical works under consideration reveals "universal" qualities of autobiographical writing in the sense defined by Gusdorf, they also demonstrate peculiar qualities emanating from each of the two authors' idiosyncratic mode of regard. Yet, in weaving the texture of their narrative both of the two autobiographers draw heavily on native cultural factors, mainly trajectory of travelogues, the theme of encounter between the East and the West, and the tendency to view things from cross-cultural perspectives as a means of achieving better self-knowledge and self-interpretation- the ultimate goals of autobiography.

The wide range of discourses employed by the two authors and their characteristic tendency to rely heavily on native cultural heritage in their portrayal of their life stories seem to bear out Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti's theory of the flexibility of autobiography to accommodate diverse and multiple self-representational practices.

About the author:

Professor Nedal Al-Mousa hold a PhD in English and Comparative Literature from Essex University (1984), and an MA in Comparative Literature from the American University in Cairo. His research areas include comparative literature, cultural studies, translation, and literary criticism. At present he teaches at the Arab Open University/ Jordan Branch.

Endnotes

- (1) For a full discussion of these sub-genres in Arabic literature, see Kristen E. Brustad (2001) et al., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in Arabic Literary Tradition*, ed. Dwight F. Reynolds, Berkeley: University of California Press, 38 – 44.
- (2) For a full discussion of the distinctive narrative features of travelogue in Arabic literature, see Richard van Leeuwen, (1998) "Autobiography, Travelogue and Identity," in *Writing the Self Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature*, eds. Robin Ostle, Ed de Moor and Stefan Wild (London: Sagi Books, 1998). 27-30.

- (3) For a fuller discussion of this point, see Al-Mousa, Nedal M (2005). A critical study of the theme of death in Don Delillo's *White noise* from an intertextual perspective." *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*, 21, 65 – 76.

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The Survival of the Author in Ian McEwan's *Sweet Tooth*

Alaa Alghamdi

Department of Languages and Translation

Taibah University

Medina, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Metanarrative techniques in Ian McEwan's latest novel, *Sweet Tooth*, challenge our conception of literature by creating and destroying illusions of reality. The metanarrative subtly challenges Roland Barthes' notion of "the death of the author" by offering an alternative—the death or dissolution of the subject—which permits the survival and persistence of the author as a distinct voice within the narrative. An idealized but ultimately untenable examination of the nature and purpose of fiction is presented. The novel radically reexamines the role of author, subject, and reader, culminating in an evolved and emergent vision of the author.

Keywords: metafiction, Ian McEwan, metanarrative, poststructuralism, first-person narrative

The Survival of the Author in Ian McEwan's *Sweet Tooth*

Ian McEwan's latest novel is a pleasing and accessible, fast-paced and character-driven work that employs many of the tropes of an uncomplicated, linear narrative, but conceals a sophisticated contemplation of the nature and meaning of life and art. Ostensibly a spy novel set in England in the early 1970s, *Sweet Tooth* concludes with a meta-literary twist that forces us to turn the narrative upside down and to reexamine what we thought we had known. In so doing, the ending asks us to radically reorganize our assumptions regarding the author's intent and the very structure and identity of the work. In effect, we think we are reading one story, only to discover at the very end that we are reading another that contains and frames, and perhaps deliberately destroys, the first.

As the above issue involves a meta-critical examination of the interaction between author, narrative, and character and all of their relative roles, a reasonable way in to this analysis of McEwan's work is Roland Barthes' famous statement about the death of the author. In an essay of the same name, Barthes posits that, once a literary work has been written, the words assume an identity of their own that transcend the author's own interests and intentions. The author is merely a vehicle through which the words are transmitted: the author does not retain control or presence in the written work. In essence, the narrative is set free to fulfill its purpose through its creator's absence or figurative death. I examine McEwan's work by reading it within the context of Barthes' thesis, an approach that is more than justified by the invitation that McEwan sets out for us.

As the author's concluding twist is clearly meant to rearrange characters and events in our minds and prompt a reexamination of the narrative, and since the purpose here is to effectively pick up the story by its tail and scrutinize it as a whole, it is no betrayal of these goals to describe this concluding twist here at the outset of the analysis. Until this last chapter, we believe that we are reading a first-person account by a young female narrator, Serena Frome. Groomed by her older lover, Tony Canning, Serena has been recruited by the British intelligence agency MI5 to participate in "Sweet Tooth," a cultural campaign designed to promote anti-communist ideology through literature. The premise is simple: Serena's job is to cultivate and encourage writers with an ideology deemed appropriate by vetting them and offering them a stipend. She embarks on an affair with one such author. At the end, we find that this author, Tom Haley, has in fact written the very account we have been reading. To add another layer of interpreted meaning, as many reviewers have remarked and as McEwan has confirmed in interviews, Tom Haley bears a strong and conscious resemblance to McEwan in terms of his background and literary interests. The similarity is sufficiently pronounced for us to conclude that Haley is in fact a fictionalized version of McEwan himself, even if a similarity with regard to their experience cannot be confirmed.

In an interview in which he discusses the writing of *Sweet Tooth*, McEwan states, "I have always been skeptical of first-person narratives"¹. It is a simple enough statement when taken at face value, seemingly referring to a preference on the part of the author. On the other hand, though, it is a distinctly odd statement in light of the fact that McEwan has here produced a first-person narrative, and the use of the word "skeptical," surely a deliberate choice, suggests a lack of believability of such narratives. One reading might suggest that McEwan finds himself

¹"Sweet Tooth - Writing and Research - Ian McEwan" August 22 2012 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbuS-SHTzhU>

incredulous, and therefore skeptical, with regard to the authenticity of the first-person narrative. As the narrative in question is fictional, however, from whence comes this skepticism? Surely a fictional first-person account is always just that – fictional, and the result of an author's ability to adopt a character's voice? Yet if skepticism is activated during the course of reading, it indicates that the fiction itself is faulty, providing an imperfect illusion. In *Sweet Tooth*, McEwan seems to want to convince us of the permeability of this faulty illusion. Therefore, he displaces and destroys the first person narrative he has created, forcing the reader to share his own skepticism of it.

It is a simple but masterful move: the elementary nature of the device gives way to a more profound meditation on the very nature and limitations of the fictional world. When McEwan transfers his own skepticism of the first-person narrative—perhaps as a form that is by its nature particularly deceptive—to the reader, the tropes and conventions of literature are called into question. In a way, of course, that is what all postmodern or meta-literary narratives do. Critics sometimes distinguish between metafiction, which calls attention to its own fictional nature (simply stated, “fiction about fiction”), and the metanarrative, which is a “fiction about the process of writing” (Mullan). Metanarrative, Mullan explains, is distinct from metafiction. The former is a self-referential form that may predate postmodernism. Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* “from the first sentence makes a story out of how reader and writer conspire to make a story” (Mullan). In fact, authors throughout much of the history of literature have used elements of metafiction, at least as far back as Chaucer. Metafiction simply means that the reader is being made aware that the writing or telling of fiction is taking place. Metanarrative, on the other hand, is more intensely self-referential and as such it is well positioned to call into question the nature of the fictional reality, sometimes by entertaining opposing interpretations of it. We are forced to acknowledge that the narrative is inherently unreliable. McEwan employs elements of metanarrative in previous novels, most obviously in *Atonement*, but also in *The Cement Garden*, *The Child in Time*, and *Enduring Love*.

Though a more recent development than metafiction, the metanarrative is well established in postmodern literature and is hardly McEwan's invention. For example, John Fowles achieved a similar effect several decades ago in both *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *The Magus*. In the former, the writer/narrator occasionally steps into the role of an additional character in the novel, speaking directly to characters and readers and thus, according to critic Frederick Holmes, destroying one illusion of reality and replacing it with another. The technique in fiction was an innovation at the time it was written, but may be no different from occasions when a character in a drama (for example, David Huang's *M. Butterfly*) steps out of the fiction of the performance and engages directly with the audience for a time. In both cases, the result is the destruction of the contrived scene simply through an admission that something else is transpiring; indeed, that this created reality is somehow being orchestrated. In fact, destruction is the point here: one thing these postmodern techniques do is to systematically destroy the conventional fiction, and pull our attention to what is created in its place. But what is the ultimate purpose of such machination? For one thing, it guards against a relaxation into verisimilitude and the world of the fiction. As such, I would argue that metanarratives that deliberately preclude the wholehearted acceptance of the created reality of the fiction in effect protest and guard against the notion that the author can or must die. On the contrary, in such narratives, the author proves himself to be alive and well, visibly pulling the strings of the narrative and demanding to be seen.

Frederick Holmes, in describing Fowles' work, discusses the idea of destruction and creation, referring to deliberately created worlds as the products of a 'godgame'. The author, of course, both creates and destroys, and one element of the meta-literary novel is that this is done consciously, visibly and deliberately, and that, as readers, we are invited or forced to look at the author's process as a component of our experience of the novel. Contrasting two works by Fowles, Holmes states:

In order to demonstrate to Urfe that his enterprise is, like a novelist's, fictional, Conchis [in *The Magus*] must destroy the reality of each stage of the godgame before moving on to create a new illusion involving his company of actors. It becomes increasingly difficult for the reader to submit imaginatively to successive illusions inasmuch as he becomes increasingly aware that they will soon be punctured. (Holmes 184)

Given that the role of the magician Conchis is analogous to that of an author creating a fictional world, the successive destruction of those worlds asserts the dominance of the author over the appearance and principles of the fictional world. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the destructive action is the same: the intrusion of its creator—the author—pierces the illusion. But because this is done in a subtler way, our sense of disruption is minimal and can be overridden. The "illusionist element" in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Holmes suggests, "does not strain our credulity because its fictionality is exposed in a way that does not require its destruction... the narrator identifies himself as the author, and, accordingly, it is apparent from the start that he does not exist within the confines of his narrative (although at two points he does enter it briefly as a character). Consequently, he can periodically point up the artificial nature of his story without destroying it" (Holmes 184-5).

In *Sweet Tooth*, McEwan follows the former pattern insofar as the narrator and author he reveals at the conclusion is a member of the cast of characters to whom we are introduced. Moreover, the similarity between McEwan himself and his character Tom Haley suggests that McEwan is stimulating a surreptitious entry into the action of the novel as himself. The personality of the author in this case is unusually robust, surviving the transition between worlds that would usually eliminate or obscure the representation of his personality. Like a spy himself, in keeping with his theme, the author infiltrates the narrative under false pretenses.

As noted previously, this is not the first fiction in which McEwan has manipulated and altered the version of reality he has painstakingly created, forcing the reader to reconsider not only the story but the whole nature and motivation of fiction. In what is arguably his most acclaimed novel, *Atonement*, the author pulls the proverbial rug out from under us by demonstrating that the narrative we had been reading and believing in was, all along, an invention by another character. As readers, we are surprised – even shocked – by this revelation, and then what checks us in our surprise is the realization that any narrative is, to some degree, invented, and as such may be just as easily reinvented.

In *Atonement*, this occurs through the shifting identity and perspective of the narrator, which culminates in a revelation about the supposed "truth" of the narrative. The identity of the narrator—or, rather, our understanding of it—shifts from the omniscient and impersonal to one who is intimately involved with the characters and action, preceding the final disclosure that this narrator has written the story, and not as a faithful representation of fact but a wistful fiction that

provides her the opportunity to atone. The persistent message in this metanarrative is, it seems, the awareness of how a narrator's emotion and intention both intrudes upon and shapes the narrative. Even the element of time that confines the characters in the narrative is challenged by the narrator's persistent consciousness. As Mullan notes in "Looking forward to the past", an analysis of *Atonement*, McEwan uses "prolepsis - the reader's 'premature' knowledge of eventualities" (Mullan 2006, para. 2). In other words, the narrator's knowledge and anticipation of events intrudes the narrative.

To justify a narrative that refuses to maintain its own illusion, there must be something profoundly instructive, even some epiphany, to be found in that moment of surprise and shock, when we, unlike the captives in Plato's allegorical cave, are made to realize and acknowledge that we are looking at shadows. We can call it enlightenment, but the moment is, at the same time, one of destruction. Once the shadow world loses its integrity, it can never truly be reconstituted. It is in this way that, like Fowles' *Conchis*, McEwan destroys a version of reality in order to create another one.

Standing in opposition to this acknowledgement of destruction is Roland Barthes' notion of the death of the author. Barthes' essay proposes that for a story to retain its integrity the one who orchestrates it into existence must relinquish any active or dynamic role—he or she must be forgotten. The existence of the author, his or her identity, and his or her historical and social circumstances—these all must be obliterated so that the story exists unfettered by any consciousness of the author. The author must truly be "dead" in the reader's mind in order to give the story life. McEwan, it would seem, protests the death of the author by allowing him to infiltrate the narrative, drawing attention to both its "truth" and its fictionality. As though in recompense, it is the integrity of the principle narrative and its first-person subject that collapses, perhaps suggesting that Barthes was, in fact, essentially correct, but that his statement was incomplete. There may be an alternative to the death of the author; namely, the demise of our belief in the reality of the work. In other words, if the author refuses to die, perhaps his "living" in the narrative requires this sacrifice—simply stated the death or dissolution of the subject.

The metanarrative, like other poststructuralist forms, "... [seeks] not to constitute the subject, but to dissolve it" (Drolet 3). The integrity of the subject is dissolved or destabilized by the built-in necessity that we recognize in the work the "...multiplicity of interpretation, perspectivism and limitedness of any one point of view" (Wheeler 213). Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of the fiction cannot be mere destruction. Rather, the goal is to create something durable that can withstand and transcend the instability of the subject. Regarding *Atonement*, Mullan states: "The test of the trick is perhaps in re-reading... McEwan wants you to identify with characters, to succumb to narrative illusion, to believe it for the moment. If it works, the novel compels you not to treat it as mere fiction" (Mullan 2006, para. 7). *Knowingly* succumbing to illusion is a confirmation of the power of fiction even without the need to "believe in" what it tells us.

In the case of *Sweet Tooth*, however, fiction itself is called into question by the representation of how it can be used and manipulated, forming a subtext of instability whose intention at times seems to be the production of a radical skepticism in the reader. Laura Miller points out that Serena Frome herself might not approve of McEwan's metanarrative techniques; in fact, she would be likely to regard them as 'tricks' to be 'distrusted'. Reading a story written by Tom Haley, Serena criticizes a narrative twist that foreshadows McEwan's own:

"Only on the last page" Serena explains, "did I discover that the story I was reading was actually the one the woman was writing. The ape doesn't exist, it's a specter, the creature of her fretful imagination." (Miller 72)

Thus, the death of this subject, Serena, is not a simple or clean death. In retrospect, Serena seems to speak directly to readers when she decries narrative "tricks" as violations of the unspoken contract between author and reader. The death of Serena becomes, then, a sort of battle between her voice and the one that emerges, for through her destruction, we also witness the emergence of a new subject, the fictional author, intruding upon and cannibalizing the story. Early in the narrative, reading voraciously, Serena vainly searches for a subject that can reflect her in a story:

... I suppose I was, in my mindless way, looking for something, version of myself, a heroine I could slip inside as one might a pair of favorite old shoes. Or a wild silk blouse.... I suppose I would not have been satisfied until I had in my hands a novel about a girl in a Camden bedsit who occupied a lowly position in M15 and was without a man. (McEwan 38)

Both the narrative and our belief in the narrative are destabilized when we realize that the story we are reading is that very thing that Serena desires, in the manner of a mirror that would root her more firmly in the manufactured world. Yet in the process, the illusory reality of Serena disappears, along with the sense of desire emanating from her; indeed, we realize that she was never there at all, much like the happy couple in *Atonement*. But where, in the earlier work, a grimmer version of reality—their own deaths during the war—replaces the phantom couple, here McEwan replaces the young female subject and narrator with something possibly even more disconcerting—something (and someone) totally unlike herself, and like him.

This clever dénouement challenges our sense of reality in the novel, as the loss of the reality of Serena is easily interpreted by the reader as the loss of the woman herself, who has been our pleasant companion throughout this narrative. As readers, we experience a radical distancing from Serena when it is revealed that she is the creation of her lover, the one whom we had believed was being objectified. He steps forward as narrator to take her place as we find it has been his hand and therefore his consciousness at work all along. Nor, as mentioned, are the biographical similarities accidental: while seeming to root him in the non-fictional world, they also point to the fact that Tom Haley himself can likewise be revealed as an illusion, as behind him stands the author himself. In essence, if the author was supposed to die, he has here exacted the ultimate comeback: a resurrection and reassertion of himself into the midst of the narrative.

At first glance, McEwan appears to be demonstrating in a spectacular way that the author is not necessarily the one who dies but instead that the subject and the narrative itself may be made to die in his place. But why insist upon the virility and survival of the author? Is it a philosophical stance or a poetic one - or perhaps both? We would not suspect an author of McEwan's ability and range to be engaging in a simple expression of ego, so then what is gained by staging the death of the subject and refusing to allow the author to die? Why does McEwan take this approach to prompting a meta-critical examination of the text and of the dynamic interaction between subject and author?

Whereas an awareness of the death of the author is comprehended on an intellectual level, the destruction of the subject is a more poignant loss for the reader, evoking every childhood disappointment in finding out that a beloved character is “only pretend,” never having existed at all. With the creation and then the death of the subject, a fantasy world is created and then destroyed, suggestive of the magical qualities of the author as creator in the manner of Holmes’ description of Conchis in Fowles’ *The Magus*, the powerful manipulator who “...must destroy the reality of each stage of the godgame before moving on to create a new illusion” (Holmes 184). The moment of revelation of a new stage in the author’s ‘godgame’ is in fact reminiscent of a magician revealing his tricks, or the screen being pulled away from the Great and Powerful Oz, or Prospero in *The Tempest* renouncing his magic book. At the same time, this act of stripping a character of her illusory reality is like an act of violence in a book that is otherwise remarkably devoid of it.

Existing critical examination of the nature of this violence focuses on a feminist analysis of the work that emphasizes the role of the heterosexual relationship. Katie Riophe points out that Serena may have been suspect from the beginning, as her character is “a little thin”, and the reader’s overall impression of her is that of a “pliant, lovely, spirited, slightly vacant woman” (Riophe 1). It makes perfect sense to the reader, therefore, when Serena is revealed to be “a man’s fantasy of a woman” (Riophe 1). Moreover, it is through the (imperfect) appropriation of the woman’s persona and identity that the male narrator, who so closely resembles the author, seeks to reconstitute and represent himself. Tom states: “I had to get out of my skin into yours. I needed to be translated, to be a transvestite, to shoehorn myself into your skirts and high heels...”; however, as Riophe points out, the transformation and therefore the representation of Serena is “... clouded by [Tom’s] own vulnerabilities and hopes and vanities” (1). We are left with a portrait of the drawbacks of a worldview in which the female is subject to the male gaze, as well as a hypothesis regarding the perceived need of the dominant male to objectify the female. The implication here is that the male requires the feminine archetype in order to comprehend and reconstitute his own persona.

Gender politics, however, though present in this narrative, may not offer a full interpretation of the text’s purpose. Gender-related issues seem secondary to the author’s implicit comments on the nature and limitations of fiction itself. If we take as a starting point McEwan’s skepticism of the first-person narrative, it becomes apparent that what the author may be objecting to is the intimacy of that point of view, and the illusion that we as readers have the ability to step inside the character’s mind and experience. That is impossible in a fictional narrative and somehow disingenuous, as it involves the author’s pretense of being someone else, of hiding within the semblance of another. To discover that the first-person narrator is not in fact who she professed to be is tantamount to the author’s admitting to the deception, and thus justifying our own skepticism on this matter. To become accustomed to the use of that first-person pronoun and then to be told that it was an illusion creates the loss of precisely what was seemingly present as a result of the point of view—that is, the intimacy with the one who not only created but also lived the narrative, the direct person-to-person transmission of experience.

Once the illusion is compromised, the reader, like prisoners freed from Plato’s metaphorical cave, gazes around at the shattered remains of the illusion and begins to reconstitute a world, based this time on a broader landscape, encompassing both the ruined illusion and the elements that created it. Of course, this is only an intermediary step to anything that may be considered an ultimate reality. Tom Haley himself is a fictional construct, closely identified with McEwan yet distinct from him, another illusion and a false self as McEwan stops

just short of doing as Fowles did several decades earlier and inserting himself in his identity as author directly into the narrative. The precise relationship between McEwan and Tom Haley is a matter requiring some interpretation. Is Tom Haley McEwan's stand-in, his avatar, his means of functioning within a fictional world (albeit one that overlaps, temporally at least, with McEwan's own social background)? Is Tom, then, a means of allowing McEwan to function within a version of his own memories? Or is the emphasis, rather, on McEwan and Tom as parallel figures, both creators, the one begetting the other? The latter is, indeed, a more fascinating proposition because it allows us, finally, to examine the relationship between McEwan and his character, Serena Frome. Her illusory nature does not mean that she and her individual characteristics can or should be dismissed, though it may, as critics have suggested, make her a profoundly unreliable narrator, calling into question her ability to be an authentic representative example of the female psyche. Such critical analysis is certainly warranted, and indeed implicitly invited by the author. But if we are to consider the author and Tom Haley as having an existence parallel to one another as writers and creators, we must consider, also, the implication that Serena is to Tom what Tom is to McEwan—a literary subject with whom both author and reader identify, as indicated in Tom's case by the appropriation of the first-person pronoun and perspective.

Unlike Tom and McEwan, Serena Frome is, ostensibly, a consumer rather than a creator of literature. But her participation in the Sweet Tooth program and its emphasis on providing intellectual and ideological guidance and nurturing for young authors invites us to question that categorical judgment. Serena, albeit by proxy, is, at least by aspiration, a creator of literature. Moreover, had her enterprise been successful, Serena would have been a part of the creation of the literary, intellectual and cultural landscape of her society. To be sure, she would have done so as an agent of M15, not as an independent figure. This distinction, however, also points toward an examination of the meaning of agency. Specifically, a social agent is one who is able to act freely and with autonomy on his or her own behalf. Because of the fact that women, in so many times and places, have been (and continue to be) denied social agency, the concept is a familiar and important one within feminist analysis. Serena, however, acts as an agent not solely for herself—she is an agent in another capacity, acting on behalf of an organization attempting to arbitrate culture, and it is in this capacity that she herself, at least potentially, becomes a cultural arbiter and a creator of literature. If we continue to entertain for a moment that McEwan and Tom Haley are parallel figures, then each creates a version of himself. If Serena is a version of the author, on the strength of the parallel relationship and her role as a 'creator' by proxy, then the implication is that authors themselves may not be agents only of themselves, but of the dominant culture they see and experience around them. Literature itself, while not created as propaganda, is nevertheless judged by its ability to reflect desirable cultural values, and if it does so, it is rewarded by a facilitated acceptance by readers. Thus, McEwan invites us to consider the extent to which we are implicated in a Sweet Tooth program.

On the other hand, the preceding analysis of McEwan's work, while satisfying, is a trifle facile in that its conclusion has already been engaged and proven by writers and critics. It was, in fact, this awareness of the powerful persuasiveness of social mores and norms that may have led Barthes to dismiss the voice and enculturation of the author, striving toward a pure and unmediated engagement of the reader with the words of the text. It would be in keeping with McEwan's implicit repudiation of Barthes, as discussed above, to conclude that he wished to remind us of the prevalence of social values in writing and the near impossibility of freeing

oneself from them. Serena's job and the visible artifice of her conception make her a viable device for delivering this message.

But to stop at this analysis and conclusion is to ignore the other peculiarities of Serena's character and what they might convey. Before we are asked to grapple with the significance of her role as an agent, Serena's dominant identity, as suggested by her activities and distinguishing characteristics, is that of a *reader*, and as such surely significant within the scope of this discussion. Serena is an anomaly, being a prodigious reader but not a scholar of literature, and this distinction is deliberate and vital. The fact that Serena studies mathematics at university but fails to excel at it is noteworthy for several reasons: first, it provides a basis for a discussion of gender roles and expectations, as Serena herself comments on her unlikely inclusion in a predominantly male department; and second, it establishes Serena's weak association with the world of absolute logic, important for both its presence and its ultimate failure. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, her academic field frees Serena from receiving overt instruction in literature or the arts, in effect allocating a protective zone around her within which she may read without judgment.

Within that protected space, Serena, as a reader, is indiscriminating. She reads quickly and voraciously, but in a way that is almost sacrilegious to an orthodox scholar. Within the purely personal parameters defining her interests, all literature is laid out side-by-side and equal. As a reader, Serena is not exactly democratic, but she is ruled by intuitive preferences. She initially states: "I read anything I saw lying around. Pulp fiction, great literature and everything in between - I gave them all the same rough treatment" (McEwan 16). Later, she expands on this attitude and contrasts it to the more cultivated tastes of those around her:

I caused amusement among my Newnham friends studying English when I told them that *Valley of the Dolls* was as good as anything Jane Austen ever wrote. But who cared? Who really minded the unformed opinions of a failing mathematician? Not me, not my friends. To this extent at least I was free. (McEwan 17)

Until such time as she reads Solzhenitsyn and undergoes a sort of fall from grace, Serena leads a charmed life—a serene one, as her name implies. Though living in the shadow of the cathedral, she states that religion has touched her only lightly. Though an avid reader, she is an innocent one, free of any socially based judgment about what she is reading. To some readers, the inner world presented as Serena's is as attractive as it is fundamentally vapid. She is innocent and her observations about literature may be laughable, but she is a character designed to exact a kind of grudging respect even from literary scholars based on the speed and volume of her reading, not to mention the breadth of an intellect that includes mathematical ability along with literary accomplishment. Despite the learning she has acquired and despite the fact that seems to reside in the shadow of academia as well as of religion, Serena, at the outset, is presented as an innocent, minimally influenced by socialized attitudes and therefore, arguably, possessed of a refreshing spontaneity and naivete, which, coupled with intelligence, may make her novel and interesting. There is no question that Serena's innocence at the outset of the novel is truly a reflection of McEwan's own conception of the female psyche, given the complex and nuanced female characters he has created in other works. She is, however, uncomplicated and appealing, the breadth of her intellect and her early success as a columnist prohibiting a judgment of her seemingly inclusive and unschooled mind.

This early state of mind ends, however, with her political awakening, an event that is referred to as leading to a “sin”—that of earnestness. For this sin – which arises, for Serena, when she reads Solzhenitsyn, adopts his anti-communist ideology, and comes to idealize him as a person – she is expelled from the Eden-like existence that she initially seems to inhabit (later, as though to emphasize the point, she is expelled from the rural ‘Eden’ of her idyll with Tony Canning by knowledge - his wife’s knowledge of their affair and his own knowledge of his impending death). The initial fall, of course, leads in a direct line to Serena’s employment with MI5 and her acting as an agent for a political agenda. Her earnestness regarding Solzhenitsyn’s political message, in other words, is not one that she can easily expunge, but is one that follows her and comes to define her life. McEwan makes clear both the inherent appeal and the impossibility of remaining in that initial state, where ignorance holds knowledge in balanced check. In effect, it is impossible to be or remain as Serena does in her serene, charmed existence. So then what is the purpose of presenting us with such a scenario?

Serena’s indiscriminate reading and her ideological neutrality, prior to her ‘fall’ with Solzhenitsyn, mimics the position of the reader who is truly innocent of any influence stemming from the author’s identity, background or political stance. Perhaps Serena, as a reader prior to her ‘fall’, is what all readers would be if the author were truly able to die. That philosophical stance, McEwan implies here, is appealing and desirable but ultimately untenable. The ‘fall’ with Solzhenitsyn comes about from a natural engagement of the emotions and intellect with her reading, and Serena denies the death of the artist by stating of Solzhenitsyn, the man, “He was God! I would have washed his feet”. Even though the author is, in this case, literally dead, she revives him by invoking his physical being along with his politics. Later, as Canning points out, it is clear that even the act of reading (and leaving books open at the spine) tampers with the innocent reaction of the next reader; this is the meaning behind Professor’s gift to Serena of a bookmark, a device with which the neutrality of the text might be protected.

Of course, Serena goes far beyond influencing readers by leaving pages folded open. As an MI5 agent, she undertakes to manipulate the very creation of literature. In this way, McEwan lets us know the consequence of leaving that state of grace and innocence in which all literature is regarded and judged equally, impartially, and with an intelligent but unschooled carelessness. Once the sin of earnestness has been committed, one is in danger of unwittingly or not becoming an agent for an ideology, an agenda, or a well-defined critical stance. The reader loses her impartiality, and any optimistic or idealistic interpretation of Barthes’ ‘death of the author’ concept is likewise invaded and breached, so all that remains is a text that is vulnerable to casual or deliberate appropriation.

Finally, it is, of course, significant that McEwan ‘destroys’ his female protagonist, as outlined earlier. Serena’s destruction allows for the deconstruction of the interaction between ideology and the creation of literature. McEwan has left in Serena’s place a durable figure, his own literary double. Perhaps the intention is not so much to subvert and resist the death of the author as it is to imbue with the author’s own image the amorphous words left behind after the author is forced to depart the scene. On the other hand, it is also possible that Tom Haley’s novel – the dystopian work that is based on an early, unpublished work of McEwan’s own – is intended to resist the political message and agenda of *Sweet Tooth*, and, by extension, the intrusion of cultural agendas on literature. To be sure, a dystopian worldview is hardly unaffected by ideology; it references culture strongly in order to mount a criticism or resistance of it. Yet Tom Haley’s novel is, essentially, the undoing of the entire web of influence and interaction that exists within McEwan’s narrative. Germs of his own early work are embedded in the center of

his latest, a powerful nucleus. For the author, this literary resurrection of his early and unpublished work, along with the time frame of *Sweet Tooth*, turn back the calendar and provide transport back to his early career. As Serena and all that she represents is undone by the same device, we may speculate that the thrust of the whole novel is, in some way, toward undoing what has been woven into place during forty years of writing. And yet, as an inveterate creator, McEwan only does so as part of the process of creating something new. Through the entire process of creation and destruction, he works toward a new, emergent definition of the role of a writer and a writer's role.

Famously, at the conclusion of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero promises to free the spirits that he has enslaved to his purposes so that they might populate his created world. As added assurance that he has truly renounced the magic, he promises:

...this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

(*The Tempest*, Act 5 Scene 1)

Scholars have viewed this speech as a reflection of Shakespeare's own consciousness that, in view of advancing age, his career is drawing to a close, and with it, the magic that had wielded through the written word. The concept of advancing age, of course, is different in this era than it was in Shakespeare's. Shakespeare was in fact only 46 years old (compared to McEwan's 64) when he wrote *The Tempest*, his last independently written work. There is no reason to think that McEwan is at anything other than the prime of his career; nevertheless, the trip back into time that he achieves through his revisiting of 1970s culture and his own early career is suggestive of a full circle journey, just as the construction and subsequent destruction of his central character suggests an undoing of the fruits of his craft.

The importance of this act of 'giving up', if we are to interpret the author's intentions as such, lies not, as some critics point out, in what is lost, but rather in what is to be gained. In an article published in a psychology journal, William Benzon begins his analysis of Shakespeare's Prospero with the query: "Why is Prospero Shakespeare's greatest creation?" His response to the question is the idea that in this character, as in none other, male and female properties comeingle. Thus, "Prospero is Shakespeare's embodiment of human wholeness" (Benzon 259). Interestingly, this explains, for Benzon, why female characters are absent from the play (with the notable exception of Miranda, who functions as a child rather than a woman in the narrative); he states: "Shakespeare no longer needs them to carry, preserve, and defend feminine values [as] he has a male protagonist who can do that" (Benzon 261). From this author's point of view, it is, moreover, a mark of Shakespeare's maturity as a writer and as a person that he is able to create such a character, as he himself had "significantly transcended the division of experience into male and female" (Benzon 261). It is from this position of strength and mastery that Shakespeare contemplates the conclusion of his career of creating successive worlds driven by precisely that opposition between male and female protagonists that he has now laid to rest – and it is from this same position that his creation, Prospero, gives up his magic and his book. It is, perhaps, no stretch of the imagination to speculate that McEwan, through his conscious conflation of his own

character, persona and history with that of his character Tom, and with the melding of his Tom's persona with Serena's through metanarrative manipulation, experiences some of that same accomplishment of wholeness, of coming together of components that were previously disparate. The overall 'serenity' of this narrative, the lack of disruption by any bizarre or catastrophic event (a notable departure from previous works) likewise suggests the tranquility that may come about when all conflict and polarization has passed.

Finally, at the conclusion of *The Tempest*, after the renouncement of his magic, Prospero performs a small, quotidian action: he dons the old robe that he wore as the Duke of Milan. This signifies the resumption of his old, rightful position, the one he occupied at the beginning of his journey, though now boundlessly enriched by the journey itself. One could argue that McEwan's representation of himself in the guise of Tom Haley is a similar action—a renewal of something outgrown and long past, with the implication that there is work still left to be done on a different plane or in a different place. With the neat, tight structure of this latest novel, which nevertheless leaves the reader with the serious job of contemplating the nature and meaning of literature, McEwan leaves behind the fantastical and leaves us with nothing more nor less than a representation of the real.

Abut the Author:

Alaa Alghamdi is Assistant Professor of English Literature at Taibah University in Medina, Saudi Arabia. He holds a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Leeds and he earned a master's degree in English Literature from Newcastle University, UK. He holds a bachelor's degree in English language and literature from King Abdulaziz University.

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Charlotte Bronte's Alternative Enlightenment: The Muslim Other in *Villette*

Khaled Aljenfawi
Kuwait University, Kuwait

Abstract

In her novel *Villette* (1853), Charlotte Bronte, unlike many of her contemporary British novelists deploys the Muslim *Other* as an effective rhetorical and figurative device. The main character in this late eighteenth-century novel, Lucy Snowe utilizes Arab, Muslim and in particular Turkish cultural allusions, symbols and images for the sake of verifying her day-to-day experiences. Lucy seems to achieve emotional security while using imagery from the *One Thousand and One Nights*. The *Other*, according to Joseph Childers and Gary Hentzi (1995), "is the ultimate signifier of everything I am not[...] has often been defined as 'women' or African or Asian- and hence the Other is what is feared, what exists to be conquered" (p. 216). Bronte in *Villette* seems to use the Muslim other as a signifier of almost everything Lucy Snowe goes through in her daily life. Bronte in *Villette* represents a unique case of a British novelist who seemed to have truly believed in egalitarian Enlightenment ideas. Involving ideas of progress, tolerance and the removal of censorship, Immanuel Kant (1784) defines the Enlightenment in his famous essay "What is Enlightenment?" Kant explains that "it is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point" (p. 2). Bronte reveals her freedom of reason while transcending in the novel national and entrenched cultural biases against Muslims. In many ways, Bronte in *Villette* creates an Enlightenment *cosmopolitan* space.

Keywords: *Villette*, Cosmopolitan, Egalitarian, Turks, Muslim Other

Charlotte Bronte's Alternative Enlightenment: The Muslim Other in *Villette*

In her novel *Villette* (1853), Charlotte Bronte, unlike many contemporary British novelists who seemed to have been more accustomed to use predominantly negative depictions uses the Muslim *Other* as an effective Rhetorical and Figurative device. The main character in the novel Lucy Snowe utilizes Arab and Muslim cultural allusions, symbols and images apparently for the sake of verifying her day-to-day experiences. Lucy finds solace and seems to achieve more emotional security while recalling imagery from the *One Thousand and One Nights*. Consequently, Bronte in *Villette* develops the *Muslim Other* as an effective rhetorical device to expose what she considers as the brutalities and oppression of the outside world against her main character Lucy Snowe. Whenever Lucy finds herself in an oppressive environment in which she feels overwhelmed by a particular situation, she creates her own fantasied escape. This constructed means of escape usually involves introducing fictional characters from the *One Thousand and One Nights* who passed through difficult situation and then reflect on how they succeeded. Sometimes, Lucy utilizes the Muslim *Other* as a mean to expose some of the brutalities associated with some social situation. Being a stranger in Villette, Lucy encountered few situations in which she had to deal with Mrs. Beck, the intrusive and aggressive landlady/school mistress.

The novel is somewhat based on Charlotte and her sister Emily Bronte's visit to Brussels. They travelled in 1842 to Brussels to enroll in a boarding school; Charlotte taught English, while Emily taught Music. The sisters' time was cut short by the death of Elizabeth Branwell, their aunt who at the time was taking care of her sister's children. Published in 1853, *Villette* chronicles the life of its narrator Lucy in the imaginary Belgian town of Villette. She is poor and friendless, later hired as a teacher by Madame Beck, an authoritarian headmistress. Lucy falls in love with Madame Beck's despotic cousin, professor M. Paul. Emmanuel. Suffering from isolation, Lucy's gothic reading, and her reading of the *One Thousand and One Nights* enables her to blend the supernatural and real in order to negotiate her relationship with other characters in the novel. The novel ends with ambiguity when M. Paul. Emmanuel travels by ship to the West Indies. The reader is not exactly sure whether Emmanuel will ever come back to reunite with Lucy.

Bronte in *Villette* presents a unique case of an early Victorian novelist who seemed to have transcended, to some extent, entrenched national and cultural biases against non-Europeans. For example, Islamic cultures, literatures and even Islam as a religion seemed to have represented an ever-present spirit *us mundi* for Lucy Snowe. Lucy tends to examine *almost* whatever events happening in her life through an adopted Eastern and Islamic perspective. She does not only rely on her native English culture, language and culture, but seems to derive most of her day-to-day vocabularies from the *One Thousand and One Nights* Arabian stories. She becomes infatuated with Muslim culture to the extent that she continually constructs meanings out of her personal experience upon "oriental" mental frameworks. Bronte in fact creates a cosmopolitan space, some kind of a universal intelligence, breaking away from conventional and contemporary depictions of the East. She attempts in fact to create an alternative enlightenment by adopting an egalitarian worldview.

The author of this essay does not *pretend* to argue that Charlotte Bronte's Lucy Snowe relies only on Islamic thoughts and values while living in the town of Villette. However, the *One Thousand and One Nights* in particular represent a moral and mental gateway to a fuller understanding of the social realities surrounding Lucy Snowe. Lucy seems to be more mentally

and psychologically at home, and more engaged with plots of popular fictional Eastern tales. She uses such a non-European literary plots and characters as effective cosmopolitan cultural references from which she attaches meanings to her daily experience. For instance, the *One Thousand and One Nights* seem to provide Lucy with peculiar methods of thinking she uses to negotiate the social complexities in her environment. Above all, she seems to feel more comfortable in the presence of Ali Baba, Saladin, and Scheherazade than with Nelson, Byron or any other real or fictional Western counterparts.

Brontë, as I will argue later in this essay, appears to emphasize the importance of looking at the world as a *cosmopolitan* universe full of various races and cultures, yet of equal importance. Brontë confirms such egalitarian outlooks in the attitudes and behavior of her major character Lucy Snowe. Lucy does not seem to mind deriving legitimacy of the "truthfulness" of her daily experiences from Oriental literature. It must be pointed out that Brontë does not enact a full enculturation of Eastern cultures. However, she creates in her novel many situations and events in which the "Oriental" and especially the Muslim *Otheris* introduced as a part of the larger eighteenth-century globalized world. For example, in *Villette*, Brontë quotes heavily from the famous *One Thousand and One Nights*. She repeatedly introduces Turkish, Arab and Muslim fictional characters as if they are familiar figures in her specially constructed Villettian world. She also borrows many of her novel's plots from eastern real and fictional contexts. This does not mean that *Villette* is an Eastern novel. For example, commenting on her work as a teacher in Madame Beck's school, Lucy explains that her work "had neither charm for my taste, nor hold on my interest." What seems to matter most for Lucy is "to be without heavy anxiety, and relieved from intimate trial; the negation of severe suffering." She overcomes her anxieties through leading two separate lives: "the life of thought, and that of reality." Lucy's life of thought is "nourished with a sufficiency of the strange necromantic joys of fancy." (p. 140).

In this essay, I will examine some the uses of the images of the Muslim *Other* in Brontë's novel *Villette*. Brontë's use of the *Otheris* peculiar because instead of being used a derogatory term, she uses it in a way that makes it positive. Her choice of literary contexts; borrowing some plot elements from *One Thousand and One Nights* underlines Brontë's positive use of the Muslim *Other*. This rather unconventional use of the *Other* as a positive fictional element in the daily life of Lucy constitutes a unique utilization of Eastern images in early Victorian literature. While doing so I will underline and analyze what I consider as important episodes in the novel where Brontë seems to deploy the Muslim *Other* as a powerful rhetorical device to clarify and comment on ambiguous events and characters in Lucy's life. Such ambiguities usually arise during direct interactions between the rather reserved Lucy Snowe and other characters in the novel. Such interactions between Lucy and the outside world seem to lead her to rely on her previous readings about Eastern culture and literature and legends.

Lucy primarily relies on *One Thousand and One Nights* to make sense of reality. She seems more adept at negotiating thorny social issues if she places them within a personally constructed Eastern mental framework. In other words, she uses the "Arabian Entertainment" to entertain alternative interpretations of her daily experiences. During such "eastern" moments in her daily life, usually taking the form of daydreaming, the Muslim *Other*, instead of being introduced in a contemporary typical negative depiction or as a curious exotic object of marvel, it plays a more positive role in Lucy's daily experience. Using Muslim characters and situations in complex ways rather than stereotyped and negative ways allows Lucy to face her conflicts more easily.

Unlike many of her early nineteenth-century contemporaries, Brontë treats Muslim historical and fictional characters not primarily as representatives of a foreign or an inferior race or culture, but equal human beings whom she tolerates, at least within the specially constructed "cosmopolitan" world in *Villette*. For example, a few nineteenth-century British writers tended to deploy what one may describe as a negative typical discourse about Arabs and Muslims in General. Usually called *Mohammedans*. For example, ShahinKuli Khan Khattak(2008) in his book *Islam and the Victorians: Nineteenth Century Perceptions of Muslim Practices and Beliefs* indicates that the Brontë sisters seemed to have been influenced by Victorian depiction of Muslims. As well as Muslims, the "Irish were equally the 'other' for the Victorians" (p. 52).

Whether compared or contrasted intellectually or politically with Europeans, the Mahomed an individual, his culture, society and even mentality is usually depicted through-out late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century British literature and journalism as less humane, more chaotic, less intelligent than their supposed superior European counterparts. However, common negative depictions about Muslims did not seemed to have hindered Brontë from using the Muslim Other in her fiction.

As a case in point, nineteenth-century literary discourses about Islam in general tended to focus on the political, social and cultural deterioration of eighteenth-century Mongol Empire in India. Such perceptions of the incivility of Islamic cultures coincided with an expanding role of Britons in India and Asia. The Mogul Emperor for contemporary British journalists became a figurehead, supposedly unable to practice full political power on his Nabobs. Though it is valid here to argue that the late eighteenth-century Mogul Empire was experiencing its most chaotic era, yet British officials in India seemed to have found it quiet easy to collaborate with minor provincial rulers (Nabobs). In his *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire* Robert Orme (1782) adopts an early dehumanizing discourse about Muslims. According to Orme, the "Moors [Indian Muslims] hold the office of a scribe in contempt: commerce therefore cannot be held by them in honour" (p. 70). He goes on to demonstrate the spread of bribery even in the judicial system of Indostan. Like many of his contemporary authors, Orme deploys a prevalent dehumanizing discourse about Muslims or Moors. Even though Moghuls and Moors were Muslims from different parts of the world, however negative attitudes towards them were common to all. It seems that few writers in early Victorian period were able to distinguish the cultural, geographical and historical differences between Moghuls and Moors. It is much easier to combine these different Muslim identities in one common stereotype. Yet, many eighteenth-century English historians of that period might have argued that Islamic jurisdiction toward the end of the eighteenth century was more developed than in Europe.

What is remarkable about *Villette* is Brontë's apparent persistence to present an egalitarian world, which she constructs while apparently using the Muslim *Other* as a successful trope. She seems consciously aware about her rhetorical process, in which she adapts, deploys and persistently uses Eastern imagery and motifs. As readers, we continue to encounter different Eastern figures in the novel from Pashas to a Cleopatra and a Vashti: The *Oriental Other* in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* becomes a representative of Brontë's unique egalitarian perspective. Likewise, her main character Lucy's imagination constructs an egalitarian world where it is possible to blend both Islamic and Christian cultures. Snowe reveals a curious affinity with other human beings. She seems to be at home while talking about or recalling Eastern tales and exotic fictional characters.

Some critics may consider such egalitarian treatment of Eastern themes and imagery in eighteenth and nineteenth century British novels as a typical fictionalizing of the exotic. However, the elaborate plots, rhetorical maneuvers Brontë consistently deploys usually revolve around Eastern fictional figures. For instance, Brontë's recalling of the Eastern Muslim Other seems to be an attempt to re-qualify it and its culture as legitimate sources of fictional inspiration. In other words, though Orientalist discourse was used during the mid- eighteenth century, especially while discussing the history of the *Saracens*, the infidel Turks, Brontë's more positive use of it as a tool of verification of Lucy's daily experience remains unprecedented. For example, Diane Long Hoeveler and Jeffrey Cass (2006) in their book *Interrogating Orientalism: Contextual Approaches and Pedagogical Practices* explain that "British citizens travelling throughout the Oriental world[...] were hybridizing (as Homi Bhabha has defined the concept) and modernizing" (p. 2). Hoeveler and Cass argue that "the donning of indigenous garb by Lady Mary Wortley, Lord Byron, and Sir Richard Burton indicates one of the ways that the 'lived perplexity' of Orientalism can be approached." This lived perplexity of the Orient, according to Hoeveler and Cass, is more "complex, nondualistic paradigm" (p.3).

However donning the oriental fictional masks, adopting the persona of an Eastern visitor to Europe, did not always serve its intended purposes: exposing the shortcomings of contemporary European governments and societies. In fact, such literary Orientalism found its detractors in the twentieth century. As a case in point, the late Edward Said (1978) in his book *Orientalism* underlines what he argues to be the complicity of such literary texts and their role in paving the way, according to Said, to later colonialism. However, Brontë introduces in *Villette* a new approach toward human relations, more cosmopolitan in nature, combining East and West. Her novel seems to pave the way toward a more egalitarian world.

For instance, Brontë consciously combines her interest in Eastern culture and transform this interest in *Villette* into an integral part of the fabric of her narration. She introduces the figure of the Eastern other, albeit borrowed directly from the *One Thousand and One Nights* stories, and it introduces Muslims in *Villette* as equally respectful human beings. She achieves this respectability of Muslims through referring to Eastern fictional characters, like Saladin, as equally heroic as any other Western heroic character. Saladin, Sinbad and Ali Baba become role models for imitation for Lucy. She creates scenarios in which she meditates on how Saladin would, for example, behave in this or that situation. Brontë seems eager to use the literary symbols of the East as vehicles to ascertain and sometimes to qualify the daily experiences of Lucy Snowe. Brontë however introduces the Muslim Other free from typical late eighteenth-century British misconceptions.

Baron Montesquieu (1721) in his *Persian Letters* translated into English in 1730, George Lyttelton (1735) *Letters from a Persian in England* and Oliver Goldsmith (1762), "Chinese Letters" and *Citizen of the World* tended somewhat to exaggerate the Oriental environment. In such "oriental" texts, one can discover a variety of depictions. In Montesquieu's *Letters*, for example we encounter an ideal Oriental individual whose supposed moral outlook surpasses his European counterpart. Though Montesquieu 'oriental' speaker condemns fallacies of contemporary European societies, yet he continues to be an *outsider*. Brontë was so infatuated with the supposed exoticism of the east that she wrote stories about genies in her early and still unpublished writings like "A Song of Exile on Seeing the Ruins of the Tower of Babel."

Elizabeth Gaskell (1857) the biographer and friend of Charlotte Brontë reports in her *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* that "a curious packet confided to" her "containing an immense amount of

manuscripts, in an inconceivably small spaces; tales, dramas, poems, romances, written principally by Charlotte" (p. 93). Gaskell in the *Life* inserts a copy of a letter written by Charlotte Brontë listing what she describes as "Catalogue of my Books, with The Period of their completion up to August 3rd 1830 [sic]." She mentions among her early writings "Chief Geni in Council," a Song of Exile on Seeing the Ruins of the Tower of Babel [sic] (p. 95). Such juvenile literary compositions might not have been fully developed like *Villette*, however, they testify to Brontë's Eastern interests.

Moreover, Gaskell includes in her *Life* (1857) a letter by young Charlotte in which she begins her address to the imagined editor of the "Little Magazines" she, her sisters and brother Branwell wrote. In this highly imaginative letter she begins by telling her readers that "it is well known that the Genii have declared that unless they perform certain arduous duties every year, of a mysterious nature, all the worlds in the firmament will be burnt up" (Gaskell, 1857, p. 104). Gaskell comments on this curious composition by predicting that the letter "may have had some allegorical or political references invisible to our eyes" (p. 105). It is however impossible to predict exactly the nature of the allegorical references Brontë was using. Yet it is safe to argue here that the highly imaginative young Brontë reacted to contemporary political and social events. She might have been commenting on the British political arena.

Though she does not advocate colonialism, however Brontë is eager to use Eastern literary allusions as topics of discussion through which her major character Lucy Snowe can interact with the outside world. In other words, Lucy's interest in the *exotic* is certainly part of the larger British contemporary infatuation with Eastern culture and literature. Brontë's utilization of Eastern themes in *Villette* serves more particular functions in her narrative, besides being sources of fictional inspirations, she uses these eastern themes order to construct an egalitarian world. Such egalitarianism I argue is a product of the *Enlightenment*.

One of the enduring Eighteenth-century European enlightenment's ideas is "cosmopolitanism." Some European intellectuals, writers, and philosophers of the nineteenth century seemed to have wanted to achieve an egalitarian world based on the idea that Man can perfect his human existence and that he is able to transcend historical religious, cultural and racial biases. Therefore, creating a cosmopolitan or a universal world, according to the Enlightenment's tenets is a primary purpose for intellectuals. The maintaining of such cosmopolitan conception of human existence paves the way toward human progress.

According to the *The New International Webster Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* (1998), "cosmopolitan" "relates to "common to all the world" and "at home in all parts of the world" (p. 294). Lucy uses some literary allusions from the *One Thousand and One Nights* in different situations during her daily life. Such deployment of exotic allusions reflect her latent and cosmopolitan desires. Her constant recalling of stories, allusions and anecdote from *One Thousand and One Nights* underline Brontë's egalitarian thinking. These egalitarian tendencies take the form of rhetorical devices Lucy consciously uses to verify her daily experience and in fact to make sense of her surroundings.

To illustrate this point further: Lucy utilizes Eastern historical figures (usually placed in fictionalized contexts) like Saladin or Cleopatra in order to create her own egalitarian and cosmopolitan world. What characterizes this creation of special universal contexts in which all human beings can freely interact is that they are usually free from any possible contemporary national limitations or racial prejudices. Lucy recognizes the importance of Saladin and actually seems to identify him as archetype of moral heroism. It is actually this kind of mental and psychological freedom from the usual European chauvinism that one repeatedly encounters in

Brontë's novel. It is important at this point of the discussion to examine those instances in *Villette* where Lucy reveals her infatuation with all things Eastern. The peculiarity and singleness of vision Brontë reveals in treating the Arab, Turkish and Muslim other is remarkable because it reflects a tolerant cosmopolitan voice in the middle of extreme intolerance toward the non-European Other.

Brontë first introduces the Muslim other in the novel when Lucy tries, in one of her numerous soliloquies, to describe to herself a strange incident she witnessed while in Madame Beck's house. The owner and headmistress of the boarding school Madame Beck is outwardly kind, however she is also intrusive and despotic while dealing with Lucy. It happens that Dr. John Bretton Lucy's friend was visiting the Beck's family. Dr. Bretton is the son of Lucy's godmother Mrs. Bretton. Brontë portrays him as a cheerful character, and as a good-looking gentleman. He works as a physician in Villette. He seemed to have fallen victim to the immature flirting of Desiree, the young daughter of Madame Beck! The Lady of the house, Madam Beck invites him to examine young Desiree who was feigning sickness. Desiree wishes Dr. Bretton to prolong his stay at the house so she can enjoy more of his company.

In order to soothe the feelings of his young patient, Dr. Bretton somewhat willingly accepts to stay for more time. Out of courtesy perhaps, he indulges young Desiree's whims. Lucy, who was present at the time, wonders about Desiree's bold behavior. She reflects on such childish frolic, and instead of continuing to be a detached observer of the scene, Lucy attempts to understand Desiree's playful and childish flirting. As such, Lucy explains Desiree's attitudes toward Dr. Bretton through recalling a similar situation in the *One Thousand and One Nights*! Lucy starts to examine such curious behavior (flirting) relying not on her limited life experience, but on oriental literature. She uses the exotic literature of the East (i.e. *One Thousand and One Nights*) as one of her major referential points. For instance, it happens that the daughter of Madame Beck feigned her sickness in order to be attended by the handsome Dr. Bretton. He visits her in her bedroom and finds her in bed surrounded by her pillows and bed covers. While observing such coquettish behavior Lucy recalls a scene from the *One Thousand and One Nights* to make sense and decipher what's was happening in front of her. Lucy finds similarities between Desiree's behavior while sitting in her bed and that of a Turk! For Lucy, Desiree's affectation of sickness and flirting toward Dr. Bretton are "like a Turk amidst pillows and bolsters" (Brontë, 1853, p. 162). Although this image of a Turk sitting in his bed surrounded by pillows sounds like highly sexualized, however, Lucy uses it to show how despotic and childish is Desiree. Even though she looks, sitting in her bed, secured and healthy, yet, Desiree instantly changes her behavior when Dr. Bretton arrives. Lucy visualizes an exotic Turkish scene and uses it to expose Desiree's duplicity. Although the comparisons between Desiree's behavior and that of a Turk in one story in the *One Thousand and One Nights* might seem rather far-fetched, however, Lucy seemed to have succeeded in exposing the artificiality of Desiree's coquettish behavior.

Moreover, what is fascinating about Lucy's use of Eastern images is that they tend to become the norms rather than the exception in the narrative. In other words, Lucy uses the Oriental literary theme as a rhetorical device in order to make sense of different life situations. In the case of Desiree for example, Lucy could have used a basic interpretation of teenage expected behavior in order to clarify why Madam's daughter acted so strangely with Dr. Bretton. However, Lucy, who seemed to have already been versed in all things oriental seems to insist that it is more practical to utilize her rhetorical powers using linguistic and moral tools directly borrowed from a different non-European culture. Moreover, Lucy seems to find it edifying to

borrow such non-European cultural icons (i.e. Muslim culture and literature), archetypes, images, descriptions in order to understand the truth. Perhaps she even insists in using Saladin in order to read through the implications of other people's behaviors. The highly imaginative and meditative mind of Lucy Snowe makes use of Oriental trope in order to make sense of the complexities of social surroundings. For example, one day, "while he [Dr. Bretton] sat in the sunshine, and [Lucy] was observing the colouring of his hair," she compares "his beamy head in [her] thoughts to that of the 'golden image' which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up [sic]" (p. 163). Lucy is trying here to make sense of Dr. Bretton's personality by putting him "under a direct, inquiring gaze" (p. 163).

Lucy is almost always thinking in / about oriental milieus and characters. She uses them as referential points of departure to understand the outside world. She also seems eager to legitimize her personal experiences within such Eastern settings. Charlotte Brontë seems to adopt certain narrative techniques in *Villette* as the ultimate legitimizing tool. In other words, the kind of legitimization Lucy needs is to ascertain her personality in the face of a domineering Madam Beck. For instance, Lucy, lives under the shadow of the domineering personality of Madam. She needs to solidify her daily experience within a rather complicated narrative framework. She feels that she has to deal with Madam's moody behavior, while at the same time she recognizes her ambiguous relationship with other characters in the novel. In order to achieve peace of mind, Lucy approaches such new daily experiences through adopting a universal outlook, a more tolerant understanding of universal cultural and religious differences. For instance, even while dreaming, Lucy relies on eastern images to make sense of her dreams. In order to explain the ambiguity of one of her dreams, negotiate through its complexities, she recalls a story from the *One Thousand and One Nights* of "Bedridd in Hassan, transported in his sleep from Cairo the gates of Damascus" (p. 240). He was married to Sittelhosn, a beautiful young woman and "borne away miraculously to Damascus, where he became a pastry-cook" (p. 607).

Considering Brontë's cotemporary milieu it sounds rather too optimistic to adopt an essentialist point of view toward her universal outlook. However, she does not seem to provide an escape for Lucy through using Eastern imagery. On the contrary, Lucy seems more familiar with Eastern tales that she finds it easy to recall some of their events.

Laura Ciolkowski (1994) in her article "Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*: Forgeries of Sex and Self" recognizes Lucy's eagerness to validate her daily experiences. She argues for example that "Lucy is a self in translation as well as in transition in *Villette*, delighting in and encouraging the narrative confusions for which "Currer Bell," *Villette's* pseudonymous author, was notorious" (p. 7). Such transition of the self or the intended confusion of narrative in the novel, I would argue underlies almost all daily interactions of Lucy with Madame Beck, her colleagues and even the Bretton family. As a case in point, she is constantly reflecting on the nature of her relationship with other characters. Not being sure about the nature of those relationships does not mean that Lucy is distrusting all. However, she continues to reflect on whether these characters help her understand the complexities of the outside environment. The translation of the self in the novel takes the form of attempting to stabilize the instability and to see through the vagueness of the outside environment. Lucy's familiarity with Eastern tales seems to influence those who are close to her. For example, commenting on the "school-project" of Lucy, M. Emanuel calls it "an Alnaschar dream," yet another reference to the *One Thousand and One Nights* that tells the story of a man who invested his money in glassware, later smashing it accidentally (p. 573). Lucy's ability to validate some of her daily experiences by comparing them to fictional experiences she reads about in Eastern literature constitutes one form of translating the self. In other words, she

continues to translate and interpret some of the complexities in her daily life through using metaphors, images from the East as vehicles to achieve more clarity in her points of view.

Such self-conscious tactics influence Lucy's interactions with the rest of the character in *Villette*. She achieves a much needed tranquility by instantly resorting to Eastern tales and to her beloved Saladin, if possible. The Turk, the Muslim *Other* seems to provide Lucy with more confidence and self-assurance.

One of the best psychological methods Lucy opts to make sense of her experience is through implicitly and sometimes more explicitly quoting archetypal stories in Eastern literature, from the *One Thousand and One Nights* in particular. As this essay will argue later, Brontë tends to use the Oriental\Eastern imagery\themes\conceits as important legitimizing rhetorical and thematic tools in the novel. To illustrate further, Brontë achieves this process of acculturation seriously by transforming it into favorite intellectual and spiritual ammunition for Lucy. Very unlike many late eighteenth-century contemporary British writers, Brontë seems more relaxed while she consciously adopts *Oriental* themes in her fiction.

Noting that "the Orient" has always been "elusive" to Western civilization (ix), Thierry Hentsch (1992), in his book *Imagining the Middle East* writes that the Middle-Eastern *Other*, is at once the site of the commonplace, the word for "the exotic, catalyst of contradiction and excess" (p. ix). Hentsch explains that the Middle Eastern Other, or what he calls as the Orient was perceived at the same time "wise and irrational, ascetic and voluptuous, cruel and refined" and it is "the primeval dawn and night of history" (p. ix). However, he illustrates that such Western constructions of the ME implies a foreign figure that is a more of a figment of a disturbed European psyche. He argues that such perception of irrationality does not seem to account for the richness of Middle Eastern history and its true impact on European literature. What is needed according to Hentsch's a more subtle and meticulous re-reading of the representations of the *Other* in Western consciousness which should reexamine the salient characteristics of the process of othering of the Middle Easterner (shifting, distorted, interchangeable). Brontë in *Villette* seems to introduce a re-reading of the other in early Victorian literature. For example, Lucy's frequent use of Eastern images seems to indicate her willingness to reexamine the process of othering. The Eastern other in the novel becomes a stable point of reference, which Lucy can deploy as her personal moral compass whenever she needs some help in understanding her surroundings.

What is remarkable in Brontë's treatment of Eastern figures in her novel is that they seem more rational, predictable, and not stimulators of "excess" (Hentsch, 1992, p. ix). Indeed, Lucy seems more at home while recalling images from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, which makes Brontë exceptional in her tolerant treatment of Muslim figures and subjects. For example, Lucy finds it empowering to describe her style of writing as "words scattered here and there - not thickly, as the diamonds were scattered in the valley of Sindbad, but sparsely, as those gems lie in unfabled beds? Oh, Madame Beck! How seemed these things to you?

[sic]" (Brontë, 1853, p. 377). She knows that Madame Beck reads her personal letters. However, Lucy wishes that she evaluate her letter writing skill according to its exotic nature, and apparently not according to its Englishness. According to Lucy, her "words"

should be considered by the formidable Madame Beck as gems lying on imagined Eastern beds (p. 377). Brontë here seems to avoid, perhaps intentionally, comparing Lucy's style of writing with English rhetoric or correct syntax. She finds it perhaps more civilizing to maintain the exotic nature of Lucy's writing. In other words, the glamorous Eastern imagery used in the self-dialogues of Lucy seems more appealing to Brontë than the practical English

tongue. With the absence of specific proof that Brontë favored Lucy's colorful rhetoric, she might have been satirizing it. However, Brontë wrote a letter to her publisher George Smith on November 3 1852 to comment on the novel's plot. She contrasts Lucy with Dr. John Bretton whom she describes as "far too youthful, handsome, bright-spirited and sweet-tempered." (Smith, p. 209). One can juxtapose this Brontëan use of the Muslim other as an effective rhetorical device with previous and contemporary early nineteenth-century representations of the East in Western culture.

Thus, in *Imagining the Middle East*, Thierry Hentsch (1992) begins his introduction of what he describes as the historical construction of the image of the Orient by emphasizing its ethnocentrism. This Western construction of Islamic culture and historical or imagined figures played a significant role in creating a repertoire of images about the East in general. These Eurocentric representations of Islam seem to have been readily used by all kinds of European writers (p. xiv). What is curious about Hentsch's discussion of Western manipulation of the images of Islam is that he does not consider this historical process as a fault. He does not consider "ethnocentrism" as a fault to be set aside, nor is it merely a sin a critic might wipe out through repentance. Instead, he argues that it is a prerequisite of our (Western) vision of the other. Ethnocentrism, according to Hentsch, "is constitutive of our understanding of the other; it obliges us constantly to return to our point of departure, if only to seize the internal and external important factors which shape our interest about the other" (p. xiv). Brontë in *Villette* reflects one particular European vision about Islam. She chooses however to invest more positive efforts in finding common grounds with the Muslim other.

In order to have a deeper understanding of Charlotte Brontë's use of images of Islam in *Villette* we might need to place it within its historical context. In fact, to create a new form of critical pedagogy that addresses the construction of the image of the Other in late eighteenth-century British texts one needs, at least briefly, to touch on the seminal metaphors and images used by earlier writers to represent Arab, Muslims, native American-Indians, and others. For example, some of the typical images of Muslims in Victorian Britain might have included adjectives such as savage, superstitious usually associated with *Mahammedanism*. Perhaps the Victorian discourse about Islam and Muslims was not as polarizing as in earlier eras; however, it tended to be rather negative. Some writers invoked the superiority of Christianity over Islam.

In addition, one can argue here that Hentsch's discussion of the creation of the Other in the Western mind corresponds to Norman Daniel (1960) in an argument he made in his book *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. He argues for example that the representation of Islam in the medieval period was more a matter of stereotypical miscomprehensions than of facts. Hentsch, like Daniel before him, traces the origins of how Western civilization conceived its Other which he describes as the "Orient."

However, Hentsch, while discussing this creation of the Orient in Western imagination goes beyond what Daniel examines in his famous book. He points out that the European-constructed image of Islam continues to be essentially the creation of a relatively narrow literate section of Western Christendom—the rest would be uncertain speculation (Hentsch, p.24). This essay agrees with both Daniel and Hentsch and emphasizes that the stereotyping of the Islamic Other in particular is more complex. During the eighteenth century few writers were able to sift through negative representations of Islam and attempt to reflect a more authentic representation. Even though Brontë does not seem to have shown more knowledge about Islam than any other contemporary British writers, she is able to deploy a more unique understanding of cultural diversity. In other words, Brontë insists in *Villette* on overcoming the typical Eurocentric and

Ethnocentric conception of Islam and thus she is able to use Muslim culture and Muslim figures, even if fictional, in making sense of her main character's realities. For instance, Bronte utilizes Eastern tropes for specific narrative purposes. She derives such tropes from the fact the Eastern Other in almost all of its manifestations was actually visible in Britain.

A Turk, a Muslim and even a Saladin from *One Thousand and One Nights* could be easily materialized for Bronte because he as a real human being was present in London during the nineteenth century. This is clear from earlier writings about the presence of Muslims in the London's exchange. For example, Kirstin Olsen (1999) argues in her book *Daily Life in 18th-Century England* that from 1689 onward "brokers met at Jonathan's Coffee-House in Change Alley, this in time became the site of the London Stock Exchange." Olsen explains:

There, according to Voltaire, one could see a Jew, a Mohammedan, and the Christian deal with each other as if they were of the same religion, and give the name of infidel only to those who go bankrupt" (p. 191).

The *Mohammedan* Other appears vividly in *Villette*. Though he might take the form of a Turk, however the Muslim figure whether fictional or real historical characters are quite visible in the life of Lucy Snowe. She uses the Other as a vehicle to achieve a more effective interaction within her social and "familial" environment. For instance, while visiting the Bretons, John invites Lucy and his mother to the theater. When Lucy arrives at the hall, she is startled by its magnificent lights. She seems unable to comprehend the luster and lights in the theater being her first time to visit such a place of public gathering. What seems to strike most in the theater is the shape and luster of a hanging chandelier, which she describes as a "Pendant from the dome, flamed a mass" (Bronte, 1853, p. 285). However, in order to familiarize herself with this new scene, the chandelier, which "dazzled me - a mass," Lucy promptly concludes that it "seemed the work of eastern genii." She tells her readers that "I almost looked to see if a huge, dark, cloudy hand - that of the Slave of the Lamp - were not hovering in the lustrous and perfumed atmosphere of the cupola, guarding its wondrous treasure" (p. 286).

The Grand buildings she visits in the town of Villette, luxurious concert halls and even the coquettish Desiree seems to appear in Lucy's mind as manifestations of an imagined fantastic Eastern world. It is only in such exotic literary and imaginative contexts Lucy seems to find peace and tranquility. Whenever she faces a challenging social situation, her mind willingly recurses to an imaginative Eastern environment where she becomes more skilful at understanding her surroundings. Actually, Lucy tends to recollect her thoughts and filters her peculiar conception of the social realities around her by repeatedly juxtaposing it with what she imagines to be the nature and expectation of typical Eastern milieus.

To illustrate further, while watching the play, Cleopatra at the theater accompanied by the Breton, Lucy finds herself unconsciously almost immersed in the play's constructed Eastern environment. For instance, the actress, who plays the role of the famous Egyptian queen transforms in Lucy's mind into "Vashti," the Persian queen. Though Lucy does not seem to distinguish clearly between the history of Egypt and Persia, yet she *merges* the real Greek/Egyptian Cleopatra with the queen character she remembers from her Eastern reading. What becomes more remarkable in this theater scene is that Lucy is more willing to enforce what appears to be a self-constructed reality to make sense of her surroundings. In other words, in order to make sense of Cleopatra, as both a real queen and a fictional character on stage, Lucy deploys a readily-made comparison between Persian and Greek/ Egyptian history and culture.

She might have felt that she needs to do so for the sake of admiring the stage performance she was watching.

Whether due to lack of sufficient knowledge about the differences among Eastern cultures, for Brontë, the East in general continues to be a magical world full of Cleopatra's, genies and "Saladin" (Brontë, 1853, p. 340).

In addition, Brontë's interest in Muslim culture extends to animals too. As a case in point, in *Villette* she seems to contrast what she considers as wild European animals with the more tractable Arabian animal. For instance, while contrasting the characters of Dr. John Bretton with the "little professor," Paul Emanuel, Madame Beck's "caustic" relative, Lucy thinks that the later is "rude and stubborn 'sheltie.'" According to her, he is very unlike the "high-courage but tractable Arabian [Dr. Bretton]" (Brontë, 1853, p. 281). Professor Manuel's sour temper and sometimes-unpredictable reaction reminds Lucy of the difficulties one may face while handling a stubborn Sheltie horse. The Sheltie refers to the Shetland pony, who according to *State master Encyclopedia*: is a "very opinionated" and "cheeky." Furthermore, if this horse is not "handled properly, [it] can be impatient, snappy, and sometimes become uncooperative" (Statemaster). Such inflexible characteristics seem to fit exactly the character of Paul Emanuel whom Lucy describes as "acerb" which mean sour and astringent (p. 281). There are other moments in the novel when Lucy seems utterly infatuated with Eastern analogies, figurative tropes, testifying to Charlotte Brontë's deep interest in "Oriental" literatures and cultures. However, this essay focused only on those most poignant episodes in the novel when the East seems to materialize in a concrete and a vivid language Lucy deploys to negotiate here surroundings. What remains to be explored is the extent such Brontian interest in the East appears in her other writings.

Brontë in *Villette* (1853) utilizes the popularity of Eastern tales in the late eighteenth century and uses its imagery, figures of speech, fictional and historical characters as mental frameworks. She uses such constructed mental frameworks to facilitate the movement of the narrative of Lucy Snowe. However, unlike many contemporary late eighteenth-century writers, Brontë seemed to have transcended to some extent racial and cultural prejudices against non-Europeans. She created a Brontian oriental discourse of her own in order to illustrate the daily experiences of her main character Lucy Snowe. Miss Snowe's frequently refers to Oriental tales, and even attempts to use Eastern figures of speech and Oriental images to make sense of information related to her interaction with other characters. This Brontian capacity in deploying Eastern culture and literature to comment on the life of Lucy Snow continues to be unprecedented in the history of English literature. Brontë helped propagate a new kind of universal discourse, an egalitarian outlook toward the world outside Europe. She deals with the Muslim other in particular as an equally respectful human being. What remains to be examined however is the impact of such Brontian cosmopolitanism on later British authors. In fact, the novel suggests a new way of reading of the Muslim other which is not essentialist. There needs to be a reexamining of the concept of othering in early Victorian literature that can shed more light on the complexity of relations between the Muslim East and West.

About the Author:

Khaled Aljenfawi, PhD. Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts at Kuwait University. He is interested in researching/ writing about the representations of Arab, Muslims and Middle Easterners in Eighteenth-Century English Literature. He currently teaches English Literature at Kuwait University.

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Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp: How are Foreign Folktales Conveyed in Western Children's Literature?

Eman Elturki

College of Education, Washington State University
USA

Suda Shaman

College of Education, Washington State University
USA

Abstract

This paper seeks to examine how the Middle Eastern folktale *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp* was retold to the Western children through critically analyzing 8 English versions of the story and an Arabic version to compare the different English versions to it. Through looking at the settings, the characters and the events as well as the cultural characteristics presented in the books, we found that most of the English versions were not faithful to the Arabic version- specifically the Disney version of Aladdin, which was the most Westernized one. Based on the findings of this study, we recommend that teachers, educators and parents should not rely on a single book to be the only source for providing information. Rather, they need to locate different books especially when introducing a certain culture.

Keywords: Arabic folktale, cultural representation, children's literature.

Introduction

Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp is an Arabic fairytale that was a part of the classic collection of *One Thousand and One Nights* (Arabic: *alf laylah wa-laylah*), also known as *Arabian Nights* in English. The original author and date of this collection are unknown. However, it is said that the first known reference to the *One Thousand and One Nights* in the Arabic literature was in the 9th century (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2012). *The stories of this collection became popular in Europe since Antoine Galland issued the first translation in French in the 18th century* (Irwin, 1994). It is also argued that “individual stories from the *Nights* had been included in medieval and Renaissance story collection” (Irwin, 1994, p. 42). The *One Thousand and One Nights* tells the story of a king named Shahryar who suffered from infidelity and decided to marry a new woman every night and execute her. In order to postpone her execution, Scheherazade, a newly married queen, tells a story to the king and after it ends, she begins another one. This makes the king eager to know the conclusion, so he postpones Scheherazade’s execution each time. This lasted for 1001 nights. The stories that Scheherazade tells to the king vary broadly. They contained love stories, tragedies, historical tales, comedies, poems, and burlesques and most of them depict legendary places, djinn, and magicians (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). The most well known worldwide tales from this collection are *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp*, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, and *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor*.

This paper seeks to critically analyzes the Western versions of *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp*, which tells the story of a lazy impoverished boy called Aladdin, who lives in a poor condition with his mother. He accidentally finds a wonderful lamp that has a genie, which grants Aladdin all his wishes. With the help of the genie, Aladdin becomes rich and marries Princess Badr-al-Budur, the Sultan’s daughter (Johar, Bernag, & Attar, 1991). This story is very well known and has been retold in different languages and forms like children’s picture books, book chapters, films, cartoons, plays, and opera. Accordingly, this paper seeks to examine how *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp* was retold to the Western children in different story versions. More specifically, we would like to study the settings, the characters (such as Aladdin, the Princess, the Genie, and the Sultan), and the events as well as the visuals. The two research questions that guide our analysis are: (a) How different are the Western versions of *Aladdin* from the Arabic one in terms of the settings, main characters, and the events? (b) What are the overall cultural characteristics of the books? Again, *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp* is a famous story that has been retold in many languages since the early eighteen century. However, there has not been sufficient research that examined how this Middle Eastern folktale is represented in the various Western versions. Therefore, answering these above questions hopefully, would help educators and/or parents to understand whether the different elements of a culture are appropriately or inappropriately depicted to children.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework of this study is drawn from the literary approach and the multicultural approach. The literary approach centers around “the aesthetic aspects of the text (e.g., plot, character development, setting, length and complexity of sentences, word choice, word order, figures of speech, and illustrations)” (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 25). The multicultural approach will assist in the understanding of how the Middle Eastern story is depicted to the Western society. Furthermore, our theoretical framework is based on the belief

that “all literature is a cultural and historical product, emerging from a particular place and time, and reflecting particular cultural and temporal contexts” (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 8).

Accordingly, Hassan (1995) argues that Arabic folktales mirror the Arabic culture's values, morals, myths, social customs, and religious beliefs. She added that the major characteristics of the Arabic folktales are derived from the social and religious values of the Arabs like the protection of women by men, faith in God, hospitality to guests and strangers, honor, generosity, loyalty, and courage. Other components of Arabic folktales are the depiction of the king as a very powerful figure who has slaves and is never questioned; the hero as a brave and proud man/boy, and women as weak and need protection by men. Additionally, Hassan (1995) claimed that Arabic folktales very often include supernatural elements such as Jinn (or Genie) and Ghouls as well magical ones like a ring, a crystal ball, or a flying carpet. The author also stated that many Arabic folktales lack a logical explanation of a certain event, and they very often teach morals.

Furthermore, in her doctoral dissertation, Raina (2009) looked at the representation of Muslims in children's and young adult literature books that were published in English and distributed in the United States. She mainly investigated the overall characteristics of the selected books as well as the background experiences of the authors, illustrators, and translators who write and distribute literature that reflect Muslim cultures within the U.S. The researcher employed a qualitative critical content analysis based on postcolonial theory to analyze 72 children and adolescent picture books and novels about Muslims that were published between 1985 and 2009. These books include biographies, historical fictions, and contemporary realistic fictions. The researcher found that most of the examined books emphasized stereotyped views of the Muslim world such as lack of education, poverty, deserts, camels, and tents. Other examined historical fiction books emphasized “old world tales of the Arabian Nights and harems” (p. 132) like corrupt and cruel husbands, polygamy, and harems. In terms of the background of the authors, illustrators, and translators, the researcher stated that most of the selected books are written by either outsiders to the cultures “who have crossed the boundaries of cultures on wings of imagination and research” or by insiders, “who realize their social responsibility and write from the heart” (p. 217). Nonetheless, many of these insiders depicted some unique cultural aspects to their home-countries in their stories that should not be generalized to include all Middle Eastern countries. The researcher implied that more books which authentically represent the Muslim culture should be published and distributed in the Western countries.

In addition, Ridouani (2011) critically examined how the Western media represents Arabs and Muslims and the effect that this has on the Western people. The researcher utilized a critical analysis for various sources of Western media that conceptualize Arabs and Muslims such as books, cartoons, articles, and movies. Based on the analysis of, for examples, Western media news reports, children animated movies like *Ali Baba the Mad Dog of the Desert* and *Disney's Aladdin* as well as some art pieces of European painters and sculptors such as Jean-Léon Gérôme and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, the researcher found that Arabs and Muslims are misrepresented in the Western media by emphasizing a stereotyped depiction of the actions, thoughts, and intentions of Arabs and Muslims whether in printed, televised, or broadcasted media sources. Additionally, through analyzing the Walt Disney's animated cartoon *Aladdin*, the researcher found that this version of *Aladdin* is very Americanized in terms of the characters' appearances and names. For instance, the princess's identity has been distorted in many ways; her name was changed from Badr Al-Buddur to Jasmine, her attire makes her look as a belly dancer instead of a noble princess, and the color of her complexion and her heavy make-up

present her as a sexual product. The researcher added that in the past, Arabs and Muslims were mostly viewed in the West by less-than-flattering images such as “erotic, primitive, ignorant, and slave traders,” and lately as “terrorist, fundamentalist, and blood-thirsty” (Esposito, 1992, pp. 180, 203 as cited in Ridouani, 2011). This biased representation has a negative impact on the Western public and makes them view Arabs and Muslims as demoniacs. Moreover, the researcher added that although there are other religions existing in the Arab world- other than Islam- like Christianity and Judaism, the two terms Arabs and Muslims are used interchangeable. That is, all Arabs are depicted as Muslims.

Most of the reviewed studies and articles generally looked at the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in the media. None of the studies deeply examined how the Middle Eastern folktale of *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp* is rendered in English children's books. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the settings, main characters, and events of the Western versions of *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp*. It attempts to answer the following questions: (a) How different are the Western versions of *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp* from the Arabic one in terms of main characters, settings, and events? (b) What are the overall cultural characteristics of the books?

Methodology

Using a critical multicultural analysis (Botelho & Rudman, 2009), this study analyzes eight different English versions of *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp*. An Arabic version of the story is also included in the analysis to compare the different English versions to it. The original story can be classified under the genres of fiction, folktale as well as fairytale. The text set was located through Internet searches, mainly by using *amazon.com*, as well as reading book reviews. The researchers reviewed over 15 books and eventually selected 9 books, including the Arabic version, based on the following criteria: (a) Illustrated picture books, (b) written for age six to ten, and (c) publication dates represent the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Accordingly, the researchers were able to select nine picture story books that mostly met the identified criteria. The publication years of the chosen versions are 1981, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2005. The analysis process comprised of the following steps: The researchers (1) read each book individually, (2) recorded some comments, (3) compared their notes, and (4) organized and coded the information into a chart (Table 1). The data collection chart includes the following information for each book: (a) Title, (b) author and year of publication, (c) settings of the story, and (d) main characters and a brief description. Data was charted in this way to highlight the different and common characteristics between the different versions. The events of each story were not included in the chart. However, the events that are different were highlighted in the books and are discussed later on in the Data Analysis and Findings. Additionally, being insiders of the Middle Eastern culture, we were able to verify the authenticity of the illustrations which are also discussed in the following sections. After the coding process, critical multicultural analysis was employed to assist us examine “how identities are constructed, how texts are constructed, how society is constructed, and how language/discourse creates us as much as we create it” (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 3).

Data Analysis

The data from our text set was coded in the following chart to assist us in identifying the differences and similarities between the nine versions of *Aladdin* in terms of the settings and the main characters.

Table 1. Text set information chart

Title	Author & Year	Settings	Main Characters
One Thousand and One Nights: Aladdin and the Magic Lamp (Arabic)	Johar, Bernag, & Attar (1991)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, poor and lazy ○ Princess, Badr-al-Budur ○ Sultan, powerful ○ Magician, Moroccan ○ Father, Mustafa the tailor ○ Mother, works hard ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp
Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp	Lang (1981)	Persia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin ○ Princess, no name ○ Father, Mustapha the tailor ○ Magician, African ○ Sultan, powerful ○ Mother ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp
Disney's Aladdin	Ferguson (1992)	Arabia; imaginary town of Agrabah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, thief ○ Princess, Jasmine ○ Sultan, less powerful ○ Jafar; Sultan's chief advisor (more powerful) ○ Iago; parrot ○ Abu; monkey ○ Rajah; a Bengal tiger (the Princess's pet) ○ Genie; lamp ○ Magic carpet

Title	Author & Year	Settings	Main Characters
The tale of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp: A Story	Kimmel (1992)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, poor, lazy, thief, and beggar ○ Princess, Shadjarr ad-Darr ○ Sultan, powerful ○ Magician, Moroccan ○ Father, Abbas the sandal maker ○ Mother, works hard ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp
Aladdin and the Magic Lamp	Hautzig (1993)	Persia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, an innocent and small poor boy ○ Princess, no name ○ Sultan, powerful ○ Magician, Egyptian ○ Father, no mention ○ Mother, works hard
Aladdin and the Magic Lamp	Stewart (1995)	Eastern City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin; a lazy, spoiled, and poor ○ Princess, no name ○ Sultan, powerful

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Magician, African ○ Father, a tailor ○ Mother, works hard ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp
Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp	Eastman (1996)	Un-known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, lazy ○ Princess, no name ○ Sultan ○ Magician, African ○ Father, not mentioned ○ Mother, jobless ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp
Aladdin and other tales from the Arabian nights	Kerven (1998)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, poor and trouble-maker ○ Magician, Moroccan ○ Emperor ○ Princess Badr al-Budur ○ Mother ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp
Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp	Pullman (2005)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aladdin, a troublemaker, lazy and poor ○ Princess, Badr-al-Budur. ○ Sultan of China, powerful ○ Magician, Moroccan ○ Father, Mustafa the tailor ○ Mother, works hard ○ Genie, ring ○ Genie, lamp

The Arabic version

In the Arabic versions of *Aladdin*, the narrator chose to set the story in China “to add mystery and romance to the tale. However, many of the story’s features remain essentially Arabic” (Kerven, 1998, p. 18). The chosen Arabic version in our text set (Johar, Bernag, & Attar, 1991) takes place in China too. All the names of the characters are Arabic. It can also be said that they are depicted as Muslims because of their frequent use of Islamic expressions.



Figure 1. Aladdin is Chinese (the Arabic version)

The following presents the main events of the tale in a chronological order to compare it later to the Western versions.

Table 2. The chorological order of the events

Aladdin is a poor, lazy boy who had lost his father, Mustapha the tailor, and lived with his mother in a miserable condition. Aladdin refused to work.

A Moroccan magician approached Aladdin and pretended to be his uncle who had been outside of the country for many years. He told Aladdin that he wanted to see his mother and have a meal with them. Aladdin's mother was suspicious because her husband had never said that he got a brother. Nonetheless, she was deceived by his tears and words about her husband.

On the following day, the alleged uncle asked Aladdin to come with him to buy him clothes and find him a job. However, the alleged uncle took Aladdin out of town into a deserted place and told him to gather some sticks in order to set a fire. After the fire had started burning, the magician added some powder to it and began murmuring some unintelligible utterances. Aladdin got scared and tried to escape, but the magician grabbed him and punched him in the face. Then, he told Aladdin that he wanted him to get inside this cave which had a treasure and bring him a lamp. He gave Aladdin his ring to supply him with power.

Aladdin fantasized about the treasure and got inside the cave. He was amazed with the fine stones, gold, and fruit trees. He grabbed the lamp and wanted to get outside. However, he got trapped in the cave because a large stone had blocked the cave entrance. The magician was waiting outside tried to remove the stone, but he could not. He waited and waited, and out of desperate, he left.

Aladdin got scared and began praying. He unintentionally rubbed the ring that was given to him by the magician, and in a surprise, a giant genie appeared. The genie told Aladdin that he was his servant and would do whatever he wanted. Aladdin told him that he wanted to get out of his trap. And this was answered.



After the lamp and the fine stones, both Aladdin's life and his mother's had changed. They became rich. Once, Aladdin saw the Sultan's daughter, Badr al-Budur, and he decided to marry her. His mother went to the Sultan to ask for her hand. She took with her precious jewels. The Sultan was fascinated by the present and told her to wait for three months because his advisor's son had already asked for the Princess's hand too, and the Sultan wanted to see if the advisor's son would be able to bring a pricier present than Aladdin's.

Before the completion of the 3 month period that was set by the Sultan, the Princess got married to the advisor's son and Aladdin felt very sad. After the marriage ceremony had been over and the bride and groom had gone to their palace, Aladdin ordered the Genie of the lamp to bring him the Princess in order not to be touched by the groom. So, the Genie obeyed Aladdin's commands; the Princess was brought to Aladdin and her groom was locked in a room. This reoccurred for three nights.

Then, Aladdin's mother went to the Sultan and asked for his daughter's hand. The Sultan said that Aladdin must provide forty golden plates filled with precious jewels carried by black slaves. And this was answered, so Aladdin and the Princess got married.

The magician came back after he had heard about Aladdin's wealth and started to look for the lamp and get revenge from Aladdin. He pretended to be a lamp street-seller, and the Princess mistakenly gave him the magic lamp as an exchange for a new one. The magician ordered the Genie to transfer Aladdin's palace and the Princess to Morocco.

The Sultan could not believe his eyes after the Princess had gone. And he started to mourn for his daughter's loss and decided to throw Aladdin in prison. In prison, Aladdin remembered the magic ring and rubbed it. The Genie said that he could not bring the Princess and the palace back because he was less powerful than the Genie of the lamp. However, he was able to take Aladdin to Morocco.

The Princess was joyful by seeing Aladdin whom she met. She had a plan to get rid of the magician. Aladdin told Badr al-Budur to wear a beautiful robe, offer the magician a poisoned drink that was prepared by Aladdin, and tell the magician that she had forgotten about Aladdin and wanted to say with him. After sipping from the poisoned drink, the magician died immediately. Then, Aladdin ordered the Genie to get them back to China and the Sultan was very happy.

The magician's brother knew about what had happened and decided to go to China to get revenge for his brother. There was an old woman named Fatima who was a religious figure and many people visited her. The magician's brother killed this woman, wore her clothes, and pretended to be her. The Princess asked this woman to come and live with them in the palace. Fatima started to tell the Princess that they were missing some things in the palace that would protect them. Aladdin asked the Genie for these things and the Genie told Aladdin about the real identity of Fatima. While Aladdin was alone in his room, the magician's brother wanted to stab him with a knife. However, Aladdin took the knife and stabbed him instead. He explained to the Princess why he had done so.

Aladdin and Badr al-Budur lived happily ever after. They had a lot of children. And Aladdin became the Sultan of China after the Sultan's death.

This version of *Aladdin* contained most of the components of Arabic folktales identified by Hassan (1995) in the literature review section. Faith in God was strongly reflected in most of the story events by, for example, praying to God. Moreover, the hero Aladdin was first introduced as a lazy boy, and then was transformed into a proud, brave, and generous man. The Princess is portrayed as a weak person who needed protection by the Sultan and then Aladdin.

She did not have a voice in the story. She did not decide whom to marry. The Sultan is ultimately powerful. He has a lot of wealth and slaves. His commands are answered without questioning. He only cares about his daughter. After his daughter had disappeared, the Sultan ordered for the execution of Aladdin without even hearing from him. The inclusion of supernatural and magical elements is another characteristic of traditional Arabic folktales such as the magic ring and lamp in this tale. Additionally, Arabic folktales very often include certain numbers such as *three*, *seven*, and *forty* which assumed to contain spiritual meanings for many Arabs (Hassan, 1995). In this tale, the Sultan ordered Aladdin to bring him forty plates that are filled with jewels and fine fruits. Furthermore, many events lacked logic. For instance, Aladdin was never questioned by the Sultan or the Princess about his wealth and his ability to answer the Sultan's unfeasible commands without any trouble. Another important characteristic of Arabic folktales is that the righteous side always prevails and this was true of the evil magician and Aladdin.

The English Versions of *Aladdin*

Settings. From Table 1, it can be understood that three out of the eight English versions were faithful to the Arabic version in terms of location as they were set in China. However, the other five versions were set in places such as Persia, an imaginary place in Arabia, and an unidentified Eastern country. For instance, the Disney version of *Aladdin* (Ferguson, 1992) was set in a fictional place in Arabia called Agrabah. The 1981 version that was retold by Andrew Lang, according to the review by Reed Business Information (2005), is considered "the gold standard [and] the most complete and compelling account of Aladdin's life". However, the story was set in Persia and not in China. Nonetheless, the facial features of the characters can be recognized as Asians as can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Persian with Asian facial features (Lang, 1981)

Characters. Aladdin is described as a poor lazy boy as well as a trouble maker in almost all versions, except in Hautzig (1993) as an innocent, small, poor boy. He was also identified as a thief in Kimmel's (1992) and Ferguson's (1992) versions. Aladdin is visualized in different ways. For instance, in Hautzig (1993), Aladdin is depicted as a European boy in the drawings of Hautzig's (1993) as in Figure 3, as an Asian boy (Figure 4) in most versions (even in the ones that were set in Persia such as in Lang's (1981)) wearing Middle Eastern clothes in Kimmel's (1992), and as an Arab in the Disney version as in Figure 5.



Figure 3. Aladdin as a European boy (Hautzig, 1993)



Figure 4. Aladdin is a Chinese boy (Kerven, 1998)



Figure 5. Aladdin is a Middle-Eastern boy (Ferguson, 1992)

The Princess's name was not preserved as *Badr al-Budur* in all versions except in Pullman's (2005) and Kerven's (1998). She had no name in some versions (Eastman, 1996; Hautzig, 1993; Lang, 1981; Stewart, 1995) and different names in other versions (Ferguson, 1992; Kimmel, 1992). The Princess was named *Jasmine* in the Disney version (Ferguson, 1992) and *Shadjarr ad-Darr* in Kimmel's (1992). *Shadjarr ad-Darr* is an uncommon name in Arabic. After conducting some research on this name, we found out that it was the name of the Sultana of Egypt in 1250 (Waddy, 1980) and it means '*Tree of Pearls*'. In all of the examined versions, except in the Disney version, the Princess has no voice. She does not choose her groom. However, in the Disney version (Ferguson, 1992), the Princess, Jasmine, has a stronger personality and her voice is heard. She refuses to get married to Jafar, her father's advisor, and she has a love affair with Aladdin. In terms of the Princess's clothing, there were some contradictions in some versions. For instance, in Hautzig (1993), the Princess is depicted with a veil in the beginning of the story when Aladdin sees her for the first time, and without veil when she is talking to the magician at the end of the story as in Figures 6. In Kimmel (1992) and Ferguson (1992), the Princess was depicted as a belly dancer rather than a Princess. Figure 7 shows how Princess Jasmine is presented in the Disney version.



Figure 6. *The Princess was wearing her veil but no veil with the magician (Hautzig, 1993)*



Figure 7. *Princess Jasmine presented as a belly-dancer (Ferguson, 1992)*

In other versions, women, including the Princess, were visualized in a confusing and misrepresenting way of Arab Muslim women; they cover their faces and show their bellies (Kimmel, 1992; Pullman, 2005) as in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Women covering their faces but not their entire bodies (Pullman, 2005)

From this misrepresentation, it might be inferred that in Islam women can show their arms and bellies as long as they cover their faces. This depiction of Arab Muslim women might confuse the reader who is a stranger to the Muslim culture. Also, in Kimmel (1992), the Princess and other women were depicted in the drawings with pets such as cats, dogs (Figure 9 is an example), and tigers, which is an uncommon thing in Arab culture, so the author mixes the Western and Arab cultures.



Figure 9. The Princess carrying a cat (Kimmel, 1992)

Aladdin's mother did not have a name even in the Arabic version. Her job was not clearly mentioned. In the Disney version, there was no inclusion for Aladdin's mother and father. In most versions, she was depicted as a Chinese old woman except in Hautzig's (1993), her appearance brings to mind the paintings of women in the Renaissance art, and hardly give the impression of being Arab as can be seen in Figure 10.



Figure 10. Aladdin's mother neither looks Chinese nor Arab (Hautzig, 1993)

At the beginning of most versions, it is told that Aladdin's father, Mustapha the tailor, is dead. In one version (Kimmel, 1992), Aladdin's father was given a different name and profession; *Abbas, the sandal maker*. The magician was identified as Moroccan in some versions, similar to the Arabic version, and as African in others. The Disney version was completely different from the Arabic one. The Sultan's advisor, Jafar, was assumed to be the magician. The Sultan, who was referred to as the Emperor of China in Kerven (1998), is very powerful in all versions and never questioned except in the Disney version; he looks less powerful in front of his evil advisor Jafar.

Other important characters are the Genie of the ring and the Genie of the lamp. They were present in all versions except in the Disney one. The Genie of the ring was not included in the Disney version. However, other characters were added such as the magic carpet and the animals; Abu the monkey, Iago the parrot, and Rajah the tiger who is the Princess's pet. All these characters in the Disney version were not part of the Arabic story. This can be regarded as the Disney formula or style; the inclusion of objects and animals (Figure 11) that are given human characteristics.



Figure 11. The Genie, magic carpet, and Abu in the Disney version (Ferguson, 1992)

Events. Most of the examined versions included the same events of the Arabic version and the same sequence except for the bolded events in Table 2. We are not definite whether these two events, the marriage of the Princess to the Sultan's advisor's son and the inclusion of the magician's brother, were part of the earlier retold Arabic versions or only in this one (Johar, Bernag, & Attar, 1991). There are some insignificant differences in some events such as in Hautzig's (1993), when the magician first met Aladdin, he gave him gold; silver dirham in Kimmel's (1992); and 10 dinars in Pullman's (2005). In the Stewart (1995) version, the magician just introduces himself as Aladdin's uncle and takes him directly to the garden where the lamp is hidden without meeting Aladdin's mother. Additionally, in all of the versions, the ring is given by the magician except in Pullman's (2005); the ring was found in the cave and then worn by Aladdin. The Disney version (Ferguson, 1992) was not faithful to the Arabic version; some major events were different. For instance, it begins with Jafar, the chief advisor of the Sultan trying to reclaim the magic lamp from a tiger-shaped cave and failed. Aladdin accidentally meets the Princess in the marketplace. Then, Aladdin is thrown in jail for thievery. Jasmine orders to be released, but Jafar tells her that he has been executed. After that, Jafar frees Aladdin and takes him to the cave to get him the magic lamp. Aladdin and Abu find a magic carpet, a magic lamp, and lots of jewels. Jafar tries to kill Aladdin when he hands him the lamp, but Abu bites Jafar and gets the lamp back and the carpet. However, both Aladdin and Abu get stuck in the cave. Unintentionally, Aladdin rubs the lamp, and a Genie appears and helps him get out of the cave. Then, Aladdin asks the Genie to make him a Prince so he can flatter Jasmine. Jafar proposes to

the Princess but Aladdin shows up as 'Prince Ali', so she rejects Jafar. Jasmine goes with Aladdin to a trip around the world on the magic carpet. Afterwards, Aladdin is captured by Jafar, but the Genie rescues Aladdin whom then returns to the palace and exposes Jafar's plan. Iago, the parrot, steals Aladdin's lamp and gives it to Jafar who orders the Genie to make him the Sultan. With the help of the magic carpet, Aladdin returns to the palace and tells Jasmine to distract Jafar in order to retrieve the lamp. However, Jafar has not been deceived and transforms himself to a giant cobra. After a big fight, Aladdin is able to defeat Jafar. Finally, the Sultan changes the law to let the Princess marry Aladdin, and the Genie has been freed. From what preceded, it can be seen that the Disney version of *Aladdin* has a different plot and characters from the Arabic version.

Findings

Based on the analyzed data, this section attempts to answer the two research questions of the study:

I. *How different are the Western versions of Aladdin from the Arabic one in terms of settings, characters, and events?*

With regard to settings, some authors chose to set the tale in Persia (Hautzig, 1993; Lang, 1981), a fictional place in Arabia (Ferguson, 1992), and unidentified Eastern country (Stewart, 1995). However, other authors kept the settings in China which is the same as in the early Arabic versions of the tale (Kerven, 1998; Kimmel, 1992; Pullman, 2005). In terms of the characters, they were, to some extent, similar to the Arabic versions. However, some authors did not preserve the Princess's Arabic name *Badr al-Budur* as in Kimmel (1992) and Ferguson (1992). Moreover, the illustrations were somewhat confusing; Arabic names with Chinese facial features and women covering their faces and wearing belly-dancer-like outfits. The Disney version was the most different one in our book set from the Arabic version. For instance, new characters that did not exist in the Arabic version, such as Jafar and the different animals and objects with human characteristics, were added. Moreover, we found several references to different tales from *Arabian Nights*. For instance, Aladdin impersonates a prince named Ali Ababwa; an obvious reference to the protagonist from *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.

I. *What are the overall cultural characteristics of the books?*

Critical multicultural analysis of the text set has revealed that most of the cultural characteristics of Arabic folktales were preserved in the English versions such as the supernatural elements, faith in God, protection of women, powerfulness of the king, the proud, brave, and generous hero, the lack of logic in some events, and the victory of good on evil. Nonetheless, as can be seen from the Data Analysis section, there was a mix between the Arabic culture and the Western one in some versions (Ferguson, 1992; Hautzig, 1993; Kimmel, 1992; Pullman, 2005). For instance, there was a misrepresentation of Arab women's outfits; wearing a belly-dancer-like clothes and covering their faces with veils. Furthermore, we found that the Disney version of Aladdin was the most Westernized one in our book set in terms of the characters' appearances and names as well as the events. For instance, the Princess's identity has been heavily diverged. Her attire and personality were remote from the Arabic version as well as the general cultural characteristics of Arabic folktale. She falls in love with Aladdin and goes with him on a magic carpet ride around the world. In addition, a major cultural difference in this version is the presentation of the Sultan as a weak person in front of his advisor which is not a common cultural component of Arabic folktales.

Conclusion

Introducing Arabic folklore to children through the use of *Aladdin*, *Aladdin's Disney* is not recommended because it is extremely westernized, and it does not preserve the essence of the cultural features of Arabic folktales. However, Kerven's version might be a faithful version to the Arabic one in terms of settings, characters, and most of the events. Additionally, it has some explanatory notes (visual and text) on the margins of the page for unique Arabic cultural concepts. This version has also other tales from the *Arabian Nights*. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that "no single book should be relied on as the sole source of information about any country or culture" (Lechner, 2007, p.1). Teachers need to locate different books for a classroom use, as they should not rely on a single book to introduce a certain culture.

For further research, we recommend a deeper analysis of how gender, class, race, and/or power is/are constructed in other versions of *Aladdin*, particularly the Disney version because it is the most accessible one to children. Another potential study is to examine other Arabic folktales from the *Arabian Nights* like the well known English versions of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, and *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor* since they are available to children as story books and animated movies. Finally, it would be interesting to look at different earlier versions of *Aladdin*, or other tales from the classic collection of the *Arabian Nights*, and see whether and/or how they have evolved over time.

About the Authors:

Eman Elturki is a doctoral candidate in the Language, Literacy and Technology program at Washington State University. Elturki holds a master's degree in TESOL from the University of Southern California. She works as a part time ESL instructor at the Intensive American Language Center of Washington State University.

Suda Shaman is currently earning her PhD. in Language, Literacy and Technology Education at Washington State University. Shaman holds a master of art degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Washington State University and a bachelor degree in Arabic Language Education at the Faculty of Education for girls.

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Past, Status Quo, and Future of the Department of English

Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh
Department of English
University of Jordan, Amman Jordan
(On leave at Arab Open University)

Abstract:

This study offers an account and a critique of the undergraduate syllabus of the English department in Jordan. The aim is to explore its evolvement and dynamism and suggest what it should look like in the days ahead. It starts by taking note of a little-known but historic conference on the subject hosted by the University of Jordan (UJ) in 1982, which triggered much of the discourse on the subject and whose major premises are extremely relevant today. It then moves to discuss the English department's emergence and development, focusing on what the study sees as its three main phases: the colonial, the national/postcolonial, and the global/postmodern. While the discussion and the conclusions pertain to the English department in both Jordan and the Arab World, the specific examples are given on the basis of the experience of the English Department at UJ, the oldest and most influential in the country. Throughout, attention is paid to the three major components of the department syllabus: language, literature, and linguistics. The study confirms that a major preoccupation of the department should be with language and communication skills. Nevertheless, it needs to pay ample attention to other crucial skills, such as critical, analytical, aesthetic, and cultural skills – most of which can best be served through the literature component. In order for the department to continue to thrive, it has to deal with emerging challenges and societal pressures, including the zealous push for “language” per se or ESP programs, without fragmenting its own structure and compromising its sense of mission and coherence.

Keywords: English Department, English literature, English language, linguistics, English in Arab World

Past, Status Quo, and Future of the Department of English

In the past three decades English departments in Jordan, which epitomize English departments in the Arab World (Ibrahim 1983, p. 20, Zughoul 1983, p. 30), have started to pay increasing attention to their mission or sense of purpose (John 1986, Salih 1986, Majdoubeh 1992, Obeidat 1997, Haggan 1999, Al-Kharabsheh et. al. 2009, among others). Before the 1980s, there was hardly any evidence they had “given much thought to their place or role in our universities and societies,” as Ibrahim aptly pointed out in 1983 (p. 19). What seems to have triggered and heightened their attention to their role is a milestone conference on the subject held at the University of Jordan (UJ) in 1982. The focus on the department’s role and welfare can also be attributed to the remarkable expansion of these departments in the country and the region: in the case of Jordan, from one in 1962 to about thirty in 2012 . Today the department in our part of the world, unlike the department in America which seems to be on the decline (Chace 2009), is in a strong position. Nevertheless, while it has succeeded in coping with many challenges, it will have to continue to do its best to address those which it is facing now in order to maintain its position of strength.

In what follows, and by way of delineating where the department stands and where it should be heading, I shall focus on the following three dimensions of the matter: how the department came into being in our part of the world, how it has developed, and what its structure, focus, and function should look like in the coming years. These dimensions are parallel to and embedded in the three phases which the study suggests the department went through, as manifested in its evolving study plans: the colonial, the national/postcolonial, and the global/postmodern. I shall argue throughout that what helped the department survive and thrive is its dynamic structure, its adaptability to change, and its multiple functions. Toward the end, I will highlight some of the new challenges that the department needs to face.

I. Literature Review

Several studies have tackled the subject. The most important of these appear in the proceedings of the UJ conference referred to above on “The Problems of Teaching English Language and Literature at Arab Universities,” which were published in 1983. The proceedings contain seventeen articles written by scholars from Jordan, the region, and abroad. Four are on the English department as a whole (Dahiyat & Ibrahim 1983, pp. 7-51), five on the literature component of the syllabus (Ibid, pp. 52-101), and eight on the language/linguistics component (Ibid, pp. 102-206). Many of the conclusions these studies reach are extremely relevant to the English department’s core mission in Jordan and the Arab World today and to the argument of this study. Three of the conclusions are noteworthy because they have, first, greatly influenced the department’s shape thereafter and, secondly, been endorsed by several subsequent studies. The first is that the department’s primary aim is to teach language (El-Mowafy 1983, p.11). To this end, there should be great emphasis, especially in the first two years, on language skills, particularly “composition and writing” since “the language component is the weakest” (Ibrahim p.28, p.24). The second is that English literature is relevant, even essential, to students’ needs, and that its primary purpose should be to serve language learning. According to Munro, the department needs to pay special attention to literature because “our students will have a far greater, richer, deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the English language. If TEFL is important, TEFLIT is equally so” (Munro 1983, p 60. See also Lott 1983, pp. 102-3). Some

conference participants suggested that emphasis should be put on “modern” literature and on prose rather than poetry (Zughoul 1983, p.36). I shall qualify this by saying that literature – both old and modern, poetry and prose – also serves a host of other skills, including critical and cultural skills, as Dahiyyat pointed out (p. 63). The third is that linguistics, which most participants agree was arbitrarily placed in the department, does not serve language learning much: linguistics has “little to do with language teaching” (Ibrahim 1983, p.25) and “linguists lack the training in language teaching” (Zughoul 1983, p.40). I shall also qualify this by underscoring that linguistics does, to an extent, contribute to language learning by making students think about language and about some aspects that boost language learning (Haggan 1999).

In addition to the articles in the proceedings, I also rely in developing my argument on several studies that have tackled the subject from 1983 to the present. These, which will be acknowledged in the body of this essay as well as in the bibliography and which were primarily triggered by the proceedings, address further aspects related to the three components just mentioned: language, literature, and linguistics. The study also depends on a close analysis of the three major study plans of the English Department at UJ, from the sixties to the present.

II. The Study’s Main Thesis

The study proposes and seeks to crystalize the following thesis statement: The English department in Jordan has been able not only to survive but also thrive over the past five decades because of its flexibility in accommodating and balancing the three disciplines which compete for dominance in its syllabus: literature, language, and linguistics. What adds to its position of strength is also its accommodation of societal expectations in terms of the know-how and skills that English majors should possess. Nevertheless, societal pressures and expectations intensify and widen at this point in time pushing for the accommodation of an increasing number of other sub-fields, such as translation, applied English, and the various forms of ESP. For this reason, the department needs to prioritize and adopt only what it sees fit and reject what is irrelevant or distortive. This will enable it to continue to maintain its overall coherence and relevance and prevent erosion or fragmentation which, according to Chace, has harmed the English department in America (Chace 2009).

The thesis is arrived at on the basis of a close examination of the studies available on the subject, a close reading and critique of the components of the three major UJ study plans over the past five decades, and a careful look at some of the major contextual shifts that brought about such dramatic changes in the syllabus.

It should also be noted here that, in delineating the department’s evolvement and development, the study pinpoints the three major phases that the department has gone through: the colonial, the national/postcolonial, and the global/postmodern. While the first phase has been identified as such by some critics (as will be illustrated), the latter two have been identified by this study.

III. The Colonial Phase

When English was introduced as a university discipline in our part of the world, as early as the 1920s and 1930s (EL-Mowafy 1983, p. 9, Zughoul 1983, p.31), it was introduced as a department of English *literature*, with no significant language or linguistics components per se. This is clearly manifested in the first study plan which the UJ English Department adopted upon establishment in 1962 (Appendix I). A glimpse at the plan reveals that the program was almost

exclusively composed of English literature courses. Students throughout the 1960s had to study, after a year of general university requirements including some English, mainly 3-credit, year-long courses dealing with English single authors, eras of English literature, and historical and social contexts from the Medieval to the modern period. These included courses on Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, the eighteenth century, Romanticism, Victorianism, and the twentieth century. There were also a couple of courses on Greek and Roman Mythology and an introduction to Western Civilization. There was one course on the History of English. And there were only two 2-credit hour courses on linguistics and one single 1-credit hour course on translation.

What is also obvious is the total absence of language-skills courses throughout the specialization years, which today we consider essential. Additionally, the philological dimension, aside from the two courses on linguistics and the course on the history of English, was absent. Almost all faculty members were native speakers of English, from Britain and America.

The conclusion one draws, on the basis of this study plan and as some scholars have stated, is that the UJ English Department throughout the 1960s, as the case was generally throughout the Arab world, was an exact copy of the English department in Britain. Zughoul calls it “a replica of departments of English at home, i.e., at British universities” (1983, p. 21). It is a “replica” precisely because it was a department of literature, not language or linguistics. It is a known fact that the British colonized much of the Arab World in the first half of the twentieth century and when the English departments were set up, they were set up “in the days of colonialism” (Zughoul 1983, p. 31) based on the British model.

The department’s “coloniality” stems from two main factors. The first is that the department, as one infers from Terry Eagleton, was introduced due to the influence of imperialist Britain. According to Eagleton, there was a direct link between the creation of English literature as a discipline in Britain on the one hand and British nationalism and colonialism on the other. Asserting both points in *Introduction to Literary Theory*, he says: “English literature rode to power on the back of wartime nationalism” (p.26), giving the British great “pride in their national language and literature” (p.22). He also adds that the rise of English in the early twentieth century in Britain becomes inevitably, by virtue of this very nationalist dimension and Britain’s place in the world, part and parcel of British imperialism and colonialism: “The era of academic establishment of English is also the era of high imperialism in England” (Eagleton 1996, p.24). It is due to such rationale that the department was a department of *English* literature. Among the long list of courses in the UJ study plan, there was not one single course on American, Canadian, Australian or even Scottish or Irish literature – let alone global literature. It is interesting in this context to point out the doubleness of meaning, and thus the doubleness of hegemony and influence, implied in the word “English” in the department’s title: “English” meaning literature, not language or linguistics, and English referring to the literature of England per se.

The second factor in the department’s coloniality pertains to its disregard of students’ specific needs. The mere assumption that what suits Britain and British students should suit Arab society and students is highly problematic, to say the least, as El-Mowafy has pointed out (10). Why would our students enroll in a BA program in which *all* the courses belong to a foreign culture and literature with no direct relevance to their own culture and literature? The case against the department’s early form, one concludes, is precisely that no adaptation or acculturation took place in introducing the program to learners. Granted, English literature is partly relevant to our students, as many ended up teaching English literature at school.

Nevertheless, even those who went on upon graduation to teach English at schools, they had to teach primarily language skills. Clearly, there is a gap here: students needed more training in language and communication skills and some linkage with Arabic literature and culture (El-Mowafy 1983, p.12-13).

It is interesting to note that even those departments, such as the UJ English department, which came into existence after the British Mandate officially ended in the late 1940s for most Arab countries continued to copy the same model that commenced during the Colonial era. And when Jordanian or Arab professors, who were native speakers of Arabic, obtained their doctorates in English and started teaching in these departments, they continued to teach what the founding British professors were teaching, with no alteration (El-Mowafy 1983, p. 9-10). El-Mowafy's position is typical of some scholars who later became critical of the colonial department. Says he: "It is not a wild guess to think that deep in the national consciousness there lurks the suspicion that those Arab specialists of English or French can't be real nationals Have they not taken over from foreigners?" (p.9).

It must be made clear, however, that even though the colonial department was criticized for privileging courses in English literature over language skills, these same scholars do recognize that literature contributes substantially to language learning (Ibrahim 1983). So, their criticism – one infers – was not so much of the fact that the English department taught English literature per se but that it taught *only* English literature . Therefore, despite the absence of thinking about meeting learners' or society's needs and despite the absence of language skills, the department did graduate quality students whose command of English enabled them to complete the program successfully and to find rewarding jobs. This is one lesson learned from the colonial department.

The second lesson, and this is a paradox one should not lose sight of, is that the colonial and the postcolonial are always intertwined. Regardless of the colonialist intentions, those students who study the literature of colonial powers or foreign literature in general always end up becoming empowered, not pacified, "softened" (Eagleton 1986, p. 24), brainwashed, or subscribing to the viewpoint of the "masters" (Eagleton 1986, p. 22). They are always able to understand the colonial culture better, critique it, deconstruct it, and come to terms with it. *Studying* a foreign culture, even when its values are diametrically opposed to one's own, not only yields crucial moral and intellectual advantages but is a necessity for challenging and thus fostering one's own faith in one's own culture (Asfour 1983, Majdoubeh 1992). This is especially true in the case of English literature. A great example is Edward Said. Among many, he was a product of the early version of the English department who went on to build a career on deconstructing Orientalism and Western colonialism, making ample use of his knowledge of English literature and culture, and to become one of the icons of post-colonialism, a school of thought that unmasked and disarmed the colonial school (*Orientalism* 1979, *Culture and Imperialism* 1994). Inadvertently, and unlike what is *intended*, the colonialists end up empowering the colonial subjects. As Mustafa Sa'eed, himself a colonial subject turned postcolonial, has eloquently put it in his diary in *Season of Migration to the North*, "We teach people ... But we cannot guarantee the result" (Salih 1969, p.151).

III. The National, Post-colonial Phase

The colonial phase, which, as has been illustrated, extended beyond the actual colonial period, ends with the end of the 1960s, as clear from the department's radical study plan shift

(Appendix II). As of the early seventies a new phase, which I call the national/ post-colonial, begins to unfold. With this new phase – which can be divided into two stages, that of the 1970s (the national) and that which begins with the early 1980s (the postcolonial) and extends well into the new century – the English department changes dramatically. It even transforms, especially in the first stage. The study plan itself begins to noticeably, even drastically, alter, and so does the composition of the academic staff, the vast majority becoming national (El-Mowafy 1983, p. 10). Regarding the Arab World, Arab nationalism continues to climax and brings about both abrupt and slow changes, including – in a way – the “nationalization” of the English department, among the overall “nationalization” of universities and other institutions. In Jordan, the 1970s witnessed the birth of another major national university, Yarmouk University (1976), and therefore another English department. From then onwards, other universities started emerging, always with an English department that is *core* to university structure. The paradoxical point to stress here is that the end of the colonial period did not see the end of the English department but its further rise and multiplication, with one difference: the department survives and thrives in an altered form. At UJ also, the early 1970s witness a distinct academic event, the shift from the British year-system to the American credit-hour system. This heralds a major, milestone shift in the department’s life.

Such shift is most clearly seen in the new study plan which the department at UJ adopted (Appendix II). For one thing, many language-skills courses were introduced. The compulsory list, which all students had to take, included: Writing (1), Study Skills, Advanced Grammar, Writing (2), and Pronunciation and Speech. The long language/linguistics electives list, of which students could take up to 18 credit hours, was composed of about nine courses, such as Comprehension and Advanced Writing, Studies in English Grammar, the Tense in English, the Art of Writing and Expression, etc. There were also many linguistics courses. The compulsory list included two courses on Phonetics and Linguistics, and the electives included several courses, such as Advanced Linguistics, Comparative Linguistics, Schools of Language, Sociolinguistics, Advanced Phonetics, a Research Seminar in Linguistics, etc. There were also, among the electives, two courses on translation and two on teaching English as a Foreign Language. The rest of the courses, a majority, were in literature. It is interesting to note here that the “English” department, by which was originally meant English “literature,” becomes now a department of English Language and Literature, with “language” coming before “literature.” The official degree the graduate obtains is also one in English language and literature (Appendix II).

Several conclusions can be drawn from the components of the 1970s study plan. The first is that it has undergone a fundamental *structural* change, and not just minor alteration or reshuffling of some components, as in later decades. This makes the 1970s plan truly stand out as a milestone development. Obviously, literature no longer reigned supreme, but it did remain the more fundamental component: the majority of the long list of compulsory courses are in literature, and a student desirous of studying more literature can choose up to 18 hours from the electives list. Nevertheless, there are so many other language and linguistics courses to choose from. The second is the study plan’s obvious liberalism, which derives its spirit from the American credit-hour system. The liberalism works at two levels. The first is that, while the student does not have a choice in compulsory courses, he/she has a lot of choices from the electives list. Not only is the list long enough to offer so many options, but – more importantly – a student can choose all the 15-18 hours from the literature list, the language/linguistics list, or from both. The second level of liberalism is that, for the first time ever, the student has the

choice to major in English and minor in another subject: education, business, Arabic, etc. The third conclusion is that, for the first time also, the study plan is no longer imported wholesale. National demands begin to influence what students can and should study. For example, the introduction of the language skills courses recognizes the fact that the students are non-native speakers and therefore they need a solid base in language skills before and after they embark on specialized literature or linguistics courses. Furthermore, the introduction of a main major and a minor, as opposed to a single major, is greatly influenced, in the case of Jordan, by the Ministry of Education, which was sending a large number of students to the university to obtain a bachelor's degree and then join it as teachers in schools. The Ministry wanted the students to minor in education so that they will be better prepared for their profession as teachers of English. The fourth conclusion is that the study plan comes with the aim of striking a balance between literature and the growing influence of linguistics, especially since several faculty members joining the department are specialists in linguistics. Faculty members' specializations at both Jordanian and Arab universities do influence the fate of the syllabus in their departments (Ibrahim 1983, p.24).

This was the picture in the 1970s: an English department the majority of whose faculty members were nationals, whose core curricular components reflected the demands of the new national phase, whose study plan had a core of literature and strong components of language and linguistics to complement students' learning, and whose liberal philosophy allowed students to make many choices.

This 1970s structure continued to manifest itself strongly in the second stage, of the post-colonial phase, i.e. throughout the three decades that unfolded since then. A look at the study plan of the 1980s and 1990s and onwards shows that it underwent largely *minor*, though significant, shifts and changes (Appendix III) . Some of the amendments were progressive, some were regressive. Many of the courses that existed in the 1970s remained but were shifted or juggled in and out of the compulsory and elective lists. The long lists of electives were shortened, and the students' choices were curtailed. There was essentially one list of compulsory courses combining together literature, language, and linguistics courses, with literature courses being still more in number; and one list of electives – also combining language, literature and linguistics (Appendix III).

Three developments during these three decades, however, are worth highlighting. The first is the appearance of some totally new courses, mainly in the electives list, as an attempt to present courses relevant in some employment spheres. These include Writing in the Field of Journalism, Debating and Dialogue, Creative Writing, Introduction to American Studies, etc. These, however, remain, in my view, at best shy attempts to respond to market and societal needs and emerging fields of interest. The second is a development related to the literature component. Over the years, other world literatures in English started cropping up in the study plan. For instance, a whole course on world literature was introduced in the 1970s, which focused on Western authors and the more ancient literature. At present, the course on Modern World Literature introduces a wider variety of authors from the Western and Non-Western worlds. This, again, is another shy attempt at expanding into what is called nowadays "literature in English". The third is the growing importance of literary theory courses, focusing on postcolonial topics such as Orientalism, feminism, psychoanalysis, etc. The fourth is the heightened interest in foreign languages. French was introduced as an independent major in the early 1980s. In the late 1980s, other foreign languages followed, including German, Italian, Spanish, Korean, Chinese

etc. The point to stress here is that the introduction of these languages as “joint” bachelor’s programs strengthened the demand on and the position of the English department rather than weakened it, for students who specialized in these foreign languages had to take a lot of English from the department so as to graduate as joint specialists in German/English, Chinese/English, etc. Offering a joint program in languages proves to be a very pertinent idea in light of the current emphasis on bilingualism or even multilingualism (Graddol 1997, p. 3, Graddol 2006, p.19, Doiz, et. al. 2011). Furthermore, when the idea of studying English for the purpose of teaching, through the so-called “field teacher” program, was introduced at UJ’s Faculty of Educational Sciences in the 1990s, students enrolled in this specialization also took a large number of courses from the department.

Two conclusions can be drawn from these developments. The first is that the department begins to diversify course offerings beyond the typical language, literature, and linguistics courses into other related fields – such as the Language of the Journalism, Creative Writing, etc. The second is that the department begins to be a provider for students from other specializations: the “field” teacher in Education, the specialists in “joint” foreign-language degrees, etc. The ultimate conclusion, on the basis of these two conclusions is the mounting, not the diminishing, importance and centrality of the English department.

IV. The Global, Postmodern Phase

In 2011/2012, which falls within what we know as the height of the global, postmodern era (Jameson 1991), we find the department academically structured as has been described: a major component of English literature and two substantial language skills and linguistics components complementing it, in addition to a small miscellany of ESP and other courses that are put mainly in the electives list. Some departments offer a translation component for market or cultural considerations.

Even though the department has so far succeeded in balancing pressures and demands (John 1986, Salih 1986, Obaidat 1997, Haggan 1999) and has survived and is thriving, its position of strength should not be taken for granted. There is a potential threat that could come from some of the same factors that affected its counterpart in the U.S. negatively (Chace 2009). The potential threat stems from several factors. The first, and most serious, is the absence of strategic thinking. As the case is in institutions in the Arab world generally, there is no specific body within the university that thinks strategically for programs. Almost always changes are initiated not collectively, but by single individual faculty members or administrators, often in response to ideas or pressures that come from without. Such pressure is not to be underestimated. Of course, changes have to go through the formalities of councils, but such processes are largely formalities. Additionally, while some decisions are made bottom up, many are made top down. In Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education has shifted from legislating and facilitating at a macro level into governing and concerning itself with a lot of micro matters, which cripples university autonomy – and thus that of the department. Some decisions are also made by chairpersons and deans without due consultation with faculty members. In the absence of strategic thinking, such influences often result in impulsive or subjective decisions. Additionally, administrators change frequently. In the past decade, UJ experienced six different presidents, with each of whom a new team comes to govern, bringing with them new ideas which replace those that have hardly been put in place. Abrupt changes and hasty decisions are distortive. The ultimate outcome is a series

of capricious pulls and pushes, unsuccessful attempts to accommodate so many emerging ideas, expectations and conflicting demands.

The second reason is, paradoxically, the increasing demand on English itself. There is competition with English, of course, from specializations like business and others (Ibrahim 1983, pp.19-20). Nevertheless, the department is still doing well, in fact attracting more students than it can accommodate. This is due to the still high demand on English. English is seen by many as essential for employment and survival in the marketplace (Ibrahim 1983, Zughoul 1983). Additionally, in our society, unlike in many others internationally, there is a population “bulge” which guarantees the continued flow of clients to most university specializations (Assaad & Roudi Fahmi 2007, Steityeh 2010). This, in turn, heightens the demand on the current department.

However, it is this upsurge of interest in language and the ambiguity or false notions about how to best realize it that may affect the department negatively, threatening its very structure and existence. It is a situation where a blessing could become a curse. The demand for language, in other words, may encourage some to drastically reshuffle the structure and content of the existing study plan so as to increase what they call “language” courses. They may even opt to transform the whole department into a “language” department. This is neither far-fetched nor paranoia on part of those who believe in the current form, structure, and content. Already some, within the academic world and outside it, are frowning at the literature component, questioning its relevance to students’ needs. (Zughoul 1983).

Already also, some universities, bowing to pressure for English for the market, have started opening some BA programs in ESP or “applied” English. For example, UJ has opened one, copying a program which has been in operation at another, Jordan University of Science and Technology. Clearly, there is no problem in experimenting with new programs *in addition* to the English program as we know it, or in having some universities adopt some new programs and others stick to the classic ones and their slightly modified versions. But the ESP or applied English can be a threat to the English department if it is injected as a major component in it or – in extreme cases – if it replaces it. The problem, of course, in incorporating too many components in the English department is that the department loses its coherence and character. And this is the second reason Chace mentions behind its decline: the syllabus becomes too fragmented to be of any benefit. Says he, “English has become less and less coherent as a discipline[a]mid a chaos of curricular change” (para.24 of 41). It is this fragmentation, this derailing from focus, that could threaten the English department.

Certainly the department should grow and respond to change positively. It should be dynamic, not static – and so far it *has* been. And it has also survived and thrived because, in the words of McDougal, it has evolved within the context “of its own culture and history” (2010, p.360). But in the days ahead, it needs to maintain its focus, priorities, and character. The best way to teach English is through the current, evolved structure: a strong literary component (yes, even including Spenser and Shakespeare), augmented by relevant linguistics and language-skills courses (Sage 1987, Stern 1991, Collie & Slater 1990). Through literature we can teach language (Hismanoglu 2005), and literature puts language in context, textually and culturally. One or two courses in ESP or “applied” English may be necessary, but a heavy dose of it isn’t. Some training courses in ESP or applied English outside the department are encouraged, as ESP at such a level is both useful and growing in popularity (Anthony 2001). A whole program on ESP or applied English is very problematic.

One would argue, on the basis of experience, that ESP and applied English as whole programs are largely a red herring. For one thing, how does one teach an ESP program? One understands a student of business learning the language of business through business courses, a student of law through law courses, a student of engineering through engineering courses, etc. But how can a student of “language” learn the language of business, law, engineering, etc. *together*? In an “applied” English course at UJ, a teacher was teaching students “the language of law” through asking them to read and interpret law texts. The students kept complaining: “We do not understand these concepts; we are not law students.” So they ended up memorizing the texts. There is no “bare” or “naked” language out there to have a department for. For another, assuming that ESP or applied English works and that one finds the right textbooks, it would be too narrow and too limiting to fulfill students’ overall needs: “it teaches learners enough English to survive in certain narrowly defined venues but not enough to thrive in the world at large” (Belcher 2004, p.165). We should not forget that ESP courses are, in the first place, “tailored to fit the specific needs of the students” (Basturkmen 2010, p.143) and not their general needs. Furthermore, how many disciplines can one put in an ESP or applied English program without eroding it and without graduating jacks of all trades? A whole ESP or applied English program would suffer exactly from what Chace has referred to above: it would lack the bare minimum coherence enabling it to *be* a discipline.

Furthermore, our students do not need the language of the media to be able to work in the media, the language of business to work in business, the language of tourism to work in tourism, etc. What they need is not the *specific* English of ESP but the *general* English that one finds in the classic department (in its postmodern, improved form – that is): in language-skills courses, short stories, plays, essays, poems, novels, and good books; in other words, in good-old basic, solid English. In all of these literary genres one finds narrators or characters speaking the general, varied, every-day English of communication in numerous life situations. It is the English of life, which *includes* the language of business letters, media, diplomacy, etc. When students graduate with solid general English, they can excel in any job with some training. Employers need to play a complementary role by giving short training courses in the specific line of work they focus on, rather than expect the department to graduate students in the specific or narrow field they require, which is one of thousands of narrow fields. An impossibility for the department to handle.

It should also go without saying that the role of the department should by no means be confined to the teaching/learning of language. We do not open a whole BA program just to teach our students listening, reading, writing, speaking, and understanding. As much as our students need language skills, they also need analytical, critical, aesthetic, and – of great importance these days – cultural or cross-cultural skills (Hogan 2007, Hannigan 1990, Gay 2002, Tarawneh 1986).

V. Conclusions

The English department in our part of the world has evolved and developed steadily over the years, as primarily evident from the UJ successive study plans and the critical discourse on the subject. As a result, and because of its relative flexibility in accommodating emerging trends and demands, it is now thriving despite competition from other disciplines. What needs to be done to bolster its status and prevent any reversal of the growth trend is to continue to pay careful attention to its content, modifying it somewhat in order to keep abreast with emerging

developments, but without eroding or fragmenting it. There should always be insistence on a solid core and a flexible periphery. The core, as made clear from the discussion above, should consist of a solid language- and communication-skills package, a strong literature component, and a few relevant linguistics courses. The language and communication package should focus on the four skills but prioritize reading and writing. The literature component should be built around not English literature per se, as the current practice is, but literature in English. The approach could be generic (i.e. focusing on the main genres of literature) rather than historic, and it should represent the best in world literature from the five continents, including Arabic literature in English. Such a shift will make the department global rather than colonial and – through some emphasis on Arabic literature in translation – more linked to the Arab cultural context. The periphery could accommodate a host of diverse courses or mini-packages catering to specific student needs and interests: press and media, film studies, communication, cultural studies, creative writing, teaching English, translation, area studies, etc. In practical terms, I propose a study plan that is a developed, refined, and improved form of the 1970s study plan, capitalizing on its strictness in the core and liberalism and freedom of choice in the periphery.

About the Author:

Prof. Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh, Dean the Faculty of Language Studies, Arab Open University(*on leave from University of Jordan*)

Acknowledgment:

This work has been carried out during sabbatical leave granted to author (Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh) from the University of Jordan during the year 2011/2012

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Appendix I: The 1960s Study Plan

First Year:

- Arabic	3 hrs.
- English	3 hrs.
- History	3 hrs.
- Geography	3 hrs.
- Philosophy and Sociology	3 hrs.
- Education and Psychology	3 hrs.

Second Year:

- English Literature: History & Social Background I	3 hrs.
- English Literature: History & Social Background II	3 hrs.
- Shakespeare and His Times	3 hrs.
- Linguistics	2 hrs.
- Special Subject: Metaphysical Poets	2 hrs.

- Arabic 3 hrs.
- History of Islam 2 hrs.

Third Year:

- English Literature I (Chaucer to Spencer) 2 hrs.
- English Literature II (Milton to Dryden) 2 hrs.
- Special Subject: The Eighteenth Century 3 hrs.
- Literary Criticism 2 hrs.
- Linguistics 2 hrs.
- Western Civilization 3 hrs.
- Greek and Roman Mythology 2 hrs.

Fourth Year:

- English Literature: The Romantic Period 3 hrs.
- American Literature: To the Twentieth Century 3 hrs.
- Shakespeare 3 hrs.
- Special Subject: The Victorian Period 2 hrs.
- History of the English Language 3 hrs.
- Translation 1 hr.

Appendix II: The 1970s Study Plan (These are the specialization requirements, after a year of university and faculty requirements in which students who fail a proficiency exam take 3 credit hours of English)

A. Compulsory Courses: (all 3 credit hours)		Singles Major	Main Major
- Writing (1)		x	x
- Study Skills		x	x
- Advanced Grammar		x	x
- Writing (2)		x	x
- Phonetics		x	x
- Pronunciation and Speech	x		x
- Linguistics		x	x
- Medieval & Renaissance English Lit.	x	2 courses	
- 17 th Century Lit.	x		
- 18 th Century Lit.	x		
- Romantic & Victorian Lit.	x		
- 20 th Century English Lit.	x	1 course	
- American Lit. before 1900	x		
- 20 th Century American Lit.		x	
- Poetry		x	2 courses
- Drama		x	
- The Novel and Short Story	x		
- Criticism		x	x
- World Lit. (1): Homer to Reformation	x		-
- Shakespeare		x	-
	60	39	

- Single-Major student to choose 18 hours of electives from one or the other, or both, of the following two lists.
- Main-Major student to choose 15 hours of electives from one or the other, or both, of the following two lists:

List A: Language and Linguistics (all 3-credit hour courses)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehension and Advanced Writing - Phonology - Translation of Arabic Texts - Art of Writing & Expression - Schools of Linguistics - Teaching English as a Foreign Language (1) - Old English - Advanced Phonetics - Tense in English - Seminar in Linguistics - History of English - Generative phonology - Psycholinguistics - Seminar in Linguistics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Rhetoric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced Linguistics - Studies in English Syntax - Comparative Linguistics - Sociolinguistics - Special Subject (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medieval English - English Morphology - Special Subject (2) - Advanced Trans. of Arabic Texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformational Grammar - Dialects - TEEL (2) |
|---|---|

List B: Literature

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literary Appreciation - Short Story - Greek & Roman Mythology - Special Subject - The Novel & Short Story (2) - Milton - Arab English Writers - Metaphysical Poets - Drama (2) - Art of the Essay - World Lit. 2: Reformation to Present - The Epic - Lit. of the Absurd - Dryden & Pope - Special Subject (2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17th and 18th Century Prose - 17th and 18th Century Drama - Chaucer - Studies in Romanticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20th Century World Lit. - Yeats and Eliot - Seminar in Lit. - Studies in Eliz. Lit. - Eliz. and Jacobean Drama - Literary Criticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar in Lit. (2) - Drama before Shakespeare - Shakespeare (2) - James Joyce |
|--|--|

Appendix III: The 2009/2010 Study Plan (These are the specialization requirements, after a year of university and faculty requirements among which there are 6 hours of remedial courses in English for students who fail the English Proficiency Test)

A. Compulsory Courses (a total of 66 credit hours; all 3 credit hours)

Introduction to English Literature
 Oral Skills
 Writing
 Reading and Listening Comprehension
 Advanced Writing
 Syntax (1)
 English Phonetics
 English Linguistics
 English Literature until 1660
 American Literature until 1800
 Drama
 Writing Research Papers
 Syntax (2)
 English Literature from 1660-1798

19th-Century English Literature
American Literature in the 19th-Century
Novel (1)
Shakespeare
20th -Century English Literature
20th -Century American Literature
Criticism and Literary Theory
Ancient and Classical Literature

B. Elective Courses (a total of 18 credit hours from the following list; all 3 credit hour courses)

The Short Story
Professional Technical Writing
Discourse Analysis in English
English Transformational Grammar
English Semantics
Pronunciation and Speech
Novel (2)
Poetry
Modern World Literature
Translation 1 (English-Arabic)
Translation 2 (Arabic- English)
Special Subject in Translation
Writing in the Field of Journalism
Debating and Dialogue
English Socio-linguistics
History of the English Language
Psycholinguistics
English as a Foreign Language
Creative Writing
Seminar on Literature
Introduction to American Studies
Special Subject in English Literature
Special Subject in English Language

Theme via Technique: Fear of the Human World as Reflected in the Poetic Techniques Used in Louis MacNeice's 'Prayer before Birth'

Abdel Mohsen Ibrahim Hashim
Department of English, Faculty of Arts
Assiut University, Egypt

Abstract

Can a poet convey his themes and ideas through the technical devices he uses? The main aim of this paper is to seek an answer to this question and show how the poetic techniques which Louis MacNeice employs in his poem, 'Prayer before Birth', help develop his thoughts and feelings. In fact, MacNeice resorts to a variety of poetic techniques that enrich his poem such as diction, anaphora, enjambment, alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, metaphor, personification, paradox, irony and many others. 'Prayer before Birth' is set out like a plea, a cry for help from an unborn baby who prays to God to protect him from a harsh and ruthless world he is going to enter. The poem reveals the speaker's depression and hopelessness expressing the thought that the world would not correct itself, but continue in its evils. Consequently, the unborn baby is worried about losing the unity and wholeness of character; there is also a fear of being made incomplete through the process of socialization, of being indifferently driven away by the pitiless world. The unborn speaker hopes to do without the humans and their wicked, corrupt world. Thus, he asks God to provide him with all those things which no longer exist in this deformed world, things which remain pure and unaltered by human hands, like the pure water, the green grass, the beautiful trees, the unconquered sky, the singing birds and the clear conscience or the guiding insight that can instinctively show him the right path. Finally, the unborn speaker makes it clear that it is better for him to be denied life than to be denied a real protection against all those who will try to nullify his humanity. Brilliantly, all these ideas and feelings can be interpreted by the poetic techniques that MacNeice employs in 'Prayer before birth'.

Keywords: fear-human-MacNeice-technique-theme

Theme via Technique: Fear of the Human World as Reflected in the Poetic Techniques Used in Louis MacNeice's 'Prayer before Birth'

The American poet and critic Paul Engle writes, "poetry is boned with ideas, nerved and blooded with emotions, all held together by the delicate, tough skin of words" (as cited in Strachan & Terry, 2011, p. 190). A careful reading of this quote indicates that the way 'the delicate, tough...words' of a poem are written can vividly convey the poet's 'ideas' and 'emotions'. Put another way, the poetic techniques used in a poem help the writer develop his themes and feelings. The aim of this paper is to show how Louis MacNeice's 1944 piece 'Prayer before Birth', centering around the fear of the human world, can be interpreted by studying the technical devices employed in the poem. Outstandingly, MacNeice makes use of a variety of poetic techniques which enrich the poem. Of these devices some are related to sound-patterns such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, and rhyme. Other devices which MacNeice uses are metaphor, personification, paradox, symbolism, juxtaposition, irony, sarcasm, and satire. Other techniques employed in this poem are diction, anaphora, enjambment as well as the form and structure of the poem.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle (1968) argues that good writing consists of a balance of "common" words which make the writing comprehensible and "strange" or "unusual" words that make the writing interesting and distinctive (p. 39). Fully aware of the old master's emphasis on the importance of diction for the literary work, MacNeice uses carefully selected vocabulary to convey his message and make the reader see sense in his point of view. The word 'prayer', for example, shows that the baby is trying to get help for something which troubles him. This, in fact, raises a significant question: why would a soon-to-be born baby who still has a lot of opportunities in a future life be worrying about 'sins' that he hasn't even got the chance to commit? That a not-yet-born baby can have the ability to think or even narrate such a horrifying poem even if he isn't yet subjected to the wicked world suggests that the evil characterizing the human world is so intense that the fetus could feel it from within the mother's womb.

Throughout the poem, the diction underpins the poet's ideas reflecting the helplessness of the unborn baby in the face of the heartless absurdity of the world. At the very outset, the unborn speaker points out, 'I am not yet born' as if he wants to draw attention to his powerlessness in facing the evils of the world or coping with its tricky maneuvers. This anaphora not only contrasts the innocence of the baby to the vicious world of the humans, but also asserts the idea that though the unborn baby is still inside the safe confines of his mother's womb, he feels worried and frightened of the challenges waiting for him. Though the baby has not yet been born, he seems apprehensive of the darkness which surrounds human life, giving a gloomy and hopeless mood to the poem. Weak and helpless, he cries for aid and support using words that reflect his powerlessness and need for help such as 'hear me', 'console me', 'provide me', 'forgive me', 'rehearse me', 'come near me', 'fill me', and the shocking closing words, 'otherwise kill me' (MacNeice, 1979, pp. 193-94⁽¹⁾). The unborn baby fears to come into a cruel world that MacNeice portrays as a horrible place full of 'blood baths', 'tall walls', 'strong drugs', and 'black racks' [93]. As the unborn speaker states in the poem, it is a wicked world marked with 'treason', and 'murder' [93], a world in which the person can easily be subjected not only to 'folly', but also to 'doom' or 'curse' [93].

The first stanza of 'Prayer before Birth' reads as follows:

I am not yet born; O hear me.
 Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the
 club-footed ghouel come near me. [193]

The unborn speaker starts his appeal seeking protection against the nocturnal creatures, both real and imaginary. These 'bloodsucking' creatures symbolize a bloodthirsty world of which the unborn baby is really horrified. In addition, the symbolism of these creatures which signify decay and corruption reflects the moral decadence of the world, and the presence of evil which lingers and continues to feed upon our humanity. Remarkably, there is a common use of alliteration in the above lines. As the quoted lines reveal, the unborn baby asks for protection against 'bloodsucking bat', a phrase in which both the words 'bloodsucking' and 'bat' start with the consonant sound /b/ which connects the two words together, attracting attention to the fear-provoking nature of the 'bat'--that nocturnal creature which kills its prey and feeds on its blood. This is a horrible image of death which terrifies the baby and makes him feel afraid of a bloodthirsty world he is going to enter. This conveys the baby's gloomy interest in death even before birth, as a reaction to the frightening atmosphere prevailing in the human world. The unborn speaker feels he is not free to develop according to his preferences, and his prayer is a plea to escape the rigid confines of social conformity and the painful results of exercising personal choices, as we see in the second stanza:

I am not yet born, console me.
 I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,
 with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,
 on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me. [193]

Noticeably, the poet makes use of both assonance and consonance in the above stanza. Examples of assonance can be noted in the words 'tall' and 'wall', 'black' and 'rack' where the vowels /ɔ:/ and /a/ are successively repeated. Significantly, these two pairs of words also contain examples of consonance as the consonant /l/ comes at the end of the words 'tall' and 'wall', and similarly the words 'black' and 'rack' end with the same consonant /k/. I think that the repetition of a vowel and a consonant in each pair of words joins the two words together reflecting the meaning intended by the speaker. Connected together by the same vowel and the same consonant, these words reflect the state of fear and horror conveyed by 'tall walls' that may imprison the baby and hamper his freedom. In addition, the unborn speaker fears that 'black racks' may 'rack' him making him suffer pain and torture.

Juxtaposition is another poetic device MacNeice uses in the poem. In the third stanza, the poet creates a lovely, positive image of the natural world juxtaposing it with the hateful, depressing image of the human world as it is portrayed in the other stanzas. This indicates that the speaker has no trust in 'the human race' and consequently resorts to nature which, unlike the world of humans, is pure, uncorrupt and reliable. The unborn baby wishes to substitute the failings of 'the human race' with the blessings of nature simply because the natural world can sufficiently 'provide', as he says,

With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk
 to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light
 in the back of my mind to guide me. [193]

Seeking the company of nature, the unborn speaker hopes to do without the humans and their wicked, corrupt world. Thus, he asks God to provide him with all those things which no longer exist in this deformed world, things which remain pure and unaltered by human hands, like the pure water, the green grass, the beautiful trees, the unconquered sky, the singing birds and the clear conscience or the guiding insight that can instinctively show him the right path. This romantic portrait of nature is juxtaposed with the gloomy portrayal of the human world where everything arouses the fear of the unborn: the 'bloodsucking' creatures, 'tall walls', 'black racks', 'blood-baths', 'sins', 'treason', 'murder', 'death', and 'the man who is beast or who thinks he is God' [193].

In her *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*, Burroway (2011) argues that good writers are those who "show" and "don't tell" (p. xviii). Burroway here urges authors, particularly poets, to pick out specific sensory details that evoke deeper abstractions in the reader. This is what the author of 'Prayer before Birth' exactly does when he resorts to imagery, "a technique so simple and yet so elusive" (Burroway, 2011, p. xviii). MacNeice here uses effective images to reflect the unborn baby's lack of trust in the human world and his wish to immerse himself with nature--that safer, purer world. Throughout the third stanza, nature is personified many times. Examples of personification are clearly shown in 'water to dandle me', 'trees to talk to me', 'sky to sing for me', and 'a white light...to guide me'. In these instances, water is personified as an individual, a mother for example, who moves the baby up and down in a playful or affectionate way as if she lulls him to sleep. Both trees and sky are personified as people talking and singing for the baby. Furthermore, nature provides the baby with a white light which the poet personifies as a human being who safely takes the baby and guides him to the right way. Here, the white light may be a kind of insight or a sort of moral guidelines that show the baby the path to virtue and keep him away from vice. These examples of personification reveal how the baby admires and trusts the natural world as an alternative to the human world that cannot provide him with these simple things which form some of the basic needs of every baby.

As argued above, the unborn baby foresees that he will not be able to cope with the community in which he will lead his life and that it will in turn dominate or destroy him. "Like war," Longley (1988) points out, "the perspective of the unborn highlights the powerful imperatives which mock our belief in individual autonomy" (p. 86). Accordingly, the unborn baby goes on to place blame for all his future sins on the social factors that may mould and control him:

I am not yet born; forgive me
For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words
when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,
my treason engendered by traitors beyond me,
my life when they murder by means of my
hands, my death when they live me. [193]

Regarding imagery as an essential element of poetic craft, MacNeice comes now to use metaphor in order to reflect the unborn speaker's fear of being sinful in such a cruel world. This can be seen in 'my words / when they speak me', 'my thoughts when they think me'. This indicates that the social control which the baby expects to be practiced on him is so authoritarian that he

becomes afraid of finding no voice to express himself or being brainwashed, performing actions beyond his control. Put another way, the unborn baby will speak thinking the thought or language to be his own, but in fact it will be someone else's; he will simply be reduced to a mouthpiece for a powerful mind controlling influence around. Thus, the resistant will embodied by the voice of the unborn speaker seems to be unable to deflect the violent domination exerted by others. The social forces beyond individual control dominate mental, emotional, and even physical growth. That's why the baby prays to be forgiven for committing these sins, simply because they are beyond his control. More importantly, he realizes that to be in this world is to know sin, death and betrayal.

Anticipating such a horrible world, the unborn baby asks to be prepared beforehand, to be accustomed to the roles he will have to enact in life:

I am not yet born; rehearse me
In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when
 old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains
 frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white
 waves call me to folly and the desert calls
 me to doom and the beggar refuses
 my gift and my children curse me. [193]

The old men and bureaucrats here refer to the force of tradition and the imposed order of civilization against which the unborn baby rails. Significantly, MacNeice here makes use of both paradox and personification to show how the image of nature has paradoxically changed from being a source of hope and optimism for the unborn baby into being a cause of fear and horror, with 'mountains' frowning and 'desert' calling him to his death. Even 'the white waves' which metaphorically signify purity are depicted as beckoning him towards evil and foolishness. Thus, nature that has previously been a supporting factor comes to be a conspiring force suddenly turning its back on the helpless baby. This suggests that corruption in this world is so rampant that nothing, even nature, can remain pure for long. For the unborn baby, the world has become like a wasteland and he tries to "pursue a nightmare journey in a world now apparently deprived of meaning" (Kenner, 2007, p. 27), a sense also shared by the speaker in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* which similarly depicts a gloomy, chaotic world that lacks spiritual depth. In such a world, Eliot (1936) writes,

... one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence ...
 But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude ...
 But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
 From doors of mud-cracked houses. (p. 74)

The sixth stanza adequately summarizes the whole poem as the unborn baby asks God to protect him against Man, the main factor behind deforming everything beautiful in this world:

I am not yet born; O hear me,
Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God

come near me. [193]

Obviously, the paradox between 'man' and 'beast' reveals irony in a clear way; the poet mocks the human world in which man is depicted either as a savage animal or a tyrant thinking he is as supreme as God Himself. The portrayal of man in such a brutal way emphasizes the depressing mood of the poem and reflects the unborn speaker's fear of the human race.

Perhaps, the most important stanza of the poem is the seventh. Here, MacNeice alludes to war whose influence is particularly noticeable in his mention of 'lethal automaton' [193]. The thought of a soldier immediately comes to mind. A person who is not allowed to show any emotion and is asked ceaselessly to kill on behalf of his country can only be a 'thing with / one face, a thing' [193]. The unborn baby is completely horrified by the concept of merely becoming a 'thing', a bureaucratic static for a totalitarian regime which, instead of allowing the individual to choose between multiple social identities, "crushes all autonomous institutions in its drive to seize the human soul" (as cited in Rozeff, 2008, para. 7). The unborn speaker states:

I am not yet born; O fill me
With strength against those who would freeze my
humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,
would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with
one face, a thing, and against all those
who would dissipate my entirety, would
blow me like thistledown hither and
thither or hither and thither
like water held in the
hands would spill me. [193]

Thus, this stanza is a strong protest against Totalitarianism, "an oppressive system" dominating people, permitting no individual freedom and seeking to subordinate all aspects of the individual's life to the authority of the government (Gregor, 2009, p. 12). Furthermore, the unborn speaker is worried about losing his 'entirety', his wholeness, his unity; there is also a fear of being made incomplete through the process of socialization, of being indifferently driven away by such a pitiless world. In these metaphorical comparisons, the baby is compared, one time to 'a cog in a machine', a second time to a mere 'thing with one face', a third time to something thrown away 'like thistledown hither and / thither', and finally to 'water held in the / hands' and therefore spilt unnoticed. These metaphors reveal the acute absence of control the unborn would exercise on his life.

Written at the height of World War II, 'Prayer before Birth' stands as an allegory of war, a theme which features strongly in MacNeice's poetry. As an active participant in the socio-political scene of his time, MacNeice was very close to the horrible consequences of war which destroyed people all over the world, filled the poet with disappointment, and added a gloomy tone to his poems. As Goodby (2000) puts it:

In the wider-post-war international contexts in which he was involved, a narrative of disenchantment can be discerned, from his coverage for the BBC of the communal bloodletting which accompanied

Indian Partition, to his role as a British Council employee in Greece just after the 1943-49 civil war (in which British troops supported monarchist forces and the Right against communist partisans)... (p. 59).

As the above extract reveals, 'a narrative of disenchantment' can be detected in MacNeice's poetry. The same note of bitterness is also felt in 'Prayer before Birth', a poem in which the poet uses the voice of an unborn baby, innocent and frail, to convey his fear of a bloodthirsty world.

Enjambment is the poetic technique MacNeice uses in the seventh stanza to convey his message to the reader. This can clearly be noted at the final part of the stanza where the unborn baby prays to be kept away from those who

... would
blow me like thistledown hither and
thither or hither and thither
like water held in the
hands would spill me. [193]

But how can this technical device convey the idea of the poet? Reading these lines carefully, I feel that the speaker is so frightened that he wishes to throw away all the causes of his fear and horror in one breath; he likes to get rid of the huge amount of fear that terrifies him bringing to his mind the thought that he may, in this harsh world, be blown like 'thistledown hither and / thither' or be wasted 'like water held in the / hands'. I think that uttering these words quickly in one breathless sentence lessens the speaker's sense of anxiety and anguish.

Asking for the protection of God, the unborn baby concludes his plea as follows:

Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.
Otherwise kill me. [194]

The above lines clearly reveal sarcasm and satire. The unborn speaker makes it clear that it is better for him to be denied life than to be denied a real protection against all those who will try to nullify his humanity or stand against his liberty as if he likes to ask sarcastically: is this life worth living? The poet here directs his satirical arrows at the human world which turns the person into a senseless 'stone' that has neither thought nor feeling.

A skilled poet, MacNeice knows that "the words of a rhyme... are the icon in which the idea is caught" (Wimsatt, 1982, p. 165). Accordingly, he employs the technique of rhyme in 'Prayer before Birth' in order to convey the theme of fear resulting from the endless violent practices of the human world. It is noteworthy that the poem consists of thirty nine lines; of this total number, twenty lines end with 'me', a monosyllabic word that often rhymes at the end of lines with itself as seen in the second stanza:

I am not yet born, console me.
I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,
with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,
on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me. [193]

The use of this pronoun in the objective form, I believe, suggests that the speaker is always threatened by something; he is always the victim and the one against whom something is plotted. In addition to being repeated in all the lines of the above stanza, the object pronoun 'me' is repeated at the end of many other lines throughout the poem as we can see in 'console me', 'wall me', 'lure me', 'roll me', 'provide me', 'guide me', 'forgive me', 'think me', 'live me', 'rehearse me', 'curse me', 'come near me', 'fill me', 'freeze me', 'spill me', 'kill me'. Again, the repetition of the objective pronoun 'me' throughout the poem foregrounds the exclusively passive position of the unborn speaker. The preceding imperative verbs add to this foregrounding the element of agony and anguish resulting from the speaker's utter helplessness. Furthermore, the regular rhyme scheme of the poem harmonizes with several instances of internal rhyme, as noted in 'tall walls wall me', 'white light', 'black racks rack me', 'speak me...think me', 'thither...hither', 'make me...spill me'. This technique not only adds to the pace of the poem but also reflects on the fast paced movement of life largely marked by tyranny, oppression, death and destruction.

Finally, MacNeice resorts to the irregular structure or form of the poem as an effective technical device to express his views and convey his themes. Expressively, the varied length of the stanzas and lines is a reflection of the chaos characterizing the human world. The deterioration of humanity is effectively brought out through the cascading lines of the poem--we are left with the feeling that with every second that passes by, the world is falling apart and humanity is losing its spiritual significance. Throughout the poem, MacNeice uses such a form that each stanza starts with longer lines and then the lines get shorter towards the end as if the baby's sense of safety in the mother's womb is gradually decreasing as he starts to enter the human world which is characterized by "disappointment, defeat, [and] betrayal" (Goodby, 2000, p. 57).

To conclude, the main concern of this paper has been to explore how the technical devices employed in MacNeice's 'Prayer before Birth' help the poet develop his themes and ideas. As has been argued, MacNeice's craftsmanship outstandingly enables him to convey the unborn speaker's fear of the human world through the poetic techniques that enrich 'Prayer before Birth'. Diction, anaphora, symbolism, alliteration, assonance, consonance, juxtaposition, personification, metaphor, paradox, irony, enjambment, sarcasm, satire, rhyme and the structure or form of the poem are techniques that the poet employs to express his feelings and elucidate his thoughts. For future research, exploring the religious implications in Louis MacNeice's 'Prayer before Birth' is highly recommended. The quest for individual freedom in Louis MacNeice's 'Prayer before Birth' is another important topic. Finally, modern world as depicted in Louis MacNeice's 'Prayer before Birth' is an idea worth researching.

About the Author:

Dr. Abdel Mohsen Ibrahim Hashim, is a lecturer in English Literature (PhD). He works at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, The New Valley, Assuit University, Egypt. His research interests lie mainly in twentieth-century and contemporary Anglo-Irish poetry as well as comparative literature.

Notes

⁽¹⁾ MacNeice, L. (1979). *Collected Poems*. Ed. E. R. Dodds. London: Faber & Faber. [All quotes from 'Prayer before Birth' are from this edition and hereafter cited between square brackets as page numbers only.]

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African American Female Subjectivity: Reading Postcolonialism In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

Aspalila Shapii

College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
Malaysia

Faisal Lafee Alobeytha

College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
Malaysia

Sharifah Fazliyatun Shaik Ismail

College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
Malaysia

Abstract

This article examines the subjectivity of the African American female in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. It aims to verify that the subjectivity of the African American female in fiction is somewhat relative. It attempts to answer the following questions: What are the reasons behind the fluctuation of subjectivity in the character of African American women? How does the postcolonialism literary theory help in understanding the subjectivity that echoes this class of women? This article comes to the following findings: The subjectivity of the African American black female has been influenced by their black complexion, gender, discrimination, family, school and community. Not all of these women have been influenced passively by the aforementioned elements. The African American women have been exploited in a male dominated society, where white people are the final authority and arbiter of the social status of women. An African American woman seems to have been suffering since birth. The color of her complexion is the cause of her misery. Illiteracy, beggary, depression and sexual harassment are tied to her very existence. Morrison has succeeded in delivering a clear message relating to the black woman's subjectivity; she enhances the concept of emancipation of soul and thought among the black community, besides the concept of women's rights.

Keywords: African American female, Black woman, Postcolonialism. Subjectivity.

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The subjectivity of the black female in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is not psychic energy; it is part of her character as a human being. There are many perspectives of subjectivity that differ from one woman to another (Kaivola, 1993; Shu, 2001), because there is no standard to determine the degrees of suitability. Many people claim they are proud of having subjectivity, but in fact, they adjust it to suit the demands of their characters and their community. This article will clarify the subjectivity of the African American black women in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* according to the thought of postcolonial theorists.

In reality, some black women in *The Bluest Eye* could not manage to perform even simple matters without being directed or getting directions and having orders imposed on them by external powers. Their subjugation to the authority of white people or black men cannot be justified out of the two discriminating terms: superiority and inferiority. In his *Orientalism*, Edward Said tackles the use of the jargons 'European superiority' and 'Oriental backwardness' among western people. Euro-centric universalism takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or western, and the inferiority of what is not (1979, p.7).

A mother has a unique relationship with her child since its creation in the womb. As a result, the child has been fed by subjective feeling since his or her stay in the womb. In this way, subjectivity is inherited or acquired by the child, and the role of the family and community, hence, is to monitor and promote the process of forming this subjectivity. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove and Pauline Breedlove are two characters who seek for their identity through others, while Claudia and Frieda have their own full subjectivity under calm and close family relationships. *The Bluest Eye* presents the story of three black families "first Geraldine's (a counterfeit of the idealized white family)... [then] the MacTeers and at the bottom [of the social order] the Breed loves" (Ogunyemi, 1977, p.113). These families live in London and Ohio, shortly before World War I. The MacTeer family has interactive vision among its members. They struggle to survive and fight this hostile reality. They do not succumb to the bitter treatment by the white community where the position of black people is precarious. This is unlike the Breedloves family who suffers from family violence, with its members becoming victims, malefactors, and perpetrators. The Geraldine is a black family. This family pays attention to false appearance in order to live the life of a white family. This imitation reflects the hollowness of their characters.

Pecola Breedlove, for example, is a poor, powerless and homeless black girl. She endures the mockery of her mates, the degradation of her gender and colored complexion, witnesses the violence in her family, while being exposed to the mercilessness or pitilessness of her parents. She sheds tears over her irrevocable situation. In the introduction to her *Violence and the Family*, J. P. Martin introduces the reader to a dangerous place that may threaten the lives of children, "The home can be a dangerous place, particularly for women and children" (1978,p.1). Pecola's home is the source of her anguish and the loss of her subjectivity in the world of stinginess. Her home is the real terror in her life. This black home witnesses the physical force, the incest, the abuse of children, verbal assault, ostracism and constraint. There is a brutal and cruel relationship dominating the lovely and merciful sphere that should be among them. "The only

living thing in the Breedloves' house was the coal stove, which lived independently of everything and everyone" (Morrison, 1970, p.33).

Wife battering is the weapon of the escapist father who uses force to gratify his brutal instinct. Pecola becomes witness to the act of her mother being beaten by her father repeatedly. Pecola's parents' struggle is dark and brutal formalism. They do it whenever they need to prove their malice and grudge against each other. The account of Mr. Cholly's drunken battering of his wife, Pauline, describes the inferior status of mothers in black society. Bulling on women assures the deep struggle of gender in the mind of masculinity. Children who witness the abuse of their mother will often suffer low self-esteem, depression, and have feeling of weakness (Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). Such children will seek escape in sex, drugs and alcohol. Furthermore, they may choose isolation, suicide, or running away, as Sammy does when he sees his mother being abused.

Pecola endures the violence of her parents against her, and her rape by her father. She wishes to imitate her brother by running away, or by throwing herself into the fray. However, she feels unable, because of her weakness as an ugly black female. She finds solace in her prayer. She implores God to "please make me disappear" (Morrison, 1970, p. 39). Indeed, her being a child, being black, and being a girl is a condition of being powerless.

Mr. Cholly resorts to violence against his family, because he wants to restore his lost honor, respect and subjectivity, caused by his financial and social stress. The social stress theory emphasizes the role of stress in the violent husband, "The theory suggests that when he is unable to economically support his wife, and maintain control, he may turn to misogyny, substance abuse, and crime as ways to express masculinity" (Stallone, 1984, p.300). The lack of equivalent power, between Cholly and his wife, leads them to conflict. Each of them desires to control the other, and behaves as master of the castle. Thus, they resort to violence to restore their lost subjectivity, but in the wrong way.

Pauline's efforts, to hold her family together, do not bring any fruitful results, because of her husband's abuse. As a result, she surrenders to the desperation, and she is unable to carry out her duties as a mother and a wife. In fact, she abandons her holy role in building the family, which God gave her. Unfortunately, poor Pecola suffers from a pitiless mother and the absence of a wise father. These conditions impact Pecola's subjectivity. She cannot express her female subjectivity without considering her parents' welfare and concerns since one of them can provide a certain sort of emotion, but the other cannot.

All the responsibilities abandoned by the parents will influence Pecola's gender identity, because a girl develops her gender identity from observing all the women around her. Her mind will subsequently form a schema based on what she sees. The most important woman in a girl's life with regards to the formation of her gender identity is her mother. However, Pecola loses her identity because of her careless mother and merciless father who never thinks of her as a daughter. On the contrary, her father sees her through the angle of incest. The failures of Pecola's parents fire back on their neglecting father. Cholly is abandoned by his father Samson Fuller. Moreover, Fuller does not admit that Cholly is his son, and he dismisses him, saying "something is wrong with your head? Who told you to come after me?" (Morrison, 1970, p. 123). Cholly discovers that he does not remember his mother's name or that she died in labor. In fact, Cholly

does not have the passion to be a parent. In spite of his inability to be compassionate to his daughter, he is able to be affectionate towards his aunt. He received his passion from his aunt 'Mrs. Jimmy', who raised him. However, she is the only woman whom he respects, because he received more care and compassion from her. She lavishes attention upon him. In fact, she is the only woman whom he does not cause any harm. Therefore, her death is painful to him. Cholly's wife, Pauline, did not have a better situation than her husband. She lives a miserable life. During her childhood, she is injured by a rusty nail. This incident resulted in her becoming permanently disabled with a lame foot. This incident causes her to lose confidence in her ability to interact with people. Her lame foot contributes to her feeling of helplessness and ugliness, all feelings that provoke her to look for compensations in the world of white people, where a life of luxury and welfare are available. She resorts to imagination and movies to compensate for her bitter reality. She realizes that her black color will destroy her life. Therefore, she resorts to working as a servant in the homes of white people. Her position challenges her instinct as a mother. She prefers to satisfy her white master's girl than her own daughter, blaming her daughter because she harms the white girl without intending to. She realizes that by her rejection of her daughter, she will be able to face the life of misery and deprivation. Pauline finds haven, hope, life, and meaning as a servant to the rich white families where no starvation and poverty threatens her existence. Pauline fails to share her life of fantasy with her own daughter in particular and her family in general by living through the white world and rejecting the black world. Michael Rayn justifies Cholly's carelessness towards his family "Because he did not experience a kind of care that would have instilled a coherent and consistent sense of self and of self-worth in him that would allow him to control his impulse, action" (2007, p.184).

Though Cholly's and Pauline's subjectivity are usurped by their family and the white racists, they treat their daughter in an abusive, oppressive manner. They fail to recognize that this practice is essentially a form of physical and social violence. As a mother, Pauline devotes her sacrifices and emotions to her daughter and her husband, but this consecration needs sustained economic support and a stream of affection that need to be extended for a long time. Being deprived of the economic and affective needs causes Pauline to behave like her husband, and makes her abandon her duty towards her family. Indeed, there is a pressing need to provide mothers with the opportunity to be good mothers. Mr. Cholly puts pressure on Pauline to work after Pecola's birth. He does not understand the special bond between the mother and the child, and does all in his power to weaken and destroy the essential mother-daughter bond. He does not want to be the family's sole bread winner. Therefore, she could not impersonate the character of the father and mother at the same time. This personification does not suit her female character. She fails in this role as a father in the condition of an absent father. Because of this frustration, she leaves her role, and lets her children swim alone in the swamp of sexual and dehumanizing exploitation.

The absence of the influence of the mother in the life and consciousness of Pecola destroys Breedloves' family, in general, and Pecola, in particular. Pecola's parents ignore their responsibility towards their children. Moreover, they add many obstacles and road blocks to their children's lives. They blow out all the candles of subjectivity that could shine through their course of life. In fact, Pecola's subjectivity was born dead, like the seeds of marigolds that were planted deeply in the yielding earth by Claudia and Frieda, friends of Pecola. Her subjectivity does not find the fertile land to flourish and thrive. Pecola's home is barren, since her parents

abandon their responsibility and affection towards their own poor children. Pauline finds meaning not in her own family, but in romantic movies and in her work caring for a well-to-do white family. Mr. Cholly finds his subjectivity in his drinking and domestic abuse. He resorts to them to prove his existence. He is extremely abusive, verbally, to his wife. He has even served jail sentences. He makes her life a living hell.

In studying Pecola and her mother's case, we see that they are influenced by the lifestyle of the white community. They want to imitate them and neglect their identity, because they are deprived of their independent subjectivity. They hate their existence and expect to find happiness in other ways, because they believe that subjectivity is found in the characteristics of white people. These women have struggled for a long time to be accepted as human beings in this supremacist society. Morrison illustrates this goal when Pecola poses a strange question that perplexes Claudia "How do you do that? I mean, how do you get somebody to love you?" (Morrison, 1970, p. 29). She realizes that by acquiring love from another person, she will find her lost identity and existence. She believes that it is possible to own identity by love. Unfortunately, her great efforts to implant the seeds of love in people's hearts have not found the lowest degrees of expected success. She realizes that the reason for her loss of subjectivity is due to her ugliness. By having blue eyes and a white complexion, she will acquire the happiness and the love of others. She turns to the things that belong to the white community to find the meaning of beauty. Consequently, she seizes any opportunity to contemplate the beauty of things in pictures, dolls and etc. She likes to talk about how cute Shirley Temple is. She gazes fondly at the picture of Shirley-Temple's face on the cup of milk, "We knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face"(Morrison, 1970, p.22). In addition to the Shirley Temple cup, Pecola goes to the candy store and buys the candy that is wrapped in the picture of little Mary Janes, for whom the candy is named, and by having the blue-eyed baby doll. She thinks by having this kind of candy and the blue-eyed doll, she owns all the beauty elements 'white skin and blue eyes'. Therefore she resorts to praying, for a whole year, to become beautiful like white girls. She concentrates all of her thoughts, feelings and interests on owning them, and considers them the first basic need in her life. In fact, she believes that her non-existence refers to the bereavement of having the same biological features that the white girls have, since the standard of beauty in this community should fit that of the white race. However, the salvation of the mind and the soul of Pecola from these concepts will need critical surgical operations, where the percentage of success of the operation is low.

Pecola inherits her genes of dealing with things from her mother, because both of them are in desperate situations where they have been dehumanized. They indulge in things that do not have the ability to express their identity. Besides, black women also suffer from loneliness. They experience a powerful surge of emptiness and isolation, finding it hard to form human contact. Their feelings of loneliness have started since their childhood. The physical absence of the meaningful people around them causes the loneliness. They are convinced that something is wrong with them, so they do not find friends who would understand them. To avoid social rejection, they do not attempt to interact with other people. The result will lead to feelings of emptiness, which may lead to a state of clinical depression. The chronic loneliness has an affective influence on them. It links with their depression and their social isolation. This loneliness may destroy the person and lead him or her to madness. Pecola does not endure

loneliness and the low self-esteem that destroy her subjectivity and transfer to the unconsciousness. Even Pauline's loneliness does not come from a vacuum. The racism and the hard situation that results from poverty and motor disability pave the way to the descent into psychological isolation. She feels loneliness in her childhood because of the disregard of the surrounding people.

Why she alone of all the children had no nickname, why there were no funny jokes and anecdotes about funny things she had done; why no one ever remarked on her food preferences... Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot. (Morrison, 1970, p. 88)

Morrison introduces two types of mothers: Pecola and her mother on the one hand, and Mrs. MacTeer and her daughters, Claudia and Frieda, on the other. Disappearance is the desperate dream of Pecola, because she does not find any meaning in her existence. Ignorance of her existence has effaced her subjectivity. Pecola's total self-subjection to victimization and her surrender to the tyranny of the family and the outside world blackballed her from the space of subjectivity. Thus, her fleeing from the bitter situation does not mean she will not continue to suffer setbacks as far as her identity as a woman is concerned. On the contrary, the more she evades confronting the obscenities of life, the more her character will be subjected to degradation and debasement. Pecola is never loved by her parents, because she is not seen by them. Her invisibility causes her to lose her feeling of self. She is invisible to her mother, Pauline, so her mother does not see her beauty. Her mother isolates her from seeing herself in the mirror of beauty, causing her to lose self-confidence since the moment of her birth, "But I knew she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly" (Morrison, 1970, p100). She hates her baby for many reasons: her ugliness, her father, a desperate and melancholy life, the poverty and the inability to provide her with a suitable life. All these reasons prevent Mrs. Breedlove from giving her love and mercy to her own daughter. She does not like to hear the best word in the life of any mother 'mammy'. This mother has not nursed her children with maternal affections; she nurses them with self-contempt. The mother becomes the major participant in the young girl's denial of self and life. Pecola's relationship with her mother does not resemble a mother-daughter relationship. The natural relation between the mother and her daughter can be very close, but in case of Pecola and her mother, they are far apart, not just physically, but emotionally. Their relationship is fueled by monotony, black draught, and musing. The normal picture that determines the relationship between mother and her daughter is built on strengthening of the bond of maternal affection, which is a relationship that usually occurs in the womb and will continue through the life. A mother always tries to avoid critical points with her daughter that she encounters during the course of her life. She does not want her daughter to commit the same mistakes. A daughter represents her mother's character. In fact, she is a mirror image of her mother. She gives her mother a feeling of affiliation, and a feeling of love. Mother, in return, tries to help her daughter passes adolescence with fewer difficulties. She tries to sustain her communication with her daughter, so an understanding of relationship will facilitate the difficulties between them. Both of them try to keep in touch with each other, and build the confidence, frankness, honesty and a respectable relationship. They should understand the subjectivity of each other, take an interest in each other's' issues, and feel an intimately close relationship.

The second type of mother that appears in *The Bluest Eye* is Mrs. MacTeer. In spite of all the obstacles that the black families face, Mrs. MacTeer has avoided the dysfunctions of the Breedloves. The overcoming of this results from the cooperation between the parents to develop their current situation. Claudia's mother makes sacrifices for her family. Her efforts share in her husband's intention of constructing a family model, and avoiding destruction, while raising their children. Those children, Claudia and Frieda, have good and strong characters. She takes care of her daughters. When Claudia is sick, her mother takes wonderful care of her. She feels outraged by her daughter's sickness, "My mother's anger humiliates me; her words chafe my cheeks, and I am crying. I do not know that she is not angry at me, but sickness" (Morrison, 1970, p.14). She knows tiny things about her daughters. She holds her family together. She is the reason for life, and she is the source of comfort. All the neighbors and the government know that MacTeer's is a good family, so the local governor chooses this family to receive displaced Pecola, "The country had placed her in our house for a few days until they could decide what to do, or, more precisely, until the family was reunited. We were to be nice to her and not fight" (Morrison, 1970, p.17).

Through all the lines of this novel, the lovely condition, and the atmosphere of love and affection fill the MacTeer's house. The house's atmosphere is a very fun place for the children and its occupants. It becomes a home and gathering of happiness, peace and politeness. These parents realize the risks that their children face if they grow up in a home full of hatred and venom, that characters will be easily offended and quick-tempered.

Mrs. MacTeer always pays attention to her daughters, while Mrs. Breedloves 'Pauline' does not try to indulge herself in her daughter's issues. She neglects her daughter. The impact of the mother's neglect on her daughter has appeared clearly since her early childhood. The effect of this neglect is harmful and possibly long-lasting for the victim. Its impact can become more severe with age and physical, intellectual, and social development, as she grows, and passes the critical stages in her life: childhood and adolescence. The negligent mother fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision or medical care for her daughter. On the other hand, MacTeer's parents are actually aware of the fact that raising a child is a demanding responsibility, but at the same time a very pleasant and satisfying task parents can undertake. Their knowledge of how to raise their children usually comes from their own culture, background and family. The parents have the most influential role in forming the personalities of their daughters. Claudia and her daughter have shown great respect, kindness, honesty, friendship, generosity and confidence to their parents. In fact, such kinds of parents do not want their children to be rude or aggressive, so they prevent them from witnessing the scenes of violence at home. They always tell and show their children how much they love them, as well as provide them with the constant support they need to become confident and happy.

It is worth mentioning that both the children and the parents like to be listened to, the parents expect their children to obey their orders and abide by the limitations they set for them; also the children prefer to express their thoughts and to have the chance to fulfill their needs. Morrison presents two incidents: one relates to Pecola and the other to Claudia and Frieda. Pecola used to visit three whores. She tries to find her respect with them, "three whores lived in the apartment above the Breedloves' storefront: China, Poland, and Miss Marie. Pecola loved them, visited them, and ran their errands. They, in return, did not despise her" (Morrison, 1970, p. 43). She resorts to them in hope that she finds a replacement for her mother. However, she

does not find the embrace of motherhood that can listen to her and feel the pulse of her heart. It is illogical to find a mother who never advises or orients her daughter; a girl who is under the age of consent. In fact, her mother has not exerted any sort of control over her daughter's behavior. The loss of her mother's care leaves Pecola without the guidance necessary to grow up to be a happy and responsible girl. Her mother does not use her role as a mother to protect and nurture her daughter. She does not ask her daughter the routine questions that are usually asked by a mother like: Where are you? Who is your friend? Why are you late? Her daughter is exposed to a lot of abuse from her mates, the priest, the teachers, and the grocery. The consequences of her mother's negligence have had a hazardous impact on Pecola's behavior, and on her subjectivity. Pauline is just not interested in her daughter.

It must be kept in mind that subjectivity and loneliness are contradictory, because they do not have similar characteristics. Furthermore, loneliness decreases feeling of subjectivity, when the person feels that his character is exposed to the internal and external threat of being isolated for matters beyond his capacity. He confronts, in this case, several possibilities: these depend on his character. Perhaps he faces his inevitable death, suicide, or madness. In this case, his personal qualities do not prompt him to the level that he can defend himself in front of community's challengers. Pecola and her mother represent this sort of self-defeating personalities. They face the threat of the community and the threat of the members of their family. In fact, the absence of understanding and consistency in the ideas, attitudes and opinions among family members create a sort of disharmony and contradiction. On the other hand, there is the MacTeer family, who face the arrogance and racism of the community that threatens them. This threat promotes the harmony and consensus among them. In other words, the threat of the community unites and strengthens them. They form a solid front against the racist community.

On the other hand, Mr. and Mrs. MacTeer have shared power equally; they do not resort to conflict. They take care of their children and make great good efforts to produce a close family with outstanding and strong daughters. Claudia and Frieda do not conceal anything from their parents. They have an intimate relationship with them. When Frieda is sexually abused by Mr. Henry, she tells her mother who, in turn, tells the father who decides to kill Mr. Henry: "I told Mama, and she told Daddy, ... and Dad shot at him, and Mr. Henry jumped out of his shoes and kept on running in his socks"(Morrison,1970, p. 80).

This incident indicates how Frieda's father has devoted himself to protecting his family, and he is ready to do anything to ensure their protection. He works day and night in the steel mill in order to provide a decent living for his family. He always orients and teaches his daughters to do the correct things. In addition, he acts as the head of his family. He works to unify his family against the inherent viciousness of poverty. He provides his wife the opportunity to mother their children.

The impact of Claudia's father on his daughter is very effective and useful, so they acquire self-esteem and subjectivity. The result of seeing how their parents treat each other creates a pattern or a blueprint for them to follow. The parents have shown their love and respect to their daughters. They devote special attention to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity and a great respect and generous concern for their rights. They understand the dangers that hide behind the marginalization of their children in the society and

family. Claudia and her sister Frieda are lucky, because they find the acceptance and the understanding they need, so they acquire a better outlook to their personality. They have not harvested the negative effects like Pecola. In fact, these effects enhance the personality and the subjectivity of the two sisters; therefore, they do not search for their subjectivity; it is implanted in their personalities. Anyway, their strong female subjectivity has not destroyed their life, but enhanced their ability to lead a happy life. On the other hand, Pecola has the worst luck of all the characters of the novel. She is rejected by her classmates, teachers, and her fellows, "The ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk" (Morrison, 1970, p. 39). Besides that, she is rejected by her parents who do not care about the psychological effects of community rejection that has plagued her. These rejections have driven Pecola to insanity. Actually, Pecola views herself always as an ostracized girl, and the inherent feeling of ugliness heightens her desire for further separation. However, she finds solace in her separation in spite of her marginalization. The people do not attempt to find a way to help Pecola's search for subjectivity. On the contrary, they exploit her needs to gratify their lust, arrogance and their brutal excessive needs. Community violence shares in destroying and blurring Pecola's subjectivity.

Those people do not follow the identity of Sigmund Freud. Their greed and selfishness have exceeded all the lines of taboo in destroying the life of black women. This community ignores the ego where the pleasure meets reality and the child begins to learn to balance the various drives for the sake of self-preservation. The restless and melancholy life traps the black women. Studying the community attitude of black people, the white parents do not miss the chance to implant the seeds of racism and arrogance in the minds of their children. In the early stage of childhood, the children acquire and imitate the people around them. They adopt and imitate the words, deeds and behaviors of their peers, parents and other people. Morrison illustrates the innate instinct in the mind and the heart of the people towards others; this instinct is built on the complexion factor. The white people have distinguished and isolated themselves from others, and put up principles and criteria that create differences between the colored people and the Negro. Said also points to the concepts of "us" and "them" as they are depicted in the minds of the colonizers. They believe "they" deserved to be ruled by "us" (1993, p. xiii). These were taught by Mrs. Geraldine to her children, Louis and Junior. She does not like to see her children play with the nigger kids, "White people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud"(Morrison, 1970, p.71). This kind of rearing and teaching will definitely affect the behavior and actions of a child. These behaviors will be intrinsic to the child's behavior, and it will be difficult to get rid of them in the future, "More and more junior bullying girls. It was easy making them screams and run. How he laughed when they fell down and their bloomers showed. When they got up their faces red and crinkled, it made him feel good"(Morrison, 1970,p. 72). Mrs. Geraldine always believes that her son is correct, but in fact, he is lying. He kills the cat and accuses Pecola. As a result, she dismisses Pecola and insults her: "you nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house"(Morrison,1970, p. 75). Surely, these few words have the ability to increase Pecola's abandonment and isolation to the state of what sociologists name Borderline Personality Disorder which means emotionally unstable personality disorder. The psychological factor is one of the causes of this Borderline Personality Disorder. Sick children may be exposed to traumatic experiences in their childhood, such as physical or sexual abuse, verbal abuses, or emotional neglect. Besides the psychological factor, there is the social factor, such as the societal support and emotional security. On the contrary, if the society and parents do not meet the special needs

of children, the latter will be victims of serious impulsiveness and emotional instability. Mrs. Geraldine, a white lady, makes a frantic effort to isolate the African American people, and she puts her colored children in the ivory tower. This isolation, hateful racism, irresponsible actions and disrespecting of African Americans are imprinted in the mind of Mrs. Geraldine and passed to her children. As a result, they produce violence that engenders the encouragement of terror, and deepens the hatred and animosity in the hearts of both the colored and African American people. The African American people in this case have a poor outlook on the future. However, the ethnic conflict between the two groups of society poses a risk to the individual as well as society especially in the field of security, economy, policy and society. The social siege which encircles the necks of the African American prevents them from using or benefiting from their rights. Morrison says that in Lake Shore Park, "Black people were not allowed in the park"(Morrison, 1970 ,p. 84).

Racists look to the black people in merciless vision where there is no space for affection and mercy. They would not help the poor black people, because they are, according to them, not human beings. It is known that the relation between the patient and the doctor has a sort of mercy and pity in spite of all forms of discrimination. Pauline has a severe experience with the white doctor when she gives birth. She hears the dialogue between the old doctor and the young ones "when he got to me he said now these women you do not have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses"(Morrison, 1970, p. 99). They do not show interest in Pauline's thoughts, ideas, fears, and concerns. They ignore her need of reassuring words; she needs to know that she will be safe. At the same time, those doctors said reassuring words to the white woman. All of these cruel feelings towards the black patients will not help or participate in the formation process of their subjectivity.

Subjectivity describes our sense and feeling of being in the world. This being should be subjected to some standards that define the forming of the standard subjectivity. A personal identification is not a number or an identification card that gives the person his legal rights or proves his name and nationality. The wanted subjectivity is intangible in some regards, and tangible in others, as the building of subjectivity is exposed to the influences of the family and the community, such as norms, the economic, political, or psychic pressures, and the community background. This subjectivity is circumscribed by all of the previous influences. No one can deny the effect of pain on the subjectivity of the little girl. This experience is crucial and dangerous to her life. It generates the feeling of disability especially if she does not find the cues of help from her parents. Therefore, the feeling of inferiority, internalized oppression and shame will inhabit her life, besides the sting of racial discrimination. In spite of her believing that her lameness is an act of God, Pauline feels ashamed. This feeling is imposed on her by her community who defines 'disability' as a deficiency, disadvantage, and limiting impairment. This feeling has reached epidemic proportions in the thought of a disabled black little girl. The inferiority complex is also found in her daughter, where she experiences the ugliness of her appearance. Both of them have not experienced the disability pride in the deaf community. All of these experiences decrease the feeling of subjectivity and the sense of presence because of the shortage of family and community support. The experience of childhood needs the care and the interest of the parents to pass the serious hurdles of beings a disabled child, and the mother or caregiver is a key process in subjectivity formation. This depends on the mental features of the caregiver that can absorb and understand the little girl's problem. The subjectivity of the black

women is varied from one family to another, for instance, Pecola and her mother, do not meet their basic needs, while Claudia and Frieda have their subjectivity, and they are proud of it.

It is true that in a racial society, women's rights are raped by the supremacists and by the patriarchal authority, but their tireless attempts to build their and their children's subjectivity have produced remarkable results. However, the results cannot be generalized to all black women, because there are successful outcomes such as the MacTeer family who overcomes the expected and unexpected difficulties. Morrison adorns the invisibility of the black women in the dress of ignorance, backwardness and sex. Black women don the mantle of subjectivity. They convince themselves of being unworthy, because of their negative feeling about their complexion which fills them with ugliness and sadness. They try to adjust themselves within this vein, but their subjectivity rejects it. Indeed, this sort of vein will prevent them from the process of forming their own subjectivity. This mantle conceals what they cannot change, because it is the work of God. Skin color is not evidence that these women do not deserve the human rights that are discussed in all international forums. The mirror has a profound meaning in the psyche of women. It is one of the stages that determine the identity and the subjectivity of the infant girl. In the mirror, she can see her "I" and can distinguish herself. Pecola resorts to the mirror to find her reality, and subjectivity. Lancan, in his psychoanalytic theory, considers the mirror as a stage that establishes the ego. This stage starts at six months and last until eighteen months (1977, p.1). Pecola is eleven years old. Similarities between the baby and Pecola exist despite the differences in ages "Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness" (Morrison, 1970, p. 33).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the subjectivity of the African American women is not a mirage. It is present in each woman, but the form and content differ from one woman to another. It is not important if the other can see it, or they intend to ignore it, the subjectivity is an internal feeling of credibility and reliability. It is one of the human rights that are acquired through the course of life. So, the people seek to build and survive for the sake of subjectivity. To be, or not to be: that is the question.

About the authors:

Aspalila Shapii, PhD is a lecturer at College of Arts & Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia. She has a doctorate degree from University of Leicester, an MA in ELT from University of Warwick and B.Ed.TESL Degree from University of Malaya. Her research interests are ELT classroom research; student-centred learning approaches and teacher reflections.

Faisal Lafee Alobeytha is currently doing his doctorate degree in English literature at Universiti Utara Malaysia. He participated in two United Nation Missions as a translator, and as an interpreter at King Abdullah II Special Operation Training Centre (Jordan). He taught as English lecturer at Northern Border University and Taibah University (Saudi Arabia).

Sharifah Fazliyaton Shaik Ismail, PhD is presently Senior Lecturer at the School of Education and Modern Language Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia. She teaches courses on translation, linguistics and literature. Her areas of interest include the translation of children's books, gender studies, 'chick lit', literary translation, and comparative literature.

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Adultery and Redemption in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* (1940)

Hany A. Abdelfattah
Faculty of Al-Asun
Minia University, Egypt

Abstract

The relationship between priests and younger women from their audience has been turbulent for centuries. Our protagonists, here, are two priests who fathered two daughters out of the wedlock; thereafter, their self-torture commences. This paper examines the relationship between adultery and redemption through a comparative analysis of two priests: Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* and the whiskey priest in *The Power and the Glory*.

But many questions arise here, such as: what is the benefit of confession when the priests love the daughters who are born of their crimes? How can the illegitimate daughters drive the priests to repent in public? Why do the two authors resort to fiction as the best genre to convey their messages? This paper offers possible answers to these questions by examining the following: first, the reasons behind the choice of novels; second, the biography of each author and the reception of his novel; third, Puritanism and Catholicism as denominations of the Christian religion; fourth, the dissent of the authors from faith; finally, the wilderness in each novel—for example, the brook in *The Scarlet Letter* and the rural villages in *The Power and the Glory*—and its influence on the protagonists. Through a comparative study of the similarities and differences, the paper investigates plot lines, themes, significance of names, biblical allusion, the confession, and the redemption of the two priests.

Keywords: Catholicism, Greene, Hawthorne, Puritanism, redemption,

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He [the whiskey priest] admits, 'I don't know how to repent.' That was true: he had lost the faculty. He couldn't say to himself that he wished his sin had never existed because the sin seemed to him now so unimportant and he loved the fruit of it.

(Greene, 1990, p. 128)

If Graham Greene's Roman Catholic priest has expressed his own dilemma of committing sin and then falling in love with the fruit of it, Nathaniel Hawthorne's minister Arthur Dimmesdale precedes him nearly a century earlier in echoing the same paradox before the Puritans at the scaffold. Dimmesdale pleads:

If she [Hester] bring (sic) the child to heaven, the child also will bring its parents thither! Herein is the sinful mother happier than the sinful father. For Hester Prynne's sake, then, and no less for the poor child's sake, let us leave them as Providence hath seen fit to place them!

(Hawthorne, 2006, p.106)*

Out of the minister's numerous attempts to downplay Hester's sin, he succeeds partially to save his daughter Pearl from the jaws of Puritan rigidity in his community. Likewise, the whiskey priest, whose reputation has been besmirched all along the villages of Mexico, embarks upon a self-sacrificial journey lest his daughter fall victim to communists. He cries: "O God Give me any kind of death—without contrition, in a state of sin—only save this child" (PG, 1990, p. 82). Both priests have left their women suffering under the yoke of strict religious rules of their communities. Against all odds, these women bring up their daughters to believe in their dignity and self-worthiness. Hence, the daughters participate effectively in granting absolution to their fathers.

This paper examines the relationship between adultery and redemption through a comparative analysis of two priests: Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* and the whiskey priest in *The Power and the Glory*. Both priests father daughters out of wedlock; thereafter, their self-torture commences. The paper considers how the daughters—"the product[s] of sin" (SL, 2006, p. 87)—participate in the process of transforming the guilt-ridden priests into caring and tending fathers. In the aftermath of their affairs, the two priests have undergone a profound spiritual experience which transforms them from adulterers into holy men. Moreover, the paper proposes that Puritan and Catholic societies have an important influence on the redemption of the two priests as well as the reconstruction of the daughters' characters.

Both Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* have attracted the attention of critics for a long time. Many scholars have focused on the concept of sin and how a priest can descend from a demigod position in his society to a lustful tramp. This concept has become unfashionable in the modern world because its language "has

* Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* will hereafter be cited as (SL) and Greene's *The Power and the Glory* as (PG).

become somewhat ineffectual in terms of its ethical and religious meanings. There is a lack of vitality and freshness and resonance with reality" (Connolly, 2002, p. vi). Even more, the theme of adultery is almost a fade-out in the rapidly changing ethics of the western world, as Carol Iannone (1988) asserts: "with our lively, all encompassing sense of absolute moral freedom, ours is an age in which *The Scarlet Letter* not only could not be written, but almost cannot be read as Hawthorne wrote it" (56). But the Bible absolutely denounces adultery to the extent that it equates those who do not avert their gaze with adulterers, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (James, Mat. 5:28, New International Version). So, pious people should lower their gaze, otherwise they would commit adultery. Therefore, adultery remains a major disgrace regardless of how much time passes and world changes; indeed, it is the mortal sin that "precipitates the sinner into a state of wrath, death, and condemnation, so that, if he should die in this state, and without repentance, he would be eternally condemned" (Cooper, 2006, p.118).

But a host of deeper questions arise here. Among the most notable are: what is the benefit of confession when the priests love the daughters who are born of their crimes? How can the illegitimate daughters drive the priests to repent in public? Why do the two authors resort to fiction as the best genre to convey their messages? This paper offers possible answers to these questions by examining the following: first, the reasons behind the choice of novels; second, the biography of each author and the reception of his novel; third, Puritanism and Catholicism as denominations of the Christian religion; fourth, the dissent of the authors from faith; finally, the wilderness in each novel—for example, the brook in *The Scarlet Letter* and the rural villages in *The Power and the Glory*—and its influence on the protagonists. Further, I will compare the two narratives, focusing on similarities and differences between the two novels under examination, shedding light on the plot lines, themes, significance of names, biblical allusion, the confession, and the redemption of the two priests.

In her book *Religion and Sexuality in American Literature*, Ann-Janne Morey (1992) documents numerous examples of priests who engage in sexual relationships with women in the nineteenth-century fiction. Morey asserts how the fiction documents two kinds of priests: one is sexless like Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter*, and the other is virile such as Rev. Joseph Bellamy Stoker in *The Guardian Angel* who is depicted as a "hen hawk among the chickens" (Holmes, 1867, p. 8). In *The Leatherstocking*, the protagonist Josph Dylk is described as a "Stallion of a man" (Howells, 1976, p. 8). Springing from this discourse, I excluded narratives about adulterers and adulteresses out of the context of the priesthood and church. My selection is narrowed to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Greene's *The Power and the Glory* despite the fact that they are almost a century apart and one is set in the Puritanical America and the other in the communist Mexico. However, the two novels converge on one theme: an adulterous priest who has fathered a girl out of the wedlock. In the aftermath of his affair, the priest is well-aware of his guilt and has no intention to repeat the sexual act. Despite the death of the two priests by the end of the novels, the notion that their lustful experiences are deeply regretted and that adultery is not beyond redemption is another important element behind my choice of the two works. In addition, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Greene's *The Power and the Glory* are chosen because the adulteresses—Hester and Maria—are not concubines of the priests: they have already repented of their sins, and they are waiting for the redemption of their priests. Both are courageous women who stand by their priests throughout their journeys.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) along with Herman Melville, Henry James, and Mark Twain are the most celebrated nineteenth-century American novelists. Hawthorne grew up in Salem, Massachusetts—well known for its Salem's witchcraft trial which is depicted in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953). In 1692, Salem witnessed a horrible massacre where twenty people from Salem village were executed for practicing witchcraft on their neighbors. By that time, Puritans believed that Satan would "impersonate individuals without their permission" (Person, 2007, p. 18). In his formative years, Hawthorne is influenced by a number of Puritanical books such as John Winthrop's *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* (1825–26), Caleb H. Snow's *A History of Boston* (1825), and Joseph Felt's *The Annals of Salem from Its First Settlement* (1827).

In contrast, Graham Greene (1904-1991) was born and bred into the religious traditions of the Catholic Church. He converted to Catholicism in 1926 under the influence of Vivien Daryell-Browning, who later became his wife, and Cardinal John Henry Newman. In his book *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination*, Mark Bosco, S.J. (2005) states that "his true loyalty was to Vivien first and only secondly to the Church. But what began as an intellectual conversion for personal reasons became, after his experience of the persecution of Catholics in Mexico, an emotional conversion too" (16). Hence, Greene dedicates *The Power and the Glory* to investigate this troublesome persecution of the Catholics under the tyranny of the dictator Tomás Garrido Canabal. His major novels *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1947) and *The End of the Affair* (1951) present Catholicism as the solution against sin, evil and doubt. Greene was influenced by Catholic writers like Evelyn Waugh and Muriel Spark and the American Thomas Merton and Flannery O'Connor.

However both writers are under the influence of different Christian denominations, their writings correlate largely with similar literary inclinations. Both challenge their personal faith and the dogmatic religious training they once underwent in their formative years. For example, Hawthorne's novels such as *The Gentle Boy* (1832), *Alice Doane's Appeal* (1835), *Young Goodman Brown* (1835) are a revolt against Puritanical legacy. In *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), he criticizes the concept of devil impersonation in his delineation of the inevitable transformation of Arthur Dimmesdale despite the existence of the Blackman in the forest. Hawthorne uses language in a perfect way to describe the terror of the Blackman and the self-torture experience of his minister Arthur Dimmesdale. Thus, Hawthorne is considered a pioneer in creating "psychological fiction before the field of psychology developed" (Baym, 1986, p. 2). Similarly, Greene is famous for his Catholic novels such *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) in which Greene "shows the evil of a dogmatic fanaticism within the Catholic Church" (Gordon, 1997, p. 47). The Catholic themes in his novels prove that God's faith will prevail finally through negation. This tendency is known in his writings as "via negativa" which is "both a theological approach and a set of literary techniques (Hodgkins, 2006, p.53). "Via negativa" means that the knowledge about God is obtained through negation or through the path of sin. This style has influenced numerous writers after Greene such as T.S. Eliot and James Joyce. In *The Power and the Glory*, one is brought face to face with the contradictions of the whiskey priest who, despite his drunkenness and cowardice, sets off a redemptive journey to reach absolution that finally got him killed.

Both Puritanism and Catholicism are strict Christian denominations. Puritanism encompasses wide interpretations of reformed Protestantism and Calvinism. It is originated as an "insult launched at nonconformist clergy within the newly reformed Elizabethan Church (Coffey, 2008, p. 1). Set against the papal authority, Puritanism is originated in the Church of England and branched off into North America or what is known as New England. Hawthorne was a member of the society of New England which derived its ethical principles from the seventeenth-century Puritanism. The theme of adulterous clergyman in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* provoked a Puritan controversy. In his review "*The Scarlet Letter*" and *Other Writings*," Reverend Arthur Cleveland Coxe criticized the novel for its erotic theme and asked about the motive behind selecting such a theme. He expressed his concern that the novel might "signal a trend in the American publishing" that would allow a "running under tide of filth" (as cited in Person, 2005, p. 67).

Catholicism belongs to the influential Roman Catholic Church whose roots go back to the first millennium. Catholics pay homage to the Bishop of Rome and they usually criticize reformation of the church by both the Protestants and the Calvinists. The relationship between Catholics and Puritans is turbulent, as Catholics regard "Puritanism as the most evil expression of Reformation heresy. Catholics frequently pointed to Puritans as savage persecutors of Catholicism who, out of mere malice, took it upon themselves to oppress and torment the adherents of true religion" (Questier, 2006, p. 61).

Greene invokes images of grace and doubt in his novels. For him, doubt is "honored above any religious pharisaism or political party line" (Bosco, 2005, p. 27). Therefore, Greene's *The Power and the Glory* has been criticized by many critics because they claim that Greene "conceives of God in terms that either confuse the Father with the Son or force the term "God" to mean only the Creator at the expense" (Bosco, 2005, p. 27). For example, Jae Suck Choi notes that Greene turns God into a scapegoat, a title usually reserved for Jesus; whereas, Cates Baldridge claims that Greene rarely thinks of Christ.

In an answer to the question: why do the two authors resort to fiction as the best genre to convey their messages? Nancy Armstrong (2005) asserts in her book *How the Novel Think: The Limits of British Individualism from 1719–1900* that the modern secular morality does not emanate from the Bible or the religious institutions, but rather from works of fiction that introduce "a whole world of possibilities without which, I believe, a modern secular state ruled chiefly by ideology could not have emerged when and how it did (29). It is evident that fiction is able to encompass a wide array of schools and techniques that enable it to venture into new experimental arenas that other genres are still lagging behind.

The two novels are similar in a number of ways, especially in terms of plot lines as well as themes such as sin, guilt, escape, redemption, and re-assimilation. With regard to the daughters and mothers, there is a resemblance of the daughters' names and an obvious analogy between the audacious roles of their mothers who sacrifice their happiness in a bid to save their children.

In the plot lines, there is an obvious similarity between biographical histories of each priest. They both revolve around renegade priests and faithful, relentless women who remain committed

to their illegitimate children. In her article "*The Scarlet Letter* of the law: Hawthorne and criminal justice," Laura Hanft Korobkin (1997) asserts how Dimmesdale lives in religious society controlled mainly by a small group of "powerful men, accountable apparently to none but themselves and their God" (p. 194). And this clique of powerful men are excluding the townspeople who "may mutter, but they must also unhesitatingly obey." (Korobkin, 1997, p. 195). In this restrictive community, Hester Prynne gives birth to a child out of the wedlock. Surprisingly, Hester remains determined and withholds the name of her daughter's father despite the relentless efforts by the governor and his retinue to deter her. Consequently, Hester is brought to the town's scaffold where she is publicly stigmatized. To avoid the constant surveillance of the Puritans, she moves out of town into the woods to live alone with her daughter, Pearl, making her living by working as a seamstress. As the story unfolds, we realize how Pearl has become a naughty girl who rebels against the reality of the notorious scarlet letter. Up until the last chapter of the novel, the love affair between Hester and the young minister Arthur Dimmesdale is kept secret. Finally, the little Pearl has a great effect in transforming the disenchanted priest from a shameful adulterer to a free soul by forcing him to confess his guilt openly and recognizing her as his legitimate daughter.

If we consider the possibility that Puritanism is the foe in *The Scarlet Letter*, Catholicism is definitely the savior in *The Power and the Glory*. Not only does faith drive the whiskey priest to sacrifice his own soul in defense of Catholicism, but it also drives him to repent for having an illegitimate child.

In the rural district of Tabasco, Mexico, where a totalitarian regime persecutes Catholics and eradicates any signs of religion, only two priests are left alive: Padre José and the whiskey priest—as the townspeople used to call him by that name because he is a drunkard. The former renounces his religion and gets married, thus saving his life on earth and heaven; meanwhile, the latter remains in the country and defies the government by preaching Christianity to the poor villagers, and thus becoming the only voice of the church in that rural community. There is yet another underlying cause behind his determination to tour the poor villages: the priest has fathered a girl and her memory haunts him wherever he goes. Finally, he finds her in terrible conditions in one of the towns he visits; he loves the girl, but he cannot stay with her lest the police pick him as a scapegoat and shoot him before the masses. As Greene contends:

The old man was muttering and the priest's thoughts went back to Brigitta. The knowledge of the world lay in her like the dark inexplicable spot in an X-ray photograph; he longed—with a breathless feeling in the breast—to save her, but he knew the surgeon's decision—the ill was incurable.

(PG, 1990, p. 127)

In his long run from the police, he gets weary and desperately tries to find a church where he can confess his own sins, adultery among them, and thus experience absolution. Upon reaching the border between Mexico and the United States, however, and after a tip-off from the mestizo, the whiskey priest retreats in order to help a criminal on the verge of death. Confident that the story is full of flaws and that the mestizo is his Judas, he goes on to rescue the man even though he knows that he may be captured and shot. And, as it turns out, this is what exactly happens.

Another striking resemblance between the two novels is the affinity between the characters' names. For example, in *The Scarlet Letter*, the daughter's name is Pearl, but when Mr. Wilson forgets the name, he calls her many other names: "Who art thou, and what Pearl?—Ruby, rather—or Coral—or Red Rose, at the very least?" (SL, 2006, p. 101).

Coral, here, is a reminiscent of her namesake in *The Power and the Glory* who hides the priest in her parents' big barn and ignores her mom as she "couldn't trust her" (PG, 1990, p. 37). Coral does this herself and helps the priest until he finally gets away from the lieutenant. Having made this help, she turns to be a link, proving the analogy between the two novels: the whiskey priest has a daughter named Brigitta, which is the same name of the little boy whom the whiskey priest baptizes while drunk and Juan tells her mother that it is "a good saint's name" (PG, 1990, p.28). At the same time, it is also related to Saint Brigit of Sweden who lived in the fourteenth century, and used to have visions, as Bridget Morris (2006) notes in the abstract of the book *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden*:

St. Birgitta of Sweden (1303-1373, canonized 1391) was one of the most charismatic and influential female visionaries of the later Middle Ages. Altogether, she received some 700 revelations, dealing with subjects ranging from meditations on the human condition, domestic affairs in Sweden, and ecclesiastical matters in Rome, to revelations in praise of the Incarnation and devotion to the Virgin. (i)

Semantically, the name 'Brigitta' connotes a connection or a link, suggesting that the girl functions as a bridge between different cultures.

In addition to the aforementioned nomenclatural analogy, the role of women in the two novels is clearly analogous. They show a sort of independence in their lives and in bringing up their fatherless daughters. For instance, Hester works in sewing clothes to the well-off Puritan ladies of Boston to become financially independent. Further, she devotes the rest of her time sewing clothes for the poor—creating a social position among the puritan community not just as a woman seeking to earn a living but also as a communal philanthropist. In much the same way, Maria lives like any ordinary villager in town; working the land and raising her children. But she differs from Hester: she has little education, and that is why she regards herself as different, as when she claims:

I know things, I went to school. I'm not like these others—ignorant. I know you're a bad priest. That time we were together—that wasn't all you have done...do you think that god wants you to stay and die—a whisky priest like you? (PG, 1990, p. 79)

Empowered by her education, Maria censures the whiskey priest for his lewd behavior and drunkenness. She is a sinner, but she redeems herself by devoting her life only to her daughter. Further, she and Hester suppress their sexual desire and remain faithful to their runaway priests and to their children. Their influence is omnipresent and that makes them direct foils to their priests who are always viewed as cowards and dependents. Accordingly, Hester remains silent refusing to speak the name of the father of her child; Maria provides an excellent cover for the whiskey priest when he comes to visit her. She saves the priest from being captured by asking him to "bite this...She had a small raw onion in her hand" (PG, 1990, p. 72-3). Moreover, she rescues him by saying that he is her husband which quells suspicions of him being a priest.

Most of the action of the novel takes place in Boston—a city in Massachusetts where John Winthrop established the first Puritan settlement in the beginning of the seventeenth century. In his article “Remembering John Winthrop-Hawthorne's Suggestion,” Matthew S. Holland (2007) elaborates on the important role of John Winthrop as one of the leading Puritans who come to America. Holland writes:

During this period, he settled Boston and skillfully held together the sprawling frontier settlements of Massachusetts in the face of harsh winters, economic downturns, unpredictable patterns of migration, divisive political and theological disputes, and a smattering of conflicts with foreign powers and native populations. (6)

The Protestants of the British church revolted the inability of their churches to force reformation in the society, and rather they pushed to “purify their national church by eliminating every shred of Catholic influence” (Wertenbaker, 1947, p. 89). Dissenting from Catholicism has significant ramifications for the Puritans, they headed towards extremism in interpreting the Bible.

Indeed, this principle was heavily underlined in Hawthorne's wonderful depiction of place that appears crystal clear in the description of the minister's study. The old books besieged Dimmesdale from every place, illustrating the biblical stories of ancient adulterers and adulteresses and the suffering they had endured throughout all their lives. Hawthorne writes:

The walls were hung around with tapestry, said to be from the Gobelin looms, and, at all events, representing the Scriptural story of David and Bathsheba, and Nathan the Prophet, in colors; still unfaded, but which made the fair woman of the scene almost as grimly picturesque as the woe-denouncing seer. Here the pale clergyman piled up his library, rich with parchment-bound folios of the Fathers, and the role of Rabbis, and monkish erudition, of which the Protestant divines, even while they vilified and decried that class of writers, were yet constrained to avail themselves.

(SL, 2006, p. 116)

The Old Testament influences the Puritans' view on adultery; Dimmesdale is obsessed with the story of David and Bathsheba where the beautiful maiden Bathsheba seduces Prophet David to marry her after the demise of her husband:

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

(James: 2 Sam. 11:2, New International Version)

Bathsheba has an extramarital affair with Prophet David: their child dies and that is regarded as God's retribution. Stemming from this direct affinity, the whole novel is an allusion to the Old Testament's story of Bathsheba, and equally, this point is addressed in *The Power and the Glory* in which the title of the novel is taken from a famous prayer “For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen” (James: 1 Cor 16:10, New International Version). If we look at the two narratives from the perspective of religious allusion, the ancient theological trope of the identification of redemption and sin has been realized. Fully aware of the demise of the child in the story of David and Bathsheba, both priests attempt to reverse their fortunes by confessing their sins in public and admitting their fatherhood of their children. But the old

Puritan books hold Dimmesdale back from confessing his sins. Despite the attempts of Chillingworth and others to convince Dimmesdale to get married and have children, he is disinclined to take this step and rejects "all suggestions of this kind, as if priestly celibacy were one of his articles of church-discipline" (SL, 2006, p.115-6).

This is not the case for the whiskey priest though. He is caught between a rock and a hard place. Were he to get married, he would be defrocked from the church. Even more, if he had disclosed that he had a child out of the wedlock; his reputation would have been marred among the poor Catholic peasants who always regard him as a pious leader. And that is exactly what happens to his counterpart Padre José whose decision to renounce Catholicism and get married is a curse rather than a blessing: he gradually loses his self-image and falls under self-deprecating pressures. Greene asserts:

He stood outside himself and wondered whether he was even fit for hell. He was just a fat old impotent man mocked and taunted between the sheets. But then he remembered the gift he had been given which nobody could take away. That was what made him worthy of damnation—the power he still had of turning the water into the flesh and blood of God. He was a sacrilege. Whenever he went, whatever he did, he defiled god. (PG, 1990, p. 29)

Not every priest is able to confront the communist regime in Mexico—a few fight and get killed. Many just blend with the herd in getting out of the Christianity cloak before the Red Shirts kill them, and Padre Jose is no exception. Greene's *The Power and the Glory* depicts the historical period of Garrido Canabal's reign of terror in Mexico who succeeded in closing all the state churches and mandating all priests to marry and renounce their religious duties (Malcolm, 1998, p.9). Greene himself travelled to Tabasco region during his writing of his novel *The Lawless Road* and witnessed how this despotic ruler had turned the Christian schools to "almost military-like institutions of discipline where children were indoctrinated scientifically and learned the virtues of reason, agricultural technique, and physical exercises (Krauze, 2006, p. 4). But the character of Garrido Canabal does not occupy much space in the novel; instead Greene uses the character as a metaphor of the treacherous insiders who are corrupting the moral fabric of the Mexican society, and also as a constant reminder of how the communists loathe Catholicism.

Escaping from the inferno of the pangs of conscience, the priests move to the wilderness in order to meet with their daughters and minimize the difficulties they are encountering. Hester and Dimmesdale decide to move to the forest, out of the restrictive presence of their Puritan society. Their meeting, which is prolonged for a long time, finally offers them the opportunity to set everything straight in their relationship. Not only is the forest chosen for being a hidden sanctuary, but also for its openness and freedom. Hawthorne writes:

Partly that she dreaded the secret or undisguised interference of the Old Roger Chillingworth, and partly that her conscious heart imputed suspicion where none could have been felt, and partly that both the minister and she would need the whole wide world to breathe in, while they talked together—for all these reasons Hester never thought of meeting him in any narrower privacy than beneath the open sky. (SL, 2006, p. 182)

Between 1642 and 1649, Salem was still a small settlement, bordered on three sides by a forest. Thus, the forest turns out to be the right place for Dimmesdale to rethink in his future, and for the two lovers to rekindle their love and passion. But this time, love is platonic, and sex is totally out

of their minds. Had there been any desire still left in their bosoms, they would have repeated the sexual affair once they met again. But neither Hester nor the priest wishes to repeat the act because the catastrophe of the scarlet letter has purified their souls from the earthly desires.

Unlike Dimmesdale, the whiskey priest is not forced to retreat into a rural space; instead, he willingly exiles himself to rural villages, preferring to go south "in the actual track of the police," (PG, 1990, p. 83) where the danger lies rather than heading north. Choosing the rural villages as his exile, he passes his time preaching patience and catechism to the poor peasants of Tabasco. The priest hopes that he will be worthy of salvation by saving the needy people of Tabasco. He hopes that God will reward him by saving his daughter.

In the wilderness, Arthur Dimmesdale is surprised to see Pearl completely unresponsive and rather provocative in all her demeanor. In a voice full of reproach, Hester warns her, "Leap across the brook, naughty child, and run hither! Else, I must come to thee" (SL, 2006, p. 196). Surprisingly, all her feelings break loose once her mother demands that she greet the priest.

She accompanied this wild outbreak with piercing shrieks, which the woods reverberated on all sides; so that, alone as she was in her childish and unreasonable wrath, it seemed as if a hidden multitude were lending her their sympathy and encouragement. (SL, 2006, p. 196)

It is clear now that Pearl will not compromise with the priest as his sin of hiding his fatherhood has cost the young girl too much: she has lost her father's affection and protection. In a similar way, after the whiskey priest comes to Maria's town, Brigitta refuses his constant attempts to reconcile with her. She is frustrated, as she is the only one in town left fatherless. Greene writes:

He moved towards her with infinite caution, as if she were an animal who disturbed him. He felt weak with longing. He said, "My dear, why me...?"
She said furiously, "They laugh at me."
'Because of me?'
She said, 'Everyone else has a father...who works'.
(PG, 1990, p. 81)

These qualities of being imp, mischievous and impudent do not exist in the daughters' peers simply because calamities had hardened and burnt them away. Therefore, leaving the two daughters without any help or support has brought a touch of nervousness to their behavior. Pearl is so nervous and stubborn most of the time, whereas Brigitta is sad and aloof.

Building on this, Pearl's meeting with the minister turns to be silent where they "exchanged no words" (Maclean, 1990, p. 55), Pearl just uses her body language and facial gestures of winking and nodding. Likewise, Brigitta's dialogue with her father is so concise and depends mainly on her arresting eyes: "The child stared up at the lieutenant and then turned her knowing eyes upon the priest" (PG, 1990, p. 76). This indirect contact between the priests and their daughters reveal the ingenuity of Hawthorne and Greene in turning the daughters to supernatural beings. In her article "The Character of Flame: The Function of Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter*," Anne Marie McNamara (1990) suggests that Pearl has undergone transformation from a physical presence into a spiritual one:

The spirit child communicates her disapproval in another way, one exquisitely appropriate to Dimmesdale's sensibility--through a silent, indirect, subjective language. In the entire scene at the brook side, she does not speak to him with her human voice at all. She addresses him indirectly through her persistent rejection of his advances and through actions ostensibly directed towards her mother. (69)

Torn between his own illusions and the repulsion of his own daughter, Dimmesdale realizes that Pearl, "the elf child," has something "preternatural" to her:

"I have a strange fancy," observed the sensitive minister, "that this brook is the boundary between two worlds, and that thou canst never meet thy Pearl again. Or is she an elfish spirit, who, as the legends of our childhood taught us, is forbidden to cross a running stream?" (SL, 2006, p. 195)

The brook is nothing but a gate between two worlds: Earth and hell, as Randal Stewart (1933) suggests when he claims that the meeting in the wilderness between Dimmesdale, Hester, and Pearl is "a meeting of souls in hell, souls frozen in the eternal state of a decisive earthly choice" (196). Thus, Pearl transforms into a spirit who has a "preternatural" presence, whereas Brigitta turns into a nightmare, haunting the whiskey priest wherever he goes.

The Power and the Glory is interspersed with episodes of the priest in different places and completely in anguish for leaving his daughter alone. For instance, upon hearing the word "bastard" in the crowded cell, all the pain and agony come up in his mind as if the word "brought his own child nearer" (PG, 1990, p. 124). In the same cell, where the priest discloses his true identity to realize how crucial his situation will be as the place might be brimming with "inevitable Judas," his thoughts go back to Brigitta, and wonders how the girl could live on near that rubbish-dump (PG, 1990, p.127). Even after his departure from the despicable cell to the luxurious house of Mr. Lehr, he ponders that he, himself, "had no right to such luxury" while his daughter is suffering alone (PG, 1990, p. 164). Exhausted, narcotized with brandy, and in police custody, the whiskey priest remembers his child, "coming out of the glare: the sullen unhappy knowledgeable face" (PG, 1990, p. 208).

Thus, all the attempts of the priests to get close to their daughters are met with a cruel rebuff. There is only one way of reconciliation, which is through the public confession of their sins. As Pearl lays down her conditions on the minister:

"Doth he love us?" said Pearl, looking up, with acute intelligence into her mother's face. "Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?"
 "And will he always keep his hand over his heart?" inquired Pearl. (SL, 2006, p. 198)

Pearl's pre-reconciliation demands are clear and non-negotiable: public confession and bearing the whole responsibility of what he had done to her mother and her. On the other hand, Brigitta seems helpless and sad most of the time: she does not ask the whiskey priest for anything. Yet, the whiskey priest asserts that little Pearl is protected by god's angels more than any other power in the world, as he notes, "the president up the capital goes guarded by men with guns—but my child, you have all the angels of heaven" (*PG*, 1990, p. 82). The fear of the girls' unknown future is a considerable concern for the priests. Dimmesdale begs Hester to take care of Pearl, despite the girl's cold-hearted welcome to him.

"I pray you, answered the minister," "If thou hast any means of pacifying the child, do it forthwith! Save it were the cankered wrath of any witch, like Mistress Hibbons," added he, attempting to smile, "I know nothing that I would not sooner encounter than this passion in a child. In Pearl's young beauty, as in the wrinkled witch, it has a preternatural effect. Pacify her, if thou lovest me!" (*SL*, 2006, p. 196)

But the pacification needs Dimmesdale to confess his guilt publicly. Consequently, he will reconcile with Hester and Pearl and he will prove that he lives up to the moral principles which he always been professing loudly and emphatically.

In Pearl's vision, the scarlet letter 'A' is the token of the devil, as it is made of flame. Throughout the novel, the letter A, which Hester wears on her chest, becomes a symbol of her strength rather than her weakness. Letter A is more than just a symbol of adultery it casts her and her daughter out of the society to the wilderness. Further, it defines who Hester is and who she is becoming. Stigmatized by wearing it in public, Hester does not want Dimmesdale to endure her experience lest he be shunned by his community.

By the end, both priests die: one from the self-torture he inflicts upon himself; the other from being shot dead by the communists. Both are conscious of what they had done, and the haunting sense of guilt will never leave them to enjoy the pleasures of life. However the two priests and their partners are stifled by a mutual sense of guilt, this sense constitutes the only bond that unites them together. In her review of Peter Brooks' *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature*, Austin Sarat (2000) explains that Brooks contends that guilt constitutes, along with broad cultural pressures, a bond that unites the priests with their partners. Austin writes:

Brooks argues that confession requires a relationship: between writer and readers, penitent and priest, patient and analyst, suspect and interrogator. Each of these relationships are (sic) characterized by dependency, subjection, fear, and desires to appease and please. (122)

Despite being born out of the wedlock, Pearl and Brigitta are the real support of these relationships which guarantee the transformation of the priests and the acknowledgment of the two daughters. Consequently, confession, which is the pillar of redemption in Christian theology, is the only panacea for all their problems. Mark Van Doren (1966) expresses how Hawthorne stresses the inevitability of Dimmesdale's confession:

Sin for him, for Hester, and for the people who punish her is equally a solemn fact, a problem for which there is no solution in life. There was no other solution for his story, given Hester's strength, Dimmesdale's weakness, and Chillingworth's perversion, than the one he (Hawthorne) found. (132-3)

On the same ground, Hugh N. Maclean (1990) concurs that "the very weakening of Dimmesdale's fibre is a subtle part of God's plan, for only in this way can man receive grace" (60). The moment of confession is not that bitter as immediately after Dimmesdale confesses his sin, he is rewarded by Pearl "who kissed his lips. A spell was broken" (SL, 2006, p. 238). Before, Dimmesdale was not able to mount the scaffold, and he called upon Pearl "Come hither! Come, my little Pearl!" (SL, 2006, p. 235). Knowing that he has breached the divine order of God to no avail, he cries: "The law we broke" (SL, 2006, p. 239). His death, while Hester and Pearl are nearby, comes as evidence that he would not have died without completing his last wish: confession.

If the whiskey priest does not confess his sin before the peasants of Maria's villages, he has already done it many times through the many villages he has been through. His love for his daughter overwhelms him and supersedes any sorts of love that he once boasts. As a result, the whiskey priest fails to come to terms with one of the pre-conditions of sainthood, which is to turn the other cheek and love your enemy. Greene explains:

As the liquid touched his tongue he remembered his child, coming in and out of the glare: the sullen unhappy knowledgeable face. He said, 'Oh God, help her. Damn me, I deserve it, but let her live for ever.' This was the love he should have felt for every soul in the world: all the fear and the wish to save concentrated unjustly on the one child. (PG, 1990, p. 207-8)

The young Juan, who is once touched and influenced by the suffering of the whiskey priest, is a representative of the new Catholic generation; he gives a refuge to another runaway priest from the claws of the communist regime. Greene writes:

'Yes,' he said gently, 'My name is Father_' But the boy had already swung the door open and put his lips to his hand before the other could give himself a name. (PG, 1990, p. 222)

So, the young Juan is a disciple of the whiskey priest who is so resolute to continue the path of resistance against the communists.

By examining the two novels, we can see that the differences are few but significant. For instance, the pace of action in the two novels is different, and this is an apparent divergence between them. If we look at what exactly happens to the priests before going to the wilderness, we wonder, for instance, why Dimmesdale's redemption is at snail's pace. On the other hand, the whiskey priest's redemption is like a roller-coaster ride of flight and pursuit, capture and escape, repeated over and over again. In fact, Hawthorne prolongs his novel by adding "The Custom House" chapter which is intended to "offset the intensity of *The Scarlet Letter*" and includes an account of his own background (Silver, 1965, p. XVI). But apart from these differences, the slow redemption of the minister can be explained through the concept of God's retribution in Puritanism and Catholicism. In the Puritanical point of view, God's retribution is manifested in the inner conflict or the psychological forces clamoring inside the minister's mind; therefore, retribution is not corporeal but a subconscious one that is reflected in psychosomatic ailments, and this is shown clearly in Dimmesdale's illness as well as on his hand that is always on his heart. In *The Power and the Glory*, God's retribution does not occur in the inner conflict per se

but rather in the physical torture and the seedy conditions the whiskey priest encounters wherever he goes. Eventually, Catholic punishment guarantees that the more pain you endure, the happier you will be.

On an entirely different note, the place is seedy in *The Power and the Glory*; on the contrary, it is beautiful in *The Scarlet Letter*. *The Power and the Glory* has plenty of seediness, squalor, ugliness, spiritual emptiness and a significant sense of failure among human beings. Up until the end, the whiskey priest passes through several sordid scenes and places in which vultures, mosquitoes, and beetles are the only inhabitants. Even his daughter the poor Brigitta is left alone near a rubbish-dump. If Greene has tarnished the image of redemption of the whiskey priest, Hawthorne has done quite the opposite, for he beautifies the places his protagonists have been through "His Puritan world is in its own way beautiful" (Doren, 1996, p. 132). Pearl is playing near the magnificent brook in a wild-yet-verdant forest and she is not like the poor little Brigitta: she is definitely at the opposite end of the scale.

Due to the different conditions, in which the priests live, Dimmesdale is a sinner inside a Puritan restrictive society; however, his society at least, safeguards the rights of the individuals and spreads moral views and social integration in an affluent American community. Thus, in the Puritans' point of view, religion is intrinsic; nevertheless, it is pervasive in the Catholic community of Tabasco, where the masses have nothing to believe in except God.

Feeling guilty makes Dimmesdale semi-paralyzed throughout the novel until Pearl pushes him to act. Meanwhile, the communist regime of Mexico in 1930s is atheistic: it abolishes religion totally, dismantles churches, and outlaws priests. Subsequently, the whiskey priest is caught in the middle between outside forces like communism and from within by his persistent dependence on alcohol and the nagging pain of having an illegitimate child who has to live alone in this godless community.

Another striking difference is that the whiskey priest knows well who his enemies are: the lieutenant who pursues him like a hound; and the hungry mestizo or the Judas whom he recognizes immediately as his betrayer and his death. However, what the whiskey priest may be unaware of is that these enemies may be the messengers of God to him in order to test his metal. Meanwhile, part of Dimmesdale's frustration and masochism goes to the fact that he faces no obvious enemy; for instance, he does not know that the doctor who has come to cure him is really Hester's absent husband, who is determined to take revenge on him. At the same time, he falls in an abyss of despair making himself his own worst enemy.

Technically, the novels correspond to the theme of endeared illegitimate daughters through the stream of consciousness technique in *The Power and the Glory*, in which the apparition of Brigitta appears before the whiskey priest many times. In parallel, Pearl appears before Dimmesdale through the celestial insights (McNamara, 1990, p.68). When Hester appeals to Dimmesdale to convince the Puritan officials not to take her child away from her, Dimmesdale backs her and decides that Hester must keep the child. Dimmesdale pleads: "This child of its father's guilt and its mother's shame has come from the hand of God, to work in many ways upon her heart, who pleads so earnestly and with such bitterness of spirit the right to keep her" (SL, 2006, p. 104).

The priests' ultimate sin is the mortal sin that reminds them of how they have to judge themselves. But instead of judging themselves on the principles of justice, they fall under the spell of self-flagellation by the memories of their illegitimate daughters. Seeking redemption and rebirth, they have to pass a self-awakening experience in which they head towards the wilderness. Dimmesdale seeks the appalling forest that has been more horrifying by the existence of mistress Hibbons, the black witch, to protect him from any worldly thoughts. At the time of the dictator Garrido Canabal, the whiskey priest tours the barren land of Mexico to baptize children and preach wisdom to the ruthless peasants. Dimmesdale needs to act covertly in his society and does his best to hide his own sin, whereas the whiskey priest tours the villages and speak openly against communism. Dimmesdale is fighting a war within and without, but the whiskey priest thinks that he is fighting the devil or the communism. The objective of Dimmesdale is a reformation of the society's rigid rules and conditions; meanwhile, the whiskey priest seeks to overthrow the society and embolden the enemies of communism. Yet, their female partners are different: Hester is waiting for the result of the inner conflict within the priest's psyche; whereas, Maria supports the whiskey priest and provides a hideout for him.

As the priests go farther in their journeys, they come to find out their true identities, reconcile their differences, and gradually return again to their urban origins to sacrifice and redeem their sins either by sacrificial death in the case of the whiskey priest or by confession in the case of Dimmesdale. Consequently, they transform themselves into caring and tending fathers, ones who love their illegitimate daughters unconditionally and without shame or remorse.

About the Author

Hany A. Abdelfattah teaches English literature at the Faculty of Alsun, Al-Minia University. He is currently seconded to teach at University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. His fields of interests in research include theatre studies, trauma studies, and the post 9/11 docudrama. He has been a visiting scholar at Duke University, USA in 2004 and at Carleton University, Canada in 2008-2009.

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The Presence of Augustinian Thought in *Beowulf*

Antonín Zita

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
USA

Abstract

The identity and literary intentions of the author of the most well-known Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf* is probably going to forever remain a mystery; however, hints and traces of the author's philosophy can be if not determined then at least approximated with a fair amount of certainty. The poem is a bicultural composite, an amalgam of two different cultures: it is not entirely Christian or purely Anglo-Saxon. The essay focuses on Augustinian thought that pervades the poem and several features of the text, such as vocabulary used to describe the heroes and monsters of the poem and the melting pot of Anglo-Saxon and Christian customs. Also, the speeches of the main characters are explored and contrasted with the teachings of Augustine as found in his two most important texts, *De Civitate Dei* and *On Christian Doctrine*. The essay concludes by arguing that while we might never know for certain, it is safe to assume that the author of *Beowulf* had at least second-hand knowledge of Augustine's philosophy since it is, after a detailed analysis, clearly present in the epic poem.

Keywords: Augustine, Beowulf, Christianity, Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Introduction

Beowulf is arguably the most important literary work originating in Anglo-Saxon England. While the text seems relatively straightforward at first—a hero clashes with monsters—such a reading would be grossly reductive. A closer analysis of the poem reveals several narrative aspects that complicate such a basic interpretation. The poem features elaborate kinship ties and strong Christian influence in a pagan setting. Further, speech—not fighting—consumes most of the narrative. The poet remains anonymous, yet it is safe to conclude that his or her efforts resulted in an extremely sophisticated text. This essay will then examine the poem through the lens of the writing of Augustine, namely through *On Christian Doctrine* and *De Civitate Dei*, since such an approach reconciles Christian and rhetorical readings of the text. Tracing Augustine’s influence on the poem, I claim that the author had at least some knowledge of Augustine’s writing, as is illustrated not only in the several long speeches in the poem that clearly follow Augustine ideas on oral delivery, but also in the general concept of the text and its relationship to memory and pedagogy.

Main Essay

Examining *Beowulf* through Augustinian thought is a valid and fruitful methodological approach. Undoubtedly one of the most apparent features of the poem is the presence of Christianity—God is, after all, mentioned at the beginning of the text: “Scyld passed away at his appointed hour, the mighty lord went into the Lord’s keeping” (*Beowulf*, 2009, p. 47). Mentioning God from the very start has a profound effect on how the poem is read since it celebrates God’s supremacy over man in the narrative. As Owen-Crocker explains (2000), “[t]he poet establishes at the beginning of his work that no one, whatever his worldly success, can resist a greater force than human power, his fate, the workings of the Lord” (p. 22). This point is further substantiated later in the narrative when the author describes Grendel as wearing the mark of Cain, or during Hrothgar’s frequent prayers to God. Moreover, we can interpret the dragon that Beowulf slays as a reference to Satan, an allusion that frequents the exegesis of the Apocalypse of St. John as well as medieval stories and manuscript illuminations (Risden, 2008, p. 72). Although containing many elements of pagan lore and culture, the poem seems to be indisputably Christian; as John D. Niles suggests (1993), “the poem pertains to a stage of English culture when pagan Germanic lore no longer represented a threat to Christian spirituality, so that pagan Scandinavia could be used as the setting of a poem that addresses issues of salvation and spiritual evil” (p. 97). In other words, the overwhelming number of pagan themes and symbols does not threaten the poem’s Christian foundation.

That said, the claim that *Beowulf* is purely a Christian poem is bold and perhaps inaccurate. Although there are two primary frames of reference—Christian and pagan—and although “the broader Christian worldview possessed by the poet and his audience” circumscribes the “relatively benighted pagan perspective,” the Christianity present in *Beowulf* cannot be understood to be the same as the one today (Sharma, 2005, p. 247). For instance, the poem never directly invokes any of the truly significant doctrines of Christian faith, such as the salvation of the soul or its immortality (Halbrooks, 2009, p. 106). These glaring omissions lead William Whallon to argue that the *Beowulf* author might have been familiar only with the basics of Christian faith, knowing only the stories from the opening chapters of Genesis, for example, but ignorant of other portions of the Bible (Whallon, 1962, p. 82). Whallon continues: “A missionary may have taught the poet only what could be combined with the native heroic ideals, and Beowulf may reflect the felicity of the combination. The poet lived in an age of religious

transition, but there is no cause for doubting that he thought his world-view consistent and, indeed, enlightened” (p. 82). Put differently, Christianity is prevalent in *Beowulf* but it was only slightly familiar to the people of Anglo-Saxon England; indeed, the poem displays Germanic society slowly adopting Christianity, often accommodating it to the existing Germanic customs and beliefs instead of directly replacing them. The poem therefore needs to be read with this in mind.

Rhetorical approaches to *Beowulf* resulted in a large body of scholarship that can be separated into two groups—archival studies and close readings of the poem. Two main traditions of rhetoric can be traced in Anglo-Saxon writing: the rhetorical tradition of antiquity and the tradition of rhetoric as contained in grammar (Knappe, 1998, p. 27). In addition, there has been recent research has conducted on the teaching of the “language arts”: grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, the trivium of Carolingian times (Knappe, 2013, p. 23). The issue of rhetoric must be understood in relation to other oral arts and traditions. Texts from the Greco-Roman period, with which the Anglo-Saxons were familiar, were not limited to rhetorical treatises, but also included pagan poetry, especially in the monastic tradition of Canterbury and Wessex (Werren, 1998, p. 87). This knowledge shared the same space with numerous traditions of the Anglo-Saxons, many of them “primordial and universal” among other Germanic tribes, such as the Anglo-Saxon boast, which is “a speech of self-praise” common to Germanic warrior societies (Conquergood, 1978, p. 1). The above might lead one to conclude that the tradition of rhetoric can be widely perceived in Anglo-Saxon texts such as *Beowulf*.

Unfortunately, imagining Anglo-Saxons as generally versed in the rhetorical practices of the Greeks and the Romans is naïve. For example, many of rhetorical texts were not accessible to the Anglo-Saxons due to the population’s general inability to read Greek (Knappe, 1998, p. 7). In addition, hardly any texts dealing with rhetoric from antiquity and late antiquity were known (Knappe, 2013, p. 31); research suggests that Alcuin was the “only Anglo-Saxon who was well acquainted with the rhetorical tradition of antiquity” (Knappe, 1998, p. 13). The knowledge of rhetorical tradition was thus rare; nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxons were relatively well versed in the tradition of rhetoric within grammar: they knew most of the important works from antiquity and also paid close attention to figures and tropes, especially in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period (Knappe, 1998, p. 16). Furthermore, A.P. Church (2000) notes that Anglo-Saxon manuscripts demonstrate a thorough knowledge of *progymnasmata*, rhetorical exercises aimed at gradually teaching students the rules of rhetoric. Traces of these *progymnasmata*, Church argues, can even be found in *Beowulf* (p. 53). This leads Knappe (2013) to conclude that while the teaching of rhetoric itself was virtually unknown to the English, rhetoric taught through grammar was a common pedagogical practice in the early Middle Ages (p. 32).

In other words, Anglo-Saxon England was exposed to Christianity and was familiar with rhetorical practices, yet Christianity and rhetoric were slightly different from what we understand them to be today—Christian teachings and morals were assimilated into the Germanic core and only slowly changed the pagan roots of the Anglo-Saxons, while rhetorical practices were preserved through grammatical exercises rather than a direct knowledge of rhetoric and its application. This is where Augustine becomes important, as his work was widely known throughout the Middle Ages. J.D.A. Ogilvy (1967) describes Augustine’s *The De Civitate Dei* as “the most popular” of Augustine’s works in England, explaining that it “must have been known in England from the very beginning of the eighth century at the latest, and probably reached the island at least as early as the times of Hadrian and Theodore” (p. 82). In addition, Knappe (2013) includes Augustine’s *On Christian Doctrine* as one of the few works directly dealing with

rhetoric known to the Anglo-Saxons in England (p. 31); Ogilvy (1967) confirms this notion by pointing out that Bede and Alcuin directly cited the text (p. 84). Describing Augustine as a convert from rhetoric to Christianity, James J. Murphy (1974) explains that it was his *On Christian Doctrine* that “attempted the marriage of rhetoric and Christianity” (p. 51, 43). Augustine and his *On Christian Doctrine* then becomes the logical text to examine if one wants to find traces of rhetoric and Christianity in Anglo-Saxon literature.

One could approach the text directly, carefully analyzing relevant sections and comparing and contrasting them with Augustine’s writing. However, since it is highly probable that we will never know whether or not the *Beowulf* poet knew any of Augustine’s work, I need to approach the issue in a slightly delicate manner. Therefore, I will address several different aspects of the poem before directly discussing the connection between *Beowulf* and Augustine, since such an approach will help establish the probability of my claim. Although the poem itself is clearly set in the Germanic world, intertextual evidence shows that the author of the poem might have been aware of several other texts, many of them composed in Latin. The texts contain elements that also reappear in the poem itself. Importantly, these elements are incorporated rather seamlessly into the main narrative, thus showing not only the poet’s knowledge of Latin texts, but also his or her skillful use of pagan and Christian elements. For example, the compendium of mythical monsters *Liber Monstrorum* mentions Hygelac, who “ruled the Geats and was killed by the Franks, whom no horse could carry from the age of twelve” (*Liber monstrorum*, Book One, para. 2). Hygelac’s presence in the text is significant since he is also present in *Beowulf* as the protagonist’s uncle, which makes it reasonable to assume that the author of *Beowulf* was familiar with *Liber Monstrorum*. In addition, *Liber Monstrorum* not only uses a large variety of sources, but also “alludes to and manipulates his sources, both Christian and pagan,” which only emphasizes the possibility that the *Beowulf* poet was familiar with Latin texts, namely those by Augustine, and incorporated them into his writing in the same manner as the author of *Liber Monstrorum* (Orchard, 2003, p. 87). More importantly, a close analysis of *Liber Monstrorum* shows that its author was familiar with Augustine’s *The De Civitate Dei* (Orchard, p. 89). Importantly, Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* was one of the books that was widely known to the Anglo-Saxons, one that also discussed mythological monsters (Herren, 1998, p. 92). Some of its notions, as I will demonstrate later, also reappear in *Beowulf*. Furthermore, even though Latin learning had only small impact on the Germanic heroic poetry, many of the Germanic tropes such as the kenning correspond to the figurative diction of their Latin counterparts (Knappe, 1998, p. 23). Simply put, intertextuality, the borrowing of ideas and characters, and language use were common to the Anglo-Saxons, therefore making the connection between the Latin writing of Augustine and *Beowulf* plausible.

Heroism is one of the main themes of *Beowulf*: the author invokes the language of heroic lineage at the very beginning of the text to describe Scyld Scefing, Hrothgar’s ancestor:

Often Scyld Scefing seized the mead-benches
from many tribes, troops of enemies,
struck fear into earls. Though he first was
found a waif, he awaited solace for that—
he grew under heaven and prospered in honor
until every one of the encircling nations
over the whale’s-riding had to obey him,
grant him tribute. That was a good king! (*Beowulf*, p. 47)

Beowulf depicts an age of heroes and heroic exploits, a time when it was possible for figures such as Beowulf and Breca to not only hold a swimming contest on the open sea for five days while fully armed and armored, but also to fight vicious sea serpents and prevail. However, most of the narrative does not describe Beowulf's struggles against the three monsters. On the contrary, the majority of the text is composed of various speeches and declamations. Anglo-Saxon society was interested in oratory, which can be seen from the fact that some of the most memorable scenes—Beowulf's confrontation with Unferth, Hrothgar's "sermon," and Beowulf's final speech—not only play an important part in the narrative, but also are among the longest scenes in the poem. One such oral tradition present in the poem is that of *flyting*, "an expected convention of heroic society" in which one challenges someone else's claims, as is exemplified by the conversation between Unferth and Beowulf (Church, 2000, p. 62). Another type of speech present is the Anglo-Saxon boast, a spoken self-praise that was common among Germanic warriors during the early Middle Ages (Conquergood, 1978, p. 1-2). As Conquergood explains, the Anglo-Saxon culture "stressed the importance of speech in formal situations and that the boast was perhaps the most popular public speaking event," a fact pointed out by several references to boasting in the poem (Conquergood, p. 2). Hand in hand with heroism is another important feature of Anglo-Saxon England, that of gift giving. John-Henry Wilson Clay (2009) explains that one of the reasons for gift giving in *Beowulf* is to promote stability as well as to display power (p. 32). As the poet describes it:

[i]t came to [Hrothgar's] mind
that he should order a hall-building,
have men make a great mead-house
which the sons of men should remember forever,
.....

... it was soon ready,
the greatest of halls; (*Beowulf*, p. 48)

Germanic society seems to be portrayed as a flourishing society at first sight, one without flaws and one that slowly adapts to its newfound religion, Christianity.

But we must be careful when evaluating the description of the Germanic tribes, as under the surface rests a critique of many of its customs. One of the significant aspects of the poem is the clear identification of Grendel as the direct descendant of Cain:

... ever since Cain,
killed with his blade his only brother,
his father's kin; he fled bloodstained,
marked for murder, left the joys of men,
dwelled in the wasteland. From him awoke
many a fateful spirit—Grendel among them (*Beowulf*, p. 63)

In *De Civitate Dei* Augustine discusses Cain and Abel and explains that they belonged to two different cities, the city of God in Abel's case and the city of men in Cain's (Book 15.1). Later in his treatise, Augustine mentions various monsters and turns to the Bible to explain them, concluding that "either these things which have been told of some races have no existence at all; or if they do exist, they are not human races; or if they are human, they are descended from Adam" (Book 16.8). Many of the important discussions on the nature of mankind comes from

the fifteenth book of the text, and archival research shows not only that *De Civitate Dei* was possibly the most popular of Augustine's work in the Anglo-Saxon England, but also that the fifteenth book was cited nearly as often as all the other books combined (Ogilvy, 1967, p. 82). The decision of the *Beowulf* poet to clearly identify Grendel as the descendant of Cain in a narrative with several other non-human monsters, such as the sea serpents and the dragon, is further emphasized by reading it in light of Augustine's clarification of the various creatures and their relationship to mankind. Grendel, for instance, is not a monster but a direct descendant of Adam. Just like Augustine's Cain is "moved by that diabolical, envious hatred with which the evil regard the good, for no other reason than because they are good while themselves are evil" (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book 15.5), Grendel is "rotten with sin" (*Beowulf*, p. 59). Beowulf might seem to be the opposite of Grendel—a fierce warrior but also a godly man—yet such a simple conclusion would be premature. Manish Sharma's analysis of the words *gebolgen* and *bolgenmod*—"swollen in mind" or "swollen in spirit"—shows that these terms are applied only to Beowulf, the monstrous King Heremod, and all the monsters except Grendel's mother (2005, p. 251). These terms, Sharma continues, "link the hero to his monstrous opponents and suggest that some moral ambiguity accompanies Beowulf's ability to attain this state" (p. 251). The careful choice of diction on the poet's part leads the reader to understand that the line separating the bold Beowulf from the vicious Grendel is thin and can be easily crossed, a fact that is seen in the case of Heremod, who "cut down his table-companions" while he was "enraged" (*Beowulf*, p. 68). Sharma's study of the Heremod passage shows that a term meaning "growth" or "swelling" is immediately contrasted to a reference to Heremod's evil deeds, therefore making him resemble Grendel more than Beowulf (2005, p. 259). The notion of "swelling" also leads to a paradoxical situation, in which the hero must become more than a human: he must gain inhuman strength in order to fight the monsters, but it is precisely this "swelling" that is one of the main traits of the monsters. In other words, facing the monsters with their own weapons results in becoming one of them (Sharma, p. 264).

Heroism itself is not the only aspect that seems to be criticized in the poem. As I previously mentioned, boasting played an important part among the Germanic tribes, yet it is boasting that was criticized in Old English didactic literature that existed alongside the essentially Germanic literature such as *Beowulf* (Conquergood, 1978, p. 3). The poem reflects such attitudes in several places, as it features boasts that are never fulfilled: the first negative instance of boasting takes place when Hrothgar mentions that warriors often made boasts before being slaughtered by Grendel; the second is in Wiglaf's speech urging remaining retainers to help Beowulf slay the dragon (*Beowulf*, p. 53, p. 81). The boasts are then public vows of courage and resolve, yet they do not have to be executed. Another clearly Germanic custom that comes under attack is gift giving, this time associated with Heremod: "No rings did he give to the Danes for their honor" (*Beowulf*, p. 69). The custom of gift giving creates expectations and obligations that need to be met in order to gain one's loyalty; in addition, these expressions "of loyalty, the desire for honour [sic] and prestige, the uncertainty of reciprocation, carry within themselves the latent seeds of jealousy, pride and treachery – and if these qualities grow too powerful, they will rupture and fragment existing social relations, even while strengthening others" (Clay, 2009, p. 318). Clay further adds that the custom of gift giving is in *Beowulf* identified as way of promoting loyalty, yet the poem itself explicitly shows that it cannot be relied upon: Beowulf's retainers are given rings and battle gear but still they do not relieve their lord in the final fight. The materiality of our world cannot be trusted; it was, after all, Cain who built the physical city

of man, while Abel, “being a sojourner, built none” (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book 15.1). Another aspect of the Germanic culture that is clearly criticized is the issue of avenging one’s death by killing the perpetrator of the original crime. The poem demonstrates that such revenge can easily spiral out of control and lead to the deaths of many. Importantly, revenge is also the motivation of Grendel’s mother for killing Æschere: “[Grendel’s mother] would avenge her boy, her only offspring” (*Beowulf*, p. 66). Further, a more detailed analysis of the words and terms describing Grendel’s mother and her behavior shows that, unlike Grendel, the poem never depicts her as enjoying the killing or feasting on the victim; in terms of Anglo-Saxon society, her act is completely justified (Owen-Crocker, 2000, p. 222).

The fact that many of the traditional customs are displayed as relics of the past might lead us to conclude that Christianity takes its rightful place as the ideology to follow in the poem. After all, it is God, and not Beowulf’s luck and presence of mind as Ridsen (2008) mistakenly claims, that ensures the hero’s victory over Grendel’s mother (p. 45):

There the son of Ecgtheow would have ended his life
 under the wide ground, the Geatish champion,
 had not his armored shirt offered him help,
 the hard battle-net, and holy God
 brought about war-victory—the wise Lord,
 Ruler of the heavens, decided it rightly,
 Easily, once he stood up again. (*Beowulf*, p. 66-67)

Immediately after Beowulf rises, he notices a magic sword among the possessions of Grendel’s mother; the juxtaposition of the “holy God” who “brought about war-victory” once Beowulf “stood up again” with the description of the sword suggests that God provided the sword to ensure Beowulf’s victory (Hala, 1998, p. 46). God, then, not only grants blessings, but also takes part in the narrative, intervening on the behalf of the pious and just. Yet the old customs are not abandoned so easily and the Christianity present in *Beowulf* is different from how we understand the religion today. The poem depicts a world that is only gradually adopting Christian values, a world that is neither entirely pagan nor totally Christian. For example, Whallon (1962) points out that although Beowulf is a Christian king who has for fifty years ruled over the Geats, presumably also Christian, his death is honored with a pyre rather than interment (p. 87). Interestingly, Beowulf gains the dragon’s hoard, and even though he wishes for the treasure to be used for his people’s wellbeing, he is buried with most of it (Ridsen, 68). We might interpret this act in two ways: either his followers wish to honor their fallen lord by burying the treasure with him, or they feel that with Beowulf’s death a part of their culture passed away as well, thus disposing of the treasure as a sign of further conversion from Paganism to Christianity. Either way, the relationship of the poem’s characters to Christianity is ambivalent at best. The figure of Hrothgar might be viewed as an outstanding Christian: he not only often invokes God in speech, but his people also regard him as a just ruler and “protector of the Scyldings” (*Beowulf* 53). Nevertheless, Hrothgar, “the mighty lord, long-good nobleman,” suffers through Grendel’s killing spree for twelve years (*Beowulf*, p. 48); the fact that he appears powerless amidst a large number of honorifics stressing his fame and deeds should strike the reader as incongruous (DeGregorio, 1999, p. 320). Hrothgar’s simultaneous portrayal as an idealized protector and a helpless king is further emphasized by the associates he keeps, namely Unferth, a man accused of kinslaying, and Hrothulf, Hrothgar’s nephew that kills Hrothgar’s

sons after the lord dies (DeGregorio, p. 320, 330). It appears that even a godly man such as Hrothgar is not without faults, and his inability to face Grendel as well as his choice of rather controversial figures as his close advisors paints him in an unfavorable light.

To summarize, *Beowulf* portrays a culture that might deem itself Christian yet has distinct pagan roots. The clash of the two cultures produces ambiguity, often casting doubt on characters and events that might be initially viewed favorably. Significantly, the interpretation of the poem's events closely follows Augustine's teaching on rhetoric as outlined in *On Christian Doctrine*. As the poem develops, Augustine's presence gradually reveals itself only to become nearly explicit at the end; the poem then becomes not only a documentation of Augustine's ideas on oral delivery, but also a record of the Anglo-Saxon society's progression from Paganism to Christianity. Although its nature might seem at times ambiguous, speech assumes a central role in the poem. As Conquergood (1978) in his discussion of the Anglo-Saxon boast points out, Beowulf has seven boasts in the narrative while Grendel or even Unferth has none (p. 2); this technique of displaying one's importance and virtue in the narrative is repeated in other Anglo-Saxon literature such as "The Battle of Maldon." Beowulf has several speeches throughout the poem, one of the most memorable being the speech addressed to Unferth:

Time and again those terrible enemies
sorely threatened me. I served them well
with my dear sword, as they deserved.
They got no joy from their gluttony,
those wicked maneaters, when they tasted me,
sat down to their feast on the ocean floor—
but in the morning, wounded by my blade,
they were washed ashore by the ocean waves,
dazed by sword-blows, and since that day,
they never hindered the passage of any
sea-voyager. (*Beowulf*, p. 54)

Together with Beowulf's boasting at the beginning of the speech—"I had greater strength on the sea, more ordeals on the waves than any other man"—his speech might be described in terms of Augustinian rhetoric, specifically as belonging to the grand style (*Beowulf*, p. 54). Although originally aimed at discussing sermon delivery, Augustine's classification is applicable to public speaking in general. The grand style is then one of the three styles of oral delivery—the other two being the moderate and subdued styles—and is distinguished by its higher frequency of verbal ornamentation as well as its forcefulness and emotionality (Augustine, 1958, book 4.20.42). Augustine then continues by explaining that the vocabulary of the grand style is often not determined by careful choice but rather by "the force of the things discussed" and "the ardor of the heart" (Augustine, Book 4.20.42). Interestingly, Augustine uses an example of a warrior to further explain the grand style: "For if a strong man is armed with a gilded and bejeweled sword, and he is fully intent on the battle, he does what he must with the arms he has, not because they are precious but because they are arms" (Augustine, Book 4.20.42). Beowulf's boast confirms Conquergood's explanation that boasting has positive connotations in heroic poetry, since the boast not only counters Unferth's accusation that Beowulf is a coward, but also reveals Unferth as a morally questionable character (Conquergood, p. 2). The poem then displays

young Beowulf as a pagan, yet an admirable one that even follows Augustine's advice on the grand style.

Beowulf's boastful and confident manner of speaking contrasts with another important speech in the poem—Hrothgar's "sermon" delivered directly after Beowulf defeats Grendel's mother. In the speech, Hrothgar defines the qualities of an honorable hero by contrasting Beowulf's deeds with Heremod's. But instead of praising the slaying of monsters, Hrothgar cautions Beowulf against becoming too proud and reminds him of human frailty:

Defend yourself from wickedness, dear Beowulf,
best of men, and choose the beter,
eternal counsel; care not for pride,
great champion! The glory of your might
is but a little while; soon it will be
that sickness or the sword will shatter your strength,
.....
death, o warrior, will overwhelm you. (*Beowulf*, p. 69)

The speech is striking not only because of its apparent displacement in the flow of the narrative—reminding a victorious hero of his mortality instead of greeting him as the victor—but also because of its emphasis on teaching. When discussing Heremod's foul deeds, Hrothgar encourages Beowulf to learn from his example in order to understand virtue: "For your sake I have told this, in the wisdom of my winters" (*Beowulf*, p. 69). Hrothgar's lengthy speech on pride and human frailty contrasts with the abrupt appreciation of Beowulf's defeat of Grendel's mother. The nature of the speech seems to follow Augustine's rules on teaching through sermons: "He who teaches should thus avoid all words which do not teach" (Augustine, 1958, Book 4.10.24). The whole speech appears to conform to Augustine's rules of the moderate style, certainly not plain but also not as explosive as Beowulf's address to Unferth (Augustine, 1958, Book 4.20.40). Other critics have commented on the speech, concluding through careful analyses of Hrothgar's diction that the speech is uniquely characterized by substantial use of repetition that is suggestive of the rhetoric of a preacher (Davidson, 2005, p. 147). In addition, Davidson notes that the cautionary tale of Heremod is stylistically different from the rest of the speech, thus isolating the digression from the rest of Hrothgar's sermon (p. 148). As mentioned, the poem contains several occasions of inhuman "swelling," which is connected to Beowulf, Grendel, the dragon, and, importantly, the monstrous Heremod (Sharma, 2005, 251). The stylistic use of Beowulf's swelling as being practically the same as Heremod's serves not only to blur the line between human and inhuman, virtuous and monstrous, but also to emphasize the nature of Hrothgar's speech, and the Heremod tale in particular, as a cautionary tale addressed exclusively to Beowulf. Furthermore, swelling is in Hrothgar's speech identified with pride, a connection often made in the Bible (Sharma, p. 260). Therefore, Hrothgar's speech balances Beowulf's boasting and defines pride as dangerously close to the monstrous nature of Heremod. Such rebuke seems especially important considering Beowulf's indirect criticism of Hrothgar after the death of Æschere, reminding the old king that "[i]t is always better to avenge one's friend than to mourn overmuch" (DeGregorio, 1999, p. 328; *Beowulf*, p. 65).

Augustine's perception of rhetorical skills is peculiar when we consider modern perspectives; while he considered the character of the speaker or his eloquence important, the most critical factor that distinguished a good speech from a bad one is God. Murphy further explains that medieval rhetoric exemplified by Augustine is not interested in composition;

although precise vocabulary and style are important to Augustine, the Ciceronian notions of “invention” or “arrangement” are ignored (Murphy, 1974, p. 289). Words, then, do not convince the addressee, but “prompt” him or her to recall the interior truths present in every person (Murphy, 288). Murphy further explains Augustine’s notion of truth: “[A] piece of conventional signage (what we call language) is merely intended to *remind* the hearer of an existing process, and to start it under way in the hearer’s mind so that the hearer will himself carry his own mind along to a desired objective” (p. 289). Such concept of rhetoric places great stress on individual judgment and private interpretation. Another distinction is that speakers do not persuade the listeners; instead, listeners move themselves (Murphy, p. 289). Beowulf is described as “glad-hearted” after Hrothgar’s sermon, taking his seat without commenting on Hrothgar’s speech (*Beowulf*, 69). Such immediate reaction makes clear that the speech has a lasting effect on Beowulf, as can be seen in Beowulf’s final speech to Wiglaf. The reaction also suggests that he was heard willingly and obediently, another important factor in Augustinian rhetoric, therefore showing that Hrothgar, despite his inability to defend his kinsmen from Grendel’s attacks, not only is a moral center of the poem, but also has a lasting effect on Beowulf (Augustine, 1958, Book 4.17.34). Concluding that Beowulf’s reaction is a sign of him being “moved” in the Augustinian sense might appear to be a conjecture on my part; however, other references to Augustinian ideas of rhetoric make it more plausible than one might initially admit. Augustine explains that anyone making a public speech “should pray that God may place a good speech in his mouth” (Augustine, Book 4.30.63). The notion that it is God who provides speakers with eloquence is hinted at in Hrothgar’s reaction to Beowulf’s speech after the discovery of Æschere’s death is made: “The old man leapt up, thanked the Lord, the might God, for that man’s speech” (*Beowulf*, p. 65). While it might be interpreted in two different ways – Hrothgar is either thanking God for providing Beowulf with the speech, or thanking him for making Beowulf appear at Heorot – the following are quite evident: firstly, Hrothgar is associated with speech resembling a sermon and therefore with God; secondly, Hrothgar’s speech warning Beowulf from being overwhelmed with pride is in direct contrast to Beowulf’s boasting at the beginning of the poem; lastly, Hrothgar is eloquent speaker that manages to steer Beowulf away from Heremod’s fate.

The last aspect of Hrothgar’s speech—directing Beowulf away from earthly matters and towards God—is further emphasized in Beowulf’s dying speech. The final speech follows Augustine’s guidelines on the subdued style, that is to use it in order to teach (Augustine, 1958, Book 4.17.34). His speech is somber in tone and nearly absent of epithets that are used throughout the poem in large numbers (Hala, 1998, p. 34). Importantly, the narrative of the dragon’s attack repeats the notion of “swelling”:

... To [Beowulf] that was
 painful in spirit, greatest of sorrows;
 the wise one believed he had bitterly offended
 the Ruler of all, the eternal Lord,
 against the old law; his breast within groaned
 with dark thoughts—that was not his custom. (*Beowulf*, p. 75)

Manish Sharma (2005) points out that the word for “offended” (“gebulge”) is grammatically and semantically related to the terms denoting “swelling” (*gebolgen* and *bolgenmod*) that constitute the monsters, and potentially Beowulf, as something monstrous and

unnatural (p. 263). Sharma continues: “In a sudden flash of insight... Beowulf’s apprehension appears to turn inward, toward what is conceivably monstrous and ‘offensive’ in his own nature.... Beowulf’s fear that he has swelled/offended (“gebulge”) is absolutely and literally accurate—he *has* become ‘swollen,’ and within a Christian frame of reference this state would signify his ‘offence’” (p. 263). Mirroring the realization of his potentially monstrous nature and showing an understanding of his morality, Beowulf’s final speech is short and somber in tone:

For all these treasures, I offer thanks
with these words to the eternal Lord,
King of Glory, for what I gaze upon here,
that I was able to acquire such wealth
for my people before my death-day.

.....
You are the last survivor of our lineage,
the Wægmundings; fate has swept away
all of my kinsmen, earls in their courage,
to their final destiny; I must follow them. (*Beowulf*, p. 83)

The stoic nature of his final speech shapes Beowulf into a *rex justus*, a pious and kind ruler closer to the ideal of Augustine than one would expect a Germanic warlord and monster-slayer to be (Niles, 1993, p. 96). Importantly, Beowulf is addressing Wiglaf, the last of his kin; Davidson (2005) has pointed out that the language of Beowulf’s final speech sets it apart from diction like Hrothgar’s in its intentional use of kinship terms (p. 153). Beowulf is visibly changed in the speech; gone is the boisterous warrior full of vitality. A different Beowulf is speaking to Wiglaf in the speech—a man who rejoices in the fact he has lived a fulfilling life, a ruler who hopes in the preservation of his people, but also a teacher who hopes to pass final knowledge before he dies. By this time the addressee of the poem has seen the great Beowulf rise and fall, thus he or she can finally evaluate his life and legacy.

The fact that *Beowulf* explicitly states its events are set in the past—“the judgment of God would guide the deeds of every man, as it still does today”—helps in better evaluating Beowulf’s final speech and the poem as a whole (*Beowulf*, p. 83). Even though the poem is set in fifth and sixth-century Scandinavia, it expresses a response to the two great sources of tension in English culture during the late sixth through the early tenth centuries: the integration of Germanic culture and Christian faith into a single system of thought and ethics, and the integration of all the peoples living south of Hadrian’s Wall and east of Offa’s Dyke into one English nation ruled by the West Saxon royal line. (Niles, 1993, p. 106)

While the pre-literate tradition of the poem is uncertain, *Beowulf* is a product of a literate culture which emphasized its Christian and Latin tradition as much as its Germanic roots (Church, 2000, p. 54). The poem’s decision to highlight its origin in history should not be overlooked, especially when its Christian nature that continually criticizes non-Christian elements of the poem is taken into account. As the poem progresses, the addressee witnesses Beowulf’s transformation into a godly man; *Beowulf* strives to change its audience by showing characters Christian enough to sympathize with but at the same time their pagan nature and customs make their redemption certain. One of the important ideas of Augustine’s writing is the attempt to find a way to understand the motives behind our actions so that we can make ethical decisions, which is achieved through memory; however, since our personal memory is subject to

misunderstanding, Augustine turns for an answer to events that can be verified through authenticated accounts (Stock, 2005, p. 10). Brian Stock further explains that the addressee of a text or speech is personally responsible for what Stock calls a “post-reading experience,” that is the time spent contemplating a text after having finished reading it (p. 11). The poem’s ambiguity—Beowulf’s “swelling,” Hrothgar the ineffective defender versus Hrothgar the preacher, and Christianity coupled with old Germanic customs—serves to highlight the importance of a post-reading experience; by not providing a clear-cut explanation of the characters and events readers are forced to revise the poem, thus mimicking Hrothgar’s and Beowulf’s reliance on past events in interpreting the present and predicting the future. Furthermore, setting the poem in the past only emphasizes the poem as a historical and therefore reliable text in Augustinian terms, which allows the addressee to apply it as a tool for interpreting his or her current situation. As Murphy (1974) explains Augustine’s attitude to the past, it “may be slight and difficult to detect, but here in embryo is the basic postulate of the medieval arts of discourse: that the past should serve the particular needs of the present” (p. 87).

In spite of never attributing them to the rhetorician, Augustine uses many of Cicero’s ideas on rhetoric in the Book IV of *On Christian Doctrine*: “[A] certain eloquent man said, and said truly, that he who is eloquent should speak in such a way that he teaches, delights, and moves” (Book 4.12.27). Yet Augustine differs from Cicero in one significant way – by having “the positive ideal of spiritual conversion in mind” (Murphy, 1974, p. 62). Augustine claims that trying to enjoy material and physical aspects of our lives like wealth or pleasure for their own sake is sin, or being cut off from God (Murphy, p. 290). On the other hand, it is the application of “corporal and temporal things” used in order to “comprehend the eternal and spiritual” that should be the goal of every Christian (Augustine, 1958, Book 1.4.4). Hrothgar succeeds in steering Beowulf towards Christianity, yet the hero is not fully identified with the religion by the end of the poem; although referred to as “a shepherd of a kingdom,” he decides to challenge the dragon against the council of his earls, a decision criticized by Wiglaf after his death:

Often many earls must suffer misery
through the will of one man, as we have now seen.
We could not persuade our dear prince,
shepherd of a kingdom, with any counsel,
that he should not greet that gold-guardian,
let him lie there where he long had been,
inhabit the dwellings until the end of the world:
he held to his high destiny. The hoard is opened,
grimly gotten; that fate was too great
which impelled the king of our people thither. (*Beowulf*, p. 86)

Although Wiglaf also clings to old Germanic customs, the criticism of Beowulf’s action as unnecessary is evident. Beowulf’s epithet at the very end of the poem – “the mildest of men and the most gentle, the kindest to his folk and *the most eager for fame*” – shows another critique of Beowulf and of paganism and Germanic ancestry in general (*Beowulf*, p. 88, emphasis mine). *Beowulf* is in a way a cautionary tale directed at all Christians, showing “that personal restraint and clemency – Christian virtues – are as worthy of praise as the successful pursuit of renown” (Owen-Crocker, 2000, p. 235). The audience of the poem is invited to critically evaluate Beowulf’s deeds and apply them for their own wellbeing.

Conclusion

Beowulf is an epic poem that records the conversion of a renowned hero toward a more Christian identity. Although he is still partially pagan, as his funeral pyre shows, Beowulf is Christian enough to gain the audience's sympathy. The narrative displays a world which lies on the boundaries between old Germanic heritage and new Christian culture; it is then juxtaposed with the idea of reform and teaching virtue through the character of Hrothgar. The reader is then invited to consider Beowulf's qualities and flaws as well as his own. Importantly, Augustine believed in redeeming one's sins through an active effort to become a better person:

For in each individual, as I have already said, there is first of all that which is reprobate, that from which we must begin, but in which we need not necessarily remain; afterwards is that which is well-approved, to which we may by advancing attain, and in which, when we have reached it we may abide. Not, indeed, that every wicked man shall be good, but that no one will be good who was not first of all wicked; but the sooner any one becomes a good man, the more speedily does he receive this title, and abolish the old name in the new. (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book XV.1)

If a sinful person can purify his or her soul from all sin, then Beowulf can and vice versa, if a pagan adhering to old customs can become Christian, although with flaws, so can *Beowulf's* audience. The poem is then a vessel of Augustinian thought, carefully applying Augustine's ideas in order to promote general goodwill and solidify Christian faith by subtly inviting the audience to judge the events in the narrative and discard the old pagan customs in favor of Christian sensibility.

About the Author:

Antonín Zita is a PhD student at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic. At the moment he is present at the Texas A&M University, where he conducts research for his dissertation discussing the synchronic and diachronic reception of Beat Literature in the USA and Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic. Apart from Beat Generation he is also interested in American literature of the twentieth century, post-structuralism, and reader-response theory

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A Mythological and Archetypal Reading of Abdullah Radhwan's Poetry

Rima Eid Asi Moqattash
Al-Zaytoonah Private University of Jordan

Abstract:

This study explores the employment of myth in the poetry of the Jordanian poet and critic Abdullah Radhwan (born 1949) as a representation of the deepest feelings of human life and an expression of the meaning of the universe. To achieve this aim, this study will concentrate on how he employs his mythical and archetypal background in his challenging poetry. The research responds in specific to the approach of archetypal and mythical criticism that establishes the significance of myth, and examines its relationship to archetypal patterns, highlighting how this criticism gets its impetus from the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung who has postulated the concept of the "collective unconscious". This research takes its lead from showing how Jungian archetypal and mythological criticism would view Radhwan's poems as recurrences of certain archetypes and essential mythic formulae. The study develops gradually by analyzing Radhwan's reshaping of myth for specific political and social ends.

Keywords: Abdullah Radhwan, myth, archetypal reading, collective unconscious, Carl Gustav Jung

Introduction:

Abdullah Radhwan (b. 1949) is a prominent Jordanian poet and critic. Radhwan's poems cover various topics; his themes vary in substance to involve woman, love, homeland, Amman, consciousness, and the mission of the poet in life. His cultural background as a teacher, manager of different cultural departments, member of several cultural associations, in addition to his being an excellent reader of various subjects, has made him a cultivated poet and critic who knows how to employ his various linguistic and literary tools including myths and archetypes.

As a well cultivated postmodern poet and critic, Radhwan is fully aware that modernist and postmodernist literature is replete with the use of myth as a means of social and political commentary. In an interview with Radhwan, published under the title of: "الناقد الأردني عبد الله رضوان: سوء حظي قادني للتعامل اليومي مع المبدعين ومع حياة ثقافية هشة" [“ The Jordanian Critic Abdullah Radhwan: My Bad Luck Has Lead Me to Daily Truck with Creative Writers and with a Fragile Cultural Life”, Yahya al-Qaysy asks Radhwan about the influence of his being a critic on his poeticism; Radhwan answers by emphasizing the fact that poetic creativity and criticism are of two different natures but they do not contradict with each other, because,

poetry is Prometheus's unruly and dashing fire that can never be liable to rationalization, analysis and construction; it is the rebelling glowing spirit that has its special world, [while] criticism is total rationalism, planned consciousness, an analysis to be followed by study and construction through the emission of aesthetic and general social critical judgments. Since the human mind is capable of combining counterparts, there is no conflict at all. (2008, p. 312-313)

The previous quotation indicates how Radhwan appreciates the mythological background implied in Prometheus's fire. Wilfred L. Guerin et al, in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, has established the significance of myth, and examines its relationship to archetypes and archetypal patterns, emphasizing how although,

every people has its own distinctive mythology that may be reflected in legend, folklore, and ideology--although, in other words, myths take their specific shapes from the cultural environments in which they grow--myth is, in the general sense, universal. Furthermore, similar motifs or themes may be found among many different mythologies, and certain images that recur in the myths of people widely separated in time and place tend to have a common meaning or, more accurately, tend to elicit comparable psychological responses and to serve similar cultural functions. Such motifs and images are called archetypes. Stated simply, archetypes are universal symbols. (1992, p. 149-150)

This research examines the chosen examples taking into consideration the definition of myth. According to Guerin, myths "are by nature collective and communal; they bind a tribe or a nation together in common psychological and spiritual activities" (1992, p. 149). Myth "is ubiquitous in time as well as place. It is a dynamic factor everywhere in human society; it transcends time, uniting the past (traditional modes of belief) with the present (current values) and reaching toward the future (spiritual and cultural aspirations)" (ibid). Archetypal and mythical criticism gets its impetus from the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), who "detected an intimate relationship between dreams, myths, and art in that all three serve as

media through which archetypes become accessible to consciousness" (ibid, 168). Jung, in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, defines the great artist, as someone who possesses the "primordial vision" that enables him or her to transmit experiences of the "inner world" through art; therefore the artist "will resort to mythology in order to give his experience its most fitting expression." And hence, "The primordial experience is the source of his creativeness; it cannot be fathomed, and therefore requires mythological imagery to give it form" (1933, p. 164).

Jung has postulated the concept of a "collective unconscious", which is manifested in dreams and myths of humankind and which harbors themes and images that we all inherit. Steven F. Walker, in *Jung and the Jungians on Myth*, presents Jung's belief that literature imitates the "total dream of humankind" and how Jung called mythology "the textbook of the archetypes" (2002, qtd. in Walker p. 17).

Radhwan's Mythological and Archetypal Poetic Applications:

M. H. Abrams, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, defines Jung's concepts in relation to "Archetypal Criticism". According to Jung, archetypes are "primordial images"; the "psychic residue" of repeated types of experience in the lives of very ancient ancestors that are inherited in the "collective unconscious" of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies, as well as in the works of literature (1999, p. 10). Within this context, Ahmed al-Khateeb, in his book *مفرد في غمام السفر: النص الشبيه والنص الغائب: قراءات في تجربة عبد الله رضوان الشعرية* [A Term in the Clouds of Travel (The Similar Text and the Absent Text): Readings in the Poetic Experience of Abdullah Radhwan], reads Radhwan's collection entitled *شهوة الطين* [The Sob of Clay] as dramatic poetry employing the concept of the "collective unconscious" and recalling "the memory of fertility" (2005, p. 67).

The text of *شهوة الطين* [The Sob of Clay] involves the chorus, the characters of *عناة* [Anat] (the female lover), *إيل* [El] (the male lover), the mother, and the father. The mythical text in this collection transforms the dramatic poetic text into a kind of ritual that recalls the concept of the collective unconscious. It takes us back to a mythical world in which the god El has the key divine function as the Father of gods, and the goddess Anat is the violent sister of the god Baal who was Master of the Earth ruling Tempest and Rain. Max S. Shapiro and Rhoda A. Hendricks, in *A Dictionary of Mythologies*, introduce Anat as: "a goddess of dew and the fertility it brings. She was the sister of BAAL. Anat brought about the sacrificial death of Mot at the time of harvest. Ritual sacrifices were under her jurisdiction, and it was her task to see that they were carried out to ensure the mortality of the gods" (1979, p. 13). On the other hand, Shapiro and Hendricks introduce El as:

the chief god in the hierarchy of the Phoenician pantheon. He was a deity of the rivers and streams and their gift of fertility, and his dwelling place was at the source of the rivers. The name El means god in the sense of the supreme deity. El, the father of gods and men, is depicted in the RAS SHAMRA tablets as an old bearded man and is characterized as kindly but strong, powerful, and wise. (1979, p. 58)

Radhwan's dramatic poetic collection *شهوة الطين* [The Sob of Clay] begins with the voice of the chorus introducing El:

شائبا كالضلالة

لكنه لم يكن عائباً..
 ساقنا كقطيع الأغاني
 إلى عشه
 عشر صبايا حكايا

White headed

But he was flawless..

He led us like a flock of songs

To his nest

Ten fairy-tale maidens..

(2001, p. 1-5)

In *The Sob of Clay*, Radhwan makes changes in the original myth; he employs the original story of the mythical love between El and Anat, but with some amendments. For instance he does not highlight the violent aspect of Anat's character; instead, he concentrates on one aspect of her character: the lover. Haya Saleh in her article "مستويات" ["The Levels of Poetic Discourse in the Collection of *The Sob of Clay* by Abdullah Radhwan"], depicts how the character of Anat in Radhwan's collection has been modified compared to the original mythical figure of Anat that is characterized by being powerful, arrogant and proud. In *The Sob of Clay*, Radhwan transforms Anat into a helpless woman, who is oppressed by the father and brother sometimes, and by the mother at other times (2008, p. 223).

Saleh admires Radhwan's dependence on myth in this collection; he "provides his text with deep humanitarian implications that lift him towards unlimited universal horizons, [...] The poet has succeeded in recalling a text from the memory of the informed receiver, that parallels the read text, by 'working' on the area of symbol and myth" (2008, p. 228). In fact this kind of success may lead to different interpretations for the same text. A case in point is the way Yousef Yousef interprets *The Sob of Clay* in his article entitled "في ديونه شهقة الطين عبد الله رضوان يمنح النص حياة متجددة من خلال الأسطورة" ["In His Collection *The Sob of Clay*, Abdullah Radhwan Gives the Text a Renewed Life through Mythology"]. Yousef reads this collection as a dramatic text that employs mythical figures to symbolize the role of the poet as a keeper of the land. According to Yousef, the myth is the mask which aims at fertilizing the poetic imagination of the poet who is embodied in El, whereas the Land of Palestine as embodied in Anat (2008, p. 142-143).

Intissar Abass, in an interview with Radhwan, published in an article entitled "عبد الله رضوان وحوار الشعر والنقد" ["Abdullah Radhwan and the Dialogue between Poetry and Criticism"], studies Radhwan's employment of myth. In this interview, Radhwan emphasizes that what leads the creative writer towards using mythology is the moment he feels incapable of dealing with the daily pressures caused by the deterioration of the Arab situation during the last twenty five years of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty first century. Radhwan believes that the only resort for the creative writer in this case is to converse with the other by means of employing the historical in addition to the mythical (2008, p. 259).

Radhwan explains how the creative writer has to choose one of two choices: “either to reproduce the myth as it is, and here poetry has to set back for the benefit of mythology, or to deal with myth as a humanitarian substance of knowledge by reshaping and remodeling it in a method that does not contradict with its invariability, which enables it of absorbing the new conflict, or the contemporary humanist drama” (ibid). Radhwan admits that he has chosen the second choice in dealing with mythology,

for instance, in *The Sob of Clay*, the male lover in the myth is Baal, but not El, because El gets flabby, since he is the Fore god of the Phoenicians. Baal became the god of love, but he turned into someone without ethics, almost perverted, and old, which made his character unsuitable for being a lover according to the conditions of the lover in the work, *The Sob of Clay*, therefore I reconstructed the state of love by attributing it to El himself, i.e. I have given him back his youth and affectivity. And I have also deleted the presence of the god ‘Death’ because there is no need for his role. (ibid, p. 259)

Radhwan has written a poetic trilogy entitled مقام الرضوان [Status of the Good Will] (2006), that consists of the following collections: مقام حبيبي [The Status of my Beloved] (composed 2003), مقام المليحة [The Status of the Beautiful] (composed 2004), and مقام عمان [The Status of Amman] (composed 2005). In the third collection of this trilogy, Radhwan reshapes the original myth to suit his purposes. Radhwan is cautious about the reproduction of the myth; he is fully aware that the mythical figures should be dealt with cautiously. Radhwan proceeds to explain his own method of mythical employment by elaborating on how in مقام حبيبي [The Status of my Beloved], he has created

an identification between the Greek, Sumerian, and Phoenician goddesses of Good and another identification between the goddesses of Evil; I have also shown the state of full marriage between the god El and the guardian goddess of Amman (Tyche) aiming at emphasizing the special unity between the Jordanian and Palestinian people; I have reemphasized this issue again in مقام عمان [The Status of Amman]. (2008, p. 259)

The poetic drama مقام حبيبي [The Status of my Beloved] presents how fortune changes leading to happier events by the unity between El and Tyche. Shapiro and Hendricks identify Tyche as the “personification of fortune. Her favor was constantly invoked, and her likeness on coins was often rendered with such symbols as a cornucopia for opulence and a wheel or ball for chance. Tyche was identified with the goddess FORTUNA” (1979, p. 200). At the beginning of his collection, Radhwan introduces Pandora highlighting her role in mythology to enhance the importance of the mythical presence as a whole in the collection. Pandora, as defined poetically by Radhwan (2006, p. 9), is similar to the one introduced by Shapiro and Hendricks. She is,

The first woman fashioned from clay by Hephaestus at the direction of ZEUS in order to punish PROMETHEOS for having stolen fire from the heavens. Pandora meant “the gift of all,” because all the gods gave her gifts symbolic of their powers (e.g., ATHENA gave her feminine skills, APOLLO the talent to sing, and so on). Zeus gave her a box, which she was not to open. [...] In spite of the warnings of the gods, Pandora

opened the box Zeus had given her and all the sins and evils that have plagued mortals since sprang forth. By the time Pandora closed the lid of the box, only Hope was left within. (1979, p.149)

This dramatic poem seems to reach out for what is left in Pandora's Box: i.e. Hope. May be this is the reason why Pandora and her box are recalled. Before Hope is achieved, disaster, sadness, wars, and death were the dominant features. The male lover says:

كأنني أرى "باندورا"
فأنظر صندوقها وأساءه
واكتمال الفجيعة بين خطاه
سواد يلف الدروب
جوى وحروب
أسى وعذاب

As if I see "Pandora"
And look at her box and its pain
And the completion of the disaster between its steps
Blackness envelops the roads
Sadness and wars
And death stretched over all doors
Heart-breaking and torture

[The Status of my Beloved], 2006, p. 31) (مقام حبيبي)

This dramatic poem contains three figures: the female seer, the male lover, and the female lover (Khuzamah). The female figure has the same importance as the male figure, signifying the importance of both sexes. Najeh al-Ma'moury, in his book *نون والقوس* [Noon and the Arch] – "Noon" in Arabic language refers to the feminine pronouns-, depicts how the dramatic poem prorates male and female voices equally. Al-Ma'moury believes that there is an intentional overlapping between the male and female to form a "comeback of the primary mythical discourse" (2005, p. 59). The dramatic poem ends with the female lover singing the song of victory may be to indicate this kind of discourse:

يا صبايا "عمون"
خزامى أنا
أدور دروب المدينة ضارعة
هل رأيتن يوما حبيبي

Oh maidens of "Amoun"
I am Khuzama
I go through the roads of the city
Have you seen my beloved someday

[The Status of my Beloved], 2006, p. 47} (مقام حبيبي)

Another example of Radhwan's employment of mythology is his poem "مهداة الى" [Presented to the Children of Palestine], which is a poem within the collection entitled *خطوط على لافتة الوطن* [Stripes on the Homeland's Signboard] published in *Shahqa min Ghubar: Al-'A'mal al-Shi'riya 1977-2001* [A Sob of Dust: The Complete Works 1977-2001] (2001). This poem provides mythical figures that reflect the misery of Palestinian children:

أراك غريقاً في بحر الجوع الأبدى،
أراك تعانق – أنكيدو -
تصرع عشتار،
وتضرع نحوك،
تضرع كل الآلهة الهرمة نحوك أن تخلق -
عشتار – لأجل الفقراء

I see you drowned in the sea of eternal hunger,
I see you hugging – Enkidu-
Knocking Ishtar down,
And towards you, entreat,
All frail gods entreat towards you asking you to create-
Ishtar- for the sake of the poor (lines 10-15)

This poem deals with the sufferings of Palestinian people. Iman Mousa Mawajdah, in her book *عبد الله رادحوان شاعراً* [Abdullah Radhwan as a Poet], reads the employment of mythology in these lines as symbolic aiming to implicate certain meanings. She comments that the poet stands as a representative for the poor people due to his awareness of their conditions, therefore "all gods are entreating asking for the return of the goddess of fertility for the sake of the poor (2005, p. 135). The poet features the state of social suffering faced by the Palestinian person, by employing the mythical conflict between Ishtar and Gilgamesh. Shapiro and Hendricks introduce Ishtar as,

A fertility and mother goddess who represented the planet Venus personified. Her symbol was a star. As the daughter of ANU, Ishtar was worshiped at URUK as the goddess of gentleness, love, and desire; as the daughter of SIN, the warlike side of her character was dominant. In her role as warrior, Ishtar rode into battle and sent the vanquished into the underworld, where her sister ERESHKIGAL reined [...] When GILGAMESH scorned her love, Ishtar took revenge by sending a bull against him. After ENKIDO saved Gilgamesh from the bull, the goddess struck him down with a fatal illness. (1979, p. 95)

Mawajdah believes that Enkidu in Radhwan's poem 'represents the new generation who is rebellious against the values of the elders, and these values as implied in the text have failed to rescue reality. But the elders –the previous generation- who produced the defeat insist on having Ishtar back' (2005, p. 136). But Mawajdah thinks that the poet himself "sees Ishtar as someone unable to carry the features of fertility and life. The revolution against her is a revolution against the decayed values in which the fathers believed, because these values did not lead them to success and victory" (ibid).

Radhwan not only reshapes myth for specific political and social ends necessitated by the present time, but also he employs it in his poetry as a dramatic representation of his deepest awareness of the inner meaning of human life. His poems show his appreciation of the collective and communal nature of myths, aiming at binding a nation or a tribe together in common universal activities. His reshaped myths express a profound sense of togetherness of feeling and of living, that become a dramatic factor transcending time, uniting the past of traditional modes of belief with the present of current values and reaching toward a future that is full of political and social aspirations.

Conclusion

To conclude, the chosen examples demonstrate how Radhwan's poetry exemplifies Jung's belief in literature, as a vital component in human civilization. Taking into consideration that Jung's "theories have expanded the horizons of literary interpretation for those critics concerned to use the tools of the mythological approach" (Guerin, 1992, p. 168), this study has highlighted Radhwan's application of mythology by its being concerned to seek out the mysterious elements that elicit dramatic reactions. It has shown that he has achieved what Philip Wheelwright introduces in *The Language of Poetry*, considering myth as "the expression of a profound sense of togetherness of feeling and of action and of wholeness of living" (1960, p. 11). This research has introduced examples of Radwan's poetry, establishing the significance of each myth he is using to examine its relationship to archetypes and archetypal patterns. These examples are by no means exhaustive, but represent some of the archetypal images that the reader encounters in his poems, provided that they necessarily function as archetypes that should be interpreted as such only if the total context of the work logically supports an archetypal reading.

About the Author:

Dr. Rima Eid Asi Moqattash is a Jordanian creative writer, literary critic, literary translator, and Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the English Department, Al-Zaytounah Private University of Jordan. She is also a Civic Education and Leadership Fellow/Maxwell School of Syracuse University, New York. She has composed three books and several articles in both languages

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Universal Themes and Messages in Gibran's *The Prophet*

Nidaa Hussain Fahmi Al-Khazraji

Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Language
and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

&

lecturer in Department of English Language, Karbala University,
Iraq

Mardziah Hayati Abdullah

Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Language
and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Wong Bee Eng

Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Language
and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Abstract:

Gibran's masterpiece, *The Prophet* (1923), is a volume of twenty-eight prose-poems full of sayings representing wisdom of a prophetic quality. The book's chapters deal with the universal themes of all aspects of life love, marriage, children, etc. It is considered as a full representation for a comprehensive survey for all the meanings on earth, (Bushrui, 1998; Acocella, 2008; Buck, 2010). Bushrui asserts that the language of *The Prophet* represents the unity in diversity as a passionate belief in the healing power of universal love and the unity of being (ibid, 1988: 68). The study will attempt to identify the universal themes underlying the text with the core of micro and macro levels. The theoretical grounding for this study draws upon the fact that the book has become so popular in many cultures is an indication the extent of interest in positive ideology which presented universal themes and messages appeal. Waterfield declares that *The Prophet* has not been out of print since it was first published, and has sold more than ten million copies in English language alone. It has also been translated to more than twenty-five languages (Waterfield: 1998:257). The universal themes and messages that emerge from the writings show an absence of the in-group versus out-group distinction that is often evident in other Gibran's works.

Keywords: Gibran, *The Prophet*, semantic macrostructure, universal themes

Introduction

Gibran, the author of *The Prophet* emigrated with his family from Lebanon to USA on 25th of June 1894 to escape political persecution and poverty. He is credited as having enriched the English and Arabic literature with masterpieces that offer an enduring appeal by virtue of their rich and harmonious blend of East and West (Acocella, 2008; Buck, 2010). According to Bushraui (1988), Gibran represented the best of both worlds. Although his parents were staunch Christian Maronites, Gibran suffered from the bitter denunciation of both religious and political injustice, which brought about his exile from the country, and secluded him from the church. His continued refusal to accept injustice is reflected in the ideology and philosophy that underlie his literary work.

In *The Prophet* (1923), Gibran looks at the world with the eyes of the wise man who wants to build a better society and lead people to the real way of life. The teachings delivered by the prophet (Al-Mustafa) before his departure from the imaginary city of Orphalese are said on the purpose of answering the last or ultimate questions of life. Al-Mustafa, which in Arabic means the chosen one, is one name among many names used to refer to the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). It would appear that choosing the name Al-Mustafa does not come arbitrarily, but because of the influence of Islam and Sufism upon Gibran's mind and soul. Actually, this could be regarded as the high idealism of Gibran. Bushraui and Jenkins (1998) assert that "No less influential for Gibran were the views of the Sufi poets; in particular Jalal al-Din Rumi, honored among many as the greatest mystical poet in history" (p.77).

The study makes use of the relevant findings of various approaches to discourse analysis (DA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) in investigating aspects of semantic and rhetorical coherence in the data with relation to the social domains in *The Prophet*. Critical discourse analysis is envisaged in this study as a means for a purposive end: as a problem-solving apparatus.

Text vs. Discourse

Though discourse and text are the central theoretical entities in the domain of discourse analysis, their status and dimensions have remained in dispute and have fluctuated with each influential linguistic trend. One problem in this respect is that the term *text* is commonly used in a variety of ways. Van Peer (1989) cites the following uses of this term: (a) a record; (b) a literary work of art; (c) a composition; (d) a (set of) meaningful utterance(s); (e) a linguistic structure of two (or more) sentences (ibid. 275). While the last two definitions allow every kind of language-use to be termed text, the first and third definitions suggest that texts must be written. Moreover, three of the above definitions (a, d, and e) do not distinguish texts from other kinds of language-use, while the second definition excludes non-literary texts. Relevant to this issue is the *overlap* between the notion of text and discourse. Although these two terms are not synonymous, some linguists see very little difference between them and use them, more or less, interchangeably. Others draw strict demarcation lines between them by restricting the term discourse to *spoken* utterances and reserving the term text to *written* pieces of language use. Still others see either one of these two terms as the theoretical construct verbally realised by the other. This overlap is complicated by the fact that research in discourse analysis/text linguistics is not restricted to the domain of linguistics alone, but has been carried out also by philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, sociolinguists, conversational analysts, anthropologists, literary critics.

The present paper aims at exploring the universal theme and global message that underlie the discourse of Gibran's best known masterpiece *The Prophet*. It explores the most important information conveyed in the text by spelling out the semantic macrostructures (van Dijk, 1985; 2001) of the text. The ultimate aim is to try to explore how far the universal appeal of *The Prophet* is ascribable to the universality of its themes and messages, then moving to the higher global macro structural level to represent its themes and messages. The third stage consists of defining which universal themes are addressed, in what way, and the characteristics of their appeal. The last aim is to explore whether or not there is any textual evidence pointing towards in-group versus out-group separation.

Aspects of Text

As a distinctive linguistic unit of organization, *TEXT* is a highly complex phenomenon of communicative interaction representing a world with relevant social and institutional contexts (Halliday, 1985, xvi). The complexity of text can be shown by the fact that the overall meaning of a text is not simply the sum-total of the cumulative meanings signalled by its individual sentences, clauses, phrases, words, and morphemes. This is because these operational units of textual realization obtain additional signalling values and functions by virtue of: (i) becoming parts of a higher level of organization, (ii) contracting a web of structural and semantic (inter)dependencies manifesting a specific texture, (iii) the functioning of the whole of the text as an appropriate unit of communication in its environment. Therefore, a communicative message does not consist of units, but of a goal-oriented units-in-relation (K. Callow & Callow, 1992:8).

According to Callow & Callow, a text cannot be adequately comprehended unless its constitutive units *cohere* or *hang together*. The human mind can only grasp what relates coherently both to our existing knowledge and to the rest of the text (ibid.). Therefore coherence is the fundamental property of textuality. A discourse is coherent whenever its sentences are easily related to one another. Coherent passages enable us to identify the general *thread* of discourse and the way the individual sentences *fit together* to achieve this purpose (Carroll, 1986: 213). So, coherence characterizes all the *appropriate* forms of language use by defining its unity. However, the characteristics of this unity are not straightforward; in fact they are *complex* and *multidimensional*. The problem of defining the true nature of coherence and its constitutive elements is highlighted by Chomsky (1968):

Just what "appropriateness" and "coherence" may consist in we cannot say in any clear or definite way, but there is no doubt that these are meaningful concepts. (ibid. 11)

This quotation shows that while the presence of discourse coherence is uncontroversial, it is not always easy to determine its constitutive elements, especially if we understand coherence in its wider all-inclusive sense as the constructive standard of textuality with its multi-level: phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, stylistic, rhetorical, and pragmatic aspects. Different approaches have been taken in the study described to determine the constituents of coherence as a text-formation concept, all having their own terminological distinctions. In this section some of the influential linguistic approaches will be briefly sketched by grouping relatable trends together on the basis of their general affinity rather than their chronological order.

Semantic Coherence

Semantic coherence is both *local* and *global*. Local semantic coherence accounts for the microstructural level of the relations between the sentences or propositions of the discourse. It establishes the meaningful intra/intersentential connections signalled by: word-order, sentence-order, the use of connectives, sentential adverbs, verb tenses, and pronouns (van Dijk, 1985:108). Besides the linear ordering of the propositions, there is the additional hierarchical organization of the underlying semantic structures: their spatial, temporal, and conditional connections.

In contrast, Global coherence is concerned with the meaning of larger discourse chunks or whole discourses which cannot be defined in terms of local coherence conditions mentioned above. This is because global coherence is concerned with the *topic* or *theme* of the whole discourse (i.e. its “*macrostructure*”) (ibid. 115). A macrostructure is a theoretical reconstruction of the higher level global meaning that is derived from the propositional sequences of the text by a number of “*macrorules*” (1981: 4). In other words, the macrostructure is the semantic information that gives the discourse its overall unity. Frequently, such underlying macrostructures are given by the text itself in the titles, summaries, or announcements.

Since the individuals’ world-knowledge, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, interests, and goals of communication are not identical, differences in assigning global meanings to the same discourse may occur, stemming from different evaluations about what is relevant or important information for the discourse. However, these subjective variations often manifest enough overlap to guarantee successful communication and interaction (van Dijk, 1985: 117).

As previously outlined, a semantic macrostructure is the reconstruction of the topic or theme of a discourse. It spells out the most important semantic information of the discourse as a whole. A macrostructure of a discourse is the function of the respective meanings of its sentences derived by semantic transformations that map sequences of propositions of the text onto the sequences of macro-propositions at the more general levels of meaning. Such mappings are operations that select, reduce, generalize, and re-construct propositions into fewer, more general ones through the recursive application of the information-reduction macro-rules. These transformational rules are semantic interpretation rules which allow a further interpretation of the sequences of a whole discourse in global propositions that characterize its overall meaning (van Dijk, 1985: 115-6).

Theme and Format of *The Prophet*

The most obvious theme in the text is that of teaching and preaching. Gibran believes in the prophet’s role as a dispenser of social wisdom, this is shown by other interlocutors in the text who treat, talk about, and interact with Al-Mustafa as a prophetic person. He acts as an orator who wants to teach people moral, wise, and humanistic lessons. People of Orphalese ask him to speak to them, and give them of his truth so that they can pass his words as a teacher from one generation to another. Widdowson (1975: 116) asserts that the author’s style arouses the receiver’s feelings by using appellative expressions that make a precise description for literary meaning.

The text of *The Prophet* is divided into twenty-eight chapters or subtexts (henceforth: T) that deal with the most important aspects of life and society. Each T discusses an autonomous subtitle topic in a variable number of verse-lines. Accordingly, the verse-line has been considered as the basic unit of the bottom-top analysis conducted hereunder.

T1: *The Coming of the Ship*; T2: *Love*; T3: *Marriage*; T4: *Children*; T5: *Giving*; T6: *Eating and Drinking*; T7: *Work*; T8: *Joy and Sorrow*; T9: *Houses*; T10: *Clothes*; T11: *Buying and Selling*; T12: *Crime and Punishment*; T13: *Laws*; T14: *Freedom*; T15: *Reason and Passion*;

T16: *Pain*; T17: *Self Knowledge*; T18: *Teaching*; T19: *Friendship*; T20: *Talking*; T21: *Time*; T22: *Good and Evil*; T23: *Prayer*; T24: *Pleasure*; T25: *Beauty*; T26: *Religion*; T27: *Death*; T28: *The Farewell*.

Chapters are composed of a variable number of verse-lines, ranging from a maximum of a hundred and fifty (T28), to a minimum of ten (T19).

It is worth mentioning that the Gibranian verse-lines assume quite unconventional forms, with the following characteristics:

- a) Put at the start of a separate line, each verse line invariably begins with a capital letter, ending either with a stop punctuation (period; question-mark), or a non-stop punctuation mark (colon; semi-colon; zero punctuation) e.g.:

*And you who would understand justice, how shall you unless
you look upon all deeds in the fullness of light?
Only then shall you know that the erect and the fallen are but
one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-
self and the day of his god-self. (T12)*

- b) Lengths of verse lines vary from a minimal non-sentence (e.g. *And you, vast sea, sleepless mother, (T1:21)*), to more than one compound-complex sentence (e.g. *Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache (T1: 7)*).
- c) No specific rhyme-scheme is sought; rhythm variation is the norm.

One interesting aspect of the *The Prophet* is it is generally re-told as conversations in the setting of a crowd asking questions and responses being extemporaneously given in complex verse form by Al-Mustafa.

Except for T1 and T28, all the other twenty-six chapters take the form of a question raised by one member of the crowd of followers – who gather around *The Prophet* before his departure – followed by Al-Mustafa's answer, which takes the form of an uninterrupted speech. The first chapter introduces Al-Mustafa, who has lived in the city of Orphalese for twelve years awaiting the ship that will take him back to the isle of his birth. When the ship arrives, the people of Orphalese come to bid him farewell, and a seeress called *Almitra* (the only follower named in *the Prophet*) entreats him to provide answers to all those questions that his followers seek his advice about before his departure. Al-Mustapha obliges, and his answers comprise the texts of the next twenty-six chapters. The last chapter offers Al-Mustafa's farewell speech.

Universal Appeal in *The Prophet*

At this level, the analyst can readily see that the semantic information spelled out by the macrostructures in the subtexts represent Al-Mustafa's formulation of certain fundamental truths and values which may be considered as universal themes. These define the wise aims which the prophet wants his audience to observe about the topics they ask, as given hereunder.

Unshakable Belief in Love and Life

It could be argued that the most prominent universal theme in the text of *The Prophet* is its persistent faith in *love* in its relationship to *life* and to most human activities that are dealt with. As a lexical item, *love* recurs for (64) times in the whole text, being the highest recurrent general theme, followed by *life* (35 instances). When dealing with *love* as a discrete topic, the text

stresses its purifying office. In addition, love is closely related to the appreciation of life as a whole, and to the noble feeling of gratitude, and happiness. In *marriage*, the text praises the sharing of togetherness with that of keeping space and love. Love is also required in dealing with *children*. Love and life are also paired with *work* - which is defined as noble love that fulfills life, binding the worker to the other and to God – and with *friendship*.

*Much have we loved you. But speechless was our love, and
with veils has it been veiled. (T1)*

Love teaches the appreciation of life, gratitude, and happiness. It frees and purifies the soul because love is self-sufficient. True love does not mean seeking peace and pleasure only it is self-sufficient as well. Al-Mustafa recommends his audiences to follow love though it may be painful. Love is sacred; it envelops completely to satisfy the desire to enjoy it in peaceful tenderness.

*For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as
he is for your growth so is he for your pruning.
When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart," but
rather, I am in the heart of God."
Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself. (T2)*

Togetherness of marriage requires keeping both love and space, not a bondage to possessive domineering.

*Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same
loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of
you be alone ,
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. (T3)*

Children require parent's love, but not their imposed thought because children cannot be a replica of their own parents.

*Your children are not your children .
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself .
They come through you but not from you (T4)*

Work requires love; it binds oneself to the other and to God. All work is noble; it is *love made visible*. Moreover, working with love needs caring, tenderness and joy. It is better for those who cannot work with love to become beggars.

*Work is love made visible.
And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is
better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of
the temple and take alms of those who work with joy. (T7)*

Friendship can provide love, warmth, knowledge, assistance, and peace. A friend satisfies the human need for reciprocal love and thanksgiving.

*Your friend is your needs answered.
He is your field which you sow with love and reap with
thanksgiving. (T19)*

Gibran asserts that friendship needs the frank disclosure of the self. It can realize sharing without words. When parting with a friend, one need not grieve because the absence can make one's love clearer. Self-preservation

Glorification of All Human Beings

The second prominent universal theme in *The Prophet* is the belief in self-preservation, immortality and the God-self aspect of all human beings. God is mentioned in (25) places throughout the whole text, always in relation to human beings, whether individuals or groups. The idea of man as the image of God is pervasive in the text e. Its function is to glorify humanity and emphasizes trust in all humans e.g. *Like the ocean; like the ether; and like the sun.* Degradation of the status of human beings is totally rejected, even in prayer (T23).

Like the ocean is your god-self.

It remains forever undefiled.

And like the ether it lifts but the winged.

Even like the sun is your god-self;

It knows not the ways of the mole nor seeks it the holes of the serpent.

But your god-self does not dwell alone in your being. (T12)

Gibran, through his mouthpiece Al-Mustafa, teaches his readers how to arrive to a greater self, Godhood and self-fulfillment. He clarifies that God only listens to those words that belong to Himself.

Nassar and Gibran claim that "The Prophet is an extended flight on the wings of a dubious idea that Gibran derived from Blake, Whitman, and Nietzsche, that the evolving godliness in man is god enough for exultant worship" (Nassar, Eugene Paul 1980:29). They cite verses from Gibran's *The Madman*:

My God, my aim and my fulfillment; I am

thy yesterday and thou art my tomorrow.

I am thy root in the earth and thou art

my flower in the sky. (The Madman, p. 10)

In the following verses, the theme calls for the unity of religions and the oneness of mankind *who are born of the mountains and the forests*. Even the seas, forests and mountains pray to God and one can hear their prayer in the stillness of the night, saying in silence:

*We cannot ask thee for aught, for thou knowest our needs
before they are born in us.*

*"Thou art our need; and in giving us more of thyself thou
givest us all." (T23)*

It must be emphasized on the importance of the emotional worship in which Gibran harbours toward self-superiority and Self-transcendence. He defines the prayer as the expansion of self in the living ether:

*For what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living
ether? (T23)*

Praying is not of Man alone, but also of mountains, forests and seas. Gibran parallels Man with the most three greatest things that God created.

And I cannot teach you the prayer of the seas and the forests and the mountains.

But you who are born of the mountains and the forests and the seas can find their prayer in your heart. (T23)

Obviously, the *expansion of the self* might mean self-infinite perfection, which brings it to a growing consciousness of the greater self. It is Gibran's mystical experience and his aspiration transforms self into a greater self and becomes a godlike figure.

And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God. (T7)

You are good when you are one with yourself.

Yet when you are not one with yourself you are not evil.

For a divided house is not a den of thieves; it is only a divided house.

And a ship without rudder may wander aimlessly among perilous isles yet sink not to the bottom.

You are good when you strive to give of yourself.

Yet you are not evil when you seek gain for yourself. (T22)

In the sub-text *Crime and Punishment*, Gibran asserts that man is essentially good; however, wrong-doers are still human beings. Inhuman wrong-doing is committed unconsciously by the deformed aspect of man. Wrong-doing harms other people as well as the wrong-doer himself but each person has an undefiled God-self.

And for that wrong committed must you knock and wait a while unheeded at the gate of the blessed.

Even like the sun is your god-self;

But your god-self does not dwell alone in your being.

Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet human,

And of the man in you would I now speak.

For it is he and not your god-self nor the pigmy in the mist, that knows crime and the punishment of crime. (T12)

Committing wrong deeds bars the wrong-doer from the gate of the blessed. Crime is committed because of the silence of all the community, when one stumbles he falls for the benefit of those behind him and for those ahead of him. Wrong-doer is no less human than the righteous. Crime requires the attention and care of the totality of the social system because all people proceed in life together.

So the wrong-doer cannot do wrong without the hidden will of you all.

Like a procession you walk together towards your god-self. (T12)

Justice cannot be fulfilled because some are honest in flesh but thieves in spirit. The erect and the fallen are but one man, both are standing on a par in between his god-self and pigmy-self.

And you who would understand justice, how shall you unless you look upon all deeds in the fullness of light?

Only then shall you know that the erect and the fallen are but one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god-self. (T12)

Appreciation of Joy

The third prominent universal theme in the text is that of appreciating joy (24 instances). The feeling of joy is made relevant to the topics of love, marriage, children, work, giving, pain, friendship, prayer, and death. Gibran allocates a separate and distinguished part to *Joy and Sorrow*.

When Almitra asks the prophet about the marriage, he recommends wife and husband to be joyous, he says:

Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, (T3)

Gibran talks about the relation between generosity and jubilation or joy. The prophet tells his followers that those who give all are the true believers in life bounty and are the truly rich people.

There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward. (T5)

He asserts that giving without return is godly and it is better to give when unasked than when asked for seeking needy is joyful.

*It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding.
And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving. (T5)*

Gibran realizes that joy is inseparable from sorrow; each heightening or lessening the balance of the other. Here, Gibran is under the influence of Nietzsche's book, *Thus Speak Zarathustra* (1891), Friedrich Nietzsche says: "I laugh because I am afraid if I don't laugh, I may start weeping. My laughter is nothing but a strategy to hide my tears". Gibran says:

*Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.
And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears. And how else can it be?
The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.
When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. (T8)*

When Gibran has been asked about the pain, his answer goes to deepest core of spiritual, mental, and physical pain. A birth of child is almost a pain but with joy, all races and nations are born from the pain. Joy and pain are essential aspects of religions like Islam, Christianity, Jewish (Judaism), Buddhism and Zoroastrianism; that means the relation between joy and pain is known by almost the whole world, they offer universal beliefs.

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.

And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy; (T16)

Al-Mustafa tells the youth that friendship can bring joy into someone's life; the joy of companionship is spiritual inspiration. Friendship does not mean seeking hours to kill, but making hours alive. Friendship allows sharing joy, laughter, pleasure, and refreshment.

For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born and shared, with joy that is unacclaimed. (T19)

Ay, I knew your joy and your pain, and in your sleep your dreams were my dreams. (T28)

The prophet teaches his followers the joy of praying and the power behind it. Human beings, regardless of their religions, need to pray when they are satisfied and joyful as well as when they are in distress and in need.

You pray in your distress and in your need.

Would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.

For what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether? (T23)

Appreciation of joy is so much spread between man-kind and nations. Gibran draws attention of his readers, who have enjoyed *The Prophet*, to a universal humanist joy which is relevant to all cultures and times.

Belief in Freedom

The fourth salient universal theme in *The Prophet* concerns freedom which is defined as worship (T14) and liberation from the chains of social norms. The concept of freedom is the main concern of individuals and nations; each seeks to achieve freedom, on both personal level and at the level of the state. Human beings are hailed for their readiness to sacrifice everything to gain more and more freedom.

In truth that which you call freedom is the strongest of these chains, though its links glitter in the sun and dazzle the eyes. (T14)

Gibran emphasizes that the freedom is the strongest of chains. Free people rise above their wants and grieve. Al-Mustafa teaches his audiences that one cannot be great unless become free, and therefore freedom alone can innovate and build a conscious and great society. Though human beings are born free, they remain slaves to the cruelty laws enacted by their predecessor.

Gibran's ideology on freedom is teetering between Sufism and smi-Socialism; he thinks that freedom should arise against the racism in order to restore humanity to divine justice.

*For how can a tyrant rule the free and the proud, but for a
tyranny in their own freedom and a shame in their won
pride? (T14)*

Gibran allocates a full chapter for *Freedom* in his book *The Prophet* saying that the liberation and freedom can be only achieved by pain to arrive what should be in future. Gibran is willing to remain logical and realistic with his readers.

Equality and Goodness of All Human Beings

Equality and solidarity prevail throughout the whole text of *The Prophet*. When Gibran enumerates the things that the prophet wants the addressees to avail themselves at by transcending the barriers of the city, the prophet does not characterize the audience as, say: “ignorant” or “sinful” people who deprive themselves of such great things as “peace”, great “remembrances”, “beauty”, etc. Instead, their need for these spiritual attributes is presented in the form of recurring questions: “*Have you beauty*”, “*Have you peace*”, “*But you, children of space*” ...etc. Then, the addressees are encouraged to explore the greatness of exploring nature beauty through a series of sentences wherein negation is used to assert their keeping to the desired course of action: “*You shall not be trapped, nor tamed, etc.*”, all sentences are reinforcing positive stance.

Another technique used to unite the prophet’s cause with that of the addressees is that of positive nominalizations to “the other”: the audience members are characterized as: “*children of peace, restless in rest, and bondless*”. Such a strategy enhances the relationship of solidarity and mutual value-sharing rather than initiating a negative hegemony of one party over the other.

*But you, children of space, you restless in rest, you shall not
be trapped nor tamed. (T9)*

Of the good in you I can speak, but not of the evil.

*For what is evil but good tortured by its own hunger and
thirst? (T22)*

You are good when you are one with yourself.

Yet when you are not one with yourself you are not evil. (T22)

Belief in the goodness of all human beings is dispersed in almost all subtexts, recurring (20) times. There is even a good side in the unjust, wicked, and bad:

*You cannot separate the just from the unjust and the good
from the wicked; (T12)*

Humans are good in countless ways; yet, they are not evil when they are not good. Gibran considers people who are in harmony with themselves are good but when one is not in harmony with oneself, one is not evil.

*You are good in countless ways, and you are not evil when
you are not good.*

*In your longing for your giant-self lies your goodness: and
that longing is in all of you. (T22)*

Participants in the whole text are only two parties: i.) the Prophet (Al-Mustafa), and ii.) his followers (interlocutors). This means that there is no third party characterised as the “Other”

(who does not belong) in opposition to “Us” (van Dijk, 2008:18). In addition, Gibran refers to himself as a *peace maker* using the pronoun “I”:

Would that I could be the peacemaker in your soul, that I might turn the discord and the rivalry of your elements into oneness and melody. (T15)

There are some references to the speaker (the Prophet) in the first person pronouns “I”, or “we” overall almost referring to the addressees or allegory as personification.

Say not, "I have found the truth," but rather, "I have found a truth."

Say not, "I have found the path of the soul." Say rather, "I have met the soul walking upon my path." (T17)

And now you ask in your heart, "How shall we distinguish that which is good in pleasure from that which is not good?" (T24)

The pronoun that refers to Al-Mustafa is “he”. The addressees (the followers of the Prophet) are referred to in (457) instances, either via “you” or “your”. Finally, the pronoun “us” occurs also referring to the addressees themselves. This determines that each text doesn’t draw any ideological division between “Us” and “Them”. One may legitimately conclude that the whole text of *The Prophet* draws no conceptual division between Us and Them, i.e. it advocates positive universal ideology. Distribution of co-reference types to participants shows that the text does not create a barrier between the stature of the speaker and his audience in that the prophet does not pause himself as a dominating authority over his audience, nor is there a separation between “us” and “them”, which unite together.

Global Macrostructures in *The Prophet*

At the next higher level stand the global macrostructures of the subtexts. These are derived through the recursive application of the macro-rules to each set of the macrostructures given above. Some subtexts allow the derivation of a single global macrostructure; others are too complex to be summed up into just one global macrostructure. Regardless of their number, all global macrostructures represent the gist of each subtext, or its fundamental message as shown hereunder.

(T1) THE SHIP OF AL-MUSTAFA THE CHOSEN AND BELOVED: Waiting for twelve years in the city of Orphalese, the Prophet’s ship comes to take him back home. The people of Orphalese ask the Prophet to tell them of his truth about the following topics before leaving.

(T2) LOVE: Love purifies and teaches life-appreciation, gratitude and happiness.

(T3) MARRIAGE: Marriage requires sharing togetherness while keeping space and love.

(T4) CHILDREN: Children belong to future life, requiring their parents’ love and stability.

(T5) GIVING: Giving everything without seeking any return is godly since all possessions are subject to loss.

(T6) EATING AND DRINKING: Eating and drinking sustain the eternity of life and nature.

(T7) WORK: Work is noble love that fulfills life, binding to the other and to God.

(T8) JOY AND SORROW: Joy and sorrow are inseparable, each complements the other.

(T9) THE HOUSES: Let not the physical limits of houses prevent people from enjoying the greatness of nature.

- (T10) THE CLOTHES: Clothes cover shame against the eyes of the unclean, but they conceal natural beauty and shackle freedom.
- (T11) BUYING AND SELLING: The body and soul of all people can find enough food on earth if exchanged in justice and charity.
- (T12) CRIME AND PUNISHMENT: Wrong-doing, forced by oppression, harms other people as well as the wrong-doer himself. Man is essentially good; therefore, remorse can be more harmful than punishment. Crime is the responsibility of all the community since all people proceed in life together. True justice cannot be fulfilled because some people are honest in flesh, but dishonest in spirit.
- (T13) THE LAW: Man-made laws soon become obsolete and cannot stop free people from seeking freedom and happiness.
- (T14) THE FREEDOM: Freedom is a faith worthy of sacrifice to attain greater freedom.
- (T15) REASON AND PASSION: Man, like God, needs to rest in reason and move in passion for the harmonious sustenance of life.
- (T16) THE PAIN: Pain is a bitter healing medicine that requires acceptance.
- (T17) SELF-KNOWLEDGE: Self-knowledge requires diving into the depths of the multifaceted aspects of the self.
- (T18) THE TEACHING: Good teachers make their students think and discover by themselves.
- (T19) FRIENDSHIP: Friendship is a natural human need to frankly share love, assistance, knowledge, and pleasure with other human beings.
- (T20) THE TALKING: Talking helps one to share one's thoughts and feelings with friends by keeping truthfulness.
- (T21) THE TIME: Time is infinite, but let today embrace the past with remembrance, and the future with longing.
- (T22) GOOD AND EVIL: Humans are good in countless ways, but when good is left un-nurtured, evil steps in.
- (T23) THE PRAYER: Man needs to unselfishly pray, whether in joy or distress, by pronouncing God's words.
- (T24) THE PLEASURE: The giving and receiving of pleasure is a human need that requires no rebuke.
- (T25) THE BEAUTY: The charm of beauty is always realized in people and through people.
- (T26) THE RELIGION: Religion is found in all deeds and reflections, not in riddle-solving.
- (T27) THE DEATH: Death and life are one, save that death means resting with God in joy.
- (T28) THE FARWELL: The Prophet thanks the people of Orphalese for their generosity and faith in him, praises them; then he bids them farewell and sets out in his ship after promising to come back again.

All the messages above tackle basic cultural functions that seem to be acceptable to most competent human beings. They offer universal beliefs and messages that can be usefully adopted to organize human actions due to their beneficiality to human beings and because they cannot be justifiably disputed. They basically define what is universally good and bad for all societies at large as far as the topics under discussion are concerned.

Conclusion

A quick glance at the universal themes and messages above, it goes without saying that there can be no room in the totality of *The Prophet* for in-group versus

out-group separation of human beings. Indeed the premise that all human beings are good and possess god-selves taken as the point of departure in this text completely rules out the possibility of any such separation. Significantly, as has been pointed out above, even the wrongdoers and the evil people are defended as human beings forced by circumstances to do what is not in their essential good nature. Moreover, Gibran's messages offer the addressees with insightful understanding of many vital subjects that are not available otherwise, wherein aspects of truth and reality are powerfully balanced with those of high poetic imagination. The final result is a charm-like beauty that appeals to everyone, regardless of one's religious beliefs, by bringing harmony and peace to those who seek a source of solace and rationality in this irrational world. Such totally positive attitude toward humanity that stresses the goodness and equality of all human beings can legitimately be considered as one very significant factor in the popularity of *The Prophet*. This shows that the methodological apparatus of Critical Discourse Analysis functions as tool for unraveling positive ideology as well as the negative one.

About the Authors:

Nidaa Hussain Fahmi Al-Khazraji is currently Ph. D. candidate at Department of English Language/ Faculty of Modern Language and Communication/ Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)/ Malaysia; lecturer in Department of English Language/ Karbala University/ Iraq.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wong Bee Eng, Department of English Language, Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia.

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A Reading of the Immigrant Psyche of the Protagonist/Writer in “The Tiger’s Daughter”.

Sabitha.S.R.Najeeb

University of Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract

One of the key features of twentieth century is the large-scale migration across the globe. Two world wars, emergence of decolonized countries, and the dominance of information technology have redefined concepts such as identity, belonging and home. These historical and social events have made the immigrant the protagonist of the twentieth century. This study examines how these socio-political experiences are translated into the context of American identity. In order to do so, it must interrogate the critical fields that are most interested in issues of national and cultural identities, migration, and the appropriation of women by both Western and postcolonial projects. Analysis is also undertaken about the manner in which the protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee’s “The Tiger’s Daughter” navigate between the various and often contradictory demands placed on her by her homeland culture and her position as an immigrant in the United States. This novel is a probe on the one hand to the innate complexities and inconsistencies of a conservative traditional background, and on the other hand, a sarcasm on a deformed and prejudiced social set up. Mukherjee enjoys a special place in the category of immigrant writers because she is both an immigrant writer as well as a feminist writer.

Key Words: Alienation, Dilemma, Dislocation, Immigrant Writing, Isolation

Introduction

“I once thought to write a history of immigrants to America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.” declared Oscar Handlin (1951, p.3). This holds true even sixty two years after this proclamation, as the theme of immigration, and the alienation and isolation resulting from this, continues to be the major concern of many a writer. This group of writers who portrays the joys, agonies, wish fulfillment and the disenchantment of the immigrants, can be clustered together and termed as ‘immigrant writers’.

Bharati Mukherjee is an immigrant by choice. She has a special place in this category of writers because she is both an immigrant writer as well as a feminist writer. Mukherjee in “The Tiger’s Daughter” (1971) delineates with issues regarding the return to homeland and the particular problems associated with a highly mobile class of women immigrants whose lives move back and forth as they travel to old and new homes. Though four decades have passed after its first publication, the popularity of this work seems rooted in the near universal appeal of this theme. Her novel focuses on the vaguely autobiographical journey back to India of a Bengali-born Indian girl educated and married in America to an American.

Literature Review

Mukherjee’s works focus on the “phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants, and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates” (Alam, 1996, p.7) as well as on Indian women and their struggle. Her own struggle with identity, first as an exile from India, then an Indian expatriate in Canada and finally as a immigrant in the United States has led to her current state of being an immigrant in a country of immigrants (Alam, 1990, p.10). To understand the works of Bharati Mukherjee one has to acquaint oneself with the term immigrant and what it means to be an immigrant.

“To migrate”, Salman Rushdie (2010, p.210) writes in *Imaginary Homelands*, is “to lose language and home, to be defined by others, to become invisible, or, even worse, a target; it is to experience deep changes and wrenches in the soul.” He adds, however, that “the migrant is not simply transformed by [this] act; he [or she] transforms his new world” (Rushdie, 2010, p.210). It is said that a person who adopts a country is simultaneously adopted by it. There is an anonymity and distinctiveness in the term immigrant. Harold H. Itwaru says that it entails “paradoxical forms of identification which paint faceless faces and paint also the facedness of the interaction between the state and the people so named” (1990, p.12). The immigrant suffers from disorientation. He is torn between hopes and fears and also between yesterday and tomorrow.

The immigrant who lands at his dream country expects this dream land to fulfill his desires, hopes and wishes. In the first flush of elation and excitement, the immigrant contributes his maximum energy – both physical and intellectual – to this land, which he hopes to make his own. But the country which is often soulless assumes the role of a manipulator and sucks the life out of the immigrant. He feels betrayed and the dream of fulfillment changes to the reality of exploitation.

Exactly after a decade of her attending the Writer’s Workshop at the University of Iowa in 1961, Mukherjee ventured out to create a novel of her own. Like the author, the protagonist Tara also returns to her native land after an encounter with Western value systems. The foreign returned Tara is forced to re-adjust her values and even re-define her identity.

For an immigrant, the need to understand what he or she has left behind and what is experienced in the new land is crucial to survival. Tara is forced to learn this lesson for surviving in the alien land. The immigrants often come from a land of rich culture and heritage. One wonders why then, these people discard their mother country and immigrate to an alien land. The reasons for the emigration vary. These may be due to advance oneself in the field of education, modern science and technology or monetary improvement or for reason known to them alone. These immigrants are uprooted from an indigenous culture and transplantation causes the immigrant's life to,

“occur amidst many shifting images of the self, between a yesterday always alive within, but situated now in another country and culture to which the term ‘host society’ is usually applied” (Itwaru, 1990, p.13).

The memory of her parents, friends and the Camac Street society becomes dear to Tara within the closed confines of the dormitories of Vassar. It is this memory of love and kindness that solaces and gives comfort to her. Bailey correctly observes that “the phenomenon of immigration so profoundly affected these individuals that they spend the rest of their lives adjusting to this uprooting” (1975, p.3). The setting of “The Tiger’s Daughter” is the upper class urban elite of Bengal, a milieu with which Bharati Mukherjee is familiar and is an integral part of her upbringing. This novel is a probe on the one hand to the innate complexities and inconsistencies of a conservative traditional background, and on the other hand, sarcasm on a deformed and prejudiced social set up. In the words of Mukherjee (1992):

It is the autobiography of a class rather than an individual. I was writing about the passing away of a way of life that I and many young Bengali women growing up in the Calcutta of the 50s experienced. Many of the characters are meant to operate both believably and symbolically. There is the nouveau riche class coming in and that is personified by one principal character. There are those who have been prepared by their westernized education for a gracious Calcutta that is on the eve of disappearing and there is a new people with a great deal of political vitality with reformist ideas. It’s a nostalgia for a Calcutta that has already collapsed (p.7).

Given this background, Mukherjee could not but be passionately involved with the changing scenario in Calcutta. Materialism and political corruption had eroded the majesty of a gracious Calcutta. Mukherjee as an outsider looks at this individualistic society that has emerged with detachment. Tara has been molded by a Western society whose norms are based on the self rather than the collective self. Tara is not at home with her roots nor can she fit into the society of her acquired living. Tara is stirred passively by the impulse to rebel, but does not show any power for decision in the course of the novel.

As an immigrant writer, Mukherjee’s concern in this novel is with the ethos of an Indian woman who has been subjected to the extreme liberalism of the West. Her identity entrenched in the Indian culture encounters a dilemma in this polarity of ethics. What surfaces ultimately is Mukherjee’s conviction that societies make and remake gender roles for women. Tara’s parents are proud of their only daughter. They do not constitute in themselves, the traditional patriarchal society. It is they who make it possible for Tara to break away from the gender role which the society expected of her. Tara is sent to the States at the tender age of fifteen. It should be noted

here that Arati (Tara's mother) proudly proclaims that her only daughter is more than enough to make up for many valiant sons. Though she did not mean it, the Indian mother's longing to have a son is inherent in this statement. And by equating her daughter with sons, Arati unconsciously substitutes her daughter for sons. Arati confines herself to her role as a wife and mother. Society and the gender role constructed by the society, makes Arati unconsciously believe that her life would be fulfilled only if she gave birth to a son. Arati is not to be held guilty for making the innocuous statement.

Tara arrives in India after seven years of living abroad, a period of hibernation of value system. She is outraged by the squalor and confusion of Indian life. She is irritated when the attendant sneezes on her raincoat and offers to wipe out the mess with his dusting rag. Amidst this confusion, she suddenly finds solace in meeting her parents. This episode gives a general impression that, however westernized she is, Tara is very much attuned to the class she belongs to, and to the roots that she hails from. Here the interesting aspect is that Tara's roots, especially since she has been away for seven years, is with a class in Calcutta which is tied to its dogmas and does not open up to changing trends. It is this upper middle class perspective, that gives Tara an awe about Calcutta. The disdain and disgust she has about what is going on in Calcutta, is all because of her class consciousness on the one hand, and on the other hand, because of her acquired awareness from the west.

Tara's renewed encounter with her homeland is far more insightful than it had been when the land was accepted uncritically. She observes:

It is the same Calcutta that she left but the awareness of Calcutta which she knew before leaving was only partial. For her the Catelli Continental Hotel on Chowringhee Avenue is the navel of the universe. The group outside her Fortified home in Calcutta often sat on the roof of the Catelli Continental, imagining in public to flout conventions, imploring Tara not to smile at strange old men in blazers and sun hats (The Tiger's Daughter, p.31).

But Tara was fond of Calcutta not because of the superior status she enjoyed, but because of other reasons. Her mother Arati was a saintly woman. She was not holy enough to turn her hair white overnight, but was adequately religious. Her religiosity did not proceed to the extreme of fanaticism. Though Arati occasionally goes to shrines and visits religious people she is not narrow minded. She wants her daughter to study and widen her horizons. She does not believe that the be all and end all of a girl's life is a suitable marriage. Tara on the other hand always kept her mother's holiness as a resort at times of distress and she used to long for the security of the prayer room.

At Vassar, it is this symbol of calmness and serenity at the other end of the world that is her solace. Here, as Itwaru says, "the present consciousness with its attendant ambiguities, anxieties and disorientations, invents meaning in the need to reduce confusion" (1990, p.13). We are dealing with the transposition of social, racial, cultural and religious memory. That memory will be consciously as well as unconsciously central in the interpretation of perceived realities. Itwaru further adds that the stranger in the case, here Tara, is categorized in the name and label 'immigrant'. This immigrant status is distinctive and at the same time also anonymous. This person is no longer only the bearer of another history (Tara considers herself more Indian than she was at home, while her friends at Vassar ask her about India and the population explosion and other things), but has now become a particular 'other'. The person has become the

immigrant-- this term of depersonalization which will brand her or him for the rest of their lives in the country of their adoption. Tara's personality is thus confined to a kind of dependency, not only on parents, but also to her religion and culture.

Tara undertakes the lone journey back to India which aggravates her feeling of rootlessness. She realizes how different she has grown, how incompatible life is in her native land. Tara's nostalgia and idealization for India were the spontaneous responses inherent in every immigrant removed from his country by time and space. The second position, much more complicated and complicating, gives the novel its ironic sharpness and urgency. Since Tara's image of India is now an image which makes her a kind of accomplice of custom, it also enables her to define herself against it, because she is no longer a part of it. The institution, rituals and language by which she once lived now appear to her alien, even absurd. In the midst of a serious argument with her friend Reena, for example, she is suddenly overwhelmed by feelings of strangeness: "It was the word "fusspot" that calmed Tara. What a curious tie language was: She had forgotten so many Indian – English words she had used with her friends. It would have been treacherous to quarrel with Reena after that" (The Tiger's Daughter, p.107). It is at this point that Tara realizes that she no longer shares their language and thus no longer belongs.

Conclusion

However ambiguous it seems to be, the conclusion represents the novel's achievement, which is personal as well as aesthetic. In her own way, Tara is a representative figure, not just of the Indian immigrant, but of the crisis of modernity also. Mukherjee's craftsmanship is evident in the division of the novel into four parts. The novel begins with Tara's arrival and ends with her proposed return to the U.S. By going back, unable to grasp its meaning, Tara is rejecting her homeland and her Indianness. The first part is brief and deals with her responses to India; the second part takes us back to her feudal, ancestral past. Tara and her father have tried to reject this past – a past which is overwhelmed and pushed aside by Westernization; the third section of the novel is concerned with Tara's early experiences in America – her loneliness, her attempt to stick to Indian way and the gradual acculturation leading to her marriage to David Cartwright; the fourth brings us back to India.

By centering the novel on a 'daughter', Mukherjee tries to explore the question of womanhood in India. Cultural bondage together with familial ties create the concept of a woman. She is cast into stereotype gender roles. Tara is both a daughter and a wife. As a daughter, she has been given much independence, but her upbringing and subconscious notions of the concept of womanhood are a bondage from which she cannot escape. She remains the tiger's daughter and not a tigress. It is this tension that Mukherjee has poignantly portrayed in her first novel, "The Tiger's Daughter". In reading this novel, we tend to agree with Chinua Achebe (1973) who says that a Third World Writer is a teacher. "He has as much a role to play in depicting his society as the native historian in studying indigenous history" (p.185). This is true of Bharati Mukherjee who has said that in writing "The Tiger's Daughter", she was writing "the autobiography of a class rather than an individual...about the passing away of a life that I and many young Bengali women growing up in the Calcutta of the 50s experienced"(p.7). "The Tiger's Daughter" can be considered as Mukherjee's attempts to find her identity in her Indian heritage. We can see reflections of the author in Tara, the protagonist who returns to India after many years of being away only to return to poverty and turmoil. This story parallels Mukherjee's own return to India with her husband Clark Blaise, in 1973 and the way in which

she was deeply affected by the chaos and poverty of India and mistreatment of women in the name of tradition (Alam, 1996).

The `exile` in Bharati Mukherjee turns her alienation into an opportunity not merely for a critical perspective on her world, but also to enforce complex integrations through struggles that take her beyond the narcissistic insecurities of identity search. She defines herself as an American writer of Bengali-Indian origin. In an interview with Chen and Goudie (1997), Mukherjee confesses:

The writer/political activist in me is more obsessed with addressing the issues of minority discourse in the U.S. and Canada, the two countries I have lived and worked in over the last thirty odd years. The national mythology that my imagination is driven to create, through fiction, is that of the post-Vietnam United States. I experience, simultaneously, the pioneer's capacity to be shocked and surprised by the new culture, and the immigrant's willingness to de-form and re-form that culture. At this moment, my Calcutta childhood and adolescence offer me intriguing, incompletely-comprehended revelations about my hometown, my family, my place in that community: the kind of revelations that fuel the desire to write an autobiography rather than to mythologize an Indian national identity.

As is evident from the above lines, what Mukherjee is interested in as a novelist is an issue that baffles not only third world writers, but literary artists of today everywhere: how to express a sense of displacement, while only through a sense of place and its corresponding ethics can a novel as a primarily linguistic artifact achieve an authentic voice? As Mukherjee proclaims in her first novel, "changes in the anatomies of nations are easy to perceive. But changes brought by gods or titans are too subtle for measurement" (*The Tiger's Daughter*, p.8). This perception of anatomies of nation does not unmake one's belonging, however adamant one's transformation is from one culture to the other. Bharati Mukherjee is definitely an expatriate writer and has not grown out of this stature.

About the Author:

Dr.Sabitha.S.R.Najeeb: Teaching career spanning two decades in various universities in Middle East and North African countries and India. Receptient of Doctoral Research Scholarship awarded by Government of Canada and University of Toronto. Presented academic papers in many international universities including University of Harvard. Articles published in journals in the U.S. and Europe. Presently affiliated with University of Dammam.

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A Lover-Poet's Voice: The Subjective Mode in Robert Browning's Love Poetry

Mohamed Saad Rateb

Department of English

Faculty of Arts, Fayoum University

Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze Browning's love poems "One Word More" and "By the Fireside" from his volume *Men and Women* (1855) for the purpose of illustrating how they reflect Browning's attempt to present the idea of love in a subjective mode in his poetry. In his poetry, Browning does not reckon with the idea of love in abstract terms; rather, he embodies it by referring to the specific details of his love relationship with his wife. In this sense, Browning challenges the reserved, Victorian attitude toward the expression of love in poetry. Such a reserved outlook made it difficult for Browning's contemporaries to externalize their personal feelings of love or to dedicate love poems to loved ones. "One Word More" and "By the Fireside" are the most representative of Browning's subjective love poetry. In "One Word More" Browning addresses his wife in the first person, offering her the whole volume of *Men and Women* as a token of his love. "By the Fireside" reinforces the personal expression of love manifested in "One Word More." The poem explores the intimate atmosphere Browning tries to establish for his wife by describing the places that witnessed the birth of their love and its growth in Italy. Through his use of the first person in the two poems, Browning makes it clear that part of his poetic experience, especially at moments of exalted emotions, has to be expressed in a subjective mode.

Keywords: Browning's love poetry, Browning's subjectivity, "By the Fireside", "One Word More", subjective poetry

A Lover-Poet's Voice: The Subjective Mode in Robert Browning's Love Poetry

Browning's objectivity, especially in his love poetry, has always been a matter of critical debate. Scholars have questioned whether Browning's love poetry is objective or subjective in mode, even if they have not yet come to any definitive conclusions. It is important at this point to consider a suitable definition of subjectivity. William. A. Cohen (2009) attempts a simple definition. He defines subjectivity as "literary writing [that] gives voice to ideas about the correspondence between an interior self and outer form, [and which] describes the internal experience of the self" (p. 6). And he concludes that, "when interiority itself is taken as a subject of cultural studies, it is often treated merely as a synonym for subjectivity" (p. 146). According to Cohen's definition, a subjective writer is mainly concerned with the internal world of his own self rather than the external world of other people; and his writings present an exploration of his personal experience. Browning, too, differentiates between two kinds of poets: the objective and the subjective. In his own words, Jacob Korg (1977) rephrases Browning's comparison:

The objective poet has a superior perception of externals and deals with them ... in a way that is accessible to a broad public, concerning himself with its response rather than with the expression of his own attitudes. His poems say nothing about himself, they are "substantive," separable from his personality, independent creations that speak for themselves. The subjective poet, on the other hand, writes his own thoughts without looking abroad for material; "he digs where he stands," using externals only to the extent that they can embody his ideas. (p. 155)

According to Cohen's definition and Browning's comparison, when a poet deals in his poetry with ideas and situations which correspond to some real incidents in his own life, and when he conveys his personal experience and describes his own feelings, then his poetry is unequivocally interior or subjective.

Some scholars hold the view that Browning's poetry exposes his intense objectivity. Britta Martens (2005), for instance, argues that "Browning assumes that poetry can ... act as a quasi-transparent means of self-expression, while he considers himself as yet unable to reveal his self in his poetry" (p. 76). Thus, Martens concludes that "Browning cannot and will not reveal his private self in public poetry" (p. 94). Similarly, Carol T. Christ (2007) claims that Browning's objectivity allows him to extend the purview and relevance of his poetry:

Modern poetry represented the individual sensibility, a sensibility that had become alienated from society. Browning makes this a dramatic situation; he frees the poet from the burden of alienated subjectivity by attributing it to a specific character and thereby extends poetry's representational range [He] transforms the universal subjectivity of Romanticism, in which the 'I' of the poet claims to represent each of us, to a dramatic representation of individual psychology that treats any such claim with irony. (p. 6)

On the other hand, there is a second group of critics who emphasize the subjectivity of Robert Browning. John Bryson (1979), for example, asserts that "we hear Browning's own voice" in the middle of his poems (p. 23). Similarly, Hiram Corson (2013) describes Browning's poetry as "being

the most complexly subjective of all English poetry and, for that reason alone, the most difficult" (p. v). Browning (2013) himself did not deny his subjectivity; rather, in one of his letters to Elizabeth Barrett, he indirectly describes it as self-consciousness:

... the language with which I talk to myself ... is spiritual Attic, and "loves contractions," as grammarians say; but I read it myself, and well know what it means, that's why I told you I was self-conscious – I meant that I never yet mistook my own feelings, one for another. (*Letters I*, p.41)

In his love poetry, as illustrated in "One Word More" and "By the Fireside," Browning makes use of his personal love experience and treats it as the source from which his poetic vision emerges.

A third party of critics, however, takes a middle stance between the two opposing points of view, arguing that Browning's poetry is objective at certain times and subjective at others. Both J. M. Cohen (1964) and William Clyde DeVane (1977) adopt this view. Cohen (1964) believes that Browning's characters are "mouthpieces to express various attitudes to life ... all, no doubt, his own at certain times and under certain circumstances" (p. 4). Likewise, DeVane (1977) divides Browning's poetry into two stages of development: the first is the earlier poetry which includes *Pauline* (1833), *Paracelsus* (1835) and *Sordello* (1840); and the second is the later poetry, including *Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884), *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance In Their Day* (1887) and *Asolando* (1889). Based on this division, DeVane finds "the earlier Browning objective and dramatic, and the later speaking in his own voice" (p. xiii). In other words, Browning's poetry shifts from objective to subjective over the course of his career as a poet.

Derek Colville (1970), however, offers an alternative interpretation, one that is at odds with DeVane's. He argues that Browning's early poetry is subjective: "[Browning's] earliest sustained poems ... had not been objective; what is obviously the poet's own feeling shows through action and character" (p. 141). Browning's determination to write from an exclusively objective position corroborates Colville's argument: after the publication of his first subjective work *Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession* in 1833, Browning promised "never to confess his own emotions again in his poetry but to write objectively" (Luebering 2010, p. 168). The diversity of all such views implies the difficulty of a critic's task in determining the objectivity or subjectivity of Browning. Colville (1970) thus concludes:

It is, therefore, perhaps the thorniest general problem in this poet's work to assess how far his characters speak with his very self and voice. Any consideration of Browning which looks towards his cast of mind must face this problem. It is not solved by surveying the assorted reactions of Browning's literary critics, for they show almost every variation possible. (p. 125)

The aim of this study, therefore, is to analyze Browning's love poems "One Word More" and "By the Fireside" from his volume *Men and Women* (1855) for the purpose of illustrating how they reflect Browning's attempt to present the idea of love in a subjective mode in his poetry. Among the poems of *Men and Women* "One Word More" and "By the Fireside" are the major focus of the study as they are the most representative of Browning's subjective poetry. They reveal Browning's view of ideal love within the Victorian poetic context. They also demonstrate how "implicitly (By the Fireside) or explicitly (One Word More) he broke his rule and spoke of himself and of his love for

his wife" (Luebering 2010, p. 170). These two poems are also significant in the sense that they are supposed to be the starting point of Browning's journey into the experience of other people's relationships as explored in the other poems of the same volume. Hence, Stopford A. Brooke (2013) regards both poems as "personal poems on Love" while the other poems in the volume are regarded as "impersonal poems about love" (p. 252). Moreover, both poems have one common element, namely, the voice of Browning himself. Jyoti Sheokand and Sandhya Saxena (2011) make a distinction between the two poems on one side and the other poems of the same volume on the other side:

Browning wrote poetry, broadly speaking, of two kinds of love poems – personal and dramatic. Though his personal poems are very few, yet, he poured out his personal experiences in the form of verse fully. "By the Fireside" and "One Word More" are a few poems that can surpass the passion of love and where the veil of reserve is lifted to reveal the poet's personal feelings for his wife. However, most of the other poems by Browning dealing with love are dramatic in essence. In each, there is a certain situation and revelation of the emotions of a character placed in the situation. (n. p.)

Thus, unlike the other poems in *Men and Women*, in "One Word More" and "By the Fireside" Browning presents a real, rather than dramatic, love experience with himself as lover addressing his beloved wife.

"One Word More" is a personal poem that is representative of all the love experiences expressed in the volume. According to John Trivett Nettleship (2013), "every artist who lives and loves a woman, desires to honor her by employing some highest attribute of his nature ... in order to produce a work which shall give her delight" (p. 36). Accordingly, Browning speaks in first person, addressing his wife and offering her the whole volume of *Men and Women* as an expression of his love. This is exactly what Korg (1977) emphasizes in his comment on the poem:

In "One Word More" Browning comes out on the stage after the curtain has been brought down on the prevailingly dramatic poems of *Men and Women* to say a personal word; it is addressed to Elizabeth, dated and signed with his initials, and we may be sure that ... Browning is describing an actual situation, not an imagined one. (p. 157)

"By the Fireside," on the other hand, explores the intimate atmosphere Browning tries to establish for his wife by describing the places that witnessed the birth of their love and its growth in Italy. According to Charles Harold Herford (2009), the poem is "memorable as portraying ... the Italian home-life of the poet and his wife" (p. 136). Furthermore, the poem focuses on a significant moment of union during which the two lovers remember their past, contemplate their present, and hope the best for the future of their married life.

Browning's subjectivity finds its relevant context in the poems of his volume *Men and Women*. Here Browning is obviously inspired by his own love affair, one from which he selects certain experiences as well as feelings in order to externalize them in his poetry. "Men and Women," as Stefan Hawlin (2005) rightly remarks, "is striking for the way it explores a subjective, literary, inner world, focused on the intimacies of love" (p. 81). Browning renders himself a poet of intense emotion. He also presents himself as a poet who is primarily concerned with probing the self and approaching the reality of life through an exploration of life's experiences on a personal level. What is particularly significant about Browning's expression of the passion of love in his poetry is what G.

K. Chesterton (2012) describes as "Browning's astonishing realism in love poetry" (p. 48). Chesterton argues that in Browning's poetry "there is nothing so fiercely realistic as sentiment and emotion" (p. 48). Here lies the importance of the poet's subjectivity in communicating his real emotions: the poet's personal experience of love determines the realistic quality of his love poetry. Chesterton (2012) writes:

... sentiment must have reality; emotion demands the real fields, the real widows' homes, the real corpse, and the real woman. And therefore Browning's love poetry is the finest love poetry in the world, because it does not talk about raptures and ideals and gates of heaven, but about window-panes and gloves and garden walls. It does not deal much with abstractions; it is the truest of all love poetry, because it does not speak much about love. (p. 49)

Chesterton's argument is plausible because Browning's love poetry does not treat love in abstract terms. Rather, Browning embodies the emotion of love through specific details of a personal love relationship between himself as lover-poet and his beloved wife. This makes us aware of the sincerity of his sentiment and it adds vividness, charm, and realism to the poetry.

Browning's subjective mode is particularly evident in his identification with the lovers in *Men and Women*. Referring to the effect of Browning's married life on writing this volume, Elizabeth Luther Cary (2010) comments:

To the singular perfection of his married life we must also credit much of Browning's wisdom concerning "the institution of the dear love of comrades." He was qualified, certainly, to understand the comradeship possible between a man and a woman where the two natures are fundamentally alike, and mutual respect and comprehension can join forces with depth of feeling. (p. 113)

Here, Cary attributes mutual understanding and the intimacy of the love relationships that Browning explores in detail in *Men and Women* to what she describes as "the singular perfection of his married life" (p. 113). In this sense, Browning's perfection on the personal level enables him to have a perfect delineation of the lovers in *Men and Women*.

Furthermore, *Men and Women* reflects Browning's endeavor to challenge the reserved Victorian attitude toward the direct expression of love in poetry. Victorian poetry consistently treats love as a highly dignified emotion, even if Victorian poets themselves were somewhat reserved in their treatment of personal love in their poetry. In other words, Victorian poets never externalized the personal feelings of love in any explicit way. They neither addressed their readers directly nor dedicated love poems to their loved ones. Bernard Arthur Richards (2001) attempts to justify these authorial choices:

Victorian poets were living in a time when political and philosophical emphasis was increasingly being placed on individualism. The individual 'taste' of a human being ... was to be cherished and revered. Individual liberties were to flourish – so long as they did not grossly interfere with the lives of others. The impact of this on the love relationship was to emphasize the preciousness of signal identities. The rhetoric of

complete fusion and merging survives, but the style of loving we find most amenable respects distinctness and even opposition. (p. 110)

Here, the phrase "individual liberties" refers to the Victorian social norms people followed in their life. The most distinctive of these norms is the absence of dating as well as keeping each unmarried young woman in the company of a social chaperone to "make sure that men treated her young charge with respect [and to] take her out in society so that she would make adult friends and be introduced to appropriate men" (Mitchell 1996, p. 155). Such norms made it difficult for writers to express their personal feelings of love in public. The poets' reticence in expressing their love openly is due to their fear of being rejected or their fear of imposing their personal feelings on the public. One more example of such social norms is manifested in Stephen Kern's (1998) description of how people confessed love to the Victorian community:

[People] observed distinctively male and female rhetorical formalities, delayed use of familiar pronouns until protocol allowed, followed the proper sequence for avowals with the man's coming first, relied on mediators and written communication (even for marriage proposals), veiled powerful feelings with euphemism and cliché, and avoided talking about sex. (p.118)

Nevertheless, Browning, both as lover and a poet, was able to break away from these social norms. This is clearly demonstrated in his ability to express his love for his wife openly in *Men and Women*. Hawlin (2005) points out the difference between the way love is treated in Browning's lyrics and literary works by other Victorian writers:

[Browning's] lyrics are largely unconcerned with marriage or relationships as a public or social fact. They do not look outwards to the social or communitarian implications of marriage, nor even to the liberal view of marriage as 'a building block of society'. To put it baldly, the way in which relationships feature here is very different from the way in which they generally feature in nineteenth-century novels, where, of necessity, they are treated within a wider social context. These poems are focused on the inside of relationships, their privacy. At times, there is an anti-social pull implicit in them because of the way in which they focus in on the details of intimacy There can be no doubt that the intimacy and isolation of the Brownings' own marriage as it worked itself out in Italy – far from family and English society – contributed to this aspect of the love lyrics. (p. 96)

The uniqueness of Browning's love lyrics is due to his personal belief in the transformative power of love as well as his belief in a love of a loftier type. This is partly what distinguishes him among his contemporaries. James Fotheringham (2013) confirms Browning's uniqueness:

On the face of matters, it may seem as if he stood alone, with an energy that required no outside influences, and an individuality that resisted them; so bent on speaking his own mind in his own way, that he has stood apart from his contemporaries in their interests and forms of art. It seems impossible to place him among them, or to classify his work with theirs. (p. 57)

Thus, it is important for such a poet to seek the type of love he always dreamed of and idealized, finding it in the sacred bond of marriage that lasts forever. This idea of permanent, transcendental love is based on Browning's own love for his wife.

In "One Word More" Browning presents love as an emotional power that is capable of revealing one's true devotion and constancy. In this sense, he explores love in order to discover the best in it. Through his love for his wife, he manifests this type of ideal love that draws lovers closer to each other. It is significant to note that the Brownings were first attached to each other by their mutual interest in each other's poetry. This is evident in one of Browning's letters to his wife, immediately written after their first meeting. In this letter Browning (2013) asserts: "I love your work with all my heart and I love you too" (Letters I, pp. 1-2). The Brownings' admiration for each other's verse represents the unifying element that brings them together. Luebering (2010) explains how they started their relationship and how it developed until they got married in 1846:

In 1845 (Browning) met Elizabeth Barrett. In her *Poems* (1844) Barrett had included lines praising Browning, who wrote to thank her (January 1845). In May they met and soon discovered their love for each other. Barrett had, however, been for many years an invalid, confined to her room and thought incurable. Her father, moreover, was a dominant and selfish man, jealously fond of his daughter, who in turn had come to depend on his love. When her doctors ordered her to Italy for her health and her father refused to allow her to go, the lovers, who had been corresponding and meeting regularly, were forced to act. They were married secretly in September 1846; a week later they left for Pisa. (p. 170)

What makes the personal aspect evident in "One Word More" is the fact that Browning himself speaks in the first person addressing his beloved wife: "Let me speak this once in my true person" (XIV. 137). Personal love is also apparent in various places and images throughout the poem, which provides us with enough evidence of Browning's presence in the poem. Furthermore, Browning dedicates the poem to his wife, making it a public declaration of his love. Martens (2005) asserts:

"One Word More" is generally considered to be the one indisputable instance of Browning's disclosure of his private self. The immediate paratext surrounding the poem furnishes ample evidence of its personal nature: the dedication "To E. B. B." after the title, the date "1855" – a unique case among the shorter poems – and the addition of the signature "R. B." in the editions after E. B. B.'s death. (p. 89)

Moreover, Frank Walters (2011) explains how Browning himself intends to offer the poem as a personal expression of his own love:

In "One Word More", [Browning] longs to give his wife some proof of his love which shall be unique, a sacred gift quite different from the things which the world reviews and criticizes, the painter, Rafael, made "a century of sonnets" when he learnt to love a woman; the poet Dante, urged by his passion for Beatrice, painted the picture of an angel; and Browning thinks that there is a sacredness about those sonnets and beauty of all the productions which they bequeathed to the world. He, the dramatic poet, cannot do anything more than dedicate his verse to his beloved; but, for her sake, he will, for a

moment, drop the mask of dramatic utterance, and attune his lines to a sweeter tone, as he speaks to her directly of his pure devotion. (pp. 19-20)

In this sense, "One Word More" is regarded as a token of love; indeed, it reveals the intensity of Browning's love for his wife. He asks his wife to read about the gifts offered by Rafael and Dante to their beloved women and to compare those gifts with his own:

Take them, Love, the book and me together;
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also. (I. 3-4)

Browning is a poet. Therefore, one of the best gifts he can offer his wife is a poem. Rafael and Dante produce gifts for their beloved ones by using their skills in other fields. In other words, Rafael, the painter, wrote his Madonna sonnets while Dante, the poet, made a painting for Beatrice. It is the transformative power of love that enabled the two artists to excel in trades different from their own. As for Rafael, his love for Madonna made a poet of him. Thus, he:

... made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume (II. 5-6)

It is significant to notice that Browning's wife is asked to read about Rafael's sonnets addressed to his beloved Madonna rather than to look upon his famous paintings. Elizabeth Barrett is supposed to appreciate Rafael's sonnets because a man, who fell deeply in love and, in his attempt to please his beloved, offered her something unique writes them. Since they are written by a man who fell deeply in love and in his attempt to please his beloved offered her something unique. It is an expression of love made through the effect of Madonna's love on him.

On the other hand, the power of love gives Dante, who is a poet by profession, the ability to excel in painting:

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice." (V. 32 – 33)

Dante's determination to express his love turns him into a painter. The metamorphic power of love combined with the lover's willingness to please his beloved produces a remarkable piece of art. Nonetheless, Browning and his wife "would rather see the angel" that Dante painted than read "a fresh Inferno":

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not? - than read a fresh Inferno. (VI. 50-52)

Comparing himself to Dante, Rafael and other great lovers, Browning, by writing his poem, shows his ability to express his love for his wife. Like them, he proves to be sincere and unique in his expression of love. Further, he promises to be constant in his love throughout his life and to dedicate the best of his verses to his wife:

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues.

.....
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you; (XII, 109-114)

Throughout the poem Browning uses a personal, unique language that helps him address his beloved in a more intimate way. One example is when he addresses his wife as his "moon of poets" (XVIII. 188). Browning uses the symbol of the moon repeatedly in three consecutive stanzas (XVI, XVII, XVIII) to express his love for his wife. Part of this symbolic use of the moon is Browning's description of how the moon embodies his inner self. This is clear when he describes himself as "the moon's self" (XV. 144). Lee Erickson (1984) explains the significance of this symbolic description of the moon:

The moon (which) is usually an image of otherness, becomes an image of the self. Browning supposes he is 'the moon's self', not only in the sense of being 'thrice transfigured' and waxing and waning according to his poetic inspiration by borrowing from another (l. 144-56) but also in the sense of remaining unknown to others, just as the moon never revealed her other side to Zoroaster, Galileo, Homer, or Keats (l. 161-65). And he imagines that seeing the other side of the moon would be equivalent to seeing God in the way that Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu did (l. 174-79). The other side of the moon, then, ... symbolizes the artist's private self. The moon's other side, its hidden self, cannot be seen by the public or Elizabeth unless ... the moon falls in love and turns "a new side to her mortal" (l. 161). (p. 164)

The image of the moon, as Erickson's argument suggests, is significant in the sense that it shows the effect of Elizabeth Barrett's love on the poet. She represents the source of the poet's life. To him, she represents a moon with two sides: one is public reflected in her poetry while the other is private manifested in their relationship.

In "One Word More" Browning invites his wife to read the fifty poems of *Men and Women* and explains how she should read the poetry:

Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also! (XIV. 140-142)

The first suggestion is that his wife should take the poem as a sign of his love. Furthermore, Browning assures her: "He who writes, may write for one as I do" (XIII. 128). She, for her part, should regard the poems as fifty lovers whose relationships may succeed or fail. In this sense, she is invited to "enter" (XIV. 131) into the experiences of all of subjects in the poems:

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service (XIV. 129 - 31)

In the poems of *Men and Women*, Browning never personalizes his expression of the passion of love. The feelings, actions and speech are not his own. "One Word More" and "By the Fireside" are the only exceptions. According to Franklin T. Baker (2011), what characterizes "One Word More" is the fact that "the poet speaks for himself in the first person, and not, as usual, dramatically in the third person" (p. 268). The poem, therefore, reveals Browning's subjective mode at its best. It is personal, addressed in his own voice, directly dedicated to his wife and is full of situations and experiences that are significant to the two lovers.

"By the Fireside" reinforces the personal expression of love manifested in "One Word More" by creating an intimate atmosphere for Browning's love for his wife. The poem, in a semi-autobiographical fashion, describes a mountain journey the Brownings made in Italy. Their journey reaches its highest emotional intensity the moment they reach a ruined chapel on top of the mountain. This is the when they move from an earthly level of existence to a spiritual level of sublimity, a level achieved by the union of their souls. The poem conveys a sense of intimacy between the two lovers and their world, and, consequently, turns out to be personal, true and subjective. Richard S. Kennedy and Donald S. Hair (2007) confirm these characteristics in their comment on the poem:

[It] is a major love poem ... that has many personal associations for Robert Browning. The poem begins and ends with a scene in which a husband sitting by the fireside meditates on the occasion that led to his marriage, while his wife, Leonor, sits quietly reading by his side, with "that great brow / And the spirit-small hand propping it" (113-14; a clear picture of Elizabeth Barrett Browning). The poem took its rise from the serene winter period of closeness that the Brownings experienced after the two years of intense literary and social activity in Paris and London. The principal action in the poem draws upon scenes reminiscent of the area around Bagni di Lucca, which the speaker describes from memory. (p. 235)

Kennedy and Hair's argument highlights the intimacy and the personal note that characterizes the poem. The poet asks his wife to remember the place and the affections associated with it:

Look at the ruined chapel again
Half-way up in the Alpine gorge! (VII. 31 -32)

He brings the full details of the scene, including the lake and the woods, to her attention:

The woods are round us, heaped and dim;
From slab to slab how it slips and springs,
The thread of water single and slim,
Through the ravage some torrent brings! (VIII. 37 – 40)

In addressing his wife, Browning uses affectionate language, suggesting a sense of devotion:

Oh heart, my own, oh eyes, mine too,
Whom else could I dare look backward for,
With whom beside should I dare pursue
The path grey heads abhor? (XXI. 102–105)

The poet enjoys comfort and safety in the company of his wife to the extent that he is fearless of old age. This is why he is ready to take the "path" that his wife has chosen for him.

While contemplating the path he followed in life, the lover-poet recollects the history of their loving relationship. Here lies the significance of time in the poem:

My own, confirm me! If I tread
This path back, is it not in pride
To think how little I dreamed it led
To an age so blest... (XXV. 121–24)

The word "age" in these lines refers to a significant moment in the lovers' life. The contemplation of this moment immediately takes Browning and his wife into the future of their relationship. Then the poet moves back to contemplate the initial moment that represents the beginning of their relationship and expresses admiration for this moment, since the experience of his old age have enriched it. In his comment on the poem, Edward Dowden (2013) stresses the significance of time. For him, the poem represents "the love which completes the individual life and at the same time incorporates it with the life of humanity, which unites as one the past and the present, and which ... becomes a pledge for futurity" (p. 183). According to Dowden, the power of love unifies the different aspects of time into one whole to intensify the lovers' sense of joy. The movement of time in the poem assumes a circular shape starting from home and coming back to home. Browning explores their whole past, present and future. The past is "the waste" (XXV. 125) while the present is associated with the act of remembering. The future, for the poet, is brighter because his life will be blessed by his wife's presence with her "pleasant hue" (I. 3).

In addition to time, another significant element in the poem is place. Browning invokes two types of places: the house representing the inside location and the woods representing the outside landscape. Eleanor Cook (1974) explains the significance of place arguing that "everything radiates out from the central circle of household, wife and hearth-fire; and this outward movement is the mark of the favorable love affair in Browning" (p. 133). The use of this harmonious, romantic setting serves to reinforce Browning's description of their mutual understanding:

At first, 'twas something our two souls
Should mix as mists do; each is sucked
In each now... (XXVI. 127–29)

At the moment of their union, the lovers' physical world changes into a spiritual realm of fulfillment in which their two loving souls are "mixed at last" (XLVII. 234) and "each is sucked / In each" (XXVI. 128-29). This is exactly what the lovers long for. It is their highest emotional fulfillment in love or what Kennedy and Hair (2007) describe as Browning's "concept of the 'infinite moment,' a phrase he would continue to employ in later poems to describe the heightened sense of mutual discovery in love" (p. 235). The moment of their union is described here as 'infinite' since it has no relation to a specific period of time; rather, it unifies the elements of time (past, present and future) into one permanent whole in the same manner that the lover's souls are unified into one entity.

The scene the poem describes is symbolic. This scene indicates that the most important moment in a couple's life is the moment of union, a moment that is distinguished by mutual

understanding between the two lovers. The speaker, now middle-aged, is reading Greek near the fireside. It is true that he is restricted by the narrow space of the room, but his mind is free to meander through various times and places. Thus, he lives on the memory of the happy life he has enjoyed in his youth. The description of this symbolic scene is introduced in an intimate atmosphere because it mentions names of real places that the Brownings have visited or planned to visit earlier in their life. The places, in this sense, are familiar to the two lovers. The names of these places range from Pella to Alp and Alpine gorge. This suggests, according to Herford (2009, p. 136), that the title of the poem refers to the fireside of the Brownings' house in Italy. The poet, therefore, intends to create a sense of intimacy and familiarity by invoking familiar scenes that prepare the lovers for an agreeable understanding of a significant moment.

The poet makes an immediate shift from the description of these familiar scenes to the description of the real context of their love relationship:

With me, youth led... I will speak now,
No longer watch you as you sit
Reading by fire-light, that great brow
And the spirit-small hand propping it (XXIII. 111–14)

The two lovers travel in time from the wood back to their home near the fireside. It is here that their life begins to flash in front of the speaker's eyes as he visualizes the past, the present and the future of his relationship with his beloved wife. He wanders through the places of his former years especially in Italy where he lived with her. This demonstrates that Browning's memory plays an active role in the poem. Corson (2013), however, argues that the poet is daydreaming, rather than remembering:

In his "waking dreams" [Browning] will "live o'er again" the happy life he has spent with his loved and loving companion. Passing out where the backward vista ends, he will survey, with her, the pleasant wood through which they have journeyed together. To the hazel-trees of England, where their childhood passed, succeeds a rarer sort, till, by green degrees, they at last slope to Italy. (p. 101)

According to Corson, the poem describes the whole journey in terms of a daydreaming survey of pleasant scenes from familiar English and Italian places. The description of trees, in Corson's view, is particularly important because they remind Browning of his own childhood in England and also of his first meeting with Elizabeth Barrett.

Moreover, Browning's focus on the house in his description is revealing, as it represents the peaceful dwelling of love and intimacy for the Brownings. Here, the wife's presence is deeply felt since the husband's happiness comes from living with her in that domestic atmosphere:

And to watch you sink by the fire-side now
Back again, as you mutely sit
Musing by fire-light... (LII. 256–58)

In contrast to the present domestic scene of the house, Browning associates his past with an outdoor scene of the woods. He gives a detailed description of "rarer" trees (V. 23), their

appearances and the effect they leave on him and his beloved wife at different times of the day. Browning, for instance, elaborates on the description of some flowers:

Oh the sense of the yellow mountain-flowers,
And thorny balls, each three in one,
The chestnuts throw on our path in showers!
For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun (XI. 51–54)

In such a mood of high excitement, the two lovers find themselves in the middle of the woods surrounded by the mountains. In their memories, the two lovers suddenly place Italy, the place where they got married, side by side with England; as if time and place come to a moment of union similar to that which brings the two lovers together. This indicates that the lovers live freely out of the limits of time and place due to the effect that the natural scene has on them. William O. Raymond (2007) points out that "the wood and mountains hang over the lovers as they wait for that moment which would unite their lives in one" (p. 505). Raymond confirms that the lover-poet, through his description, reaches an entire identification with the elements of setting, including time and place. Thus, the poet evokes a sense of emotional fulfillment that he describes as a worthy "prize":

... how worth
That a man should strive and agonize,
And taste a veriest hell on earth
For the hope of such a prize! (XLIV. 217 – 20)

Being entirely explored, Browning's love for his wife takes a new turn. It becomes a kind of love that is divinely protected and will continue to be so in old age because it is a "gain" to both "earth" and "heaven" (LIII. 262).

The poet uses a personal tone throughout the lines because his purpose is to convey his true feelings gained from a real experience of love. Art Gupta (2002) rightly remarks:

The poem is autobiographical through and through, and it throbs with the intensity of his love for his beloved wife Elizabeth Barrett. It is one of those rare poems in which he speaks in his own person, and he expresses the most intimate feelings of his heart. In the monologue the poet is the speaker and his beloved wife is the interlocutor, the two sit by the fire side and the poet pours out his very heart to her. (p. 43)

According to Gupta, the poem is significant because it shows how Browning guides his wife to feel the joy of love inside their house while they sit by the fireside. The lover-poet wants his wife to be emotionally ready to read about other lovers with similar scenes in his volume *Men and Women*. The poem also stresses the important point that the Brownings have achieved their romantic ideal of love that will remain forever because it is written in verse.

Browning's personal expression of love finds its clearest examples in "One Word More" and "By the Fireside." The former is a personal love poem Browning offers as a token of love to his wife. It is also personal because the speaker is Browning himself revealing his true identity as lover-poet. Moreover, the tone is personal as is evident in the dedication of the poem. The latter poem with its descriptive language and personal tone introduces the intimate atmosphere Browning wants to set

up for his wife. Furthermore, it depicts the significant moment that is the focus of Browning's description. It is the moment in which he travels in memory back and forth both in time between the present, past and future and in place between Italy and England. This is the moment in which the two lovers come into union with each other. The fact that the speaker is Browning himself creates a mode of subjectivity around the poem. Based on the assumption, as Corson (2013) explains, that "the work of Art is apocalyptic of the artist's own personality" and that "it cannot be impersonal" (p. 55), Browning, it seems, believes that his poetry has to reflect his own personality. His faith in domestic, married love forms an essential part of his personality and he could not give the best expression of his romantic ideal in any other way than speak in his own person in "One Word More" and "By the Fireside". These two poems, therefore, show Browning to be a poet with an ideal; a poet who is so true and loyal to his ideal that he directly expresses it by embodying his own character and describing his real feelings in a real, rather than dramatic, context. Significantly, through his use of the first person in the two poems, Browning realizes the difficulty of being impersonal in his poetry. He also reveals that part of his poetic experience, especially at moments of exalted emotions, has to be expressed in a subjective mode.

About the Author:

Mohamed Saad Rateb is an assistant professor of English literature at the Faculty of Arts, Fayoum University. He currently teaches academic courses at the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education, Fayoum University. He is a regular contributor to *Cairo Studies in English (CSE)*.

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The Importance of Connotation in Literary Translation

Asim Ismail Ilyas

Arab Open University, Jordan

Abstract :

Meaning in literary texts is somehow different from meaning in a technical or scientific text in which the main meaning is denotation (or referential meaning) rather than connotation, as the main function of scientific texts is to carry or transfer information. In literary texts, in which the main function is artistic, connotation acquires additional prominence. This implies that connotation has to be carefully attended to when translating literature. This paper tackles denotation/connotation transactions, and presents a number of authentic translated examples (from Arabic into English and vice versa) that are analysed in order to highlight some translators' errors in rendering connotatively-charged texts. It highlights the importance of connotative meaning in literary translation, which has to be carefully attended to.

Keywords: connotation; denotation; connotative equivalent; associations; function; culture

Introduction

Denotation, referential or lexical meaning of a word denote a core meaning of an object, an act, or a quality that is generally used and understood by the users; whereas connotation implies the associations that a word may bring to the hearer's mind according to his cognition and experience that are additional to its literal or dictionary meaning. Some words that have approximately the same denotation may hold different connotations. The words *house* and *home* have a shared denotation of "a dwelling place", but *home* has the additional connotations of 'comfort', 'privacy' and 'domesticity' that are absent from the word *house*. The denotation of the word *snake* in the Advanced English Dictionary is: "a long legless, crawling reptile, some kinds of which are poisonous". As for the connotations associated with the word *snake*, they include 'evil' and 'danger' as reflected in the idiomatic expression "a snake in the grass. The English word bus may connote 'low cost' and 'convenience' for some people (especially the poor), but may be associated with 'discomfort' and 'inconvenience' for others who own private cars. It may have the connotation of 'school' for many children who go to school by bus.

The following stanza (McCrimmon, 1963, p.131) shows the significant connotative differences between some pairs of synonyms (kitten and cat, mouse and rat, chicken and hen):

Call a woman a kitten, but not a cat;
You can call her a mouse, cannot call her a rat;
Call a woman a chicken, but never a hen

Different scholars have differently tackled connotative meaning. John Stewart Mill as early as 1843 related the term 'connotation' to the attributes or properties that a word connotes in opposition to its denotation (cited in Lyons, 1977, p. 175). Pyle and Allgeo (1970, pp.198-200) consider a word's associations to be restricted to "the senses of all the words with which it is always used", i.e. regardless of its referents. Osgood et al (1971, pp.15-16) focus on the psychological condition of using a word and view connotation as the emotive reactions of the users of language to it. Nida and Taber (1974, pp. 91-94) view connotation in terms of the emotional effects of a word on speakers and the emotional response of hearers. Lyons (1987, pp. 54, 143) states that connotation as a psychological and social aspect of expressive meaning reflects the feelings of language users towards a certain issue or thing, and that words like 'huge', 'enormous', 'gigantic', and 'colossal' reflect the speakers' feelings rather than the things they describe. Palmer (1981, p. 92) views connotation as the emotive overtones that result from different styles and dialects. Hervey, S. & Higgins, Ian (1992) classify connotative meaning into six types : Associative , Emotive, Attitudinal, Reflected, Collocational, and Allusive Connotation. Hatim (1997, p. 228) defines connotation as the "additional meanings that a lexical item acquires beyond its primary, referential meaning". Graddol et al (2005, p. 103) equate connotation with "the associations that words have for us". Munday (2001, p. 154) states that shifting the ST connotations may sometimes produce a shift in ideology.

Many connotations are well-established and constitute part of the linguistic competence of speakers (Nord, 2005, p. 102). Carter (2004, p. 116) classifies words into core words that are neutral in connotation such as the word *thin*, but a core word may have a synonym that is positive(*slim*) or negative (*skinny*). Connotation is one way in which synonyms may differ (Palmer 1981, p. 89). They are subject to continuous change. Many of the most obvious changes in the English language have resulted from changes in word connotations. Words that have

positive connotations may become negative and vice versa. An example of this is the word *gay* which was quite positive in the past. The word *charm* which has positive associations today had negative connotation in the Elizabethan age as it was associated with sorcery. The expression *nowadays* had associations of vulgarity and was avoided by the educated in Shakespeare's time and its use then was restricted to people of low status. Since the 1950's, the word *Negro* has acquired strong negative connotations, and has been replaced either by words with neutral connotations such as *black* or by words with positive connotations such as *African-American*. The word *crippled* has been replaced by *handicapped* or a more positive one: *differently-abled*. Some words may have both positive and negative connotations (Wen-li, p. 28). Sometimes SL connotations that are associated with a certain referent are different from the TL counterpart referent (Boase Beier, p. 82).

Connotations are affected by the co-texts and contexts. The word *dove* acquires positive connotations from such collocations as : "the dove of peace" , "harmless as a dove"; whereas its synonym *pigeon* has negative connotations as it is associated with such collocations as : "a clay pigeon" , " pigeon droppings" , etc (Pyle & Allgeo. 1970, P. 200). The word *liberal* has negative connotation in: "He is too liberal", but has positive connotation in : "He is liberal in an area of dictatorship". The word *bug* can have a positive or negative connotation in different co-texts and contexts:

This room is full of bugs! (negative connotation.)

John is as cute as a bug. (positive connotation)

The connotation of a word is also affected by the context of use (setting, occasion, purpose or function, and participants). The word *laser* is admirable among engineers, but many people have negative feelings about it as a result of the medical risks associated with laser technology. That is why advertisers use the *scanner* in advertisements which is a euphemism instead of *laser-using equipment*.

Connotation is not restricted to words only. Morphemes, syntax, sounds, spellings, and even typographical features can all connote certain meanings and have specific intended functions. For example, the suffix *-ish* was neutral as to connotation in the past, but nowadays has acquired unfavourable connotations in such words as *boyish*. The suffix *-ese* (in words like *journalese*, *translationese*, *officialese*) also contains negative connotations. Some grammatical structures too can have certain connotations. In the following two examples, the second one has more negative connotations in which the speaker seems to be much annoyed by the person asking him such questions:

1. He always asks me such questions.
2. He is always asking me such questions.(negative connotation).

Some have even attached associative meanings to vowels and consonants, saying that long vowels are more peaceful and solemn than short ones as the latter may express quick motion, agitation, and triviality (Boulton, PP.53-59). Poets make use of certain sounds to connote certain associative meanings, as in the deliberate and symbolic use of alliteration and assonance. Users of language can use spellings to express certain associative meanings as dealers do when they use the older spelling forms over the doors of their shops (*Gufte Shoppe* instead of *Gift Shop*) in order to attach a favourable quality of antiquity to their goods. The

romantic poet Keats in his poem "Ode to a Nightingale" changes the spelling of the word *fairy* into its older spelling form *faery* to create a connotation of antiquity:

She stood in tears amid the alien corn
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, openings on the foam
Of perilous seas, in *faery* lands forlorn"

As for the associative functions of typographical features, some poets have made use of such features to support the general theme or message of their works as did the poet Malcolm Timperly in his poem: "The Fan" (in which the poem is presented in the format of a fan); and John Hollander in his poem: "Swan and Shadow" (in which the poem is presented in the format of a swan with its reflected shadow). In advertisements, *second-hand* cars are sometimes advertised as *pre-owned* cars, in which the emotional effect is clearly played out. In the political discourse too, connotations have a significant role and function. For example, a news item once appeared in the British magazine: *Reader's Digest*, (1989, October, 135) as: "Why Russia Can't Feed Itself", in which the word *feed* is mainly used with animals and babies, and this use of the verb with reference to Russians is based on its negative connotative function which reflected Britain's negative view of Russia then.

A translators' main concern is to try to reproduce a similar version of the Source Text (Henceforth ST) meaning/function in their Target Text (Henceforth TT) versions. Beaugrande (1999, P.12) tackles the question of meaning in terms of discourse in which meanings cannot be simply handled at the literal level since they "mutually constrain each other". Hickey supports Fawcett's view that a translator faces a special difficulty in relation to the degree "the target audience may need hints as to what is presupposed rather than explicitly conveyed in the original (1998, P.7). A translator is not only a bilingualist but also a biculturalist who does not only consider linguistic and referential factors in the process of translating, but also takes connotations into consideration (Jianzhong & Yan, p.180).

In literary translation where form acquires much importance, connotations are very important as a tool of enriching meanings and arousing imagination. Firth relates the difficulties of translation to matters of meaning (1957, P. 32). Some pairs of synonyms that are denotationally and referentially similar are not interchangeable in certain texts and contexts. For Mc-Guire (1980, P. 15), synonyms such as *perfect* / *ideal* include within each of them a set of non-translatable associations or connotations. Synonymous words that denote approximately the same thing may convey different connotations not only between different languages (such as English and Arabic), but also between different varieties of the same language (Ilyas, 2001).

The translator has to choose the right TL synonym (out of a set of synonyms embodied with positive, negative, and neutral associations). In the translation of certain literary texts, it is often the case that many culturally-charged SL connotations are mistranslated or lost, either because translators focus on denotation only, are unaware of the connotative function of the SL items, or cannot find the proper TL connotative equivalents. When such lost or distorted connotations constitute the gist of the SL message, the harm done to the original text is beyond measure.

When a SL item is used mainly for its denotation or referential meaning (as in scientific texts), the translator has to render it into its TL counterpart referential meaning as in the following sentence:

An owl is a nocturnal bird of prey.

البوم طائر ليلي مفترس.

In the above sentence, the word *owl* is used mainly for its referential meaning or function. A translator cannot render it into a TL item that has a different referential or denotative meaning since it is the referential meaning that is in focus.

When the SL item or expression is not used for any specific referential meaning, but mainly for its socio-cultural associations, rendering it at the denotation level into the TL would cause the loss of the original intended associations, or may even produce the opposite associations in the TL reader's mind, it would be quite justifiable and proper to render the SL item into a different referential meaning in the TL to preserve the original intended SL associations that are in focus. In an example like : "You are as lovely as an owl", it is not the referential meaning which is in focus , but the connotative one, i.e. the attribute of beauty associated with owls in the modern English culture. Rendering it into a language/culture that views owls negatively (as Arabic) would produce incongruous and contradictory meaning for the TL reader:

أنت جميلة كالبوم!!

A woman addressed in this way would take this as an insult rather than compliment; i.e. the intended original English positive connotative meaning would be distorted and undermined. It is quite legitimate in such circumstances to sacrifice the incongruous literal (referential or denotative), meaning and give priority to the connotative one. The translator may select a bird that has similar associations of beauty in the TL culture such as عصفورة (literally: sparrow) to avoid such pitfalls:

, أنت جميلة كالعصفورة

i.e. "You are as lovely as a sparrow.)

Franjiya (1990) produces a beautiful connotative equivalent in his translation of Wordsworth's poem "*Lucy*, in which the first line connotes the joy and serenity of the romantic union of man with nature, whereas the second line connotes the contrary for the then living poet:

But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me.

انها اليوم في قبرها
اما انا فلي الشجون

Had the translator opted for a referential equivalent, the TL text would have lost its lovely and warm associations.

Connotations are indeed very important in literary translation (which may also apply to some political, religious, and advertising texts), where form and formal features have important functions and associations. Unfortunately, it is often the case that translators focus on denotative

and referential meanings when rendering texts in which connotative meanings play an important functional and artistic role, producing thus incongruent and awkward renderings.

SL connotations are mistranslated or lost, either because translators focus on denotation only, they are unaware of the connotative function of the SL items, or cannot find the proper TL connotative equivalents. When such lost or distorted connotations constitute the gist of the SL message, the harm done to the original text is beyond measure indeed.

Let us consider a number of translation examples from English into Arabic, and from Arabic into English:

Examples from English-Arabic translations :

1.

Iago: Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen; I would change my humanity with a baboon.

(Othello, Act 1, scene 3)

Jabra : قبل أن أغرق نفسي متن أجل فرخة حبشية

The SL item *guinea hen* has negative connotations (of prostitution), but the Arabic rendering *فرخة حبشية* has no such connotations whatsoever. Thus, the highly negative connotative implication and overtones of the SL text have been lost in the TL text.

A better rendering could be the use of a SL item that has equivalent or similar negative connotation such as: *كلبة مبتذلة* (a cheap bitch).

2.

Iago: By Janus, I think no.

(Othello, Act 1, scene 2)

(Jabra) : لا والله

Iago's character in *Othello* has been presented by Shakespeare as a hypocrite throughout the play, and this is why Iago's oath is : "By Janus" (Janus being a Roman god with two faces, one to the front and one to the back of his head) . His oath is overwhelmed with negative associations of hypocrisy that reflect his mean and hypocritical nature. The translator has rendered the SL item "By Janus", which is connotationally negative into a connotationally positive expression in the TL (Arabic) oath:

Jabra: لا والله (i.e. By Allah).

A solution here could be the use of an oath that would signal negative associations of hypocrisy and dishonesty such as:

قسما بالحرباء (By the chameleon) since in Arabic a *chameleon* is a symbol of inconsistency and dishonesty when used as an attribute of a person.

3.

I should venture purgatory for't.

(Othello, Act 4, Scene 3.)

Jabra : سأجازف بدخول المَطْهَر لقاء ذلك
 Mutran : من يقلد بعلي التاج فقد رضى بالاعراف سبيلا

The word *purgatory* according to the Christian faith refers to the place of temporary suffering after death, (i.e. atonement for the dead that they might be freed from sin), and hence has such Christian connotations.

Jabra's rendering المَطْهَر *al-maṭḥar* seems to be somehow close to the original denotation, whereas Mutran's translation الأعراف has some Islamic culture-specific associations that are totally different (a place located between Hell and Heaven for those whose sins and good deeds are equal). The closest Islamic term to *purgatory* is perhaps the word كِير in which sinners are exposed to fire to wash their sins (Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya, P.59). But since focus here is on the attribute of suffering as sacrifice for a noble goal, a better connotative equivalent could be suggested without restricting ourselves to the denotational/referential level :

سأضحى بكل نفيس من أجل...

4.

Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires
 A sequester from liberty, fasting, and prayer,
 Much castigation, exercise devout,
 For here's a young and sweating devil...
 (Othello, Act 3, Scene 4)

Mutran: هذه اليد نضيرة يا سيدتي
 Jamal: هذه اليد جذابة، يا سيدتي

Shakespeare here uses the term 'moist' in collocation with 'hand' for its sexual implication and associations (not its referential meaning). Both translators, unfortunately, render it into Arabic as "نضيرة" (fresh) and "جذابة" (attractive) respectively, to the complete loss of the SL negative associations. These renderings lack the original sexual associations. To reproduce the SL connotations in the TL version, a translator in such cases ought to produce a connotation-oriented rendering instead of a referentially-oriented one such as using the word مثيرة (i.e. tempting).

5.

For here's a young and sweating devil
 (Othello, Act 3, Scene 4)

Mutran : ذلك لأن هناك شيطانا فتيا سريع العرق
 Jamal: لأن هناك شيطانا شابا سريع العرق

Shakespeare uses the expression sweating *devil* for its sexual associations. Both translators reproduce the denotation of the English word sweating literally ("يعرق"), or "سريع العرق" (of quick sweating), which lack the original sexual associations. To reproduce the SL connotations in the TL version, a translator in such cases may produce a

connotation-oriented rendering instead of a referentially-oriented one, using such an expression as: شيطان الشَّبَق (literally: the devil of lust).

6.

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted,
To sever for years
(Lord Byron)

Razuq : عندما افترقنا بسكينة ودموع

The word 'silence' in Lord Byron's poem is co-textually related to 'tears', and contextually reflects the sorrowful break-up or departure of lovers, i.e. it is charged with negative associations of sorrow and bitter heart-broken feelings. The translator has unfortunately rendered '*silence*' (with all its context-based negative associations) into سكينة in Arabic, which has positive connotations of tranquility, reassurance, and inner pleasure or content. This totally contradicts the mood depicted in the English poem. A better equivalent here in Arabic (in terms of denotation and connotation) is the word صمت (silence):

عندما افترقنا بصمت ودموع

7.

The dew of the morning
Sank chill on my brow
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
(Lord Byron)

Razuq : ندى الصباح سقط قريبا على جبيني

The word *chill* in Byron's poem is co-textually and contextually charged with negative associations and unpleasant feelings of bitter sorrow and even shame as a result of the beloved's discomfiting behaviour and break of vows. But the translator unfortunately renders the word *chill* into the Arabic word قريبا that is very positive in its associations and has an idiomatic sense of joy as explicit in the Holy Quran, (Sura 25: Al-Furqaan, verse 74):

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ

Our Lord! Let our wives and our offspring be a source of joy for us.

The translator in this instance has missed the mark, distorting the text's aesthetic and pragmatic function by shifting the ST negative connotation into positive connotation in the TL text. The English word *chill* here should have been rendered differently so as to reproduce the negative associations of the ST. One may use the Arabic word قشعريرة (chill or shiver) as a better equivalent in terms of denotation and connotation:

بعث ندى الصباح القشعريرة في جبيني

8.

The typist home at teatime clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.

(T.S. Eliot, the Waste Land)

وترجع الضاربة على الآلة الكاتبة الى بيتها في موعد الشاي

The English expression teatime has institutionalized cultural associations (as English families gather at home after work to have a light meal and tea around 5pm.). It has been translated into Arabic as موعد الشاي which unfortunately does not express the original connotations. A solution or approximate equivalent could perhaps be the addition of some explanatory words to make up for the lost associations, or to use an Arabic expression: العصرية which in some Arab countries means a light afternoon meal with tea.

9.

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,

(The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, T. S. Eliot)

الضباب الأصفر الذي يمسح ظهره فوق الواح النوافذ : Abbas
الدخان الأصفر الذي يمسح خطمه فوق الواح النوافذ
ويلصق لسانه في زوايا المساء

Eliot's expressions *yellow fog* and *yellow smoke* in his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" are charged with dense negative connotations such as 'gloom' and 'monotony' associated with the common and lasting thick fog and smoke in London.

The Arabic renderings of الضباب الأصفر , and الدخان الأصفر however, do not seem to fully express the negative connotations despite the fact that the yellow colour in Arabic has some negative associations: 'evil' and 'jealousy' (Ilyas, 2001). Fog in most parts of Arabia is rare even in winter. The translator may add a negative modifier to make up for the original strong negative associations by adding such a modifier as: الثقيل (heavy).

10.

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow
(Othello , Act 4, scene 3)

Mutran : ثوت الحزينة تكي تحت الجميزة
غنوا جميعا على الصفصافة الخضراء

Jamal: جلست المسكينة تتهد قرب الجميزة
غنوا جميعا أغنية الصفصافة الخضراء

Colour connotations differ in different cultures. For example, the connotations of the colour 'green' in English include some negative associations such as 'naivety' ("to be as green as grass"), 'envy' ("green with envy") and jealousy ("green-eyed monster"), whereas all the connotations of it in Arabic are quite positive, symbolizing life and beauty (Ilyas, 2001). This is reflected in the Quran and Arabic poetry too. One of the names of paradise in the Qur'an is *الخضراء* (*the Green*) which is derived from the colour *green*. In Arabic poetry the colour *green* is almost always used with positive connotations (as in the lines of Suleiman Al-^{isa}):

نمشي نمشي مطرا أخضر

نسقي نسقي الوطن الأكبر

(Suleiman Al-^{isa}'s)

literally : (On we walk, on we walk as green rain
Watering, watering the greater homeland)

Al-Bayaati uses many such expressions in his poems: *صاعقة خضراء* (green thunderstorm); *قطرات المطر الخضراء* (the green drops of rain); *القمر الشيرازي الأخضر* (the green Shiraz moon); *نجم اسطوري اخضر* (a fabulous green star), etc.

In this example, Desdemona retells the story of her mother's maid called Barbary, whose lover went mad and left her. The song of "Willow" expressed the maid's misfortune that died while singing it. Desdemona's situation is similar to that of Barbary's, as Othello turns mad in his fit of deadly jealousy. Shakespeare has made use of the 'willow' image in *Merchant of Venice* also as Dido laments the loss of Aeneas:

"with a willow in her hand,
Upon the wild sea banks, and waved her love,
To come again to Carthage".

The negative sad associations of the S.L. text would acquire positive connotations in the T.L. text if translated denotation-wise. In such a case, a connotation-oriented rendering could be used. In order to reproduce the sorrowful SL connotations of the item under discussion "green willow", one may omit the colour 'green' and add the phrase *الباكية الحزينة* (weeping and sad) when rendering it in order to reproduce equivalent negative connotations:

هيا انشدوا جميعا مرثية الصفصافة الباكية الحزينة

Examples from Arabic-English Translations :

1.

وفي اسواق هذا الوطن الممتد
كالجرح من المحيط للخليج

(^cAbdul Wahab Al-Bayati)

(Franjiyya) : And in the markets of this nation
Lying like a wound from the Ocean to the Gulf

There are some points to be considered in this rendering. The translator has rendered the word الوطن into *nation*, and the SL qualifier الممتد into Lying. First, the word *nation* perhaps acquires some negative connotations in its co-text as it is followed by the word *lying*. To overcome such negative associations that result from the homonymous nature of the word *lying*, one can use the TL word *homeland* which has positive connotations. The other point is rendering the SL word الممتد into *lying*, which connotes static associations, whereas the SL word الممتد could be rendered in a better way into *extending*. The SL phrase من المحيط للخليج has political and nationalistic associations for many Arabs who believe their homeland to be one that extends from the Atlantic to the Arab Gulf. The English phrase: 'from the Ocean to the Gulf' is void of such positive political associations and even holds some ambiguity as a geographical location, since there are many oceans and gulfs in the world. One solution here could be to shift the implicit reference to an explicit one in the TT by the addition of the modifiers 'Atlantic' (before 'Ocean') and 'Arab' before 'Gulf'. The suggested rendering would be like:

And in the markets of this homeland
Extending like a wound from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab Gulf

2.

فالعالم في العصر الجليدي على ابوابه الجنود
والطغاة، يحجبون بالجراند الصفراء نار الليل
(^cAbdul Wahab Al-Bayati)

(Franjiyya) : The soldiers and tyrants
At the gates of the ice age world
Hiding the flame of the night
With yellow newspapers.

The connotations of الجرائد الصفراء here are negative political ones (mean, backward, and misleading) which the poet wants to associate with tyrants. The idiomatic English expressions

'yellow newspapers' or 'yellow journalism' have a totally different set of connotations that are associated with scandals and sensational matters. This means one cannot render the SL phrase literally or denotation-wise. A better connotative English equivalent for الجرائد الصفراء here could be:

shabby newspapers

3.

وتمارسين السحر في الواحات كاهنة
وفي سعف النخيل تلوحين
للسائرين بنومهم والهائمين
وتضاجعين الميتين

(Abdul Wahab

Al-Bayati)

(Franjiyya): Practicing magic in the oases like a priestess
Waving the air with palm branches
For the wanderers and the sleep-walkers
Making love to the dead

The translator renders the Arabic verb تضاجع into "making love". The translator's rendering seems to focus on the referential level only without attending to the connotative one. The Arabic verb تضاجع has negative associations, whereas "make love" in English has positive associations. When Al-Bayati wants to express positive associations in such a case, he usually uses two other expressions: يمارس الحب or يطرح الغرام. A better connotative equivalent in English for the negative connotations of the SL text would be something like:

to have sex with...

Or: to lie with

4.

عيونك شوكة في القلب
توجعني واعبدها
واحميها من الريح،
وأغمد لها وراء الليل والأوجاع ... أغمد لها
فيشعل جرحها ضوء المصابيح
(Mahmoud Darweesh)

(Khalid Suleiman): Your eyes are a thorn in my heart;
It stings me, yet I adore it
And protect it from the wind.

The SL item توجعني literally implies 'that hurts me' but within its co-text and context, it is a favourable type of hurt that has positive or even desirable associations as explicit in the second and third lines: "yet I adore it and protect it from the wind", as the thorn becomes a substitute for the eyes that symbolize the poet's beloved homeland, Palestine. Unfortunately, the translator renders it into the English verb 'stings me' which is usually used for insects like hornets, and hence acquires negative and incongruous connotations; for how can something that stings be adored and protected from the wind?!

The English verb 'pricks' is a more normal collocate for 'thorn', and does not produce any such discrepancy or connotative incongruence:

Your eyes are a thorn in my heart,
That pricks me, yet I adore it
And protect it from the wind.

5.

فلبثنا نرقبه أهلة الأعياد

and we remained watching for him as one watches for the new moons of the festivals

(Wright, vol.2. p.20)

The SL word أهلة in the expression أهلة الأعياد, is the plural of هلال (literally: crescent) and the SL word الأعياد is the plural of عيد. In this instance, Wright presents a denotative or literal rendering of the SL expression into English "moons of the festivals" as if denotation is in focus which renders the TL text somehow vague and inexpressive. The fact is that it is connotation which is in focus here, i.e. the eager waiting and watching for someone which is compared to Muslims' eager watch for the crescent's new appearance in the eve following the 29th day of fasting in the month of Ramadan to decide whether the following day would be the 30th fasting day (in case the crescent was not observed) or the first day of Al-Fitr Ied (Fast-break Tide) if the crescent was observed in the sky. It is a culture-specific image. One could therefore translate this instance by focusing on the connotative meaning:

and we remained watching for him as one eagerly watches for an important newsbreak.

6.

فرد شعورهن السود بيضا

(fate) turned their black hair white.

(Wright, vol.2.p.49)

In Arabic, the colour white collocates with hair to express old age, but in English the colour grey is used to express old age. The translator kept the same collocation for English too. In English the hair colour that is associated with old age is not 'white', but 'grey'. To reproduce the equivalent denotation and connotation of the Arabic expression under discussion, one could render it into:

Turned their black hair grey.

7.

وتفاحة من سوسن صيغ نصفها ومن جلنار نصفها وشقائق

There is many an apple, the one half of which is fashioned of a lily, and the other half of a pomegranate blossom and an anemone.

(Wright, vol.2. p.217)

The translation of this poetic verse seems to have focused on the denotative meaning of the verb صيغ as explicit in his rendering "fashioned of ...".

In fact the connotation in the SL is in focus. The focus is on the white colour of lilies in one half of the apple, and the red one of pomegranate blossoms and anemone in the other half. One could therefore suggest a connotation-oriented rendering instead of the incongruent referential one:

What a (beautiful) apple half of which has lily-white complexion, the other half with the red-complexion of a pomegranate blossom or anemone.

8.

سبحان الذي أسرى بعبده ليلاً من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى
 from the sacred temple (at Mecca) to the Temple
 which is most remote

(Wright, vol.2. p.144)

Wright renders the SL expression المسجد الأقصى into:

"the temple which is most remote".

The referent in the Arabic text المسجد الأقصى is Al-Aqṣaa Mosque in Jerusalem which comes next to Mecca's Al-Kaaba in sanctity for Muslims. The expression "the temple" in English does not represent or express the SL Arab-Islamic connotative meanings and culture-specific associations, and in fact connotes other religions such as those of the Hindus or Siekh, etc. The best approach in rendering such an instance is to reproduce some of the original Arab-Islamic associations:

from the Sacred Ka'ba Mosque in Mecca to the Al-Aqṣaa Mosque in Jerusalem.

9.

ومن يسلم وجهه إلى الله وهو محسن فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى
 and whoso turns himself wholly towards God, whilst he does good, has laid hold
 on the surest handle.

(Wright, vol.2. p.196)

Wright seems to have literally rendered the SL expression استمسك بالعروة الوثقى which has some context-based religious associations of piety into: "has laid hold on the surest handle", with the loss of the religious connotation in English. A better rendering here could be a more explicit rendering which would reproduce the original implications, rendering it into :

"has clung to the firm strings of piety".

10.

قالت رب أنى يكون لى ولد ولم يمسسنى بشر قال كذلك الله يخلق ما يشاء
 (Quran, 3:47)

Many translators (Arberry, Abdullah Yousif Ali, Al-Hayek, Kassab, Pickthall, etc.) have rendered this euphemistic SL expression يمسس (that is charged with sexual associations) into "touch" which does not have such euphemistic sexual associations in English.

A better English equivalent for such an instance would be the euphemistic English expression 'to know'. The suggested rendering then would be something like:

She said: "O my Lord!

But how shall I have a son when I have not known a man? "

From the above examples, it is clear that connotative meaning requires more attention from translators when rendering literary texts.

Conclusion

Connotative meaning is of much significance in literary texts, translators should therefore fully attend to it, because literary works and texts are not intended to convey information in the form of denotative or referential facts, but rather to express human experiences, insights, and comments on psychological, social and cultural aspects of life.

When connotation is in focus, and it is not possible to find a connotative equivalent in the TL, translators can resort to exegetic translation, or use an explanatory footnote to draw the attention of readers to the connotative differences between the SL and the TL, and highlight the relevant S.L. cultural implications.

Indeed when connotative meaning in literary texts is in focus, it should sometimes be given precedence over denotation and referential meaning if a denotation-based rendering would produce connotative incongruence between the SL text and the TL text.

Departments of translation and translation-training foundations should pay special attention to to-be-translators, and train them as to the importance of connotative meaning in a number of registers, genres and text types (literature, advertisements, politics) whenever connotation is in focus.

About the Author:

Asim Ilyas got his Ph.D. in Linguistics and Translation from ST. Andrews in 1981. Currently, he teaches at the Arab Open University, Amman, Jordan. His research interests are in the domains of Translation, Sociolinguistics, Semantics/Pragmatics, and Discourse Analysis.

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A Critical Study of the Literary Content of the Palestinian Textbook English for Palestine

Salah Shrouf

English Department, Hebron University
Palestine

Raghad Dwaik

English Department, Hebron University
Palestine

Abstract:

During the 1980s, a reassessment of the role or roles that literature could play in building the learner's competence at the linguistic, cultural and personal or emotional levels has taken place. Researchers started to argue that the natural exposure to unrestrained language in authentic texts eventually contributes to the students' overall language proficiency. The researchers believe that the new Palestinian syllabus launched in 2000, advocates an earlier start in language instruction, however, this longer exposure to the English language is not fully utilized to familiarize students with the great works of English literature. In this paper, the researchers attempt to shed light on the actual literary content of the Palestinian English syllabus: *English for Palestine*. They present a descriptive analysis of the actual literary texts available in each grade level in terms of themes, length, genre, author, age and authenticity. The researchers also investigate the various purposes achieved through the presentation of literary texts and the type of instructional support available. Results show that literature is used in the Palestinian syllabus mainly as a means to achieve the ultimate end of building students' overall proficiency. Poetry emerged as the dominant literary genre in the whole series with a few samples of dramatic and narrative texts. Literary genres other than poetry are not characterized by the same level of authenticity. Moreover, many literary periods in addition to major writers and poets are not fully covered which leaves students inadequately prepared for college programs in similar fields.

Keywords: *classroom literature, Palestinian syllabus, Literary content, English for Palestine, Literary materials in Palestinian curriculum*

Introduction and theoretical background:

One may contrast the current view with regard to the role of literature in the language classroom with the view dominant in the early stages of implementing the communicative paradigm. Upon reviewing the recent approaches to language learning as outlined by Widdowson (1978), and Brumfit and Johnson (1979) one may easily notice that the approaches which gained popularity in the 1960s and 70s of the 20st century relegated literature to the periphery of the language classroom. This ignorance of literature has led to giving exclusive attention to language notions and functions marshaled by the new communicative curriculum. During that period and out of a presumed deeper understanding of learner needs, according to Maley and Duff (2005), interest of language teachers changed from the production of scholars with an elitist education to the prolific production of learners with a more functional everyday orientation towards language learning. In 1981, Brumfit called for a retreat from that standpoint arguing that by its nature, literature provides ample content for any course in foreign language teaching. It would also provide a natural sequencing tool for a notional syllabus that gradually presents concepts and subject matter.

Since the early eighties, literature teaching has received more focus than it used to get in the past. Nowadays, it may be viewed within the wider context of content instruction currently gaining impetus in the field of language teaching around the globe. When associated with the other language skills, literature is the richest content that may well play an important role in developing students' overall literacy and cultural awareness. Additionally, literature raises learners' motivation towards reading in general and their interest in and critical evaluation of their own experiences in the general context of human endeavor.

Before digging deeper in the argument regarding the role and importance of literature, it may be necessary to agree on a definition for the term literature in light of previous studies. Literature (with capital L) has traditionally been viewed as the best in human writing in a certain language. Reading such literary canons was the ultimate goal of language learning according to some traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation. According to Maley & Duff (2005), many educational institutions included in their syllabi literary materials pertaining to the "parade of great writers" starting with Beowulf and ending with Virgini Wolf. Special emphasis was laid on metaphysical poets, Jane Austen, Dickens and other classic writers.

This traditional view of literature has undergone change during the post modern period which broadened the definition of literature to include other nontraditional genres such as feminist or detective writings. Thornbury (2006) argues that although literature did not feature strongly in foreign language materials for a long period of time, it has started to regain strength and prominence recently for a multitude of reasons. He further states that the conception of literature has changed to include works from outside the classic literary canon such as postmodern or contemporary literature. The function of literature, according to Thornbury, has also been extended to include aspects similar to those characterizing other genres such as media, philosophy, political speeches, and advertising.

One of the advantages of such a debate as to what constitutes literature is broadening the type of literary texts that may be included for learners of various age groups in different countries and sociopolitical contexts. Maley and Duff, for instance, argue that while canonical texts are generally accompanied with a heavy linguistic, cultural, and historical burden, more updated texts or "quasi-literary" texts –such as advertising

texts" (p.181) are relieved of such heavy weight. These texts can hence be more accessible and relevant to students of younger ages.

Statement of the Problem:

Despite the renewed interest in literature as a tool to teach language, culture and to promote personal growth, current EFL syllabi including the Palestinian *English for Palestine* tend to downplay the role of literature through minimizing the quantity and compromising the quality of literary texts. As for quantity, literature constitutes a small percentage of the total number of reading texts presented in the textbook. These texts are small in number when compared to the other types of texts such as the expository and they are shorter in terms of length than the original texts from which they were selected. These reading texts usually constitute the springboard for a number of speaking and writing activities that come later in the book. Absence of literature from the majority of these texts leads to a pale presence throughout the book. In terms of quality, the literary texts currently available in the syllabus are either contrived, abridged, or summarized which deprives them of authenticity. This originality is an important feature of literary texts since it gives them the natural length, density, redundancy, and figurative language. As for the roles given to literature, they are realized in a few activities that focus mainly on the skill of writing and vocabulary development, hence, ignoring the role it might play in enhancing critical thinking, argumentation skills, and discourse competence.

Purpose of the study: This study aims at providing a comprehensive analysis of the literary component in the Palestinian textbook *English for Palestine*. The researchers start by providing an estimation of the number and length of texts, then they provide information as to the text author, genre, literary period, and authenticity level. The researchers further analyze the purpose for presenting each text in terms of promoting either linguistic, cultural or personal growth functions. The instructional support preceding or following each text is also analyzed in order to give an idea about the amount of attention each text receives.

Research questions:

1. What is the total number of the literary texts presented in the Palestinian syllabus, *English for Palestine*? What themes do the texts include? How long are they? and to which genres do they belong?
1. Which authors are selected for each grade level and where do these authors lie in terms of the historical periods and literary canon?
2. What is the level of authenticity of texts and how does that influence their quality?
3. What types of purposes (role) are achieved through the presentation of literary texts, e.g., development of linguistic, cultural or personal growth?
4. What type of instructional support is available for the various types of literary texts across grade levels?
5. Are the texts and activities systematically sequenced among the various grade levels in terms of length, genre, and instructional support?

Literature Review:

When making a case for the inclusion of literary materials in the EFL curriculum, different writers have made various claims as to the advantage of literary materials. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) list ten advantages for literary texts from the

perspective of several scholars. These advantages include; cultural enrichment, linguistic model, mental training, extension of linguistic competence, authenticity, memorability, rhythmic resource, motivating material, openness to interpretation, and convenience. In the following lines, the researchers will present a synthesis of these points and will try to enrich them with similar views from various scholars. For some researchers, literary texts are a tool for cultural enrichment. When reading literature, students would enhance their cultural awareness and cross cultural understanding (Collie and Slater 1987; Schewe 1998; Silberstein; 1994). Another model proposed to explain the value of literature is the linguistic model which argues that literature contains best examples of "good" writing, language diversity, as well as lexical and grammatical range. For learners who have already mastered the smaller components of the linguistic structures, literature would enrich their linguistic competence by providing a wider range of items and hence more flexibility in oral and written expression. Some scholars focus on the mental advantage of reading literary materials. To them, reading literary materials is a type of training for the higher mental skills of critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis. Besides the enhancement of critical thinking, literature openness to several interpretations would also promote all types of interaction among learners (Duff and Maley 1990). As for memory stretching, poetry provides opportunities of enhancing the capabilities of human memory since it provides good examples of memorable language that can be stored as chunks to be analyzed in future usage. The rhythmic nature of poetry would also aid learners in developing a kind of appreciation of the musical nature of language (Maley and Moulding 1985). Literary materials are also commended by some authors for their natural authenticity which means that they are not specially written for the purpose of teaching and learning. They are also highly valued for their motivating nature in the sense that they stem from a writer's original thoughts and drives. Furthermore, they tackle human experience which may be directly relevant to that of the learner (Duff and Maley 1990; Lazar 1993).

Along the same lines, Lazar (1993) proposes several advantages for using literature in the foreign language classroom. To him, literature provides motivation, enhances information about culture, and promotes opportunities for language acquisition. It also qualifies students' interpretive capacities and their overall personal growth through the development of their imaginative and affective scope.

Burke and Brumfit (1986) underscore the importance of teaching literature for similar advantages, i.e., development of written and oral skills, the enhancement of critical and analytical ability, and unleashing the imaginative capacity of students. These authors also add to these reiterated advantages the capacity that literature has in the enhancement of "liberal, ethical, and humanitarian attitude" (171-72).

Rossner (1983), Brumfit and Carter (1986) as well as Carter (1988) stress the advantage of reading literary texts over expository texts by arguing that the interpretation of any regular text depends partially on the previous or background knowledge that the reader holds. From that perspective, the expository text provides the reader only with partial information. Literary texts, by contrast, are highly subjective and they contain novel content that keeps up the surge of the reader's interest till the very end.

Some researchers argue that besides the traditionally cited advantages for teaching literature such as consolidating the four language skills and developing reading strategies and cognitive maturation, literary materials have the greatest advantage of promoting learners emotional intelligence (EQ). This type of intelligence is highly

relevant to EFL learners who are in great need for the components of EQ, namely, motivation, self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and social skills (Goleman, 1988; Nasr, 2001; Laddouse-Porter, 2001).

Methodology:

The researchers decided to conduct a comprehensive study of the selection and sequencing of literary materials in the Palestinian textbook English for Palestine. The literary content selection was investigated in terms of the text title, its genre, instructional purpose, and support. In addition to those variables, the researchers also looked at other elements in each text such as the text authenticity, author and period where applicable. In order to reflect all these elements in the content selection, a table was built to provide a breakdown of all the mentioned variables across the various grade levels. Titles and authors of the texts were taken directly from the students' textbook then the text was classified according to its genre and period. Due to the lack of information in the students' book itself, the researchers had to look up some of the texts from additional print and electronic sources. As for the text purpose, the researchers applied the taxonomy they built on the basis of the consensus of literature with regard to the general purposes of literature teaching in the foreign language classroom. These purposes include the linguistic, the cultural, and the personal growth purpose. As for instructional support, the researchers provided a breakdown of all the activities and instructional materials (e.g. tape recorder) that accompany each text.

The researchers also investigated whether the texts and their activities are sequenced in terms of certain criteria such as length, genre, period or support.

Results:

In this section, the researchers attempt to present results of their research in the order of the research questions outlined earlier. The researchers will start by stating the question then results will be categorized under three sections each of which pertains to a series of four grade levels.

Question One:

What is the total number of the literary texts presented in the Palestinian syllabus, English for Palestine? What themes do the texts include? How long are they? and to which genres do they belong?

1st-4th grade

During this stage, the learners are exposed to a total number of 39 songs. Twelve of these songs are in the first grade, 16 in the second grade, 5 in the third grade, and 6 in the fourth grade textbook. Songs in this stage range in length between 3-12 lines. Interestingly, however, songs within and across the four grade levels do not seem to be arranged gradually according to number of songs or to the increase in length. Grade one, for instance, contains some eight line songs "Your head is green", while grade 4 contains some 5 line songs "One Baby in a Bed" (see appendix A). Criteria for arrangement seem to be related to the topic of the lesson as well as to the related notions and functions. Topics presented in each grade level depend on the learners' cognitive and linguistic level. Notions and functions that form the centerpiece of each selected poem fall squarely within these topics or themes, e.g., letters, numbers, animals, and body parts in the first grade. One of the notions that receive primary attention in the first through the fourth grade is numbers. Learners are given the chance to practice listening to and

saying numbers in a number of songs, e.g., "Five black cats" in the first grade, "Six short socks in the second grade" and "Ten men went to dig" in the fourth grade. Functions related to the general themes or topics also receive due attention. The functions of greeting, enquiry, preference, and complimenting are all available. If we take enquiry as an example, we find several poems that embody this function clearly, e.g., "What's this...?" in the first grade, "Where is Polly...?" in the second grade and "Where can I buy a sweater...?" in the fourth grade.

5th-8th grade

During this stage, the learners are exposed to a total of, 6 fables, 6 songs and 15 poems. The narrative literary genre makes its first appearance in the fifth grade textbook which presents 4 well known fables that have become part of the collective human experience, namely, "The Tortoise and the Hare", "The Wolf's Shoes", "The Princess and the Three friends" and the "Cats and the Monkey". These fables range in length between 15-27 lines. As for the six songs, they are all included in the fifth grade textbook. They revolve around themes and activities that seem to be interesting for this particular age group, e.g., kiting, rowing, racing, and hiking. The songs range in length between four to twenty lines.

As for the poems, five of them are in the sixth grade, six in the seventh grade, and five in the eighth grade textbook. They range in length between eight to twenty lines. Networking, communicating, empathy, sports and other themes related to exploring oneself within the larger world are all common in this grade level.

9th-12th grade

With the exception of the tenth grade, where learners receive no literary input of any type, the learners during this stage are exposed to a number of genres, namely, poetry, fiction, and drama. The ninth grade contains four poems that range in length between 11 - 30 lines. Themes of these poems vary, but there is clear focus on the development of a sense of empathy and belonging to school "A School Creed", to fellow humans "The Book of Life", and to the larger world "The News".

The tenth grade is totally lacking in literary texts. The researchers found no clear justification or explanation for this especially that this grade is followed by the eleventh which contains a rather lengthy fictional text, i.e., Silas Marner. The eleventh grade, as already mentioned, provides one abridged and summarized literary text. The text consists of 12 chapters with an average length of 1-2 pages for each chapter. Interestingly, the text itself and the supporting instructional activities are presented in the workbook, a practice that is fundamentally different from the way texts were presented in previous stages and grades. Silas Marner tackles several themes including man's attitude towards morality and religion.

As for the 12th grade, the textbook contains two literary genres, namely, poetry and drama. As for poetry, there are five poems which tackle themes of self discipline "If", "Solitude", and "Be Strong", attitude to nature, in "I Had a Dove", and commitment to the human cause in "War is Never Over".

The twelfth grade textbook also contains an abridged version of five acts of the timeless Shakespearean play King Lear. Each act is summarized to an average length of 2/3rds – one whole page.

Question Two

Which authors are selected for each grade level and where do these authors lie in terms of the historical periods?

1st to 4th grade

All songs presented during this stage are anonymous. They seem to be contrived for the purpose of language teaching since the notions and functions they present are tightly linked to the themes presented in each lesson.

5th-8th grade

The fables and poems presented for the fifth grade students are all anonymous. When going back to some of the original texts of the fables such as the "Tortoise and the Hare", the researchers found several versions on the World Wide Web but none of them matches the text in the students' book. Besides being abridged, the researchers also noticed that the original text has been summarized to match the length of other reading passages in the students' book. Hence, the researchers believe that the texts were contrived by the book authors to fulfill certain linguistic purposes.

As for the sixth grade, the three poets provided, namely, Susan Schutz, Telcine Turner and Tony Mitton, are all 20th century post modern writers. The seventh grade textbook contains poems by Eleanor Farjeon, Stanley Cook, Jane Whittle and Jo Peters. As for the eighth grade, several poets are mentioned, including Ann Bonner, Celia Warren, Ivy Eastwick, John Kitching and John Cotton. As in the case of the sixth grade, all poets included in the 7th and 8th grades are twentieth century modern or post modern writers (*see appendix A*).

9th-12th grade

Three poets are mentioned in the ninth grade, namely, Philip Waddel, Margaret Curtis, and David Harmer, all of whom are twentieth century poets belonging to either the modern or post modern era (*See appendix A*). As for the eleventh grade, one narrative text is presented in the students' book, namely, Silas Marner by George Eliot, who is considered to be a 19th century Victorian writer.

As for the Twelfth grade, the book contains a simplified version of the play King Lear by William Shakespeare, as well as a number of poems by John Keats, Rudyard Kipling, Cecil Harrison, Ella Wilcox, and Maltbie Babcock. With the exception of the Elizabethan Shakespeare and the Romantic Keats, all the other poets are either modern, e.g., Kipling, or post modern, e.g., Harrison and Wilcox (*see appendix A*).

Question Three

What is the level of authenticity of texts and how does that influence their quality?

1st-4th grade

As already mentioned, all songs presented during this stage are contrived or designed specifically for the purpose of language teaching. No authentic texts are presented despite the wide range of possibilities available in authentic and linguistically appropriate nursery rhymes in English speaking countries and around the globe.

5th-8th grade

None of the poems in the fifth grade are authentic; however, the sixth grade contains 5 authentic poems in addition to a translated narrative text, i.e., "The Oxen and the Lion". As for the seventh grade, the textbook contains six authentic poems in addition to a translated narrative text from the Arab culture. Finally, the

eighth grade contains five authentic poems. One may clearly notice that in this stage authenticity is found only in poetry which constitutes the major bulk of literary materials in the textbooks.

9th-12th grade

The ninth grade textbook contains 4 poems all of which are authentic. As for the tenth grade, no literary materials are included at all. The eleventh grade contains a sole narrative text, "Silas Marner", that is neither authentic in length, style nor in language. The original "Silas Marner" lies in 21 chapters and 210 pages while the eleventh grade text includes only summarized versions of chapters 1-12 with an average length of 1-2 pages for each chapter. As for the twelfth grade textbook, it contains five authentic poems, one authentic narrative by Anton Chekov, and one abridged play by William Shakespeare. The Shakespearean play, King Lear is both simplified and summarized. One may notice that "The Bet" is the only narrative text in the whole series that is presented in its original translated form, probably because it is phrased in modern English unlike King Lear which is written in Middle English, a language form generally unfamiliar to students.

Upon examining the whole series of the 12 texts and workbooks, one notices that authenticity is a distinctive feature of all the poems included. As for the narrative form, it is realized either in the fables, which are all simplified or in "The Bet" which is translated from Russian. Finally, the only dramatic text that is presented throughout the series is King Lear, and it is presented in a narrative form that makes it impossible for students to conceive it as a play. This is surprising taking into account the current national and international trends of focusing on drama as a means of language learning especially for young learners.

Question Four;

What types of purposes (roles) are achieved through the presentation of literary texts, e.g., development of linguistic, cultural or personal growth dimensions?

1st-4th grade

The songs available in the textbooks of the first four grades are presented mainly for their linguistic value. This linguistic purpose includes focus on letters, sounds, words and phrases. The songs reflect the notions and functions present in each lesson so they are clearly intended to continue with what was started earlier in the unit in terms of enhancing the students' linguistic competence. One should not ignore, however, that these songs show a clear rhyme and metrical pattern which helps in developing the students' aesthetic sense and musical appreciation.

5th-8th grade

Although the linguistic purpose dominates during this stage, there is also some focus on the personal growth aspects, e.g., didactic themes and morals as well as the aesthetic or musical appreciation. Interaction with fellow humans is highlighted in the sixth grade poem "Someone to Talk with" by Susan Schutz. Morality is stressed and fully discussed in the seventh grade narrative text "Othman the Honest".

9th-12th grade

During this last stage, the three purposes outlined above are combined. The linguistic purpose receives proper attention since many activities are designed to reinforce vocabulary development and pronunciation. The cultural purpose is reflected in many themes especially those pertaining to the classical texts such as "Silas Marner" and King Lear. As for the personal growth purpose, it is achieved

through the various activities which focus on analysis, critical thinking and open discussion of issues related to didactic themes and morality.

Question Five

What type of instructional support is available for the various types of literary texts across grade levels?

1st-4th grade

The only type of instructional support available for the learners in this stage is the tape recorder. No other activities are provided to reinforce the vocabulary presented. It seems that the song itself is provided as a supporting text for language items presented earlier.

5th-8th grade

Fables presented in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades represent the essential core of the lesson, i.e., the reading passage, hence they are used as the bases for all subsequent activities in the students' and the workbooks. In addition to regular language exercises focusing on practicing structures and new vocabulary, exercises supporting these texts also include discourse level work such as sentence ordering and some critical thinking exercises such as "predicting a different end" and "evaluating opposing viewpoints". It is worth mentioning that such narratives, i.e., fables, are the only case where a literary text represents the backbone of a lesson throughout the English for Palestine series. In all other cases, the text is either an addition to the main topic in the unit (as in the case of poetry) or it is presented in the form of "extra readings and practice" in the workbook.

As for the songs presented in this stage, they are largely similar to the previous one, i.e., 1st-4th grade in the sense that they only provide additional practice with the main language notions and functions. The only aesthetic aspects developed are rhyme and metrical patterns mainly realized in song recitation. As for poetry, plenty of activities are provided probably due to the fact that these texts are original or authentic in nature which enhances their potential for language work including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Supportive activities in this stage include poem recitation, listing, line completion, gist finding, open discussion questions, vocabulary matching, and even creative writing (*see appendix*). All activities seem to be well sequenced and quite enriching for the students' linguistic, cultural as well personal growth aspects. This could be largely due to the authentic nature of texts which naturally equips them with sophistication and redundancy.

9th-12th

The poems presented in the ninth grade build on the same techniques and activities adopted in the previous stage with more emphasis on open questions which allow for additional discussion, position adoption, and critical thinking. In the eleventh grade, only two general activities are presented, namely, "reading for pleasure" and "Tawjihi preparation". Reading for pleasure activities include multiple choice, event ordering, and summary choice. As for Tawjihi preparation, activities include short answers, gap filling, and quote identification.

Finally, the Twelfth grade contains two to three supporting activities after each chapter of the short story or play. These activities include a variety of multiple choice, short answers, gap filling and sentence completion. No quote identification is included probably due to the lack of authenticity in the play which prevents authors from selecting significant quotes.

Question Six

Are the literary materials systematically sequenced among the various grade levels in terms of length, genre, period and instructional support?

1st-4th grade

Upon investigating the length of texts presented in this stage, one notices that there is no obvious grading since songs tend to fluctuate in the same range (3-12 lines) throughout this stage. Issues of genre and period are not applicable since all the songs are contrived for the purpose of language learning. As for the instructional support, it is rather surprising not to see any activity related to songs except for tape listening and poem recitation. This may lead to the poor preparation of learners for the next stage where songs and poems receive special attention in instructional support. It is worth noting that this stage is highly impoverished in terms of dramatic texts, narrative poems, classic lullabies, nursery rhymes, or lyrical ballads, all of which could provide substantial and enriching content for students in this grade.

5th-8th grade

There are only six instances of incorporating a narrative text during this stage. These texts are poorly prepared for in the previous stage because no narratives are seen in the 1st-4th grades due to the sole emphasis on songs. Surprisingly, these fables also seem to be the only preparation for the more sophisticated narrative texts that appear later in the secondary stage, namely, "The Bet" and "Silas Marner".

The reader may notice a significant increase in the length of texts during this stage with some poems including 16-25 lines. As for the instructional support accompanying the texts, one may observe the abundance in activities in both the student's and workbooks which lay the basis for subsequent activities on the verse and narrative texts presented later. It may also be noticed that during this stage, the foundations for open discussion and critical thinking are provided which make such activities easier for the learners to engage with as they progress to more advanced levels.

9th-12th grades

There is continuous emphasis on poetry during this stage with additional focus on the narrative form and drama. The poetry presented does not seem to follow a systematic sequence in length since some poems in the twelfth grade are 10 lines while some poems in the ninth grade are 30 lines long. As for the historical period, a mix of modern and post modern poems are presented with no clear historical progression. As for the instructional support, activities seem to decrease in number as we progress in the grades. The ninth grade, for instance, contains five to seven activities after each poem, while the tenth grade contains no texts and no activities whatsoever. As for the eleventh grade, only two activities follow each chapter in Silas Marner while the twelfth grade contains two to three activities after each poem, act or short story episode.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations:

This section attempts to discuss major highlights from the previous results section and to present principal conclusions and recommendations in light of the previous literature and the headings outlined in the analysis table (*See Appendix*).

Issues Related to Literary Genres, Authors, and Periods:

One may easily notice from the information presented in the previous section that the only literary genres included in the series are poetry (including songs), narrative texts (including fables), and one abridged version of a dramatic text, specifically King Lear. Poetry constitutes the major bulk of literary materials included probably due to its relatively short length. All the included poems fit in one page, sometimes along with the activities that support them. Even with this huge focus on poetry, most selections tend to fall within two or three literary periods. Those periods include the modern and post modern with just one or two poems from the Romantic period, traditionally a literary period highly suited for adolescent or middle school learners (5th-12th grades). The selected poets are not representative of major literary schools, movements or eras, hence, despite their authenticity, these poems do not give the learner a real taste of the great literature written in the English language. Among the post modern poets selected, one notices that the majority are British, which excludes writers from the rest of the core English speaking countries and from the periphery.

Real examples of the narrative form appear only in the secondary stage (11th grade) with almost no previous preparation for reading long narrative texts such as "Silas Marner" in its original form. That probably explains why the "Silas Marner" text included in the 11th grade is only one tenth of the original novel. The researchers looked up other abridged versions of the original text only to find that there are many other summaries that maintain some of the original aesthetic features of the literary text such as the elaborate description, dramatic dialogues and natural linguistic redundancy. Needless to say that this limited number of narrative texts has not given the text authors the opportunity to represent different types of narrative texts or literary periods. One may observe that classic writers who have achieved universal status such as Hemingway, the Brontes, and Austen as well as some classic children's writers such as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain are completely absent from the whole series.

The narrative form is very valuable for learners at all ages. The fables presented in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grade fall short of achieving the desired goals from a narrative which is by nature highly attractive to learners at all levels. In the context of their study on Chinese EFL pupils, researchers found that ten year olds in the fourth grade were capable of doing independent reading of picture stories that are approximately 300-500 words in length (Qiang, Lin, and Xin, 2009). Kapur (2009) argues that story reading could be relied on as a basic technique in the classroom. It also allows for additional variety in classroom activities that may be geared towards learners of all proficiency levels such as "reading aloud, repeated reading, choral reading, story-retelling and shared reading" (p.81). This last concept of shared reading is highlighted by Al-Zedjali and Etherton in the context of literacy development among Omani students. They argue that shared reading of a "big book" could be effectively incorporated within the regular class period.

The only dramatic text included in the whole series is a simplified paraphrased version of the Shakespearean King Lear. In addition to being much shorter than the original text (5 pages while the original is 165), the play is robbed of its original dramatic nature since authors of the series choose to include only a narrative version of the original dialogue. About 8 pages of dialogue in modern English are presented at the end to provide students with an idea about the original form of the play. No activities whatsoever are built on this part. This meager attention given to drama and dramatic texts is shocking in light of the huge emphasis this aspect receives in in-

service teacher training since drama is viewed as the optimal literary form for teaching within the communicative approach whose philosophy is built on interaction. It is also worth mentioning that similar to the presentation of narrative texts, plays do not receive their due attention in the textbook and are like many other literary forms underrepresented in terms of authors and literary periods.

No clear philosophy seems to lie behind the choice of King Lear as the sole dramatic text which makes it unrepresentative of all the periods of English literature. One also wonders why modern writers such as Arthur Miller or Bernard Shaw were not included instead of translating a medieval text into modern English and compromising its overall quality.

In the context of focusing on issues of text selection, Brumfit (1986) states that the choice of texts which are related to students' experience and which lend themselves to interesting discussion is of equal importance. He further argues that popular themes change according to the students' interest and level. Besides the enhancement of critical thinking, literature openness to several interpretations would also promote all types of interaction among learners (Duff and Maley 1990).

Issues related to instructional purpose and support:

Upon reviewing the previous results combined with the data outlined in the attached table, one may notice that the linguistic and the aesthetic objectives receive the strongest focus. As for the cultural purpose it seems to be ignored in the formal instructional activities. Cultural concepts are available yet they are not highlighted in any of the exercises provided, which leaves any presentation of cultural items up to the teachers themselves. In their book Literature in the Language Classroom, Collie and Slater (2007) stress the value of literature in advancing cultural enrichment especially in EFL contexts where learners rarely get the chance to experience the target culture firsthand. They argue that although the world of a novel, a play or a story is an invented one, these literary works create an authentic context and atmosphere in which characters with real dreams, personalities and "preoccupations" move and talk, thus, enhancing the learners' perception of what might be taking place in everyday life, behind scenes or even within character minds and consciousness in the target culture (p. 4).

Sell (2005) argues that reading texts with a rich cultural component does not lead to "going native" or to the "suspension of learners' identity". Their exploration and analysis of target literary texts may even lead to questioning some of the target ideals presented. This will eventually lead to the development of a more "flexible affective competence" which will assist them in dealing with others in target culture contexts, the ultimate goal of many foreign language programs.

This lack of focus on all purposes of literature teaching as outlined by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) may be due to the observation noted earlier that literary materials in the whole series seem to be perceived as an addition or an enrichment of the existing syllabus. This means that they are not seen as an independent entity containing many values in and of itself. This lack of focus on the integral value inherent in literary materials will harmfully influence Palestinian students who plan to pursue college education in the field of English or Arabic literature. Lack of focus on literary materials will deprive them of the information and skills needed to dig deeply into the great works of English, Arabic, or comparative literature. Literature is also of great value for students who pursue their studies abroad so as to get exposed to world

culture through great works of literature that have universal relevance and global value.

One of the arguments against the incorporation of literary materials in the syllabus is that literary works might be rather lengthy or that their authentic language might be beyond the grasp of students already grappling with the complexities of a foreign language.

Duff and Maley (2007) argue that instructors may cope with the challenging nature of literary texts by paying attention to a number of issues such as whether the text is interesting to students, whether the language is suitable and whether it required a lot of cultural or literary background knowledge. Other issues that need attention include the length of texts and their suitability for language learning purposes.

Lengthy literary texts do not have to be incorporated within the pages of the students' or the workbook (as done with *Silas Marner* or *King Lear*), rather, they could be presented in independent readers and could be allotted specific class periods within a month. Additionally, the problem of language complexity could be averted by presenting a well-thought selection of a variety of writers in the form of graded readers. One may also argue that this fear of the complexity of literary language is unfounded taking into account the huge amount of receptive vocabulary literary works usually build among L1 and L2 extensive readers. One may even underscore the fact that the continuous exposure to the authentic language present in literary works might equip learners with a wealth of incidentally learnt lexical and structural items. These items reduce the burden of grappling with the elements of syntax and morphology which are more explicitly and traditionally presented in the textbook.

The value of literature is not limited to the incidental gain in lexical and structural items, rather it extends to include untraditional and elevated language use. Literature equips students with metaphorical, ironic, and elevated language currently implemented in the Media and densely available in literary texts. Politicians, scholars and senior journalists present their thoughts in a subtle way to evade facts and provide illusive arguments. Students should be exposed to and trained in such discourse types.

Finally, one may argue that despite the change in the perception of literature and its role in the language classroom in general and the foreign language context in particular, current syllabi and textbooks such as English for Palestine, still seem to view literature as an addition to the mainstream syllabus or as a tool for consolidating previously learned linguistic aspects. What is currently available in the textbook falls short of achieving the grand objectives usually associated with literary studies including the linguistic, cultural, and emotional aspects. Serious revision of available literary materials in the Palestinian syllabus and parallel syllabi in the Arab World needs to take place. Not only should materials be reviewed in the context of syllabus design and materials development, but also the actual classroom practices as well as teachers' and students' attitudes towards the role and function of literary texts and excerpts should be deeply pondered and analyzed. Literature has regained its status on the level of theory and research enquiry, however, its roles and purposes continue to be undermined and marginalized at various levels.

Incorporating literature entails careful study and analysis of texts to be included as well as careful consideration of the medium of presentation including additional readers and classroom activities.

About the Authors:

Dr. Salah Shrouf holds a Ph.D. in English Literature with special focus on American Literature. Besides his various teaching responsibilities, he currently works as the dean of the faculty of arts and formerly as the Head of the English Department. Research interests include literature in the language classroom, innovations and trends in Post-modern Literature, and feminine voices in African American literature.

Dr. Raghad Dwaik, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of English and a certified examiner of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Her areas of interest include testing and evaluation, vocabulary development and teaching English to Young Learners. She is the co-author of two articles on Teaching English to Young Learners and the role of motivation in language learning.

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Appendix

**Analysis of Literary Content in the Palestinian Textbook: English for Palestine
Grades 1-12**

First Grade							
Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
Hello, Tom	Song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Alphabet	song	anonymous		contrived	3 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
What's this?	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Big or Small	song	anonymous		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
My head, my nose...	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Happy Birthday	song	anonymous		contrived	4 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Your head is green	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Dilly is a crocodile	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Five black cats	song	anonymous		contrived	7 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
One snake in a T-shirt	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines		
Cars and buses		anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
All	song	anonymous		contrived	7 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder

together, clap..		us				growth	
Second Grade							
Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
Hello	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Alphabet	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
I'm Polly Parrot	song	anonymous		contrived	9 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Hello, Dilly	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Where's polly?	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
One, two, three, four, five	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Where is the mouse?	song	anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Listen and point.	song	anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Clap and say	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Blow a bubble	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Big, Small	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
This is our flag!	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder

Six short socks	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
I have big, big, eyes.	song	anonymous		contrived	9 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Old Macdonald has a farm	song	anonymous		contrived	9 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Listen to the clock	song	Anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Third Grade							
Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
A little song for you...	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Do you like singing?	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
It's a sunny summer's day	song	anonymous		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic Aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Do you like ice cream...	song	anonymous		contrived	11 lines	Linguistic Aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Head, shoulders	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic Aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Fourth Grade							
Text	genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
One baby in a bed	song	anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Aesthetic (personal growth), Linguistic (pronunciation)	Tape-recorder

Ten men went to dig	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Aesthetic, vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Where Can I buy a sweater	song	anonymous		contrived	12	Aesthetic, vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Father, brother	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
I like playing the drums	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Long Live Dear Father	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Fifth Grade							
Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
The Tortoise and the Hare	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	15 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Wolf's Shoes	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	22 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Princess and the Three Friends	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	27 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Cats and the Monkey	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	23 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Bear	song	Anonymous		contrived	10 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities

Went over the Mountain		us				skills	
Hey, We are Lost	song	Anonymo us		contrived	20 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
I Love to Row...	song	Anonymo us		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
A Kite on the Ground	song	Anonymo us		contrived	4 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
Good, Better, Best	song	Anonymo us		contrived	7 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
Hands up High	song	Anonymo us		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
Sixth Grade							
Text	Genr e	Author	Period	Authentici ty	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
Someone to talk with	Poetr y	Susan Schutz	Post modern	unabridged	11 lines	Linguistic, personal growth	Two Activities: a. multiple choice: Listen and Answer. b. Open questions (discussion and personal opinion)
The Oxen and the Lion	Ficti on	Samer Khaldi		translated	Half a page	Linguistic (comprehension) +didactic	Open questions (information)
Let's talk	Poetr y	Telcine Turner	contemp orary	authentic	12 lines	Linguistic (comprehension) +didactic	Four questions: a. listing and gap filling(body parts) b. Short answers

							c. Recitation d. Creative writing (write a poem)
The Seashell	Poetry	anonymous	contemporary	authentic	20 lines	Linguistic (comprehension) +didactic	Two questions: a. labeling b. open questions c. recitation
Stone , Wind (two juxtaposed poems)	Poetry	Tony Mitton	contemporary	authentic	8 lines each		Three activities: a. Listen and answer (weather diagrams) b. Listen and see (vocabulary) c. Fill in the blanks (rhyme)
Can I come along	Poetry	anonymous	contemporary	authentic	20 lines		Three activities: a. short answers b. Listing vocabulary c. Poem Recitation
Seventh Grade							
Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
My Pen Friend and Me	Poetry	Anonymous	Contemporary	authentic	12 lines	Linguistic, Personal growth culture	Five Activities: a. short answers (prediction) b. gap filling, (vocabulary) c. Line completion (sentence construction) d. Recitation e. Open question (writing and critical thinking.
Othman the Honest	Fiction	anonymous	Contemporary	authentic	25 lines (1/2) page	Linguistic (comprehension+vocabulary) Personal growth (didactic)	Two activities 1. Vocabulary explanation (prereading)

							2. Short answers (T/F) and open questions.
There is not time	poetry	Eleanor Farjeon	Contemporary	authentic	12 lines		Four Activities: a. prelistening discussion (critical thinking) b. Listing (vocabulary) c. Multiple choice (planning a visit)
A Bridge	poetry	Stanley Cook	Contemporary	authentic	10 lines		Four Activities: a. Open question (vocabulary) b. Matching (rhyme) c. Poem recitation d. Open question (planning an adventure holiday)
A Green Prayer	poetry	Jane Whittle	contemporary	authentic	12 lines		Four Activities: a. Open question (prediction) b. Completing lines c. Poem recitation d. Open questions (discussion about importance of nature.
I asked the little boy who cannot see	poetry	Anonymous	contemporary	authentic	10 lines		Six Activities: 1. Pre-listening open questions, discussion, vocabulary 2. Gap filling (color vocabulary) 3. Line completion (sentence structure) 4. poem recitation 5. Open question (imagination)

							6. Open question (discussions)
My Hands	poetry	Jo Peters	contemporary	authentic	16 lines		Four Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open question (pre-listening discussion) Gap filling (guessing rhyming words) Line completion Poem recitation General Question about all poems (favorite poem in the book)
Eighth Grade							
Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional support
Music	Poetry	Ann Bonner	Post-modern	authentic	16 lines	Linguistic, Personal Growth (aesthetic) Musical appreciation	Four Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open questions Comprehension and critical thinking Multiple choice. Vocabulary Short answers, pronunciation of words Poem recitation
Football training	Poetry	Celia Warren	Contemporary	authentic	23 lines		Four activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open question (prediction) Short answers (vocabulary from context) Open questions (poem structure, ideas, moral) poem recitation
Thanksgiving	Poetry	Ivy O.	Modern	authentic	24	Linguistic+ Personal Growth	Five activities:

ng	y	Eastwick	1949			(aesthetic)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiple choice (prediction) 2. gap filling (identification) 3. Listing (vocabulary identification in a picture) 4. Multiple choice (vocabulary) 5. Poem recitation
Geography	Poetry	John Kitching	1838-1865	authentic	16	Linguistic (listening) aesthetic	Seven Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Short answers (title, topic sentence) b. Short answers (scanning for geographical places) c. Short answers (identifying words in a picture) d. Multiple choice (vocabulary) e. Matching (rhyme) f. Open question (inference)
The World with its Countries	Poetry	John Cotton	modern	authentic	24	Linguistic (listening)	Five Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listing (identifying vocabulary in a picture) 2. Multiple Choice (summary of a poem+vocabulary+scanning). 3. Matching (vocabulary, synonyms, parts of speech) 4. Recitation
Ninth Grade							
Title of Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support

A School Creed	Poetry/school anthem	Canadian	contemporary	authentic	11 lines	Linguistic (listening), Aesthetic (rhyme and rhythm), cultural (Canadian flag+ school creed)	Six Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple choice (general idea) Multiple choice (meaning of conjunctions) Short answer (line identification) Poem recitation Open ended questions (school creed) Open ended question (comparing Canadian with local school)
In the Garden	Poetry	Philip Waddel	contemporary	authentic	13 lines	Linguistic (listening), Aesthetic (rhyme and rhythm), cultural (western Garden)	Seven Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open questions (prediction) Short answers (character identification) Short answer (vocabulary identification from a picture) Matching (words that rhyme) Open questions (theme and symbolism) Poem recitation Open ended question (monologue/expressing opinion)
The Book of Life	Poetry	Margaret Curtis	1883-1962	authentic	14 lines	Linguistic, aesthetic, moral, cultural	Six Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice (theme prediction) Multiple choice (identifying

							words from context) 3. Open ended questions (poem interpretation) 4. Matching (rhyming vocabulary) 5. Poem recitation Open ended questions (critical thinking about poem meaning)
The News	Poetry	David Harmer	1962	authentic	30 lines		Five activities: a. Matching Pictures with verses b. Multiple choice (identifying words in context) c. Writing (making sentences) d. Poem recitation Open questions (discussion of opinion-critical thinkine.
Tenth Grade							
Title of Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
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Eleventh Grade							
Title of Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
Silas	Ficti	George	Victoria	Abridged	Summariz	Linguistic, Cultural,	Chapter One

Marner	on	Eliot	n 19 th century	and summarize d	ed Parts chapters 1- 12 Avge length of chapters 1- 2 pages	Personal Growth (pleasure + aesthetic appreciation) Literary analysis (plot, information, + language teaching	<p>Two activities:</p> <p>a. Reading for pleasure/ Multiple choice (choose the best summary)</p> <p>b. short answers/ Tawjihi Preparation (comprehension)</p> <p>Chapter Two</p> <p>Two activities</p> <p>a. Reading for pleasure/multiple choice (comprehension) one item</p> <p>b. Tawjihi preparation (comprehension)/ short answers, sentence completion.</p> <p>Chapter Three</p> <p>a. Reading for pleasure/ ordering events</p> <p>b. Preparation for the Tawjihi, short answers and true false</p> <p>Chapter Four:</p> <p>a. Reading for pleasure- multiple choice/ characterization</p> <p>b. Preparation for the Tawjihi:</p> <p>1. multiple choice (comprehension)</p> <p>2. short answers (quote analysis)</p> <p>Chapters 5-12:</p> <p>The same general activities (reading for pleasure and preparation for Tawjihi) with variation of activities (sentence order, sentence completion, multiple choice, true false, matching pictures, quotation</p>
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							identification,)
Twelfth Grade							
Title of Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional support
"I Had a Dove"	Poetry	John Keats	Romantic-19 th century	Unabridged	10 lines	Linguistic Personal Growth (Aesthetic appreciation)	Two activities a. multiple choice (vocabulary) b. short answers (information+analysis)
"If"	Poetry	Rudyard Kipling	Modern	Unabridged	32 lines	personal growth (moral or didactic)	Three activities a. Multiple Choice (comprehension) /choose a summary/ b. Short answers (Comprehension) /what advice does the poet give/. c. Short answers (critical thinking) /what would happen –hypothetical situations
"War is Never Over"	Poetry	Cecil Harrison	Modern-post WW2 American	Unabridged	20 lines	Linguistic (vocabulary glossary) Personal growth (moral)	Two activities a. Multiple choice (critical thinking)/ which opinion would the poet agree with b. Short answers/(comprehension) /line interpretation.
"Solitude"	Poetry	Ella Wheeler Wilcox	Modern 19 th -20 th century American	Unabridged	24 lines	Linguistic (voc. Glossary)+connotations +denotations Personal growth (emotional impact of poem)	Three activities a. Multiple choice (comprehension) b. gap filling (vocabulary connotations) c. Multiple Choice (comprehension of information)

"Be Strong"	Poetry (hymn)	Maltbie D. Babcock	Modern	Unabridged	12 lines	Linguistic (voc. Gloss.) Personal growth (morality and morals)	Three activities a. Short answers (comprehension) b. Multiple Choice (vocab. From context) True/false comprehension/ inference
"King Lear"	Drama	William Shakespeare	Elizabethan	Abridged and summarized Original dialogue provided for some excerpts after paraphrase into simple prose	Acts 1-5 Average length 2/3-1 page each (Act I in the original King Lear is 30 pages)	Linguistic (vocab. Glossary). Personal Growth	Act I: Two activities a. multiple choice (choose a summary) b. short answers (comprehension) Act II Three activities a. multiple choice (characterization) b. multiple choice (comprehension) c. short answers (sentence completion) Act III Three activities a. gap filling (vocabulary) b. multiple choice (comprehension) c. sentence completion (comprehension) Act IV Three activities a. short answer (quote identification with explanation) b. multiple choice (comprehension) c. sentence completion (comprehension) Act V

							Three activities a. Open question (evaluation of play ending) b. Multiple choice (comprehension) Short answers (information, comprehension and critical thinking)
The Bet		Anton Chekov	Translated				

The Work of Memory as a ‘Counter-Discursive Strategy’ in Ngugi’s, Armah’s and Morrison’s Fictional works

Malika BOUHADIBA
Oran University, Algeria

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to shed light on the motives of the African and African-American writers’ work of memory. It focuses on both historical and cultural memory as counter-discourse. The major contention held in this paper is that these writers’ politics of memory has a subversive dimension. The paper argues that the African writers’ work of memory has a twofold purpose: to ‘strike back’ at the colonial powers and to ‘speak truth to power’. There is also an attempt at drawing a brief comparative study of the work of memory of African and African-American writers. The paper particularly focuses on these writers’ dramatization of the Middle Passage. It, besides, explores the issue of Afrocentric historiography as ‘counter-memory’. There is, further, an attempt at pondering the issue of objectivity in memory works.

Keywords: Afrocentric Historiography, counter-discourse, Memory, Mau Mau, Slavery .

The Work of Memory as a 'Counter-Discursive Strategy' in Ngugi's, Armah's and Morrison's Fictional works

The aim of this paper is to shed light on the motives of Ngugi's, Armah's and Morrison's work of memory. It argues that this work has a twofold purpose, to 'strike back' at the colonial powers and to 'speak truth to [national] power'. The paper particularly explores the issue of Afrocentric historiography as 'counter-memory'.

Whereas a historical work is based on data, often verifiable documentary evidence, memory work relies more on transmitted eyewitness accounts, both oral and written. In 'Les lieux de Mémoires', Pierre Nora maintains that "memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events" (Nora, 2005, p. 299). He further contends that history and memory are oppositional (Nora, 2005, p. 285), and that "History is perpetually suspicious of memory" (Nora, 2005, p. 286).

Memory narratives often have a marked 'affective' dimension. They are, besides, biased and motivated by ideological concerns. This, however, does not mean that historical narratives are not. A telling example is Eurocentric historiography, and it is mostly to challenge the latter that Afrocentric scholars produced counter-narratives such as George. G. M. James' *Stolen Legacy* (1954) and Diop's *The African Origin of Civilization, Myth or Reality* (1974), in which he defends his thesis concerning the 'Black origin of Egyptian civilization'. These African-centered works have had a major influence on African and African-American writers and account for their attempts to carry out the work of historical memory as a counter-discursive strategy in their fictional works. As Bill Ashcroft notes, the "re-writing of history is an important strategy in the process of discursive resistance" (Ashcroft, 2001, p.102).

The use of memory for subversive purposes, in African and African American literature, can be said to have originated with the early slave narratives, e.g., Equiano's. These narratives based on lived personal experiences were meant to acquaint their white readership, notably those who opposed slavery, with the horrors of the Middle Passage to make them campaign for its abolition. The subversive dimension of these accounts lied in that they unveiled some aspects of slavery that were concealed in the slave masters' narratives. As Toni Morrison points out in her 'The Site of Memory' (Morrison, 1998, pp. 183-199), the slave narratives themselves were selective and did not mention the most degrading aspects of the Middle passage (Morrison, 1998, p. 190). This self-censorship was most probably motivated by a fear of reprisals from their ex-Masters. In her essay, Morrison makes it plain that she is resolute to use her craft to unveil the atrocities of slavery. She remarks: "My job becomes how to rip [the] veil drawn over 'proceedings too terrible to relate' " (Morrison, 1998, p. 191). Yet, she reckons that to render the psychological turmoil of the victims she has to rely on her imagination, and she does so in *Beloved* (1987). Her work of memory is a form of historical revisionism and is, therefore, counter-discursive. As Bill Ashcroft observes: "historical re-visioning [is a kind] of writing back" (Ashcroft, 2001, p.102), and is a form of 'cultural resistance' (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 15).

The use of historical memory as counter-discourse became more widespread among Diasporic scholars, following Garvey's pressing call for the rewriting of Black American history. One of the major goals of Garvey's historical reclamation was the cultural disalienation of the Black Americans. It was particularly meant to cure them of the 'double consciousness' syndrome from which they suffered. Echoing this view of therapeutic historical and cultural memory, Chinweizu proclaims, in *The Decolonisation of the African Mind* (1987): "history has to be used

as cultural therapy" (Chinweizu, 1987, p. 72). In line with Garveyite prescriptions, Afrocentric scholars undertook the work of memory for racial retrieval and 'collective catharsis' (Fanon, 1967, p. 145). Their first endeavour was to dismantle white supremacist historical discourse and to glorify their past for racial pride and self-esteem. Their memory works were deconstructive in that they reversed historical supremacy in their favour. To the Westerners' claim of 'White Egypt', they opposed the counter-claim of 'Black Egypt'. Their claims generated heated debates with classicist historians such as Mary Leftkowitz. The latter has taken the Afrocentrists to task for such claims in her *Not Out Of Africa* (1996), where she maintains that Afrocentric historiography is "myth and not history" (Leftkowitz, 1996, p. XVI) and that "the ancient Egypt described by the Afrocentrists is a fiction" (Leftkowitz, 1996, p. XVI). It should be noted that Afrocentric scholars and white classicist historians, often accused one another of racist leanings. The influence of Afrocentric historiography is particularly striking in Armah's late novels.

Historical memory has been a major concern for most African writers. This is the case of Chinua Achebe, who wrote *Things Fall Apart* (1959) to show his people "where the rain began to beat them", and to show the whites that his people were not 'cultureless', as they claimed. In fact, this novel was meant as a counter-discourse to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In his essay: "An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*", Achebe maintains that Conrad "was a thoroughgoing racist" (Achebe, 1989, p. 11). Ama Ata Aidoo, was, similarly, concerned with historical memory, as it shows in her play *Anowa* (1970), where the issue of slavery is highlighted. In this play, Aidoo reminds her fellow countrymen, through the example of Kofi Ako, of their participation in the slave trade.

In this paper the focus is, however, on Ngugi's and Armah's work of historical memory. Whereas Ngugi focuses on local history, i. e., his country's history and notably the Mau Mau struggle, Armah focuses on racial history, and specifically on slavery. Armah's prime concern is racial redemption and Pan-Negroism, as it shows in *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973). His work of memory fits in with the logic of 'writing back', or rather 'striking back', at Empire. As it appears from his racist rhetoric and satirical portrayal of the Westerners, and the Arabs, his memory work is motivated by a vindictive spirit.

Ngugi's memory work, like Armah's, has a vindictive dimension. He attempts to pay back the Kenyan authorities for his imprisonment. His memory work is also motivated by the need to "speak truth to power", as Said puts it (Said, 1994, p. XIV). His dramatization of the Mau Mau episode is meant to subvert the state version of history. In most of his novels, one protagonist carries out the task of pedagogical memory by narrating stories of lived experiences during the Mau Mau struggle to a younger audience. This is the case, for instance, of Abdulla in *Petals of Blood* (1977) and Matigari in the novel bearing the same name. Through these protagonists, Ngugi carries out the duty of memory to raise the historical consciousness of younger generations and to fight historical amnesia. As Pierre Nora notes memory relies on the "will to remember [and] to block the work of forgetting" (Nora, 2005, p. 296).

Ngugi's work of memory is also motivated by a desire to denounce the neo-colonial bondage of the Kenyan regime both under Kenyatta and Moi. This is evident in most of his novels, notably in *Devil on the Cross* (1982). It is also evident in his plays. In both *I will Marry When I Want* (1977) and *Mother Sing for Me* (1986), he uses historical events metaphorically to denounce social injustice in post-independent Kenya. In carrying out the Mau Mau memory work, Ngugi insists on the betrayal of the loyalists. In *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* (1987), he emphasizes the contrast between the wealth of the loyalists and their past as

traitors for subversive purposes. In *Devil on the Cross*, he gives the example of Gitutu who has become a rich landowner after independence, whereas he “used to convict and sentence Mau Mau adherents to death” (Ngugi, 1982, p. 106), and his father “was one of the elders who were used by the colonialists in the purges of the Mau Mau followers” (Ngugi, 1982, p. 101). In *Matigari*, for instance, the Minister remarks: “Yes, we loyalists are the ones in power today. Long live loyalism” (Ngugi, 1987, p. 102) and he refers to the Mau Mau struggle as a ‘nightmare’ in their history. Similarly, Nditika, in *Devil on the Cross*, remarks: “Let’s all forget the past. All that business of fighting for freedom was just a bad dream, a meaningless nightmare” (Ngugi, 1982, p. 177). This is, clearly, a hint to Kenyatta’s condemnation of Mau Mau, in 1962, when he proclaimed that “Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated, and must never be remembered again” (Sabar-Friedman, 1995, p. 104). Ngugi insists on the fact that the Loyalists consider the ex-Mau Mau fighters as ‘murderers’ (Ngugi, 1987, 123), and ‘terrorists’ (Ngugi, 1987, p. 102), to fuel the latter’s hatred at their longstanding enemies. He blames the Kenyan authorities for undermining the heroism of the Mau Mau fighters and puts this on the account of their neo-colonial bondage.

Ngugi’s Mau Mau memory work is also undertaken to rehabilitate the image of the ex-Mau Mau fighters by emphasizing their heroism. He does so in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976), and in *Matigari*. In the latter, the heroism of Matigari, the ex-Mau Mau fighter, is highlighted through the manner in which he defeated Settler Williams before independence, and through his challenge of the Kenyan police (Ngugi, 1987, p. 31) and Minister (Ngugi, 1987, p. 112). Clearly, in this novel Ngugi uses history for subversive purposes. In *Moving the centre* (1993) He insists on the fact that ‘history is subversive’ under Moi’s regime and to support his argument, he gives the example of Kinyatti who was imprisoned for collecting data from ex-Mau Mau fighters with the purpose of re-writing this episode of Kenyan history to counteract the official version. Ngugi, like Kenyatta, is concerned with historical revisionism to subvert the historical discourse of both state and empire. In the preface of *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Ngugi and Micere Mugo make it plain that their major concern is historical revisioning. They state: “the challenge was to truly depict the masses (symbolized by Kimathi) in the only historically *correct* perspective; positively, heroically and as the true makers of history” (Ngugi and Mugo, 1976, p. V). Their historical revisionist attempt is, for instance, expressed through Kimathi’s remark: “We must kill the lie that Black people never invented anything” (Ngugi and Mugo, 1976, p. 68). In his fiction, Ngugi dramatizes the Mau Mau fighters as driven by nationalist and humanistic concerns, to reverse the Westerners and the Kenyan regime’s representation of these people as ‘barbaric’. Matigari, for instance, remarks: “When we were in the forest we never killed any animals at any cost unless we were hungry and had run out of food. Even when we came across an injured animal, we would mend its broken limbs” (Ngugi, 1987, p. 143). In the main, Ngugi’s memory work has a subversive end.

Armah’s memory work, on the other hand, relates to ‘psychological location’ and responds to Molefi Asante’s expectation of the Afrocentric literary work. Asante notes: “an Afrocentric literary text must give attention to the idea of psychological or cultural location” (Asante, 2005, p. 3). He uses the motif of slavery for therapeutic purposes, both on the personal and the communal level. Indeed, he seems to dramatize the slave-trade episode to get psychological relief, both through an exteriorisation of an obsessive nightmare, and through the satisfaction of carrying out the duty of ‘memory’.

The re-enactment of the slave-trade episode in *Two Thousand Seasons*, for instance, has a cathartic function. It is meant to help his audience get over the trauma of the memory of their forebears' misfortune. The emotional impact of the slave trade memory is dramatized in *Fragments* (1970), through the case of Baako who is frightened by the sight of a ship. In *Why Are We So Blest?* (1972), Modin experiences fright when the guide tells him and the other pupils about the ordeal of the slaves, "they were kept for weeks, sometimes months, till the ships came, and then they were taken out for loading" (Armah, 1974, p. 77).

In *Two Thousand Seasons*, Armah stresses the importance of historical memory when he writes: "You [...] imaginers, thinkers and rememberers [...] are called to link memory with forelistening [and] to pass on truths of your origins" (Armah, 1979, p. IX). He, further, makes it clear that the remembrance of the 'Black holocaust' is the duty of the 'survivors', both as an homage to the memory of the victims of the slave trade, and as an attempt to keep their memory alive. In his preface, Armah makes it plain that the records of that span of the black people's history should be undertaken by the black intellectuals whom, he calls the 'rememberers' or the 'utterers'. He expects the latter to record it from an African perspective. His concern for historical reconstruction is also motivated by a "commitment to correct the history of Africa" (Asante, 2005, p. 2), one of the paradigms of Afrocentricity. Armah Afrocentric allegiances appear in his endorsement of the Diopian thesis of the Black origin of Egyptian civilization expressed in such statements as: "close to [the desert] we brought a fecundity unimagined there now" (Armah, 1973, p. 6). This Afrocentric belief of the precedence of Black civilization over the Western one is also expressed through the following statements: "We are not a people of Yesterday" (Armah, 1973, p. 1), and "Do they ask how many single seasons we have flowed from our beginnings till now? We shall point them to the proper beginning of their counting" (Armah, 1973, p. 1).

Armah's endorsement of the Diopian thesis is also apparent in his novel *Osiris Rising* (1995). The fact that the novel is based on the Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris is quite significant. The Afrocentric dimension of this novel lies in that the major protagonists Ast and Asar want to reform the syllabus and give it an African-centeredness. Asar defines their goals stating: "One making Africa the centre of our studies. Two shifting from Eurocentric orientations to universalistic approaches as far as the rest of the world is concerned. Three, giving our work a serious backing in African history" (Armah, 1995, p. 104). This is what Armah himself is attempting to achieve through his fictional works.

Like Armah's late novels, Morrison's *Beloved* is an attempt at historical retrieval for therapeutic purposes. It highlights the power of memories and their influence on the present. It emphasizes the haunting memory of the past, notably the Middle Passage, for Diasporic Africans. Through the experience of Sethe who is haunted by the ghost of her murdered daughter, Morrison suggests that historical consciousness is important. In *Beloved*, Morrison is concerned with historical reconstruction. Her novel is, therefore, a telling example of memory used as a 'counter-discursive strategy'. In her essay, 'The Site of Memory', she refers to her endeavour to write memory works as 'literary archaeology' (Morrison, 1998, p. 192), and notes that her prime concern is to 'fill the blanks' (Morrison, 1998, p. 193) of historical narratives of the Middle passage. In *Beloved*, Morrison makes it clear that for the African-Americans, the memory of the historical trauma of slavery will never fade away. She does so through Sethe who tells Denver that their past will always haunt them: "When you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else [...] It's never going away [...] The picture is still there [...] it will

happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you [...] Because even though it's all over -- over and done with -- it's going to always be there waiting for you [...] that must mean that nothing ever dies" (*Beloved*, pp. 43-44).

In the main, through *Beloved*, Morrison wanted the trauma of slavery to be 'truly felt [and] wanted to translate the historical into the personal' (Morrison, 1993). She does so in her novel, *The Bluest Eyes* (1970), where she explores the consequences of racism on African Americans, through the case of her protagonist Pecola Breedlove, who yearns and prays to have blue eyes, since that is considered as a standard of beauty. In this novel, Morrison demonstrates how entrenched are white stereotypes, e.g., "black is ugly, and dirty", in the African-Americans' psyche, and how destructive they are. Pecola's obsession with white beauty and her inability to acquire it, and acquire and identity, make her go insane. As Morrison remarks, "When the strength of a race depends on its beauty, when the focus is turned to how one looks as opposed to what one is, we are in trouble" (Morrison, 1974, p. 89). In her novel *A Mercy* (1988), set in New York in the 17th century, she, again, focuses on the twin issues of slavery and racism and attempts to trace their origin.

On the whole, since Morrison's and Armah's memory work is concerned with a dramatic and traumatic episode of their race history, it is tinted with their emotional response to the event. As Bhabha remarks, *Beloved* is "a narrative of an affective, historic memory" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 8). Similarly, Ngugi's memory work betrays his emotional involvement and is tinted with his patriotism and radicalism. In *Moving the centre*, he maintains that the historian should be patriotic. (Ngugi, 1993, p. 99). He, besides, observes that the historian should reflect the history of class struggles (Ngugi, 1993, p. 96). In the main, Ngugi views history from a Marxist perspective. As Pierre Nora rightly observes, "Memory insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it [and that] it is blind to all but the group it binds" (Nora, 2005, p. 286).

To conclude, one might say that being ideologically-driven and emotionally-laden, memory narratives can but be biased, and therefore subjective.

About the Author:

Malika BOUHADIBA, Senior Lecturer at Oran University (Algeria) since 1977. Lecturer of English in the department of Economics 1977-1982). Lecturer in the English department (1983-84). Lecturer of English in the Translation Department of Oran University (since 1987). 'Dotorat' degree in African Literature from ORAN University (2009). Lecturer of American Literature at Doctoral school of English ORAN University (2011-2012). Lecturer of English at Doctoral School of Translation (2012-2013). Member of a research laboratory (Oran University) since 2003.

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Time Travel and the Social Imaginary of the Steppe in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*

Catherine Carey
Language Centre, Kimep University
Almaty, Kazakhstan

Abstract

Kirghiz author Chinghiz Aitmatov's novel, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, contains multiple forms of travel that trace the contours of the Sorozek Steppe. Travel imagery radiates from the "meridian" of the railway line, fueling a social construction of the Steppe from myth and folklore. I use recent work on the formation of a social Imaginary (Castoriades) to examine how incomplete past and present images fuse into a collective narrative that yokes the contradiction of the desire to roam, nomadism, with the desire to settle, pastoralism. The longing to live in a nomadic "natural state" on the unspoiled Steppe is apparent in the interplanetary space travel motif, a utopian call to a purer existence. Contrary to the Socialist aesthetic of the Soviet Cultural Revolution, bodies in the novel matter beyond capacity for work in the realms of family life, sexual attraction, and burial customs, which in Islamic tradition claim body and land together. The novel has value for nation-building since it reclaims nomadic myth and a cultural adaptation of Islam, demonstrating the rich remnant of the Steppe's half-lives in the imagination, even under harsh suppression.

Keywords: Aitmatov, Bodies, Diaspora, Islam, Kazakhstan.

Time Travel and the Social Imaginary of the Steppe in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*

The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years, published by Kirghiz author Chinghiz Aitmatov in the Soviet-sanctioned journal *Novyi Mir* in 1980, is centered on lines of multiple and incongruous forms of travel across the landscape of northwest Kazakhstan. These journeys—by tractor, train, camel, and, in an unusual sci-fi sequence, rocket—etch the contours of the Sorozek Steppe, tracing its boundaries and landmarks: the ancient burial ground Ana-Beiit, the depopulated auls, and the receding Aral' Sea.

Travel in the novel serves as both cause and effect. The rapid changes of russification transformed the terrain of the essentially deserted Steppe and the livelihood of its pre-Islamic nomadic people with numerous robust construction projects, nuclei of railroad junctions, small industrial cities, and the mysterious, walled space complex of Baikonor Cosmodrome. The central characters in the novel, witnessing the development of large parts of the Steppe, express a quixotic fear and an affectionate pride towards these signs of inevitable progress, as if the newly developed Kazakhstan were a counterpart of a necessarily matured, but nevertheless diminished, lost nostalgic self.

Glimpsing the Possible

Characters in the novel—Buranniy Yedigei, his aging wife Ukubala, and the legendary seer of the Steppe, Buranniy Kazangap—themselves need not actually travel from their settlement in order to construct and embellish a uniquely Kazakhstani travel *Imaginary* centered around the Sorozek Steppe. The requirement to take the recently deceased Kazangap on his final journey to the ancestral burial group located on the Steppe is sufficient cause for characters to review the sequence of events that united them a full generation ago as railway workers at the outpost of Buranly-Buranniy. Their narratives, as Yedigei recalls them, illustrate the definition of imaginary as the interplay of meandering, loosely related dreamscapes of collective national longing, projected onto the imagined landscape.

This fantastical longing radiates, I contend, from the unarguably real “meridian” of the railway line. As trains pass along the central rail, they provide a kind of perceptual chimera before the characters’ eyes. Brief, incomplete images of the Steppe get recycled from their basis in myth and folklore and are churned forward in time and propelled, as cinematic images are, in rapid succession to give the effect of movement and a type of visual reality. The Chimera of Greek legend was a beast composed of the parts of many animals: a lion’s head, goat udders, a snake’s tale, and a goat’s head and body stuck to the middle. When the chimera moved rapidly through the forest, warriors thought they were being besieged by a herd. The source of the word *cinema* may come from a common root meaning “to move,” in this case, moving a succession of images rapidly to give the effect of action. Each day the town’s residents, railway workers “stationary” by the nature of their work, glimpse the faces of strangers from train windows, who in turn glance back at them: depersonalized Steppe commuters reminding the reader of Ezra Pound’s image of fleeting passenger faces, “petals on a wet, black bough” (Pound12).

The Disruption of Rootedness

This ironic reversal of the rhythms of rootedness and mobility is the central issue of the “day” in the novel; schedules for the moving trains are fixed, while the once stable village and

family routines are in a state of flux and deterioration, especially the burial customs, since the plot concerns Kazangap's burial in full nomadic tradition. Locomotives furnish motifs for the machinery of the state, supplying an image of the new determinism deemed necessary for progress. Epigrams at the end of each chapter emphasize the constancy of the passing trains and how inexorably they, supplied by human labor, mark off the seasons, years—eras even:

Trains in these parts went from East to West, and from West to East. On either side of the railway lines lay the great wide spaces of the desert Sary Ozeki, the Middle lands of the yellow Steppes. And the trains went from East to West, and from West to East. (Aitmatov29)

Chinghiz constructs an imagery of the Steppe that yokes contradictory counter impulses of movement, both geographic and temporal. I use recent work on the formation of a social imaginary to examine how “through the powers of the imagination [to] summon the absent into presence, discordant images coalesce into a composite narrative and become a signifier” (Iser 171).

Jacques Lacan employed the term imaginary to describe the effect of the Other on the way an individual might imagine his or her self through specular identification, that is, by experiencing what another (usually the mother) “sees” and does not “see” as she beholds the child's physical self. She imagines, Lacan suggests, how this child's self will unfold in future life. The gaze of this Other, as it mirrors possibility and brings out difference, sets in play the notion of lack, and a sense of deficiency that then feeds the fantasy of the individual's greater potential (Lacan).

Cornelius Castoriades transfers Lacan's idea of a personal fantasy of becoming from an individual psychological process to a theory of how social organizations are formed around an ideal social state. Questioning the fundamental origins of institutions and nations that come into being, he insists that they form to meet the perceived needs of social units of people. Half-expressed needs; needs still in process of being articulated; resentments; disappointments, comparisons to the past; and dreams of the future are the stuff of the socio-historical *Radical Imaginary* (Castoriades in Iser 204-207) that seeks representation in a continually evolving semiotic. One has only to travel the vastness of the Steppe to find how readily it furnishes counterparts for each unexpressed or unfulfilled communal need, as well as for the inter-relational conflict of needs in the process of adaptation to change.

One maxim of travel is that journeys originate from and return to a designated spot. Nomadism—destination-less—although not a viable way of life, nevertheless remains an ideal. Characters, historically nomads, identify with the wandering animals and even the grasses, propelled across the Steppe; they are encountering its dangers, yes, but they are also thriving on its rich diversity. This notion of unity and sufficiency with one's environment is a religious and cultural precept described in the Qur'an as *tawhid*. The Kazakh poet Abai elaborates:

The time motif is a where, a place, a space; this is the nomad's perspective. And it points to a broader phenomenology of the Steppe wherein existence is experienced as a visceral unitary whole in which a sacred or secular, inner and outer, are one, a single horizon that always rises ahead of you, beckoning you... a vision of *tawhid* (Abai in Schwartz).

Aitmatov dwells on the disruption of this unity between culture and environment (*ghafлах*) and the misery the rupture causes through his extensive use of animal imagery, borrowing from the Sufist belief that animals are mystical beings and prescient counterparts to humans. (As a young man, Aitmatov trained as a veterinarian before turning to the public life of writing.) Animals, such as the hungry vixen at the beginning of the story that hovers near the tracks foraging among the oil-soaked remnants for food, are depicted as miserable, specifically because of their semi-domesticated state; clearly, even to Yedigei, the idea of ranging is more attractive than its actuality, since animals need food, shelter, and, like humans, companionship. The novel's Steppe is no longer the garden of heaven promised in the Qur'an, but rather a ruined garden (Schwartz 5) that the author laments through the plight of the animals driven from their usual source of nurture.

Rootedness, though desired, likewise does not and cannot occur as an absolute condition. The town of Buranly-Burannyi hosts a diaspora of displaced persons, whose own children have subsequently dispersed to other towns for education and employment. At issue in the novel is whether the grown children and extended family will gather for the burial ceremonies and if those who do return retain sufficient cultural memory and ancestral respect to conduct the traditional burial. Kazangap's son Sabitzhan, educated in a boarding school and now a minor government official, embodies the practical atheism promulgated by the Soviet state. Sabitzhan argues against the lengthy burial trip on grounds that he is needed at work; his wife does not honor her father-in-law by attending the ceremony; he readily capitulates when authorities bar the caravan's entrance into the ancient cemetery; and even borrows a tractor for the cortege to speed the time-consuming task of digging a Moslem grave with its customary side entrance.

Kazangap's burial journey includes a recounting of how World War II and its aftermath disrupted notions of return to a family life defined by place and occupation in rural Kazakhstan. Kazangap, still stinging from his father's denunciation as a *kulak* (a detail that echoes Aitmatov's own father's denunciation and death), refuses a return to his native village after the war. Yedigei in a shell-shocked state after his discharge was not fit to resume his accustomed fishing work, relying on his wife's labor until Kazangap recruited both of them to the outpost that grew to become a station concourse. Further, the continuing harassment of the schoolteacher Abutalip Kutybaev, who settles his family at Borany-Burannyi after a series of firings, illustrates the unjust suspicion and factually- unsupported political fickleness that deprived many veteran prisoners-of-war of stability long after the end of the war.

Bodies That Matter

How then can we dissect this clearly impossible longing to live in a nomadic "natural state" on the unspoiled Steppe? We might begin by looking at circumstances in which the physical body matters beyond its potential for work and the capacity of the mind to travel imaginatively beyond the limitations of the body -- and most particularly beyond the claims of the Socialist State imposed upon the bodies of inhabitants of the region of Kazakhstan appropriated by the Stalinist regime.

In *Bodies that Matter*: On the discursive limits of 'sex,' Judith Butler "troubles" assumptions girding the two poles of gender identity: biological/anatomical realities (essentialism) and social categories that attach themselves (at birth) to these physical realities (*social constructivism*). Rather than accept either of these binary categories as "real," Butler

describes the interplay of effects from the two that allow for a multitude of individual choices regarding how to “perform” gender; noting that only through repetition do gender acts come to feel “natural.” One of the violations of the Cultural Revolution was the gender leveling of male and female citizens, who even within male and female designations had differing physical capacities and desires, which the body *will* insist upon. Several have written insightfully about the construction of the Soviet male in the Cultural Revolution that fetishizes his physical strength.

The interplanetary space travel motif in the novel has been interpreted as disobedience to the Soviet State and is arguably an attack on its repressive structures, such as the Iron Curtain or the Berlin Wall (Clark v). However, the narrative of the rebellious space workers at the Cosmodrome can also be read as an answer to a perceived call to a purer existence, one in which technology, intelligence, and a more open-hearted government obviate a harsh history. This conversation of cosmonauts with planetary aliens raises the possibility of a better world in which bodies are not exploited in the name of the state for work or warfare. Moreover, it occurs within the context of international collaboration between Western and Eastern nations and a planet populated similarly to Earth. In a letter to the two governments, the space team explains its decision to leave the post:

We have sent you a signal from outer space...from the previously unknown galaxy of Derzhatel, the Upholder. The light-blue-haired people of Lesnaya Grud' are the creators of the highest form of modern civilization. A meeting with them might make a profound change in our lives, the lives of all Mankind. We could gain immensely from their experience, we could change our way of life, learning how to obtain energy from the material of the world around us, and how to live without weapons, without force and without wars (Aitmatov 106).

Despite the time gap, the cosmonauts in the novel exemplify the spirit of an ancient nomadic urge: the transportation of their bodies collectively to some spot beyond the next ridge or hollow in order to explore the vast resources the seemingly inexhaustible Steppe historically has provided. The urge to travel to an inexactly located source of well-being on, in, or beyond the all-providing Steppe is at the heart of the utopian imaginary of the Steppe, rather than the object of the Steppe itself.

Bodies, the novel illustrates, prevail because they insist upon the satisfaction of private physical desires; in parallel narratives, we learn of the lustful extramarital desire Yedigei conceives for Zaripa, Abutalip's widow. He has chosen not to castrate his camel Karanar, but he beats the camel in which he has such pride in a fit of frustration when social convention does not permit him the same range of intense sexual freedoms as the camel. This episode raises questions of the subject's “bodily obligation” to the State (Kagonovsky 7) and just how far workers can be pushed to deplete their bodies for work, renouncing personal pleasures, such as sexual attachments, procreation, creative occupations such as writing, family recreation and the marking of holidays. The depiction of labor in the novel often involves shoveling snow under blizzard conditions so engines can pass, which the older generation of workers accept as their mission in life. The younger workers refuse to work as “beasts” and walk off the job in protest, even when aided by modern snow-clearing equipment.

Another area of bodily dispute is care for the dying and insistence on proper Islamic funeral rites. Such rites enact a historic claim upon the Steppe, join the physical to the symbolic, and directly confront the bureaucratic claim to both land and bodies. While spiritual beliefs may exist in the symbolic realm, they are deeply rooted in the individual and national psyche and are not easily denied or erased. The need for respectful burial furnishes a cautiously handled occasion for the author to initiate inquiry into the long-term effects of suppressed Islamic affiliation. Yedegei, an ethnic rather than practicing Muslim, identifies with Islam but cannot recall the exact prayers and songs of his Sunni heritage, typifying the vagueness of religious practice in Kazakhstan after 30 years of Soviet atheism. *Kazakhstan, Islam, and Politics*: Since Islam in Kazakhstan developed in isolation from the rest of the Muslim world, most Kazakhs do have a strict interpretation of the Quran. The logistics of building stationary mosques to convert a migratory society meant that Islam was not able to fully penetrate Kazakh society. Kazakhs adopted a moderate version of Islam mixed with their own indigenous belief system (*Kazakhstan, Islam, and Politics* 127).

Yedegei, nevertheless, voicing dissatisfaction with impersonal secular disposal of the remains of his friend and mentor, conducts an improvisational ceremony based on recall:

Here we are, standing on the Malakumdychap precipice, by the grave of Kazangap, in an uninhabited and wild place, because we were unable to bury him at the cemetery where he asked to have his grave... You, oh great one, if You exist, forgive us and in your mercy accept the burial of your Kazangap and, if he deserved it grant his soul everlasting peace. All that we have had to do, we have done. Now the rest is up to You (Aitmatov 341)!

Interestingly, Yedigei's arduous effort to bury the elder Kazangap in the ancient cemetery only serves to *un-bury* his escaped spirit; throughout the journey bearing Kazangap's shrouded corpse, he consistently is depicted as *extra*-physical. In death he takes successive forms associated with the Steppe: a wild vixen hovering near civilization, the irascible Bactrian camel, the rust-colored dog Zholbars, and the sentient white-tailed eagle who witnesses the denial of burial rights by the Soviet authorities -- and the shooting rocket itself. Kazangap's mode of conveyance to the grave, both tractor and camel on the very day of the space blast-off, and the makeshift burial *outside* the sacred cemetery in a spot claimed as common property demonstrate how eclectically and incongruously features of the imagined Steppe combine spiritual dimension with physical features of the landscape.

All of the Steppe, it would seem, both can be -- and/or never can be -- freely accessed imaginatively by all Kazakhs at any spot in time travel. The extreme limit of the revolutionary aesthetic of Soviet Socialism was that ultimately it ushered in the defeat of the revolutionary consciousness it sought to foster. "Revolutionary culture destroys everything around it -- even [eventually] itself (Dobrenko 17)." By prizing functionality, it denied the intellectual yearning of the individual worker and consequently the opportunity for the development and expression of the dialectic of beliefs, a conversation in which ideological beliefs could evolve. The extreme prizing of functionality is depicted in the plight of the *mankurts*, prisoners whose minds and sense of identity were systematically extinguished by their captors through a cruel and painful process, rendering them perfectly obedient slaves.

A monstrous fate awaited those whom the Zhuan'zhuan kept as slaves for themselves. They destroyed their slaves' memory by a terrible torture – the putting of the *shiri* [the nursing mother camel's udder] on to the head of the victim...mercilessly contracting [it] under the burning rays of the sun...as if an iron ring was being tightened...The result was the *mankurt* slave, forcibly deprived of his memory and therefore very valuable, being worth ten healthy, untreated prisoners (Aitmatov 124—126).

The question of whether the author intended the *mankurts* to represent the labor of the Kazakhs under Soviet rule has been raised, including the suggestion that workers in the outposts of Kazakhstan were asked to participate in the destruction of their own culture (Clark x). The myth of Naiman Ana, the sorrowing mother who seeks out her brain-damaged son, is preserved in the Kirghiz epic *The Manas*, which was revived in a 1990 movie filmed and distributed in Syria and Turkey. The result is that the term *mankurt* has become widely used as a pejorative in the political arena for the “forcible forgetting” and “enforced amnesia” (Schwartz 4) of Soviet brainwashing. The revival of the story demonstrates the continuing subversive quest for remnants that it is believed the Steppe preserves, insisting on a counter-myth of recovery. In the myth and novel, the bird Donenbai encodes the surname of the victim's father in song as he appears selectively on the Steppe, providing an elusive trace of identity and kinship for those with an ear for the past (Samakin).

New Aesthetic for a New Nation

Just what is the role of a master narrative in nation building? The process of cultural projection termed the imaginary is an unanticipated reaction to the Soviet project of Socialist Realism in the arts, which systematically diverted attention from individual effort and achievement. However, since Ur-narratives rest on the same substrate as identity—nostalgia, pride, a sense of personal privation, and a longing for recompense and reward—they are rarely erased but continually modified.

What the social imaginary reveals is exactly how citizens, in a repressive state in which travel and outside communication is limited, make use of the details of their one irrefutable possession—their own geographies and legends—to push against an arbitrary subtraction of artistic creativity and beauty. This process of reconfiguring a master narrative and crafting a new aesthetic is necessary to overcome the “alienating forces that [have] constricted the boundaries of [individual and cultural] freedom” (Dobrenko 17).

The European Union has outlined its educational policy in the Bologna Agreement, suggesting the inclusion of nationalist or “heritage” literature as a means to “air” the multi-vocal histories of ethnically distinct populations that will live and work together. As Kazakhstan emerges from the long shadow of ideological constraint, one articulation of independence is a school curriculum designed to accent its own literature. The portrayal of a range of personal experiences under Soviet rule may be a key factor in youth's identification with its own highly mixed Kazakh culture.(Baktin of its youth. Scholars agree that, given the young nation's complex history as a place of exile, the way Kazakhstan chooses to negotiate notions of home and belonging has implications for the social cohesion, stability, and development in this country (De Young *et al* in Asonova).

Further, literary texts travel in time along with a population that reads or hears about the reading; through the trace literary texts leave. As texts become icons of a culture, they sustain an ongoing critique long after publication and the first generation of readers, continuing to unfold issues for national conversation that have been suppressed for so long as to be virtually *unspeakable* (Derrida). The cognitive process of any reader as he or she voluntarily engages in *the dialogic*, inquires into the various meanings and subtexts that Mikhail Bakhtin believes necessary [for cultural understanding]. Thus Aitmatov's novels four decades after publication bring forth perplexing issues around Islamic duty and worship that can be fruitfully interrogated by personal response to and close analysis of his texts. As a site for diaspora, not only individuals but entire communities in Kazakhstan are presently sifting through a perplexing heritage of religious traditions, complicated by a long period of atheism that may be to an extent internalized. These important conversations are complicated by pressures of Islamic conservatism from nearby countries, which conflict directly with decades of secularism still evident in state policy. (At the point of writing, in Kazakhstan there are no release time provisions and few public spaces for weekly and daily religious ritual and worship.)

The reader's task, then, if not the very *act* of reading, is to assimilate multiple features of the text under discussion: apparent features such as text type, protagonists, plot lines, and outcomes; and subtle aspects such as register of language, minor incidents, ironies and unintended incongruities, and slips in point of view. Room for questioning, alternative versions, objections, references to other texts and one's own cultural experiences actively shape the meaning-making processes that situate national literary works within the scope of an expanded field, connecting them to other texts and events (Carey 2010)

The Day Last More than a Hundred Years ends with Yedigei's quest after his return from the burial journey to find Zaripa and clear the name of her wronged husband. He represents a new type of citizen who exercises personal agency. He travels to the capitol to seek answers and redress, anticipating, even before the disbanding and re-development of the Soviet states, an advocate role for the common worker in nation building and a more perfectible nation. The ethos of *perestroika*, to a degree, shifted sanctions away from the "village prose" of past writers; as an émigré himself, Aitmatov could position himself in international dialogue, although he was careful to implicate the Chinese, rather than the Soviets, in the mankurt cruelties. Aitmatov was named a Hero of Socialist Labor in 1978 and founded the Issy-kul Forum, which encouraged other (mildly) dissident writers. By including the folkloric and without being overly pious, he was one of the first to reinsert the religious dimension of cultural Islam into the country's narrative.

Would we consider the novel a nationalist literary text, and do nationalist texts play a role in nation-building? Although Aitmatov's novel is one of the few contemporary works of fiction from the CIS that is widely translated; it has the advantage of a fully developed protagonist on a quest that is both secular and religious in nature, which links present concerns – and even concerns for the future -- to past experience. Aitmatov could not have predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union, but issues of regional autonomy are treated, including the leasing of Kazakhstan's space stations at Russia. Understandably, however, the style of the novel was not receptive to the modernist experiment of the West that aims to capture the rich "stream of consciousness," and another limitation is that it contains markers of Socialist Realism that might be considered didactic to today's readers. As Stalin proclaimed, : "Soviet literature is tendentious – and we are proud of it." (Luker 19)

In the ending of the story, we confront the enigma of the historical imaginary: a space capsule launched to retrieve the errant cosmonauts, signifying to readers that efforts of the state to contain and direct the collective imaginary will only create further defiance and cause it to range further afield, ever able to evade official inspection. The foundational myth within the narrative in the novel serves an epic function and is effective because it unites the familiar (the Steppe, the railroad) and the barely imaginable (nomadic life on the Steppe, the space mission). Such closure illustrates on multiple levels how the reading public [at the time of publication] was collectively ready to envision and grasp its own distinct historical cultural significance.

About the Author

Dr. Catherine Carey investigates the role of national literature in the national policy of developing nations in Asia and the Bologna Agreement. She researches Socialist Realist writers and their continuing influence on teaching literature in former Soviet states. In her graduate classes for teachers at Kimep University, Kazakhstan, she stresses the search for culturally appropriate contemporary literary selections.

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Identity Crisis in Dalit Short Stories from Maharashtra

Ali Ahmed Khan

Department of English, College of Business Administration,
Salman bin Abdul Aziz University
Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia

Abstract:

Literature has the power to bring about revolutionary changes and reformative actions by the members of society. This fact makes literature a very potent tool and it has been utilized by revolutionary and reformist forces. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the literary output of the 'dalits' of India in order to find out the voices of resistance and the struggle for identity by this marginalized group of the caste ridden Indian society. The themes of dalit literature reflect the harsh and hard realities of their day to day to life. Poems, short stories, novels and autobiographies written by dalit writers provide useful insights on the question of dalit identity. For the present paper I have taken up some short stories written by dalit writers from Maharashtra. These short stories have been analyzed to see the voices of pain and anguish trying to build an identity equal to the other so called high castes.

Keywords: identity, Crisis, Dalit, struggle, resistance

Introduction

'Dalit Literature' is uniquely Indian as it is a byproduct of an evil caste system that has been thriving in this country for hundreds of years. Although the constitution of India has abolished the caste system, it still lingers in all walks of life with its grasp as firm as ever in the minds of people. More or less it is similar to the slavery in America and apartheid in Africa. The literature that arises as an outburst against the Indian caste system is known as 'Dalit Literature'. This literature tries to expose the atrocities faced by the dalits as well as voices the anger that boils within them as a reaction to these prejudices. The present paper attempts to show the representation of such voices and the struggles of dalits by analyzing the short stories written by Waman Hoval, Arjun Dangle and Avinas Dolas. These are prominent dalit writers from the western Indian state of Maharashtra. The stories have been originally written in Marathi but I have taken up their English translations from the book; *Poisoned Bread*, edited by Arjun Dangle. This book is a collection of translations of modern Marathi dalit literature.

Who is a Dalit?

Dalit('oppressed' or broken') is not a new word. Apparently it was used in the 1930s as a Hindi and Marathi translation of 'Depressed Classes', the term the British used for what are now called the Scheduled Castes(SC).' In 1930 there was a Depressed Class newspaper published in Pune called *Dalit Bandu* ('Friend of Dalits') (Pradhan, 1986:125). The word was also used by B.R. Ambedkar in his speeches in Marathi. In *The Untouchables*, published in 1948, Ambedkar chose the term 'b men', an English translation of 'Dalit', to refer to the original ancestors of the Untouchables for reasons which must have been self-evident because he did not explain them. The Dalit Panthers, an organization formed by the dalits in April, 1972 in Bombay is an organization which takes its pride and inspiration from the Black Panther Party of the United States. The Dalit Panthers revived the term 'Dalit' and in their 1973 manifesto expanded its referents to include the Scheduled Tribes, 'neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women, and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion' (Omvedt, 1995:72). There has thus been a narrow definition, based on the criterion of caste alone, and a broader one to encompass all those considered to be either similarly placed or natural allies. Since the early 1970s, the word has come into increasingly wider usage in the press and in common parlance where it is normally used in the original, narrower, caste-based sense.

The word Dalit is a common usage in Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati and many other Indian languages, meaning the poor and oppressed people. However, it has now acquired a new cultural context relating to Dalit literature and the Dalit movement. It was first used in the new context in Marathi by neo- Buddhist activists, the followers of Babasaheb Ambedkar in the early 1970s. It refers to those who have been broken, ground down by those above them in a deliberate way. There is, in the word itself, an inherent denial of pollution, Karma(action seen as bringing upon oneself inevitable results, good or bad) and justified caste hierarchy (Zelliot 1978:77).

Dominant Dalit movements in different parts of the country at the local and regional level, both in the past and in the present, are so far within the ideological framework of the caste system. They have appealed to, and mobilized, a large mass of Dalits for collective action. The prevailing cultural system and ethos, on the one hand, and sluggish economic development, on the other, work in their favour.

The category Dalit is now extensively used in both academic and non-academic literature across the world, and in India even the most orthodox elements in Hindu society, as well as the intelligentsia, have taken to using the category Dalit. Indeed, today we can talk of a virtual Dalit

Studies in which Dalits are studied from a range of positions and standpoints around common themes: their struggles, identity politics and efforts to achieve social justice, equality and power, battles for reservations, and ritual status, to name a few.

Dalit Identity in Dalit Literature

Literature by the Dalits has today become a potent tool for projecting their identity. By providing critical insights on the question of Dalit identity, their literature projects their victimization and social subordination which no other writing could do as subtly and as pointedly. The writing of the Dalits is directly or indirectly linked up with the social, political and cultural ethos of the Dalits, however this literature does not constitute a homogenous or unified entity. There are divergent currents and tendencies, which these writers use to voice their anger and protest. This literature seems to emphasize the economic structure as primary and consequential and it seems that their identity issue is located within a larger matrix of the market economy. This literature exemplifies how relations of inequality and dominance are primarily governed by structures of economic and political power and not merely or significantly by the cultural forces.

The literature that we are going to analyze subsumes the writings of various sections within the Dalit fold including Muslims and Christians and Buddhist whose changed religious status has not insulated them from social inequities and humiliations arising out of their earlier low-caste origin. This literature taken from the Dalits of Maharashtra (western Indian state) demonstrates very visibly that their social location is strategic and it enables them to capture the depth of their social reality. This literature is insistent on using a very different imagery and is rooted in experiences and perceptions that make this imagery set of the callousness of the others and the marginalization of the self.

In a story by Waman Hoval, 'The Storeyed House' (1992) we come across a very typical Dalit household — full of children and living on the fringes of exclusion. A Mahar (a prominent Dalit caste of Maharashtra) by caste, Bayaji, has been fortunate to have got a job in the city as a lifter of heavy loads and towards the end of his career retires as a supervisor. Making his way home with two and a half thousand rupees in his pocket he becomes the butt of envy of the higher castes. The unacceptability of Bayaji is evident in the first conversation that he has with Bhujaba, the high caste rascal of the village. He would have greeted Bhujaba with:

'My humble salutations to you sir, who is my father and mother'. So, when Bayaji merely said 'Greetings' Bhujaba became furious and said, 'do you think you can become a Brahmin by merely saying 'Greetings?' Can you forget your position simply because you have turned Buddhist?" (156).

Two things emerge from this brief encounter: first that no amount of persevered attempt by a Dalit can upgrade his status, the hostility from the other castes is subversive for an identity renewal. Once a Dalit always a Dalit — even though Bayaji had converted to Buddhism there was no inversion to his identity. Another thing that surfaces is that although the Mahars amongst the Dalits emerged, historically and distinctly assertive, due to several reasons including social movement within that caste, education and availability of new economic opportunities in urban areas, yet within the closed community of their rural environment they cannot think of scaling another step upward in the social ladder. We know that among the literate Mahars there is an urge to closely observe the deteriorating conditions among the rural untouchables and express their feelings towards them.

Bayaji also gives expression of his assertiveness by trying to build a two storeyed house. It was with his all efforts that his family was doing well, that his two daughters had been married and his elder sons looked after the fields, the next two sons were in government service, the one after them was a school teacher and the sixth was still studying" (157). All this projects a kind of a well-to-doness which is unusual for a Dalit. Bayaji now opens up his secret wish to his family - he wishes to build a house out of his earnings, a storeyed house for the usual three portioned house won't be adequate for the likes of him. He wants to get out of a typical Dalit syndrome where:

Their houses are outside the village;
there are lice in their women's hair;
naked children play in the rubbish;
they eat carrion.
The faces of the untouchables have a humble look;
there is no learning among them;
they know the names of the village-goddesses and the demon gods
but not the name of Brahma
(Zelliot 2001: 59-60)

But as the news of the Bayaji's storeyed house spread, the upper castes became more caustic. Kondiba Patil remarked :

'Baiju, you shouldn't lose your head simply because you have set aside some money. Do you aspire to an equal status with us by building this house? The poor should remain content with their cottage, understand?'
(158)

Bayaji was non-plussed and Kondiba uttered a threat, "You may go in for a storeyed house only if you don't wish to stay in the village. I hope you know what I mean". Kondiba shot out as a warning and walked away. Other ruffians in the village threatened Bayaji in a similar manner.

However, the house was completed and huge housewarming ceremony planned. There was a lot of fuss by the family; devotional singers with their troupes were also invited. Some of the elders of the town grew very uneasy at the sight of the brand new house, the impressive pandal(a tent erected on such occasions) and the cleverly conceived second storey, which had been carved from a loft. As the sound of the Bhajans(religious songs) rose to a crescendo Bayaji's new house caught fire from all sides. Panic struck as the house went down in ashes and with it Bayaji too. The entire family was shattered by this calamity and their spirits dampened. Since it was Bayaji, a low caste Dalit, evidence was mutilated and records put 'right' according to the wishes of the higher-ups, "Bayaji's death was the result of an accident due to petromax flare-up," was their conclusion (161).

Such a fate does not surprise anyone who knows the social mores of a caste ridden Indian society. The life of a Dalit here is a grim struggle and if demeaning situations like poverty and immiseration, hunger and starvation, homelessness and economic exploitation are not there, they are bound to be subjects of insidious and nefarious violence. But in the wake of all this Dalits have been known to suffer their atrocities with unusual grit. It seems that despite these adversities the Dalits have become brave, have shed their diffidence and their complexes. Bayaji's sons show this kind of an unconsumed spirit and an urge to overcome obstacles. At the end of the story they amaze the gathered quests by declaring:

'Our father's soul cannot rest in peace unless we do this'.

'But what is it that you're doing?'

'We're starting on a house, not one with a concealed first floor but a regular two-storeyed house,' replied the eldest son of Bayaji. And the six brothers resumed with determination the work of digging the foundation of a two-storeyed house.

It is as if they want the hollowness and the cunningness of the hegemonic classes to be realized and simultaneously to assert their identity, which will not be cowed down by any distressing attempt. As Punalekar (2001) has pointed out the Mahars among the Dalits have been the foremost, 'with the agenda for upliftment' and 'crusade against untouchability' (239).

In a story by Arjun Dangle, "Promotion", it seems that Bayaji and his likes have succeeded in getting a job as a clerk in a government department and his dreams of both economic and personal upgradation has come through. Now there is another dialectics that he has to go through-the higher up community clerks who despite being under him, (Waghmare),- do not listen to him and are even derogatory in their behaviour towards him. Waghmare wants to preserve this identity, a distinct, different identity, that his sustained hard work and education has created. In his efforts to isolate himself he steels himself when others from his community greet him with, "Jai Bheem"; when he encounters the word "reserved" anywhere. The fetish becomes so pronounced that when his wife's aunt from a slum 'chawl' comes to visit them, he lashes out at his wife saying, "learn to maintain your status. After all, you are an officer's wife" (172). But the tragedy is that this kind of an immunization does not last for long and even though he might cocoon himself, the society has ways of puncturing into his self-created identity: his son is pushed for drinking water from Ganpati's pot, his wife finds fruit expensive and of course the haunting image of Godbole from the office who turns a deaf ear because he is an SC. His tragedy is the tragedy of Dalit identity formation,

"His newly-sprung wings of promotion fall off and a mere mortal named Pandurang Satwa Waghmare crashes helplessly into the abyss below" (172).

Despite social mobility and the acquisition of literacy skills to secure employment, a Dalit cannot ward off the evil of caste divisiveness for long. The upper castes have a way of asserting an overwhelming presence. In spite of the efforts made by the British in the earlier regime, the struggle against the evil forces was never diminished. Gavaskar in his article '*Colonialism within Colonialism*' points out that:

'Brahmins in new incarnations of Kulkarni and Bhatkamagar (social designations) are maintaining day-and-night vigil over their interests in villages and urban centres and poisoning the minds of the British against the Shudras'. In Brahmanache Kasab (PriestCraft Exposed), Phule, by depicting the omnipresence of Brahmins in the roles of a priest, a schoolteacher, a Kulkarni, a Mamlatdar, a reformer, a clerk in the public works, a reporter in the vernacular press, builds a demonology of gramrakshas (village demons) and Kalamkasais (weilders of pen) to gobble up the ignorant shudras(or dalits). Behind this demonology lay Phule's sharp grasp of power relations that made him boldly state:

We know perfectly well that the Brahmin (high caste hindu) will not descend from his self-raised high pedestal and meet his Coonbee (sic) and

low caste brethren on an equal footing without a struggle (Phule, 1991 : 125) And it was this acumen that drove him to search for an anchorage in an alternative centre of power that would overthrow the inequalitarian social set-up of his times (91).

Integration within the dominant structure is an impossibility and no amount of personal upgradation can bring about even a bare minimal of equality that the Dalits strive for. The chains of the horizontal structure of society are so tightly knit that any dream of breaking these and ascending onto a vertical ladder is impossible. Within this grooved nexus of brutal defining, the dalits do not find sufficient access to either natural or human resources. Despite the decentralization and democratization of power the Dalits are no better off and as Runciman (1966) points out, this questions the validity of the concept of relative deprivation which primarily presupposes the perception of contrasting one's situation, even at the most primal level (9). Studies understanding the Dalit movement in terms of relative deprivation and social mobility helped to reveal the role of castes and inherited status that have for long influenced the monopolizing of the available jobs by the upper castes which viewed caste mobility as dangerous and disruptive of the social fabric. It is in this context that studies establishing a connection between the Dalit movement and the above concepts bring out the latent contradictions of a socio-economic and political nature. Moreover, such studies also reveal that relative deprivation leading to socio-economic mobility has after all a democratising impact on the socio-economic, political and bureaucratic structure of India (Shah, 1991:603.)

As Gopal Guru (1999) says,

"Given the happenings in the rural areas where the upper castes or class forces are committing brutal atrocities on the Dalits, and when the state's response is either callous or repressive, the Dalits do not feel a sense of relative deprivation so much as a total alienation and exclusion and the threat of physical liquidation".

Such then is the plight of the low caste that even the most demeaning work is not a sustained materiality for them - they are destined to live from hand to mouth, to be shooed away from better vicinities and if the worst comes to worst to live a dead - like existence. They have no right to live and when they assert this right to live they are beaten up by adverse logic. Writes Avinash Dolas that a low caste is worse than a refugee - at least a refugee can appeal for security and protection, but not a Mahar :

‘A Woman in village drew water from the well of the high-caste, so they beat her up. They ordered all Mahars to empty the well. A young man like me trying to break out of this casteism couldn’t stand all that. I like me trying to break out as this casteism couldn't stand all that. I resisted. The whole village was furious. They beat up the Mahars as they do their beasts. They stopped giving them work, they wouldn’t allow them water, food—just because they were untouchables. They told me to beg forgiveness, to grovel and prostrate myself before them, confessing my wrongdoing. Or else, they threatened to burn the entire Mahar settlement. Just because we are untouchables! I argued, I protested—for my rights. But my own mother—she took my younger brother in her lap, and touched my feet, her own son's feet, and said, 'Don't do this,' and finally told me, 'My son, go away from here!' A mother tells her own son to leave the village—She is reduced to such wretchedness, only on account of caste and custom’.

So how is a Mahar a citizen of this country? Even after twenty years, one Mahar is homeless in his own country'.

The attempts by Arjun Dangle, Baburao Bagul and others have been to undermine the cultural hierarchies constructed by the upper castes. They have tried to present the existential reality of the dalits with remarkable ability and courage. Their writings have offered an opportunity and promise to raise awareness about the subjugation of the Dalits. They have concentrated their literary energies to explore the cultural gaps and the Brahminical social order in order to win support for the downtrodden. Very objectively they have worked out the vulnerability of their low caste protagonist and made their writing political. The portrayal of the absolutely adverse material conditions is done purposely to beg support for such of them that are scavengers if not worse living on the drags of the upper class and on the edge of survival. Such representations of the dalit identity that we get are enough to set the mind's thinking — are we still living in an age of inequality? How are we a democratic nation? How has the millennial change ushered in a more global order?

To quote S.P. Punalekar, "Dalit literature upholds the view that this vast majority which is vulnerable and poor, untouchable and isolated, must be brought together. And to bring them together, they must be made conscious of their capacity as creative and worthy members of humanity. It is not a matter of shame or indignity to be a Mahar or Mang, Dhor or Chamar, Berad or Kaikadi (low castes or dalits), Christian or Muslim. Caste or community does not pollute or criminalise the society. It is rather the other way around; it is society, meaning its social (economic) institutions and the underlying cultural system, which upgrades some members at the cost of others, i. e, by degrading them, by dehumanizing and marginalizing them (238).

Baburao Bagul (1973) a leading Dalit intellectual asserts that 'Dalit sahitya (literature) is not a literature of vengeance. Dalit sahitya is not a literature that spreads hatred. Dalit sahitya first promotes man's greatness and man's freedom and for that reason it is a historic necessity' (56). He had further explained this point at the Dalit Literature Conference held in Nagpur in 1976. He said, 'Anguish, waiting, pronouncements of sorrow alone do not define Dalit literature. We want literature heroically full of life for the creation of a (new) society' (Bhagwat 1976). Thus, there is clear evidence that Dalit literature is deeply concerned with identity formation and its assertion to regain the self-confidence and self-worth of the marginalised sections in our society. Most of their creative imagination is structured around these premises. Theirs is an agenda of rebuilding society on values that promote honour and dignity, justice and equity. Tryambak Sapkal's poem 'Mother India' expresses this sentiment poignantly.

Don't despair.
This day will depart too.
Now, this day is pregnant with day.
Our day is not far away.
Look, from the day is born the day.
(Times Weekly Supplement 25 November 1973.)

Dalit literature began with an agenda for upliftment and a crusade against untouchability. Today its frontiers are expanding and more and more from the group are questioning the complex set of social, economic and cultural ways, dwelling largely on the question of identity. The writers of Dalit Literature observe that the end of caste system is essential not only for an all round development of our country, but also for the growth of Dalit Literature.

Conclusion:

Thus we see that the age old system of oppression and discrimination finds staunch opposition in dalit literature. Those who had been silenced by those above them and by the forces which were beyond their control are writing back. Their literature asserts their identity and the pride they take in it. They also emphasize their right to be treated as equals to their fellow human beings who claim themselves to be more equal among the equals. The dispossessed, those whose dignity was snatched away are reclaiming it and they don't hesitate even to snatch it back from the usurpers violently. They affirm their identity and self image again and again in this literature.

About the Author:

Dr. Ali Ahmed Khan is a product of the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India. He has been teaching English for the last fifteen years. He has five research papers publications to his credit and also two books. Presently he is working as Assistant professor in Salman Bin Abdul Aziz University, Al Kharj, KSA.

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