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THE LIGHT

An Insightful View from Philosopher, Educationist and Entrepreneur

Jimmy Teo

Sometimes, it takes us to be lost
In darkness
To appreciate a little light,
Even a torch light.

May we not take our Sunlight for granted
Forgetting to be 'Thankful & Grateful':
The keys to health & gladness.

Many people return to worship the Creator
When they entered darkness:
Diseases, financial distress, family disruptions,
Tragedies, mental upheavals & loss of directions-
For quick help, solution & resolution

When they recovered & are well
They forgot to be thankful & grateful,
Returning to the old ways;
Needing surgery or entering into oblivion.

May we be thankful & grateful
At all times
Remembering that the Light
Shows us clearly where to move
To relish the beauties of creation
Even the reality of poverty
Granting us the privilege & joy
To render acts of charity
Intelligently, carefully, willingly -
Our offerings of thanks,
Gratefully.

0716hr/Wed/5.10.16/Arc@Tampines, Singapore



Jimmy Teo

Singapore

teojimmy07@gmail.com

Parafoveal Preview Benefit in Word Recognition in Urdu

Azeez Rizwana, M.Phil. and Prakash Padakannaya, Ph.D.

Abstract

Studies on parafoveal preview benefit suggest that fixations to the word fixated next are shorter in duration. The parafoveal preview enables a reader to access length, orthographic, phonological and morphological information of the word next to the fixation. However, preview benefit depends on the linguistic and orthographic features of a language. Studies in English suggest orthographic and/or phonological codes are accessed in parafoveal preview in that language while morphological codes are accessed in Hebrew. The present study investigates parafoveal preview benefit in Urdu, one of the lesser studied languages. We examined if presentation of borrowed tri-consonantal root that forms the major part of Arabic loan words in Urdu in the parafoveal region facilitates word recognition when the target words are base words, root words with inflections and root-derivative words. The results showed that mean response time differed significantly between base word condition and root inflectional word as well as root derivative word conditions.

Key words: Parafoveal preview benefit, Tri-consonantal root, Urdu, Word recognition, Derivational morphology.

1. Introduction

Word identification often starts before the eyes fixate on a target word as readers get information from the parafovea (Rayner, 1998). When the information is extracted from the parafovea there is partial activation of lexicon and this activation is integrated with subsequent activation from the foveal word (Rayner, McConkie, & Zola, 1980). Parafoveal preview benefit is derived from abstract letter codes (McConkie, & Zola, 1979; Rayner, McConkie, & Zola, 1989), orthographic codes from the beginning letters of a word (Inhoff, 1989; Rayner, Well, Pollatsek, & Bertera, 1982), phonological codes (Henderson, Dixon, Peterson, Twilley, & Ferreira, 1995; Pollatsek, Lesch, Morris, & Rayner, 1992). However, while studies in English showed no morphological preview benefit (Inhoff, 1989; Lima,

1987; Kambe, 2002) robust preview benefit was observed in Hebrew (Deutsch, Frost, Pollatsek, & Rayner, 2000; Deutsch, Frost, Peleg, Pollatsek, & Rayner, 2002).

Parafoveal preview benefit is either assessed in the context of a sentence or in single word identification. When assessing for parafoveal preview benefit during sentence reading, duration of fixation on the target word is measured for single word naming. The parafoveal preview benefit is studied with the boundary paradigm in eye tracker studies (Rayner, 1975, 1978).

Studies in Hebrew and other languages suggest that preview of morphologically related words induce a priming effect on target words (Bentin, & Feldman, 1990, Deutsch, Frost, Pollatsek, & Rayner, 2000) since morphological units may help in organizing mental lexicon and may mediate lexical access. The morphological analysis of an upcoming word during reading may be influenced by an ongoing processing of the sentence context (Deutsch, Frost, Peleg, Pollatsek, & Rayner, 2003). The process of lexical access may consist of both lexical retrieval of whole words and a mandatory parallel processing of morphological decomposition.

Urdu, like Hebrew, has a non-concatenated derivational morphology. All verbs and a majority of nouns and adjectives are comprised of two basic derivational morphemes: root and word pattern as seen in Semitic language. The root consists of three consonants and word pattern consists of vowels or consonants and vowels. Root usually carries the core meaning of the word and word pattern determines its word class and other grammatical characteristics.

Hebrew has great internal variability in the distributional properties of the morphemes and semantic transparency. But the morphemes in Urdu are not necessarily contiguous units within a given word. They often obscure the phonological and orthographic transparency of constituent morphemes.

Findings in Hebrew (Deutsch, Frost, Pollatsek, & Rayner, 2000) suggest that: a) Naming is fastest for the identical words (same preview and target word); b) a significant preview benefit effect of 12ms is observed when preview consists of the root; c) morphological units mediate word identification in Hebrew; d) a parafoveal presentation of letters with root morphemes facilitates identification of target word, since root words can be dispersed within a word; e) Hebrew presents a unique case where a sub-lexical unit that

mediates lexical access does not have linear characteristics. Thus in languages like French and English, readers may attend to first letters of a word to initiate lexical processing but in Hebrew readers may be tuned to attend morphological units in word identification.

Given the reported similarities between Hebrew and Urdu, these findings serve a sure forerunner for making a hypothesis for the present study. We hypothesized that the presentation of root letters in the preview should differentially influence response time for recognition of stem/base word, extension (inflectional) word, and derivative forms.

2. Participants

Thirty Undergraduate students between the age group of 20- 25 years (Mean age= 21.67; SD=2.41), who studied Urdu as their first language throughout their education and whose mother tongue was Urdu participated in the study. They were paid INR 50.00 for their participation. Every participant had normal /corrected vision and normal hearing. Informed consent was obtained by all the participants. The study was approved by the Research Committee constituted by the University for the candidate.

3. Stimulus Material

The stimulus words were Arabic loanwords in Urdu with tri-consonantal root as in Arabic. The experimental set had presentation of stimuli with a preview of Arabic triconsonantal root in the parafovea and a target in the foveal region. The target words were formed from root letters across three conditions. Each condition had 40 Arabic loan words. Condition 1 (C1) had the base word, condition 2 (C2) had extensions of the base-word (inflections) and condition 3 (C3) had derivative of the base-word or the root letters. The preview was tri-consonants root for all the conditions. A total of 120 words were chosen for three conditions. Word length of target words in condition1 was 3-4 letters (Mean length=3.65; SD = 0.66) and in conditions 2 and 3 was 4-6 letters (C2: Mean= 4.78, SD=0.65; C3: Mean=4.8, SD=0.75). The root letters that form all the target words across conditions were of 3 letters each, meaningless and not pronounceable. The letter sequence of the target word in the base-word and extension condition was similar to the arrangement of roots in the preview and was not the same in the derivative condition most of the time (see Table 1).

	Preview	Target		
	Root	Word	Transliteration	Meaning
C1- stimuli with identical words as the roots	اخر	آخ	<u>Aakhar</u>	unchangeable, imperishable
C2- Stimuli with an extension of the words in C1	اخر	آخري	<u>Aakhari</u>	last, final
C3- Stimuli with Derivatives of the root word used in C1	اخر	آخرت	<u>Aakherat</u>	afterlife, the ultimate, the ending

Table1. Stimuli type for three conditions used in the experiment.

4. Procedure

Stimuli were presented using E-Prime experimental software in a simple priming parafoveal preview benefit task. Each trial started with a “+” sign at the centre of the screen on which the subjects were asked to fixate. This display lasted for 500ms and was followed by a ‘preview screen’ which consisted of a “+” sign in the centre and a preview stimulus located to the left of the plus sign. The distance between the “+” sign and the first character of the preview stimulus was about 3° visual angle. The preview stimulus was timed at 50ms. The ‘preview screen’ was replaced by a ‘target screen’ with the target appearing at the centre and remained on the screen until the participant responded. The ‘ready screen’ would allow the participant to go to the next trial. Participants were instructed to look at the “+” sign and recognize the word in the display as fast as they could. When the ‘ready screen’ appeared they were asked to write the word they just saw. This was done to ensure reading accuracy. Response time from the onset of the target until the participants responded was considered as dependent variable (see Figure 1).

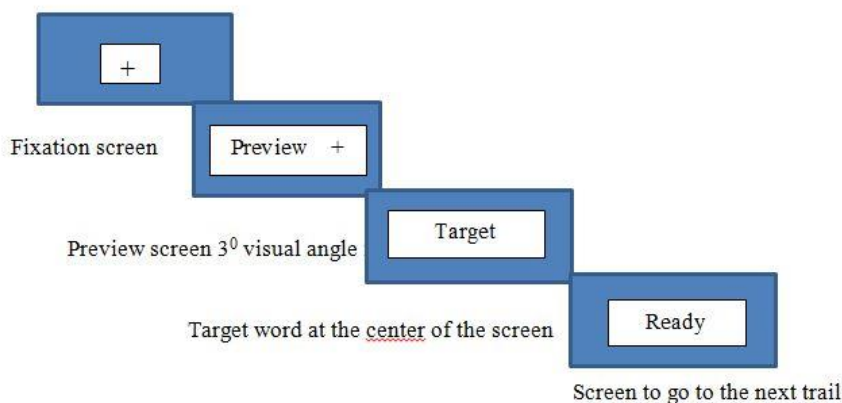


Figure1. Presentation of stimuli

Participants were presented with 10 practice trials before the experimental trials started. Each participant was presented with 120 trials for each experiment. All trials were randomized ensuring no trial repeated.

5. Results

RTs were averaged across subjects and across items.. The effect of outliers was minimized by establishing cut-offs 3 standard deviation units above and below the mean for each participant and item.

The mean and standard deviations for response time (RT) and word length (WL) are provided in Table 2. We performed the data analysis with a repeated measure analysis of variance (ANOVA). The obtained F ratio was significant ($F(2, 58) = 7.902; p = 0.001$). The post hoc analysis revealed significant difference between conditions C1 and C3 ($p = 0.007$) and conditions C2 and C3 ($p = 0.031$). No significant difference was observed between conditions C1 and C2 ($p = 0.632$).

A one-way ANOVA for word length for target word across conditions revealed significant differences ($df = 2, F = 16.3, p = 0.00$) and post hoc analysis revealed significant differences in word length between condition 1 and condition 2 ($p = 0.01$) as well as condition 1 and condition 3 ($p = 0.01$) but no significant difference was observed between condition 2 and condition 3 ($p = 0.66$).

	C1		C2		C3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
RT	581.4	143.45	624.39	123.9	678.21	156.83
WL	3.65	0.66	4.78	0.65	4.8	0.75

Table2. Mean Response Time and Word Length for three conditions.

6. Discussion

The focused attention model of parafoveal processing (McConkie, 1979; McConkie, Zola, Blanchard, & Wolverton, 1982; Morrison, 1984) suggests that reading proceeds through a sequential identification of words in the foveal vision and partial information about the word is obtained parafoveally. Preview benefit is recorded in many languages. The benefit is a function of the visual and phonological similarities between preview word and target word (Pollatsek, Lesch, Morris, & Rayner, 1992). Studies in Chinese (Lee, 2000; Tsai, Tzeng, Hung, Yen, 2004) observed that phonetic radicals have a privileged role in early stage of character identification and that phonological codes might be slower or less important than orthographic coding. However, studies that employed naming task (Cheng & Shih, 1988) and semantic judgement task (Perfetti & Zhang, 1988) suggested that phonological and /or orthographic preview benefit could be additive. These findings have been explained by the current reading models like the interactive-activation models (see Plaut, McClelland, Seidenberg, & Patterson, 1996; Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989)

Presentation of root letters in the preview, in the present study, resulted in shorter response time for base words as compared to derivative words. The difference between mean RTs for derivative target words and inflectional words was also found to be significant, though the difference between base word condition C1 and inflectional word condition C2 was not significant. The RT for identification of inflectional words in general was shorter than the RT for inflectional words, but the difference was not significant. It may be noted that the mean word length difference between these two conditions was however significant. On the other hand, the inflectional word condition and derivational word condition did not differ on mean word length; but there was a significant difference between the conditions on RT. Thus, one may infer that parafoveal preview benefit was there for identifying words under these conditions though derivational words seem to be processed differently. We do not know

whether seemingly more similarities between the base words (C1) and inflectional words (C2) in terms of semantics and orthographic features had an effect on the results obtained.. Though Urdu has rich derivational morphology and word formation rules are similar to Hebrew and Arabic, especially for Arabic loanwords in Urdu, findings of the study should be treated cautiously. More controlled studies may help clear the issues discussed in the present study.

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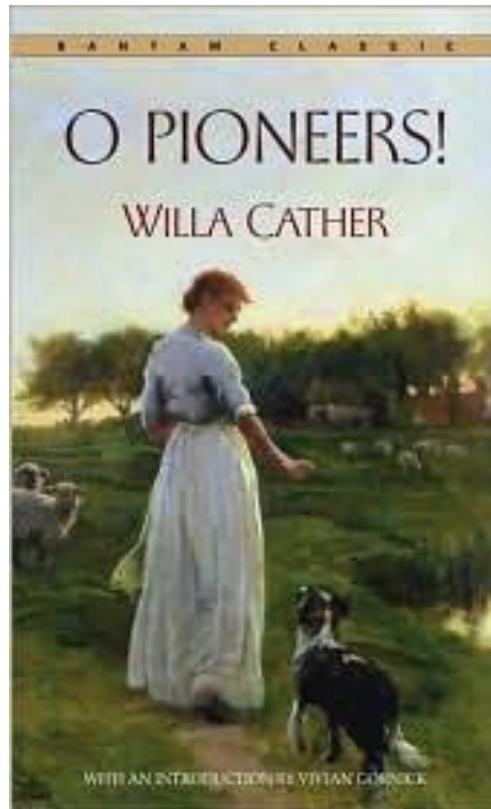
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Azeez Rizwana, M.Phil. and Prakash Padakannaya, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
University of Mysore
Mysuru 570006
Karnataka
India
azeez.vf@gmail.com
Prakashp99@gmail.com

**The Fusion of Human Love and Love of the Land –
A Transcended Renewal in Willa Cather’s *O Pioneer!***

Mrs. Bharthi. B., Ph.D. Research Scholar



Abstract

Writers play an important role in the environmental movement, indirectly by promoting a vision of life in harmony with nature, and directly by inspiring action to preserve landscapes and ecosystems. The sacred quality of places enables individuals to make intimate contact with the wild world and in turn with the wild self. The conservation of nature requires a respectful attitude towards place and landscape. The land is seen as a community to which people belong, and naturally it is used with love and respect.

Key words: prairie, pioneers, land, divides, Willa Cather

Introduction

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Mrs. Bharthi. B., Ph.D. Research Scholar

The Fusion of Human Love and Love of the Land –
A Transcended Renewal in Willa Cather’s *O Pioneer!*

Like nations, regions exist as combinations of geographical fact and historically determined, culturally bound perceptions. All regions have defining myths or symbolic identities. Midwestern writers have tended to dwell on picturesque qualities in the quieter landscape, less dramatic beauty, resulting from subtle irregularities and the juxtaposition of human and natural elements. Even when they have been harshly critical of the region's culture, Midwestern writers have written lovingly of its landscape and unique places. Willa Cather has justified herself as a regional writer by concentrating on the theme of feeling one with the land in the novel *O Pioneers!*

Attachment to the Prairie Landscape – Sense of Dislocation

The central character becomes physically and emotionally attached to the prairie landscape in order to achieve spiritual fulfilment as well as financial success. Although Cather was born in Virginia and lived most of her adult life in eastern cities, she is most often identified with the long grass prairie landscape of southeastern Nebraska, the setting of many of her best fictions. Cather's family moved to Nebraska in 1883, when the region was still in its frontier period. Having previously known only the forested, hilly terrain of Virginia, the nine-year old Cather initially felt homesick and lonely in the "Divide," as the country between the Republican and Blue Rivers was known, experiencing "a kind of erasure of personality" in the vast and seemingly barren plains. This sense of dislocation motivated Cather to befriend her immigrant neighbours, especially the Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, and Czechs, who then greatly outnumbered American born, settlers in Nebraska. These foreign born pioneers, made up for what she missed in the country. She particularly liked the old women; they understood her homesickness and were kind to her. Cather came to view the pioneers as heroic creators of the Midwestern cultural landscape.

O Pioneers!

O Pioneers!, Cather's breakthrough work, is the novel which established her Nebraska as a notable locality in the geography of world literature. It is the struggle of westering pioneers to subdue the wilderness and establish Euro-American civilization in the vast continental interior. Cather derived her title, from Walt Whitman's poem *Pioneers! O Pioneers!* to idealise the collective heroism of a central inland race.

National Pride

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Mrs. Bharthi. B., Ph.D. Research Scholar

The Fusion of Human Love and Love of the Land –

A Transcended Renewal in Willa Cather's *O Pioneer!*

Cather shares with Whitman a sense of national pride in the adventure of western settlement. It's a fusion of two different stories, one about a Swedish pioneer woman and another about a tragic love affair. Life in the city and in the country is compared and contrasted through characters representing urban and rural experience. Tragedy occurs in the form of unpredictable weather and economic trends, as well as in the fortunes of love and health. *O Pioneers!* begins in winter in a hostile environment, when the prairie is bitterly cold and depressingly colourless, which signifies the theme of struggle. Alexandra Bergson, the novel's central character, triumphs victoriously by solving the enigma in this epic struggle.

Central Character - Alexandra Bergson

Alexandra Bergson is from a strong hostile section of Nebraska. Her father dies at the opening of the novel and leaves the farm, as well as his wife and three sons, in the capable hands of Alexandra. It is a wild and a bitter land which these foreign tailors, joiners and shipbuilders have challenged. They are small and without strength, when compared to the vast prairies. The malicious spirit of the grassland destroys their cattle with blizzards, hogs with cholera, horses with snake bites and broken legs in prairie-dog holes, and often cuts off the people themselves, in the prime of their years. Many surrender and return to the soft ways of the cities. But confident Alexandra persuades her brothers not to sell but to expand to ensure confidence for the future.

The author foreshadows the rewards to come from this faith by a sentimentalism, wherein the great spirit of the unfriendly soil, bends a little before Alexandra's love and her indomitable will. The rewarding fruit of this vision is the transformation of the wild land into the prosperous countryside with telephone wires, white roads, gayly painted farm houses, red barns with gilded weathercocks, still windmills, and mile-long furrows in the squares of corn.

Tragedy and Strength of Character

A theme of minor interest is the fatalistic acceptance of the tragedy in which Frank Shabata shoots his beautiful wife Marie and Alexandra's beloved youngest brother, Emil, when he finds them dreaming in each other's arms in the tall grass like two enchanted children. Marie was simply too beautiful for this world, and helplessly and innocently she brought destruction upon herself and others because of an excess of loveliness.

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The Fusion of Human Love and Love of the Land –

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Alexandra's strength of character is established when her dying father gives her the responsibility of the farm and the family. According to John Bergson, the father, land in itself is desirable and he subscribes to that old-world belief. He believes in the land's potential, but has an idea that no one understood him, on how to farm it properly. "In eleven long years John Bergson had made but little impression upon the wild land he had come to tame".(20) He could not emboss any difference either in its appearance or its productivity. The only accomplishment after years of crop failures and natural disasters is to have completed payments on his land (a typical farm of the prairie Midwest: a full section of six hundred and forty acres). He senses that his intelligent and diligent daughter, will come to understand the enigmatic land.

His two older sons Lou and Oscar are hard workers but suffer from the dearth of foresight. Mrs. Bergson contributes significantly to the household, but "had never quite forgiven John Bergson for bringing her to the end of the earth; but now that she was there, she wanted to be let alone to reconstruct her old life in so far as that was possible."(30)

Create the Old World in the New

Thus Mrs. Bergson attempts to create the old world in the new. Among her family, only Alexandra has the courage, patience, and intelligence to make the prairie bloom, to transform it from undifferentiated space to significant place. Alexandra learns not only from her neighbors' mistakes, but from their successes too.

O Pioneers! thus presents the land tamed by imagination and love rather than by force and active will. Alexandra's epiphany on the 'Divide' is evident of Cather's aesthetic tendency to romanticism. Alexandra prefers to live a simple life, in close contact with both nature and her employees, while her brothers lack love for the land and represent the new materialistic spirit of the settled Midwest.

Placelessness

Another conflict involving place and placelessness in *O Pioneers!* is between Alexandra and Carl Linstrum, her childhood friend. Carl fails as an engraver in Chicago and returns years later to visit Alexandra. At the age of thirty-five, Carl is a displaced country parson. In a conversation about the advantages and disadvantages of a mobile, unattached

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life, like his own, and of a settled grounded existence, such as Alexandra's, this would-be couple reveal their envy of the others' a lot. When Carl expresses his sense of failure, Alexandra tells him that she would rather have had his freedom than her land. But Carl insists that attachment to a place brings greater happiness in the long run.

Here you are an individual, you have a background of your own, you would be missed. But off there in the cities there are thousands of rolling stones like me. We are all alike; we have no ties, we know nobody, we own nothing. When one of us dies, they scarcely know where to bury him We have no house, no place, no people of our own"(123)

At the novel's end, when Carl has begun to succeed in Alaska, and has again returned to Nebraska, Alexandra is presented with the opportunity to broaden her horizons, to travel with Carl to Alaska. They plan to marry, with the understanding that they will return to the farm, where even after tragedy and loneliness there will be great peace and freedom. Alexandra's first devotion is to the land, and Carl must give up his wanderlust, if not, become a creature of place, to become her husband. "We come and go," Alexandra tells Carl, "but the land is always here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who own it _ for a little while."(308)

Incarnational Feeling

Alexandra Bergson is especially gifted at intuiting the incipient fertility of the grudging prairie. The ineffable power abiding within the slumbering grasslands touches her in a manner that is vaguely incarnational: "Then the Genius of the Divide, the great, free spirit which breathes across it, must have bent lower than it ever bent to a human will before. The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman. "(65)

Through her devotion, therefore, Alexandra takes possession of the prairie in a way no mere conqueror ever could, and in the only way any mortal can ever hope. Alexandra's surrender to the prairie is perhaps best seen in her recurring fantasy of willful abandonment to a shadowy but gentle lover-god. Her reverence for the land, which in her fantasy approaches passionate love, enables Alexandra to see that, while the rolling grasslands endure, all that lives upon them eventually passes away. Her tranquility with this reality perhaps serves as the finest measure of the depth of her submission to the land. Joining Alexandra in this

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worshipful stance toward the land is crazy Ivar, a harmless, though mistrusted, eccentric. Like Alexandra, Ivar's respect for the land is borne of a deep spiritual awareness:

He expressed his preference for his wild homestead by saying that his Bible seemed truer to him there. If one stood in the doorway of his cave, and looked off at the rough land, the smiling sky, the curly grass white in the hot sunlight; if one listened to the rapturous song of the lark, the drumming of the quail, the burr of the locust against that vast silence, one understood what Ivar meant.(38)

Theme of Union

Cather's theme of union with land opens up to encompass the entire natural world. Her characters have the ability not only to apprehend nature, but to respond to the divine force dwelling within:

Alexandra drew her shawl closer about her and stood...looking at the stars which glittered so keenly through the frosty autumn air. She always loved to watch them, to think of their vastness and distance, and of their ordered march. It fortified her to reflect upon the great operations of nature, and when she thought of the law that lay behind them, she felt a sense of personal security. (70-71)

The scene of spring plowing is highly intoxicating in the novel *O Pioneers!* The brown earth, with such a strong, clean smell, and the power of growth, its fertility, yields itself eagerly to the plow, so much so that Alexandra, who has devoted all her youth to it, feels she is getting rich just from sitting still. And Carl, who loved painting from his childhood and who has been away for over ten years, sees the most beautiful picture on his return. It is a picture that he can never paint for the canvas. The endless land, and the painter, Alexandra are thus identified.

Embodiment of Intrinsic Beauty and Solid Wisdom

Alexandra, the heroine of the book, is the embodiment of intrinsic beauty and solid wisdom, which are closely associated with the land. The several passages which describe her best, combine land, farm work, scenery and her good feelings in a remarkable manner. In the year of great drought which forced others to sell their land and leave, Alexandra came back

with much more confidence after having examined the situation in the neighbouring village. On her way back, her radiance surprised her younger brother, who was attached to her.

For the first time, perhaps, since that land emerged from the waters of geologic ages, a human face was set toward it with love and yearning. It seemed beautiful to her, rich and strong and glorious. Her eyes drank in the breadth of it, until her tears blinded her....That night she looked up at the starry sky, thought about the laws governing the movement of the universe, and felt a new attachment to the land.” (65)

Alexandra is a typical country girl: steady, honest, and sometimes even a bit slow. But she can absorb new ideas, and run risks. This is the quality of pioneers and entrepreneurs. She evinces lot of care to people, in return nobody bothers to reciprocate. The only person who understands and appreciates her beauty is Carl Linstrum. Carl alone understood what land means to Alexandra and fully appreciates her outstanding ability in managing her farm. The courtship is a little too long, characteristic of that time and of an agricultural society. This kind of love is gold and is as solid as diamond. The pioneering spirit is still the crystallizing quality of Americans as a whole. Cather writes about the frontier in an era infused with nostalgia for a mythologized American past and with anxiety about America’s post frontier purpose.

O Pioneers! offers a portrayal of Alexandra, a Swedish immigrant, who suppresses her need of personal satisfaction for love of the land. Her personal life, her own realization of herself, was almost a subconscious existence; like an underground river that came to the surface only here and there, at intervals months apart, and then sank again to flow on under her own fields. Her youth and natural yearning for human love, which she had pushed down below the conscious surface, rise again and again in recurrent dreams, where she has the illusion of being lifted up bodily and carried lightly by some one very strong. It was a man, certainly, who carried her as easily as if she were a sheaf of wheat. To her, he seemed to be yellow like the sunlight, and there was the smell of ripe cornfields about him. It is in her dreams, a psychic process beyond the control of the conscious mind, that human love and love of the land interact and fuse.

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Profound Memories

However deeply buried in the unconscious the memories of an individual's past may be, there are profounder memories still of one's cultural heritage; hence it is conceivable that all minds have a common substratum. After being out all night in a storm, Alexandra remarks to her friend that the feeling of the penetratingly cold rain carried her back into the dark, before her birth, where you can't see things, but they come to you, somehow, and you know them and aren't afraid of them. Maybe it's like that with the dead. If they feel anything at all, it's the old things, before they were born. There are nevertheless a number of poetic passages manifesting the author's regional affection and pride in the courage and grit of the pioneers who, at great cost, subdued this wild land.

Cather preferred to think of *O pioneers!* as her first novel. This is the story of Alexandra Bergson, the oldest child of a Swedish immigrant who dies in the struggle to tame the wild land. Alexandra holds the family together with her industry and vision, keeps her plodding brothers from giving up the struggle, and plans a brilliant future for her beloved younger brother Emil. Alexandra and her brothers prosper, but the brothers turn out mean-spirited. And when Emil falls in love with their neighbour's wife Marie, tragedy ensues. But Alexandra endures, and when her old friend Carl Lindstrom returns from years of wandering, she can look forward to a serene middle and old age with him. The novel ends on a note of transcendental renewal: Fortunate country, that is one day to receive hearts like Alexandra's into its bosom, to give them out again in the yellow wheat, in the rustling corn, in the shining eyes of youth."

The relationship of Alexandra Bergson to the land is unique. She directs her sexual vitality towards the land and experiences a recurring fantasy of being carried away in the arms of an earth lover, which she tries to purge by pouring cold water over her body. This fantasy and her attempt to suppress it suggest the extension of her sexual self to the land, which at times represents her lover and at times is associated with her body; she felt "close to the flat, fallow world about her, and felt, as it were, in her own body the joyous germination in the soil"(204)

Conclusion

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This is a story forever repeating itself in the history of man's development, ancient but often renewed, common but soul stirring. A group of people, old and young, men and women, leave their homes for a primitive and desolate tract of land, and start cultivating it with their bare hands. It is hard work. Some fall before they can realize their goals, and some retreat in the face of difficulties. Victory belongs to those who persist and command confidence, willpower, and wisdom. Nature with its wild resistance to man is subdued by such people. The desolate plains and hills become fertile land. The pioneers finally create for themselves good homes and a good life, and eventually realizing their self-fulfillment in their struggle to survive. This little novel possesses a unique charm and heartrending beauty. This beauty comes from a deep love for the land. One can say that from the words on the flyleaf to the last sentence of the book there burns a passion, a persistent pursuit, a burning attachment, hope and disappointment, pain and happiness, yearnings, selfless devotion, which the author holds for the land deep in her heart. The special sentiments toward the land come from the hard struggle to subdue it.

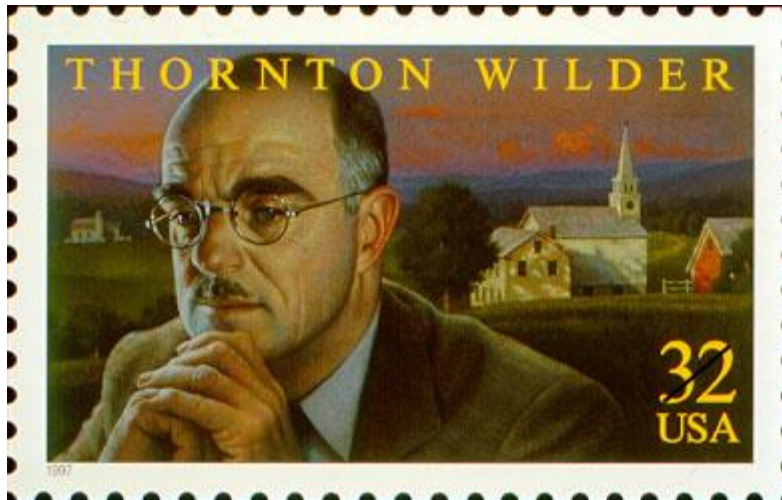
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Mrs. Bharthi. B., Ph.D. Research Scholar
Nirmala College for Women
Coimbatore 641018
Tamil Nadu
India
bharthimarudhoo@gmail.com

Thornton Wilder as a Dramatist with a Humanist Vision and Strong Religious Bent of Mind: An Appraisal

Dr. S. Chelliah, M.A. Ph.D.



Courtesy: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/gaybears/wilder/>

Abstract

Thornton Wilder was one of the most famous dramatists of 20th century, primarily a humanist who was optimistic towards life than most of his contemporary writers. His works and plays comprised a curious combination of the traditional and innovative, provincial and urban and modern and classical. This paper throws light on his humanistic vision and strong religious bent of mind and also proves that he is a person who used traditional literary forms in new ways.

Key words: Thornton Wilder, dramatist, humanist vision, religious bent of mind

Humanists of the Renaissance

Thornton Wilder, one of the renowned dramatist of the 20th century, was primarily a humanist. Generally speaking, the humanists of the Renaissance asserted the intrinsic value of men's life before death and the greatness of his potentialities and the rise of humanism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was an attempt to project

the nature of man as a men, not the nature of men
as a soul weakly wandering between birth into sin
and death as a gateway to hell. Men as men, a being
in his own right, whatever one's religious view of him
might be (Niels 96)

Humanism

Humanism implies that every human being by the mere fact of his existence has dignity, that his dignity begins at birth and the possession of this dignity ought to be the continuum of his life and 'humanism' is a word connoting a concern for men and his earthly welfare. "After all, all things are men's" (Hartley 11). No doubt, humanist attitudes regarded man as the crown of creation Shakespeare marvelously expresses this point of view in Hamlet:

"---What a piece of work is man. How noble his reasons,
how infinite in faculty, --- how like an angel in apprehension,
how like a god". (P883)

Humanism aims at providing a coherent answer to the questions of human existence and assumes that human existence can be made worthwhile by realization of everyone's possibilities in devotion to a common humanity. A humanist is of the opinion that a man is enabled to select his made of life. Man, to be human, must live by values which are higher than anything deducible from nature. Man has intuitive glimpses on a higher reality behind the flux and flow of nature. Hartley Gratten writes:

"The man who denies a higher reality and derives his values from nature is naturalist. The man that identifies higher reality with God is a religiousist but there is a medial position where man formulates his values for a close study of the reality discernible in literature and from life scrutinized through literature. Such a man is a Humanist" (P16)

New Humanism

The 'new humanism' affirmed the dignity of man. It was believed that reason and passion, head and heart, must be held in balance and any improvement of the human lot would

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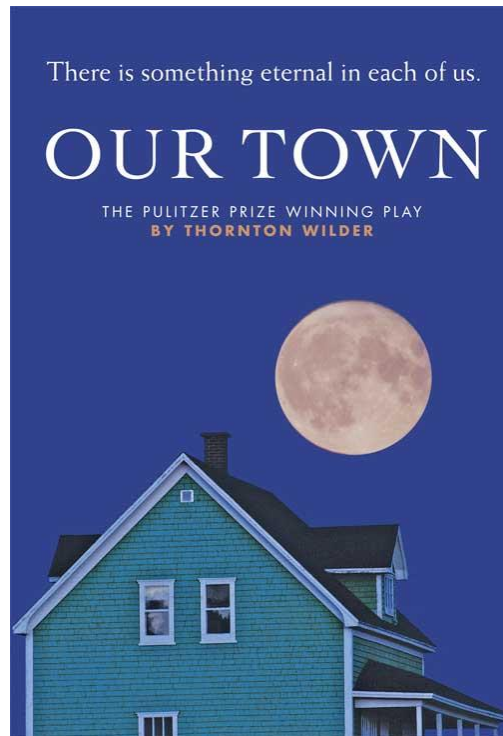
have to be accomplished from within morally, rather than from without, through changing the environment or reforming society. Thornton Wilder's humanism was akin to the New Humanism in its insistence upon the validity of human values inherited from the cultural past. His humanism like Eliot's had a religious foundation. Born in Madison Wisconsin in 1897, Wilder became a school teacher and a professor. But above this, he was found to be renowned novelist and dramatist of his age. Besides, he was a literary artist of great range and sensibility. More than most of other novelists and playwrights of his generation, he was

“a product of the humanistic tradition promulgated by the art schools and colleges” (Rex 29).

Thornton Wilder's Humanism

His humanism lies in the basic belief concerning human nature and the value of the cultural past. To Wilder, anything that life was to have would have to come from the individuals themselves and that the first step in the creation of a meaningful existence was commitment with love, to responsibility for others. Wilder responded affirmatively, to humanistic thought and vision in life and literature.

Wilder's primary concern is to celebrate humanity. Like Walt Whitman's Wilder's Christian humanism consisted of an attitude, a faith that life means something a conviction that all values must have the human individual at the centre if they are to be worth anything. Anything that bound the human spirit and prevented its freedom to love and create was the target of Wilder's critical humanism, Wilder's ethical convention that man is compelled to be free and that “Life has no meaning save that which we confer upon it” (Malcolm 79), derives from his metaphysical belief that which man is alone in a universe that does not know he exists.



Wilder's Plays *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*

Wilder's play *Our Town* has a positive optimistic attitude towards life while *The Skin of Our Teeth* conveys the message that man must never be discouraged in continuing the pursuit of intellectual development. Through the characters of Antrobus, Mrs. Antrobus and Henry, Wilder brings out the urge in man to strive and develop his intellect. In these plays, the 'nuclear' family is the family of the human race and its main purpose is to teach the lessons necessary for the human family. This means creative involvement with others in everyday life – not with the idea of reforming society but – with the - will a courage to help in making their way smoother:

“The moral choice of man is comparable to the construction of a work of art; for like the artist man is forced to create his own world” (Gilbert 302).

Thornton Wilder in *Our Town* shows an amazing step forward, embracing all creation by beginning with the small town in New England. It is man's belief that the cause of man's unhappiness is not his failure to achieve sustain greatness but his failure to delight in the beauty of ordinary human existence,

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“It is a little play with all the big subjects in it; and it is a big play with the little things of life lovingly impressed into it” (P177).

Wilder dramatizes the daily life of Grover’s corners, its living and dead, its birth and death statistics *Our Town* is nothing but a celebration of daily life in the knowledge of death’s inevitability, involving the ordinary events in the lives of ordinary people. Each act centres around the family life which is preceded by a street scene involving the casual conversation of such characters as the milkman, the constable and the paper boy – town folk in general. Act – I consists of scenes showing a complete day in the town and in the Webb’s and Gibbs’ households, where George and Emily are growing up. In Acts II and III, family scenes are shown again, but in relation to George and Emily’s Courtship and marriage and Emily’s death respectively.

Thornton Wilder portrays life on stage. The characters are not just actors enacting the role of someone. It is a true presentation of the lives of all people. In the play Our Town, Wilder presents two families - Webb and Gibbs and makes us feel the family atmosphere through their actions and conversations:

Rebecca : Ma: What dress shall I wear?
Mrs. Gibbs : Don’t make a noise. Your father’s been out all night and needs his sleep. I washed and ironed the blue gingham for you special.
Rebecca : Ma: I hate that dress” (P 14)

This dialogue shows an ordinary event which occurs in almost every household. Whatever happens in the play is an expression of the chief events in the lives of all people;

“It is life rather than the individual that is being enacted; that life is presented rather than represented, and that the people and the place and the time are the “All,

the everywhere and the Always” (Rex 76).

Phases of Man’s Life

Wilder gives three acts “Daily Life’, ‘Love and Marriage’ and ‘Death’. In a nutshell, these three are the phases of man’s existence. Man goes through all activities as though he were created to perform them during his lifetime. *Our Town* is projected as a picture of priceless value even though it is the most common and routine events in life. Life is a ‘waste’ when man fails to realize the value of every moment. He is unaware of the ordinary wonders of day-to-day events but goes through the daily rituals of life such as sleeping, eating, going to school, falling in love, begetting children and finally accepting death as a part of life. The play takes place within a small English town – Grovers Corners. In all three acts, we come across the same people who do not venture beyond that town. There is nothing sensational or special in the lives of the families. They go through life as though every action of theirs is an essential part of human life. All the personal joys and emotions of the characters like Dr. Gibbs and Editor Webb do represent the complete sum of the human passions. Emily is presented as the one important character who throws light on the importance of human life. Emily’s is an urgent lament for the lost opportunity to enjoy simple pleasures. Wilder in his preface to the plays states:

“The play is an attempt to find a value a value above all price
for the smallest events in our Daily life” (Wilder X)

Wilder emphasizes the fact through three acts that every event is nothing but a complete circle of life. The town is a place where everyone knows everybody else. The people are only concerned about what happens within the town. The people do not show much interest in what happens around that little town. They waste their time talking about who is rich and who’s poor? (P25). But there is no remedy for this. The life that people lead in the town is mechanical as the stage manager says:

“Yet every night those families sit down to supper and the father
came home from his work and the smoke went up the chimney...
The children are at home doing their school work. The days running
down like a tired clock” (P32).

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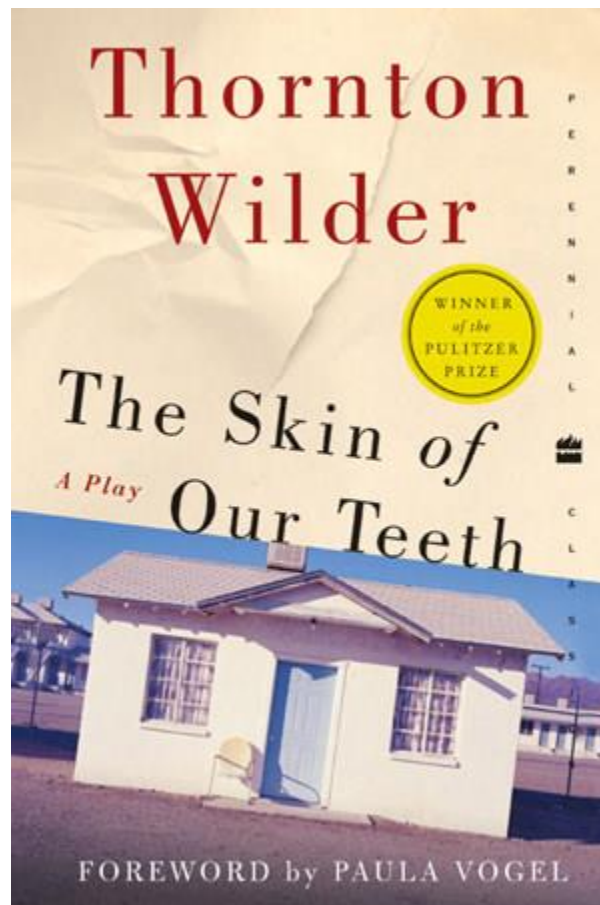
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Essentials of Human Existence

All these are ordinary events in our life. But man takes them to be the essentials of our human existence. He does not stop to realize that each moment that has gone by is precious and that he would never again retrieve it. Mrs. Gibbs, like all other housewives, gets up early, cooks meals all day, washes, irons and in addition goes and chops wood for fuel. The town is also not free of gossip. As typical of women folk, they find time for gossip. To Emily, being alive is just moving about in a cloud of ignorance; it is just a going up and down, unaware of trampling on the feelings of those around you. Ignorance and blindness is the happy existence led by us as living beings. Everyone should realize, as Emily does, that failure to realize the value of life is essentially a failure to live every moment.

The Skin of Our Teeth



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The Skin of Our Teeth is nothing but a comedy about George Antrobus, his wife and two children, Henry and their maid Sabina. The story of man's struggle for survival and his wonderment over why he so struggles is presented, with pathos and comedy and also with gentle irony.

“The under lying theme that of man's struggle, survival, Cimbing, falling destroying himself, being destroyed, surviving by the skin of the teeth but passionately and stubbornly and touching alive is an ancient theme” (P.203).

The three acts of *The Skin of Our Teeth* involve the struggle of mankind to survive the periodic disasters that threaten it with extinction: Glacial invasion in the first act, flood in the second act and war in the third act. The three acts pit man against nature, man against moral order and man against himself. “The characters are all allegorical figures on three levels; as Americans, as biblical figures, and as universal types” (Simon 162). The very title of the play brings home the point that the human race has power to survive. The Antrobuses, as Americans, are shown by Wilder to manifest their relationship to human destiny in their everyday lives.

Sabina, the Maid

Sabina, the maid who is sharp-tongued, temperamental and very conscious of her feminine charms, is the one who introduces the human situation. George and Maggie Antrobuses represent Adam and Eve as the name Antrobus indicates “All mankind” yet because they stand for their entire race, they must have genuine human qualities as well. Man continues his pursuit of intellectual development, even it times of calamities Androbus here is always found working, trying to discover the alphabet and the anticipation table. Even while the earth is turning to ice, Antrobus is out inventing and making up new numbers. He sends a telegram home conveying the news that he has discovered the wheel and asks his wife to burn everything except Shakespeare in order to keep the children warm. On reading this, the telegraph boy presents us with an affirming statement, “a few discoveries like that and we'll be worth freezing” (P.125). Antrobus after recovering from his despair asks Mrs.Antrobus to teach Gladys the beginning of the Bible and he teaches Henry to recite the multiplication tables. Survival, here, is a matter of will and

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courage based upon faith in humanistic and religious values. Survival as pictured in the second act, depends also on the acceptance of moral responsibility. Sabina partially succeeds in seducing Antrobus and asking him to divorce his wife. Antrobus nearly fails but is saved only at the moment of the flood when he leaves Sabina-fair weather behind and accepts his responsibilities to his “family”- mankind. Man is torn between his responsibilities to his family and his desire for the easier life of indulgence. He is not able to bear the sight of his daughter Gladys wearing red stockings. He knows at once that it is Sabina’s doing. It is Mrs. Antrobus, who draws his attention to Gladys saying:

“I married you because you gave me a promise.
And when our children were growing up, it wasn’t
a house that protected them; and it wasn’t our
love that protected them – it was that promise.
And when that promise is broken – this can happen” (P.201-202)

Mrs. Antrobus removes the raincoat with which she had covered Gladys’s stockings and Antrobus is stunned. He says’

“Gladys!! have you gone crazy? Has everyone gone
Crazy? Turning on Sabina. You did this. You gave
them to her’ (to Gladys) you go back to the hotel
and take those horrible things off (P 202)

But it was only after he hears that Henry hit a man with a stone that he fully recovers and tells Sabina ,”I have to go and see what I can do about this”(P 203). Antrobus waves at the beginning but redeems himself at the last movement. In Act III, Antrobus still has Sabina and Cain to contend with and is weary and disheartened but he again makes the decision to accept his responsibility to the human family. George, Sabina, Maggie and Henry, who as can represent the opposing self, Wilder spreads out his view of the human condition. Just as the various elements of personalities are frequently at war with one another within each human being these characters also quarrel and complain but only to discover that they cannot exist separately.

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Use of Ordinary Speech to Portray Characters and Their Intent

Wilder's humanity expresses itself in the play just as in all others through ordinary speech, through it does so in the midst of complex action. The skin of our teeth presents the theme in its most abstract, complex form, but presents it forcefully nevertheless. The bright and dark aspects are shown in the personality of Henry Cain, man against himself, is to be presented and tolerated because of the challenge it delivers which forces men for his own production to enlarge whatever is valuable in himself. This firm conviction that life is a process worthy of men's effort underlines the cycle of the play. This play, no doubt, speaks clearly about indestructibility of the human race and inspires hope and optimism for the future.

To Conclude

To conclude Wilder undertakes a more optimistic attitude towards life than most of his contemporary writer's. His intention is to show that it is within the power of every individual to rise above despair by exercising the great moral and ethical principles of love self-sacrifice, justice and mercy. He never portrays a situation as hopeless as long as there is a will to act. Wilder is both studious and convivial. His novels and plays comprised a curious combination of the traditional and innovative, provincial and urban, modern and classical. American and European timely and timeless. No doubt, Thornton Wilder was a humanist with a strong and a religious bent, a dramatist and a novelist who used traditional literary forms in new ways.

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Dr. S. Chelliah, M.A. Ph.D.
Professor, Head & Chairperson
School of English & Foreign Languages
Department of English & Comparative Literature
Madurai Kamaraj University
Madurai - 625 021
Tamilnadu
India
aschelliah@yahoo.com

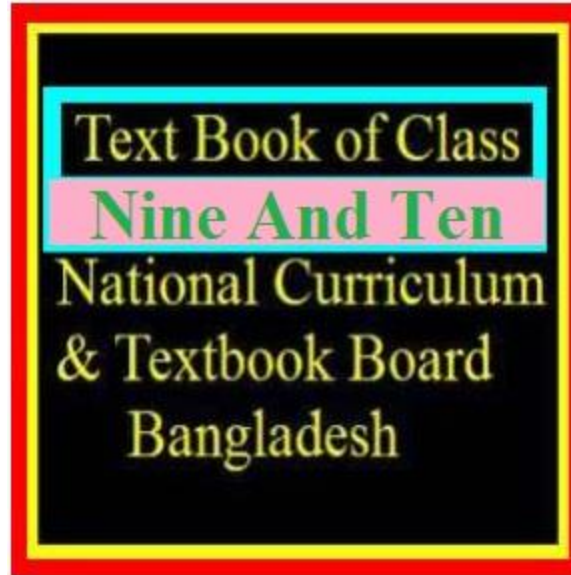
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Preference of the Learners towards Literature Based Materials in the Present Textbook of Classes IX and X in Bangladesh

Farjana Khanum, M.A.



Abstract

The present study aims to emphasize the effectiveness of using literature in the textbook of classes ix-x in Bangladesh. It reviews the arguments for using literature in the language classroom. It is found that literary texts provide wide scope to explore multi-dimensional use of the language in the classroom. The study seeks the preference of the learners' towards using literature based materials in their present text book. In the empirical study the data is collected from five different schools through questionnaire survey. To analyze the data Likert's scale is used. The major findings indicate that learners like to deal with literature based materials like short stories, poems and simplified versions of literary pieces. The study also finds that huge amount of group work and pair work that are provided by the present textbook of classes ix and x are not done in the classroom. In the last the study recommends some suggestions in order to make the teaching-learning process more effective in Bangladesh.

Key Words: EFL, Bangladesh, textbook, literature, CLT

Preliminaries

As a result of globalization it has become the basic need for all of us to be competent in English. Now it is used as a means of world communication, diplomacy, science and technology, trade and commerce, research and information. Like many other non-native English-speaking countries English education in Bangladesh is marked by several problems. Teaching materials or textbooks play an important role in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in a context where English is used as a Foreign Language (EFL). In such a context a textbook provides the primary (perhaps only) form of linguistic input. It meets a learner's needs or expectations of having something concrete to work from and take home for further study. It is very important to make the textbook effective with selective contents in the teaching-learning process. But the current textbook of class ix-x in our country is not found effective due to wrong selection of contents.

Like many other countries English language teaching-learning process in Bangladesh is running based on the conventional concept of method. With the introduction of CLT, the textbooks from primary to higher secondary level in Bangladesh have been written following the principles of this new approach. But, most of the contents of these textbooks do not appear to be effective for classroom teaching. Learners cannot exploit these contents properly due to lack of their effectiveness. To improve the quality of English teaching in our country, it is necessary to make the English textbooks effective. Many teachers and experts are now of the opinion that the English textbooks of the secondary level of education do not have sufficient amount of reading texts and whatever amount they do have are not much appealing to the learners. These materials do not appear to be attractive to them and they do not feel interested to read them or participate in the activities designed on them. That is, the materials do not sound effective to engage learners in practicing the language. If their preference towards literature based materials becomes positive, it can be thought that it will be effective for them.

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Again, they also complain that the textbooks contain only one unit of literary texts and that too is placed at the very end. As the literary texts are placed at the last portion of the textbook, teachers very often do not get chance to teach them in the classroom. For want of literature learners do not get pleasure in dealing with the textbook in the classroom. Many ELT practitioners now think that the textbook in Bangladesh need to be vigorously revised and the amount of literary contents should be increased.

It should be admitted that there are arguments for and against the use of literature for ELT. Most common argument against the use of literature in language classroom is the structural complexity and uniqueness of its language.

But there are so many experts who argue for using literature in the language classroom. Daskalovska and Dimova (2012) worked on the causes of using literature as a tool of language teaching. They argued that inclusion of literature in language teaching materials will provide students with the opportunities to experience and use the language more creatively and to develop greater awareness of the language they are learning.

Khatib & Teimourtash (2012) proposes using abridged short stories in the EFL classroom settings of Iran and finds that literature is the best to open the critical thinking faculty of the learners in language classroom.

Rana (2009) works on teaching language through literary texts in ESL classroom. He emphasises on the use of literature in the communicative classroom and especially, on the Indian classroom. Widowson (cited in Rana, 2009) claimed that ‘study of literature is fundamentally a study of language in operation’. His view is based on the realization that literature is an example of language in the use and is a context for language use.

Mixon and Temu (2006) argue in their essay that there is strong support for story telling in pedagogical theory. Stories that are based on real-life incidents experienced by students themselves can help the learners appreciate and respect the culture and the values of various

groups. Krashen (1982) also supports this view that stories lower the young learner's affective filter, allowing them to learn more easily.

According to Kohan and Pourkalthor (2004) literature plays a motivating role in the classroom and holds high status in many cultures and countries. For this reason, students can feel a real sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature. Also, literature is often more interesting than the texts found in course books. As a result, instructors should agree that literary texts encourage students to read, and most literary texts chosen according to students' language proficiency levels and preferences will certainly be motivating. In most of the EFL context young or secondary level learners feel a kind of frustration towards the language. Pleasure of literature will remove the fear and frustration towards the language and the learners will be motivated using the language.

Research literature shows that literature helps to achieve linguistic competence, facilitates communicative activity, motivates the learners towards the target language, promotes critical and analytical ability, enhances emotional intelligence, helps to achieve vocabulary and pronunciation etc. However, all literary texts are not appropriate and the amount of literature to be used has to be decided on the basis of the level of the students and also of the nature of contextual demands.

Learners' and teachers' preference towards literature based materials plays a major role to make the teaching learning process effective (Farjana 2014) in an effort to find the effectiveness of literature based materials in relation to the various aspects of the Communicative Language Teaching at the secondary level in Bangladesh. As part of that larger study, this article presents the collected data especially on teachers' and learners' preference to literature based content in the textbook.

Objective of the Study

The present study aims to identify the preferences of the secondary students to the literature based materials in the English textbook. This study presents an estimated picture about

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the students' likings, disliking and preferences to literature based materials. As the primary sources of data are the subjects' own insights into the learning process, the focus is on the actions that the learners consciously employ to facilitate learning, and, as Oxford (1989) suggests, make it more enjoyable.

Methodology

The study has made a questionnaire survey based on the preferences of the learners in order to investigate whether learners of Bangladesh prefer literary texts in their present textbook of classes IX and X. For this purpose 100 students of classes IX and X from five schools of mainstream education situated in the district of Mymensingh and Netrokona were taken as respondents. Of these five schools, three were Non-Government and two government schools. Since the number of the Non-Government school is larger than that of the government school in Bangladesh, three Non-Government schools were taken against two government school.

The questionnaires used in this survey consisted of 14 and 13 items. The statements of the questionnaire were presented both in English and Bangla for easy understanding of the participants. In order to capture the responses of the respondents, a Likert scale with five options (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree) indicating the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the statements of the questionnaire was used.

Table 1: List and Type of the schools:

Names and Locations of the Schools Selected	Types of the Schools Selected	Number of the Learners Surveyed
Mukul Niketon High School, Mymensingh	Non- Government	20

Biddamoyee Government Girls' High School, Mymensingh	Government	20
Gouripur Pilot Girls' School , Gouripur	Non- Government	20
Netrokona Govt. Girls High School, Netrokona	Government	20
Dutta High School, Netrokona	Non- Government	20

The participants were asked to answer all the items of the questionnaires honestly, giving their preferences and views regarding using literature-based contents in the English textbook of classes IX-X. The participants were randomly selected from the target population. In case of the students questionnaire survey English teachers in the selected schools were requested to explain the statements of the questionnaire to the participants. Respondents were asked to mark the extent to which they agree or disagree with the items of the questionnaire.

Results of the Questionnaire Survey of the Learners

Table 2: Statements of the questionnaire, and Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations of Responses of the Learners (Total number of Students=100)

There were 14 statements in the learners' questionnaire and all the statements were intended to know about learners' views and preferences regarding different aspects of the use of literature in their textbook. The Mean scores and the SDs of their responses are presented in the table 2 below.

In respect of the Mean score of the respondents' responses on the statement has been worked out. In this respect, strongly agree = 5, agree =4, undecided =3, disagree =2 and strongly disagree =1 point or points have been counted as the values of the responses. The Mean scores above 4 are regarded as 'very high', above 3 but below 4 as 'high', above 2 but below 3 as 'low' and below 2 as 'very low' level of preferences. To show the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the learners' preferences, standard deviation is also measured.

Table-2**The Results of Learners' Questionnaire Survey**

SL. No.	Statements	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I think in our context reading text can play a vital role to learn	4.1	0.18
2	I think our textbook of classes ix & x should include more amount of reading texts than it does at present	4.2	0.14
3	Story based texts will be more enjoyable to me than knowledge- based or information based texts	4.6	0.28
4	If presented in simplified version, some extracts from famous novels or dramas can prove very interesting and attractive as reading text	3.72	0.14
5	A poem gives us pleasure and stimulates our imagination	4.2	0.20
6	I think whole class interactions such as asking and answering questions, debate or discussion on some topic are very useful in our context	4.55	0.14
7	I think a literary text contains various kinds of linguistic elements and therefore, we will get better exposed to language when we will read it	3.9	0.15
8	I think there should be a significant amount of literary texts in the textbook for class ix-x	4.2	0.20
9	I get much pleasure to read a text if it is about a fairy tale, or a myth or any kind of story	4.05	0.15
10	I like to participate in a activity if it is guided by my teacher	4.52	0.25

11	I like to do activities on such texts as are interesting to read	3.7	0.13
12	I do pair work and group work as per the instructions given in my textbook.	2.11	0.18
13	I will feel freer to talk about a literary text than to talk about knowledge-based or other kind of text.	3.6	0.15
14	I think reading a text helps me to learn new words and new grammatical rules.	4.36	0.21

Statement 1 has ‘very high’ Mean score (4.1), which indicates that reading text can, according to the opinions of our learners, play very vital role in our context.

Similarly, ‘very high’ Mean score (4.2) of statement 2 indicates that the present textbook of classes ix-x does not include significant amount of reading text at present and therefore it should include more amount of reading texts.

Statement 3 has 4.6 Mean score which falls to the category of ‘very high’. Statement 3 signifies that our learners will enjoy story-based texts far more than knowledge-based or information-based texts.

Statement 4 has ‘high’ Mean score (3.72) and suggests that some extracts taken from famous novels or dramas and presented in simplified version can prove attractive reading texts to our learners.

Statement 5 deals with poems as reading texts and has ‘very high’ Mean score (4.2). Therefore, the ‘very high’ Mean score of this statement indicates that our learners very strongly like to see poems in their textbook as the poems give them much pleasure and stimulate their imagination.

Statement 6 has the highest score which is 4.55. This statement signifies that according to the opinions of our learners whole class interactions are the most suitable activities for our context.

Statement 7 has ‘high’ Mean score (3.9) which means that students believe that literature contains varied kinds of linguistic element and therefore, they can get better exposure to English by reading literary texts.

Statement 8 has ‘very high’ Mean score (4.2) which signifies that learners strongly support the idea that their textbook should contain significant amount of literary texts along with other kinds of texts.

In the statement 9 the Mean score is ‘very high’ (4.05). According to the learners’ response to the statement, it can be said that the learners of our country will get much pleasure in reading some texts if the texts are about some story, may it be about a fairy tale or a myth.

In the statement 10 the Mean score is 4.52 which signifies that the learners strongly agree to participate in the classroom activities under the guidance of their teacher. That is, teacher-centered classroom is strongly preferred by them.

Statement 11 has ‘high’ Mean score (3.7) signifying that learners like to participate in such activities as are interesting to read. That is to say, if the texts are interesting, they like to participate in the tasks and activities made on these texts.

Statement 12 enquires whether the learners participate in the group or pair works as per the instruction of the textbook. It has ‘low’ Mean score (2.11) which signifies that though the textbook has lots of pair and group work these are not done in the classroom

Statement 13 enquires whether learners feel freer to talk about a literary text than to talk about a knowledge-based or other kind of text. The mean score 3.6 of their statement indicates that they have higher preference' for literary texts than other kind of texts.

Statement 14 deals with the potentiality of the reading text in enabling learners to learn vocabulary and grammatical rules and has 'very high' Mean score (4.36).The Mean score signifies that the learners strongly believe that reading text helps them to learn new words and new grammatical rules.

Discussion on the overall Results of the Students' Questionnaire Survey:

The overall results of the students' questionnaire survey show that the students of Bangladesh at the secondary level want more reading texts in their textbook than they do have at present(statement 2, Mean 4.2). They think that in the context of Bangladesh reading text is very much useful for learning English (Statement 1, Mean 4.1). They also think that story-based reading text in the form of short stories, poems, and extracts from novels and dramas will be more attractive than other kinds of texts such as knowledge-based or information-based texts. (Statement 3, Mean 4.6, statement 4, Mean 3.72, statement 5, Mean 4.2, Statement 9, Mean 4.05). It is so because literary reading texts give them much pleasure and comfort, which they do not get in other kinds of texts.

The results also show that the learners of Bangladesh like to learn under the guidance of their teachers (Statement 10, Mean 4.52). They think that under teachers' control whole class interaction like discussion, debate, asking and answering etc. will be more useful in our context (statement 6, Mean 4.55). They also think that activities like pair work and group work are not suitable in our context. That is why though there is ample presence of pair work and group work in their textbook; these kinds of work are not done in the classroom practices (statement 12, Mean 2.11). The learners think that the literary reading texts help them to learn grammatical rules and new words since literary reading texts contain grammatical rules, vocabulary and other linguistic element abundantly. If reading texts are sufficient in amount the learners can learn the language more effectively (statement 14, Mean 4.36). They again think that the whole class

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interactions will be better effective if they do get literary subjects as topics for their discussion. In that case they will feel free and interested to talk about the topic (statement 13, Mean 3.6).

The results show that the learners of Bangladesh think that they can be better exposed to the language through reading their texts. They also think that reading texts contain various kinds of linguistic element (statement 7, Mean 3.9). The learners of Bangladesh have very little scope for exposure to English other than through their textbook. That is why they think that their textbook should include significant amount of literary texts (statement 8, Mean 4.2).

The standard deviation of the results shows that the highest standard deviation is .28 and the lowest is 0.14. The other numbers are in between the highest and the lowest. Therefore, it can be said that the learners of the secondary level of Bangladesh are mostly homogenous in their preference and opinions though sometimes the variations are a little bit wider.

Discussion on the Overall Results of the Students Questionnaire Survey

The learners of Bangladesh strongly believe that reading texts play very vital role to learn the English Language and there should be more amount of reading texts in the textbook (Means 4.1 and 4.2, statement 1 and 2 respectively, table 2).

The data shows that if story-based texts are used in the textbook they will be more enjoyable to the learners than information or knowledge-based texts. The learners show very strong preference towards story-based materials (Mean 4.6, state 3, table 2). In the EFL situation it is difficult for the learners to deal with the knowledge-based texts. The learners strongly believe that the textbook should give priority to story-based texts.

The result shows that the textbook should have variety in the contents. Along with the short stories there can be poems and extracts from novels and dramas. In this regard the learners emphasize on the properly chosen poems and simplified versions of stories (Mean 3.72, state 4, table 2). They also think that poems can be effective tool of stimulating imagination and providing pleasure while reading. (Mean 4.4, state 5, table 2). The language of the stories or the

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extracts should be easy so that the learners can easily deal with them. The learners think that if different kinds of literary texts like fairy tale, myth or other stories are included in the textbook they will get much pleasure (Mean 4.05, state 9, table 2).

The result shows that in Bangladesh English is not learnt through group work and pair that the textbook contains (Mean 2.11, state 12, table 2). Actually, they do not enjoy reading information or knowledge-based texts and do not participate in the pair and group work. Besides, large class size, insufficient class time and cultural factors impede pair work and group work. Therefore, the learners believe that whole class interaction can be very much effective in our context. (Mean 4.55, state 6, table 2). They think that asking and answering question, debate and free discussion can be very much effective than pair and group work in the context of Bangladesh. In this case the reading materials should be interesting so that the learners like to participate in the task and activities set on these interesting texts. (Mean 3.7, state 11, table 2). Learners even feel free to talk about the topics or subjects if they are the topics or subjects of literary texts (Mean 3.6, state 13, table 2).

The result shows the textbook should include such tasks and activities that can be done under the guidance of teacher. Instead of doing group and pair works, the learners like to participate in classroom activities under the guidance of teachers (Mean 4.2, state 10, table 2). Therefore, pair works and group works should be avoided and arrangements should be made for whole-class interactions. In this regard, the textbook should include interesting reading texts in significant amount so that the learners feel interested to participate on whole class interactions on these texts under teachers' guidance.

In the EFL context learning a language means learning grammar, vocabulary and different aspects of language. The learners think that they will be better exposed to various kinds of linguistic elements if they read a literary text (Mean 3.9, state 7, table 2). Like the students he teachers also think that literary texts is very rich in various kinds of linguistic elements and therefore learners can learn these elements of language while reading those texts (Mean 4.2, state 8, table 3). To develop their writing skills grammar and vocabulary should be emphasized.

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The result shows the learners strongly support using literature in the textbook. But what should be the amount of literary texts in a textbook? The learners believe that there should be a significant amount of literature in the textbook. Here the phrase “significant amount” signifies that the major of the learners’ textbook should be literature-based. There can be other kinds of texts in their textbook, but the literary texts should be dominant. It should be mentioned that the Mean score on this point are 4.2 and 4.5 which are very high score (state8, table2).

In this chapter the results of the empirical study have been presented, analyzed and discussed to find principles for designing literature-based materials for English language teaching in Bangladesh. The results show that some aspects of beliefs and preferences of the learners are similar with the present teaching-learning practices of the country.

Summary and Recommendations

The study started with the objectives to investigate the views the learners regarding the use of literature in the textbook of classes nine to ten as well as to provide recommendation for further research.

- 1) The English textbook of classes ix-x should include more amount of reading text.
- 2) Three fourth of the English textbook should be literature-based.
- 3) There should be variety in the topics of the text and literary items like, short story, poems, fairy tales and extracts from novels and dramas should be included.
- 4) Teacher-centered classroom is appropriate for English language teaching in Bangladesh.
- 5) Instead of pair work and group work the textbook should include interesting reading texts and whole-class interaction should be arranged.
- 6) In case of using original form of literature simplified versions should be used.
- 7) Literature should be used to teach writing skill and for this reason grammar, vocabulary and different areas of language should be taught.

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Farjana Khanum, M.A.
Lecturer, Department of English
Ishakha International University
Bangladesh
farjanak24@gmail.com

Purpose and Function of Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre

Dr. Hemant Kumar Shukla and Dr. D.R. Purohit



Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956)

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertolt_Brecht

Abstract:

The present investigation is an attempt to assess and discuss the purpose and function of Epic Theatre in the light of German dramatist Bertolt Brecht's theories and practices. He was of the view that the conventional, orthodox theatre was incapable of presenting his straightforward and progressive views. Brecht disliked the shallow spectacle, manipulative plot, and heightened emotion of melodrama. In his view dramatic theatre carried away the audience with emotions, stopping them to make use of their intellect. He wanted to inform, educate and enlighten his audience. He found Epic Theatre suitable for his objective because it assumes that the purpose of a play, more than entertainment or the imitation of reality, is to present ideas and invites the audience to make judgments on them.

Key Words: *Verfremdungseffekt, Circus Arena, dramatic theatre, Epic Theatre, Lehrstück, gest, Ostranenie*

Social and Political stance of Brecht

Martin Esslin explains the purpose and intention of ‘epic’ theatre saying that “the audience is to be confronted with a body of evidence from which it is to draw its conclusions in a critical, highly lucid state of mind. The emotions are to be involved only at a further remove.” The critical analysis of the social facts, he continues “presented in the concrete form of living pictures, is to produce socially useful emotions such as indignation at injustice, hatred of oppressors, or an active desire for the overthrow of the existing social order.”¹

Brecht writes:

Telling the truth seems increasingly urgent. The Sufferings are greater and the number of sufferers has grown. Compared with the vast sufferings of the masses it seems trivial and even despicable to worry about petty difficulties and the difficulties of petty group.²

At another place, he says that it is in the interest of the people, the broad working masses, that literature should give them truthful representations of life.³

The above-mentioned statements of Brecht reflect his social and political stance pertaining to the critical state of the common people which motivated him to initiate thinking about a new kind of theatre capable of providing these people ‘**truthful representation of life**’, and that was ‘Epic Theatre’.

Berliner Ensemble

Brecht founded ***Berliner Ensemble*** with the following objectives of the Epic Theatre Productions,

1. To portray society as alterable.
2. To portray human nature as alterable.
3. To portray human nature as dependent upon the class to which it belongs.
4. To portray conflicts as social conflicts.

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5. To portray characters as genuine contradictions
6. To portray the development of the characters, situations and events as discontinuous, full of leaps and bounds.
7. To make the dialectical method of looking at things pleasurable.
8. To capture the achievements of classics in a didactic sense.
9. To establish unity between realism and poetry.⁴

A Practical Theatre

Brecht's is a **practical theatre**, a means to an end; its beauty must spring from function, from its role in the business of living. Nothing could be more alien to it than an aesthetic experience as an end in itself. But from the mid-thirties onward, Brecht tries not to reduce theatre to a series of dry-as-dust demonstrations. To see possible improvements for the world, to hope for their realization, to plan for them, to realize something of what makes the world what it is and of one's own role in important processes. Learning, Brecht points out, can be a pleasure, provided it is not only buying knowledge in order to resell it later; so "theatre remains theatre even when it is instructive theatre, and in so far as it is good theatre it will amuse."⁵

Assumptions of Epic Theatre

Epic Theatre assumes that the purpose of a play, more than entertainment or the imitation of reality, is to present ideas and invites the audience to make judgments on them. Characters are not intended to mimic real people, but to represent opposing sides of an argument, archetypes, or stereotypes. The audience should always be aware that it is watching a play, and should remain at an emotional distance from the action; Brecht described this ideal as the *Verfremdungseffekt*--variously translated as 'Alienation Effect' or 'Estrangement Effect'. It is the opposite of 'the suspension of disbelief'.⁶ Brecht writes, "It is most important that one of the main features of the ordinary theatre should be excluded from (Epic Theatre) the engendering of illusion"⁷

A Reaction against Other Popular Forms of Theatre

Epic Theatre was largely a reaction against other popular forms of theatre, particularly the realistic drama pioneered by Konstantin Stanislavski. Like Stanislavski, Brecht disliked the shallow spectacle, manipulative plot, and heightened emotion of melodrama; but whereas Stanislavski attempted to mirror real human behavior through the techniques of his Stanislavski System, and to immerse the audience totally into the world of the play, Brecht saw this as another form of escapism. The social, political focus of epic theatre was also a departure from the radical theories of Antonin Artaud, who sought to transport audience on an entirely non-rational level.⁸

By abandoning the pretence that the audience is eavesdropping on actual events, by openly admitting that the theatre is a theatre and not the world itself, the Brechtian stage approximates to the lecture hall to which audiences come in the expectation that they will be informed, but also to the **circus arena**, where an audience, without identification or illusion, watches performers exhibit their special skills. What distinguishes the theatre from the lecture room or the circus, however, is the fact that it produces living illustrations of historical or imaginary happenings among human beings.⁹

That's the reason that theatre continues to be instructive as long as it's capable enough to amuse the audiences.¹⁰ The pleasure which his theatre was now permitted to give was the pleasure we feel when we discover new truths, the exhilaration we experience when we enlarge our understanding. In this scientific age, Brecht wanted his audience to experience some of the exaltation felt by the scientist who has uncovered one of the mysteries of the universe. For Brecht, whose own curiosity and thirst for knowledge were boundless, regarded the instinct of inquiry as a social phenomenon not less pleasurable, nor less imperious, than the instinct of procreation.¹¹

Epic Theatre versus Old Dramatic Theatre

As has already been mentioned that Brecht's '**Epic Theatre**' is opposed to the old '**dramatic theatre**'; for the traditional form of drama, with its exposition, climax and denouement, it substitutes a loose sequence of scenes, each of which is self-contained. The

general implications of the action are emphasized by means of posters, projections and direct apostrophe of the audience. In keeping with these methods of production, different styles of acting are required: the actor must himself or send the audience **'into a trance'**; instead of identifying himself with his part, he must demonstrate it. The spectator on the other hand, instead of being emotionally involved, must follow the action cool-headedly; **he must not 'sympathize' but 'judge'**, he must take sides and reach a rational conclusion.¹²

The aesthetic theories are subordinated to a single purpose-the 'activation' of the spectator, in other words, the propagation of Marxist doctrine. All the plays of Brecht's maturity are merely parables designed to illustrate this doctrine. The subordination of artistic values to political objects implied the conscious renunciation of those poetic qualities which distinguished his earlier, pre-Marxist writings.¹³

Modeling Characters and Situations on Patterns of Human Behavior

By modeling characters and situations on patterns of human behavior in the light of behaviouristic psychology, he thought to emphasize the scientific nature of his work and make plain his anti-metaphysical stance. Similarly, to prevent the spectator from wallowing in the pleasure of having his emotions aroused and satisfied, the actors-and thus the author-have to address the audience directly. The spectator must be instructed about the real i.e. the social and historical, causes of the events which he is seeing, and ultimately, **he must be stirred to action.**¹⁴

Brecht used comedy to distance his audiences from emotional or serious events and was heavily influenced by musicals and fairground performers, putting music and song in his plays. Acting in epic theatre requires actors to play characters believably without convincing either the audience or themselves that they are truly the characters. Actors often address the audience directly out of character and play multiple roles.¹⁵ Brecht thought that it was important that choices the characters made were explicit and tried to develop a style of acting wherein it was evident that the characters were choosing one action over another. For example, a character could say, "I could have stayed at home, but instead I went to the shops."¹⁶

He experienced the functioning of epic theatre in such a way:

The stage began to tell a story. The narrator was no longer missing, along with the fourth wall. Not only did the background adopt an attitude to the events on the stage by big screens recalling other simultaneous events elsewhere, by projecting documents which confirmed or contradicted what the characters said, by concrete and intelligible figures to accompany abstract conversations, by figures and sentences to support mimed transactions whose sense was unclear-but the actors too refrained from going over wholly into their role, remaining detached from the character they were playing and clearly inviting criticism of him.¹⁷

Spectator

He further elaborates that the spectator was no longer in any way allowed to submit to an experience uncritically (and without practical consequences) by means of simple empathy with the characters in a play.¹⁸

The spectators of Epic theatre are poles apart from that of dramatic theatre.

The dramatic theatre's spectator says: Yes, I have felt like that too-Just like me-It's only natural-It'll never change-The sufferings of this man appall me, because they are inescapable-That's great art; it all seems the most obvious thing in the world-I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh. While **the epic theatre's spectator says:** I'd never have thought it-That's extraordinary, hardly believable-It's got to stop-The sufferings of this man appall me, because they are unnecessary-That's great art; nothing obvious in it-I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh.¹⁹

Apparently, the spectator of epic theatre is expected to be more accountable and concerned in terms of social and political consciousness.

Role of Epic Theatre

Brocket sums up the role of Epic theatre: “Epic Theatre sees the ultimate effect of drama as occurring outside the theatre. The play stirs up thought and incites the spectator to act for desirable social reforms. In this way, it escapes becoming an opiate and assumes a vital and productive role in men’s lives.²⁰ That is what Brecht expected from the theatre.

The Columbia Encyclopedia has given the Hallmarks of ‘Epic theatre’ as:

- Socio-economic basis for theatre as spectacle, subject matter, and audience involvement.
- Plays/production style as commentary on society; goal is to instigate social change.
- Author as producer, as maker as of any other product.
- Destroy the theatrical illusion.
- Dialectical theatre: discordant, jarring elements (music v. text or commentary by actors, for example) as a way of exploring ideas and man’s contradictory nature. In theory, Brecht’s plays are ‘anti-illusionist’.
- Instead, Brecht’s goal (supported by much theoretical writing) is for the spectator to be involved in the theatrical event-to observe objectively, ponder, and develop critical detachment leading to social action.
- Among other practices, Brecht developed the *Verfremdungseffekt* or ‘Alienation-effect’. *Ostranenie* (making strange) to get at what Viktor Shklovsky calls the ‘literary effect’ and Piscator in fact developed the first epic theatre model.

Other Brechtian Techniques and Practices

According to the same encyclopedia, Other Brechtian Techniques and practices include:

- Signs, placards or projections which tell us what’s going to happen before each scene, to disrupt the illusion, give us a context or message on which to base our observations.
- Masks and puppetry

- Visible stage machinery (exposing the technology of theatre).
- To lessen this pedagogical rigor, Brecht devised the term ‘parable play’ (German *Lehrstück*, literally ‘teaching play’).
- Use of music to interrupt and comment on action.
- Acting exercise to induce the ‘alienation effect’.
- Acting in third person.
- Having actors describe their moves and gestures outside the written dialogue.
- Exploring the ‘gest’ of character. Gest meaning both gesture and gist. Actors are encouraged to explore ‘characteristic gestures’ which sum up a character or a situation or an emotion (eschewing clichés of behavior to induce empathy or illusion.”²¹

Thus, Brecht created an influential theory of theatre-the epic theatre-that proposed that a play should not cause the spectator to identify emotionally with the characters or action before him or her, but should instead provoke rational self-reflection and a critical view of the action on the stage.²²

Notes and References

¹Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963), p. 201.

² Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. John Willet (London: Methuen, 1964), p. 107.

³ *ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴ Anjala Maharishi, *A comparative Study of Brechtian and Classical Indian Theatre* (New-Delhi: National School of Drama, 2000), p. 69.

⁵ Alfred D. White, *Bertolt Brecht’s Great Plays* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978), p. 27.

⁶<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/epictheatre>.

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⁹Martin Esslin, pp. 111-12.

¹⁰*Brecht on Theatre*, p. 73.

¹¹Martin Esslin, p. 112.

¹²H.F. Garten, *Modern German Drama* (London: Methuen & Co., 1964), p. 206.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 207.

¹⁴Hans Reiss, *The Writer's Task from Nietzsche to Brecht* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978), p.153.

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¹⁶*Brecht on Theatre*, p. 122.

¹⁷<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/ger342/brechtet.htm>.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰Oscar G. Brocket, *The Theatre: An Introduction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p.313.

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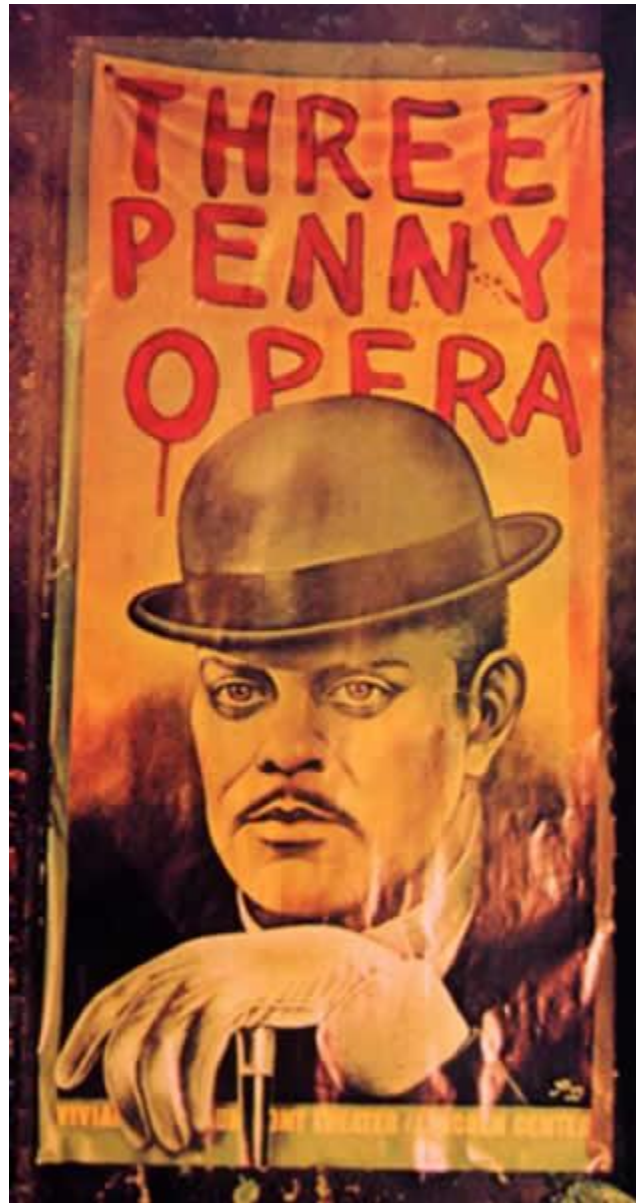


Dr. Hemant Kumar Shukla
Associate Professor in English
M.B. Govt. P.G. College Haldwani (Nainital)
Uttarakhand-263139
India
hemantkumar.shukla1@gmail.com

Dr. D.R. Purohit
Head of the Department
Department of English
Garhwal University Srinagar-Garhwal
Uttarakhand
India
badri_supreme@yahoo.com

The Use of Music in the Light of Brechtian Theories and Practices

Dr. Hemant Kumar Shukla and Dr. D.R. Purohit



Courtesy: <http://www.threepennyopera.org/mediaPosters.php>

Abstract

The present investigation focuses on the musical techniques which could prove to be effective to alienate the audience from being carried out. Bertolt Brecht's disgust with the dramatic theatre which was Aristotelian Theatre in his view motivated him to find out the ways in which the audience could be stopped to identify themselves with the characters, plot and situation. His targeted audience was common and ordinary people. He wanted to make them aware, knowledgeable of the causes of their miseries. Epic Theatre was the result of his long search and research for a theatre which could be capable of catering to the aspirations and desires of the common and ordinary people which were his targeted audience. Music was the area in which he tried to experiment. Whatever he wanted, you will read in the forthcoming lines what kind of the music he aspired. He wanted HIS MUSIC to be setting forth the text, taking the text for granted, taking up a position, giving the attitude. In what way? What were the experiments? Please read the paper.

Key Words: gestus, gestic music, Die Hauspostille, Verfremdungseffekt, The Threepenny Opera

Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956)

Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), a German Dramatist, was of the view that the isolated episodes of the play should retain their individual significance, even if taken out of the context of the play as a whole. In the same way, the non-literary elements of the production like decor, music and choreography should also retain their independence. Music was utilized by Brecht to create alienation effect. Brecht suggests that “words, music and setting must become more independent of one another.”¹ In Epic Theatre, the actors through their singing capability report the human nature, situations, and impulses. They work like a reporter. To keep the audience relaxed and yet receptive, they stimulate their critical faculties and to make them think the Epic Theatre employs the music that is capable of communicating the meaning. Brecht lays down certain rules for the music of epic theatre which are in direct contradiction with the music of dramatic theatre.²

Dramatic Theatre

- Music which heightens the text
- Music which proclaims the text
- Music which illustrates
- Music which paints the psychological situation

Epic Theatre

- Music which sets forth the text
- Music which takes the text for granted
- Which takes up a position
- Which gives the attitude

Variety of Music in Brecht's Plays

Brecht's plays make extensive use of music in a tremendous variety of styles. He secured the services of distinguished composers, such as **Weill, Hindemith, Eisler and Dessau**. Music, at first, was used to break the illusion of reality merely by bringing variety. Later Brecht evolved the theory that whereas conventionally (as in Wagner) music was a narcotic, reinforcing emotion, in the Epic theatre it should provoke thought, dispel illusion and drive out emotion. This led to the idea of '**gestic music**' - music which would inform the audience about "the right intellectual response to events depicted in the drama."³

Theatrical Music

The production of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928 was the first use of theatrical music in accordance with Brecht's new view point regarding the music for Epic Theatre. It is significant to note what Ronald Grey quotes from Brecht on the issue: "The estrangement effect occurs when the thing to be understood, the thing to which attention is to be drawn, is changed from an ordinary, well known, immediately present thing into a particular, striking, unexpected thing. In a certain sense the self-evident is made incomprehensible, although this only happens in order to make it all the more comprehensible."⁴ And this is the matter of everyday occurrences. In the same way Brecht tried to present *The Threepenny Opera*. First, he strictly separated the music from all other elements of entertainment. Even superficially this was evident from the fact that the orchestra was installed on the stage in the full vision of the audience. The orchestra was fully lit up and the titles of the various numbers were projected on the screens at the back during the song sequences and the actors changed their position before the number began. All these things were new, strange to the audience and it must have definitely created visual jerk giving way to

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alienation. Useless to say, the music played a very crucial role in the success of the play. Brecht explains, “The musical items, which had the immediacy of ballad were of a reflective and moralizing nature. The play showed the close relationship between the emotional life of the bourgeois and that of the criminal world. The criminals showed, sometimes through the music itself, that their sensations, feelings and prejudices were the same as those of the average citizen and theatergoer....A trio expressed concern at the fact that the uncertainties of life on the planet apparently prevent the human race from following its natural inclinations towards goodness and decent behavior....In such ways the music took up a purely emotional attitude and spurned, rejected or rather say refused note of the stock narcotic attractions.”⁵

Actors as Singers

In *The Threepenny Opera*, the singers were primarily actors and the songs interruptions; the music was never allowed to swamp the continually lucid text. The melodies were nostalgic, the counterpoint near and the harmonies often disconcertingly prickly, but it was scored for a band of eight musicians only, and the singers come from the world of the theatre and the cabaret, not from the grand operatic stage. Such methods imposed new rules, which were outlined by Brecht in the notes to *The Threepenny Opera*:

Nothing is more revolting than the actor who pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing. The three levels-plain speech, heightened speech and singing-must always remain distinct....As for the melody, he must not follow it blindly: there is a kind of speaking against-the music which can have strong effects; the results of a stubborn, incorruptible sobriety which is independent of music and rhythm’. Music here becomes a kind of punctuation, an underlining of the words, a well-aimed comment giving the gist of the action or the text. And this remains its prime function in all Brecht’s plays.⁶

Clear Separation of Songs from Dialogue

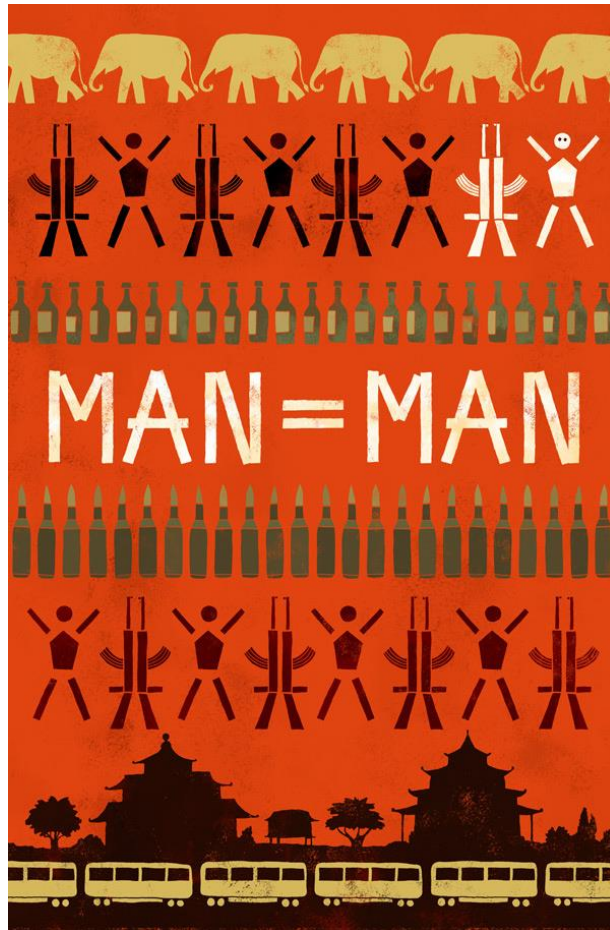
Brecht, throughout his life, followed the principles of *The Threepenny Opera*: clear division of songs from dialogue; no illustrative or ‘psychological’ element in the music; an

orchestra of not more than thirty, and the singer as ‘reporter’ whose private feelings must remain a private affair.⁷

Martin Esslin writes that music in the theatre apart from decor and choreography retains its independence; instead of serving as mere auxiliaries to the text, reinforcing it by stressing some of its features and painting in atmosphere mood or descriptive details. It is raised to the level of autonomous element; instead of pulling in the same direction as the words, it enters into a dialectical, contrapuntal relationship with them. In epic theatre, he says:

“The musical numbers are no longer smuggled in at the point when the emotional charge of a scene rises to a climax and speech merges into song-but are introduced as entirely distinct ingredients of the play, which interrupt its flow, break the illusion, and thereby render the action ‘**strange**’. And within the musical numbers themselves the music does not merely express the mood of the words: it often stands in contradiction to them, comments on them, or reveals the falsity of the sentiments they express.”⁸

Music in Epic Theatre: Used to Break the Illusion of Empathy



Courtesy: <https://scpa.ucalgary.ca/events/man-equals-man>

In the Epic Theatre, music is frequently used to break the illusion of empathy. The characters continuously address the audience directly, explaining and commenting on their action, and pointing the moral. This they do often in a few lines of verse. In addition there are the characteristic ‘songs’, summing up the moral of the story in a concise and trenchant form. H. F. Garten gives the example of Brecht’s play *Man Equals Man*: it is the first of his plays to introduce ‘**song**’ at the culminating points of the action, voicing general reflections and pointing the moral of the case. These songs are for the most part incorporated in his first collection of poetry, published under the title *Die Hauspostille* (‘Book of family progress’, 1927) which served as an inexhaustible source of lyrics for his plays.⁹ Garten cites another example of *The Threepenny Opera* in which the music was given by Kurt Weill. It is in the ‘song’ that the revolutionary challenge is most pungently expressed. Garten quotes the following lines of Brecht in *The Threepenny Opera* which are in conformity with Marxist doctrine that society is ruled by

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economic factors while all moral and religious concepts are mere ideologies serving the interests of the rich:

First comes gobbling, then morality.
First the poor, too, must be allowed
To cut themselves their share from the large loaf.

Actor in Epic Theatre

In epic theatre, the actor, through his songs, comments on the plot and the part which he is playing in order to instruct the spectators about the real social, political and historical causes of the events which he is seeing. But in this process, music can involve the spectators emotionally. Brecht was quite aware that the drama was bound to arouse emotion. He was, therefore, not against emotion but only against empathy. Emotion should not drown the intellect: it had to be harnessed to the didactic and political needs of art.¹⁰ Hans Reiss writes, “Brecht was aware of the perpetual tension between satisfying the emotions and using emotions to arouse criticism; he hoped that the dramatic devices of his Epic Theatre would succeed in resolving this problem”¹¹ That is why, the Epic Theatre actor’s frequent comments on the plot and part through the songs that are meant to prevent the spectators’ emotional involvement. Only then, the spectators can be made aware of the real causes of their sufferings and problems. Only then, they would be stirred to action.

Musical Composition – Gestic Music

The musical composition in the epic production was regarded to be ‘**Gestic music**’ by Brecht for “Gest is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes. A language is Gestic when it is grounded in a Gest and conveys particular attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men”¹² Hans Reiss explains that the ‘gestus’ is a term by which Brecht seeks to denote one whole way of life as it has become historically conditioned. For any gestus arises from the historical situation to which one belongs. But one can choose the class in history to which one wishes to belong. Brecht himself left the *bourgeois*, because it repelled him, and joined the proletariat.¹³ Alfred D.

white interprets 'gestus' as "the basic attitude which informs any particular transaction between people."¹⁴

Brecht elaborates the artistic principle of '**Gestic Music**', "The musician sees this (gest) initially as an artistic principle, and not an especially interesting one. It may perhaps help him to set his texts in a particular lively and easily assimilated way. What is more important is the fact that this principle of looking to the gest can allow him to adopt his own political attitude while making music. For that it is essential that he should be setting a social gest."¹⁵ He further elaborates the point: "The gest of working is definitely a social gest, because all human activity directed towards the mastery of nature is a social undertaking, an undertaking between men"¹⁶ He explains, "A good way of judging a piece of music with a text is to try out the different attitudes or gest with which the performer ought to deliver the individual section: politely or angrily, modestly or contemptuously, approvingly or argumentatively, craftily or without calculation. For this the most suitable gests are as common, vulgar and banal as possible."¹⁷

Brecht was the master of gestic language but his '**songs**' also have these gestic characters. They are even more pronounced, even more clearly magnified, exhibits of basic attitudes, for the music makes the fusion of words and gesture even more compelling. Brecht pointed to the way street singers render the more vulgar kind of popular song with large and simple gestures. His own 'songs' were designed to achieve a similar effect on actor and audience alike by crystallizing an essential, fundamental attitude and exhibiting it with the utmost clarity: despair or resignation, defiance or submission."¹⁸

Fully Visible Orchestra

That the Orchestra, musical instruments are fully visible to the view of the audiences and the musicians were also placed on the stage itself was meant to interrupt the action and to give the audience an opportunity to reflect, says Esslin. The coming of such an interruption is usually announced beforehand by some visible change on the stage: the title of the song may flash on to a screen, special lights may be put on, or a symbolic emblem (e.g. flags and trumpets) may come down from the flies."¹⁹

These mechanical devices through the use of music may help the actors in creating the ‘*Verfremdungseffekt*’, but they nevertheless leave the brunt of the work of ‘making things strange to the audience’. The temptation to identify himself with the character must always remain strong for the actor. Brecht used a variety of techniques including the use of music to enable him to overcome this temptation.²⁰

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⁶ John Willet, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* (London: Methuen & Co., 1977), pp. 131-32.

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¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 205-06.

¹¹ Hans Reiss, *The Writer's Task from Nietzsche to Brecht* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978), p.153.

¹² *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 104.

¹³ Hans Reiss, p.150.

¹⁴ Alfred D. White, *Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978), p.41.

¹⁵ *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 104

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.105.

¹⁸Martin Esslin, p. 119.

¹⁹ ibid., p. 122.

²⁰ ibid., p. 122.



Dr. Hemant Kumar Shukla
Associate Professor in English
M.B. Govt. P.G. College Haldwani (Nainital)
Uttarakhand-263139
India
hemantkumar.shukla1@gmail.com

Dr. D.R. Purohit
Head of the Department
Department of English
Garhwal University Srinagar-Garhwal
Uttarakhand
India
badri_supreme@yahoo.com

Present Situation of Capital Market and the Role of Brokerage House: A Study on IDLC Securities Limited

Md. Sharif Hossain

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Abstract

The capital market plays various roles for strengthening the economy of a country. It acts as an intermediary between surplus units and deficit units of the economy and facilitates savings into investments. Also providing liquidity of these investments, the capital market ensures optimum allocation of resources. All these activities make it the engine for the growth of the economy.

When asked about their expectation about GDP growth of Bangladesh in fiscal year 2012-2013, 69% of the participants believe that growth stays roughly same and 80% said local political instability is the biggest risk to Bangladesh economy in 2013. Majority answered that central bank will keep the monetary policy tools at current level but liquidity situation will improved in 2013 relative to that of 2012. When asked to identify the reason for bearish capital market in 2012, 47% attributed the reason to lack of investors trust and poor corporate governance of listed companies. Also highest 49% participants caution the local political instability is the biggest risk to local capital market in 2013 followed by the lack of confidence of investors. Despite that, 53% and 43% survey participants respectively show their optimism that market will remain moderately bullish or remain at current level. And the expectation about average market turnover is to hover around BDT 4000 to 5000 million (41% responses). When asked why big business conglomerates are not interested to raise funds from primary market, almost half of the participants believe that fear of sharing the true financials with public is the reason. A majority of those surveyed (57%) also attributes the lack of corporate governance of listed companies is the main reason of poor foreign portfolio investment in capital market. But in 2013, overwhelming (86%) consensus is that demutualization of stock exchanges will bring more transparency and increase confidence of investors. Survey participants are bullish for

equity in 2013 and 43% has said that equity will outperform other asset classes. Real estate and saving instruments received both 18% answers respectively. 51% respondent said that their expectation about employment opportunities for professional in financial market remains about the same like 2012 and 41% is optimistic about relative improvement of employment situation.

Key words: GDP, Growth, Demutualization of stock exchange, Corporate Governance.

Introduction

Development of a country is highly depend on the development of capital market, has been receiving heightened attention from the policy-makers in recent years. One explanation lies in the fundamental shift of development strategy reflected in the nearly universal embrace of the private sector as an engine of economic growth. The governments in both developed and developing countries, the international financial institutions which exert tremendous influence on the policy-making apparatus of developing countries and, to a great extent, the intelligentsia have all joined together as ardent advocates of private entrepreneurship. Capital market can play an important role in accelerating economic development through efficient intermediation of savings into productive investments and in fostering the growth of public, private entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Report

The present study aims to find out the carbon image of presence and contribution of the capital market in the economy and prospect of the capital market. Furthermore, the orientation is very useful to detect whether the theoretical knowledge matches with real life scenario or not. Though the title "**Present Situation of Capital Market and the role of Brokerage House: A study on IDLC Securities Limited**" very lengthy area, the specific objectives is to know the present situation & growth of the capital market.

Methodology of the Study

Every research needs methodology which reveals how the researcher is going to achieve his/her objectives of the stipulated study. Social Research states, as a systematic study, research methodology deals primarily with the approaches and techniques as how to undertake a research

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without being biased and prejudiced. It offers a bunch of tactical approaches and logical skills to observe, record, interpret and infer on matters under study. According to **Kothari**, research methodology is a way to solve the research problem systematically and scientifically. The objectives of the study are to explore the “**Present Situation of Capital Market and the role of Brokerage House: A study on IDLC Securities Limited.**” Three research methods- content analysis, questionnaire and interview are used in this study. Content analysis is used for the descriptive part of the study. Interview and questionnaire methods have been used for collecting data for the study. Use of these three methods is supposed to reduce biasness and work as a reliable tool for research. For analyzing the collected data I used Microsoft office (Excel) tools.

Literature Review:

Terminology

To establish the conceptual framework for the research, it is important to provide definitions of key terminologies that are given below:

Capital Market

A capital market is a market for both debt and equity securities, where business enterprises and governments can raise long-term funds. It is defined as a market in which money is provided for periods longer than a year (Sullivan et. al., 2003)

Stock Market Bubble

A stock market bubble is one kind of economic bubble that takes place in stock markets when market participants drive stock prices above their value in relation to some system of stock valuation. (Smith et.al. 1988)

Moral Hazard

Moral hazard is the prospect that a party insulated from risk may behave differently from the way it would behave if it were fully exposed to the risk. A person's belief that they are responsible for the consequences of their own actions is an important aspect of rational behavior.

An investor must balance the possibility of making a return on their investment with the risk of making a loss - the risk-return relationship

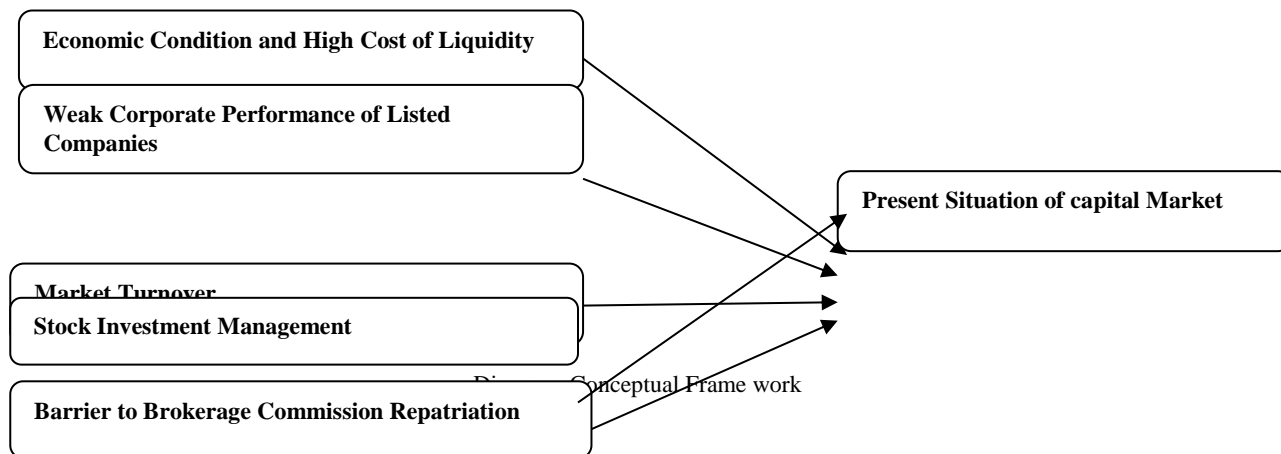
Liquidity

One of the possible causes of bubbles is the presence of excessive liquidity in the financial system that induces aggressive lending banks that make asset markets vulnerable. Economic bubbles often occur when too much money is chasing too few assets, causing both good and bad assets to appreciate excessively beyond their intrinsic value to an unacceptable level.

Previous Research on this Topic

Keeping the objectives in mind of the present study, I had reviewed the existing literatures. The Capital Market Development in Bangladesh: problems and prospects (Mah-mood Osman Imam, October 5, 2000), Capital Market: An Overview (Md. Hasan Imam, 2005), An Overview of Bangladesh Capital Market (AZM Nazimuddin, 2007), Emerging Stock market and the Economy: The Case of Bangladesh (Ahmed, M. Farid, 2000), Equity Market Performance in Bangladesh: An Evaluation Savings and Development (Ahmed.M.Farid, 1998), The Stock market and the Economy: The Indian Experience (Mookerjee.R., R., 1981), Foreign Portfolio Investment: Return, Growth, Determinants and Monitoring- A Critical Analysis (Nafisa H., 1998), Financial deepening in Economic Development (Shaw. E., 1973), Fostering Investor Confidence in the Asian and Pacific Capital Markets (Tarumizu, K., 1993). Dhaka Stock Exchange Monthly Review, (September, 2011), Financial Markets and Institutions (Jeff Madura, 2008) are some of the studies that helped me. However, although these studies offered various insights into the dynamics of the current capital market of Bangladesh, their extent of point of discussion are different and reviewed from different aspects. In this paper I have tried to compile and explain all the relevant information to make the paper successful.

Conceptual Frame Work



Most of the Brokerage of Bangladesh is located in Dhaka and adjacent towns of Dhaka like, Gazipur and Narayangang and some are located in divisional area of Bangladesh like Chittagong, Sylhet, Comilla. For the convenience of primary data collection, I choose IDLC Securities and Trust Securities Dhaka Motijheel branch. Mine target population were Financial Analyst, Trader, Individual Investors, Journalist. I have used primary data. Primary data had collected through interview and questionnaire methods

Composition of Respondents

For questionnaire:

Location	No. of Brokerage House	Respondents	Female	Male
Dhaka	02	30	8	22

For interview:

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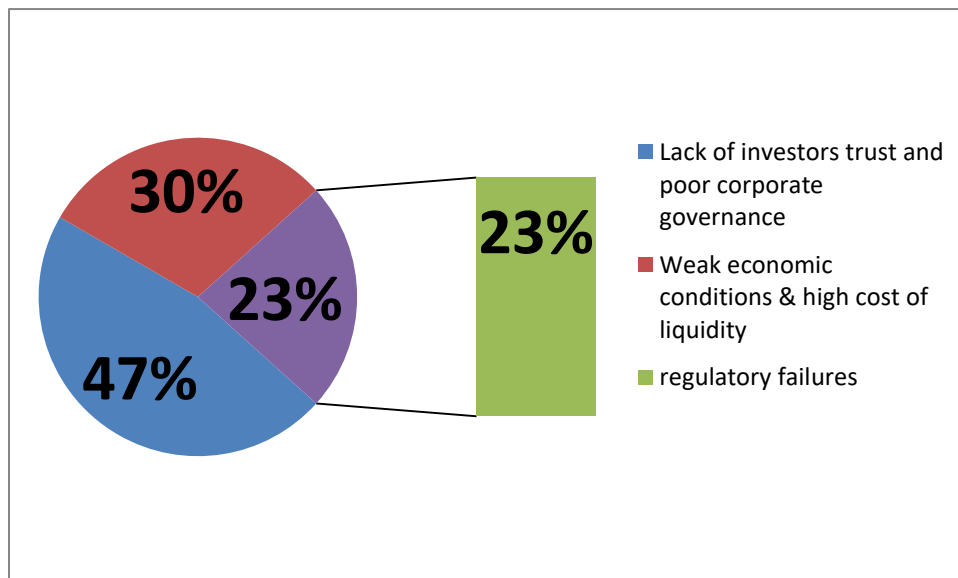
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Respondent	No.
Financial Analyst	04
Trader	09
Journalist	03
Individual Investor	14
Total	30

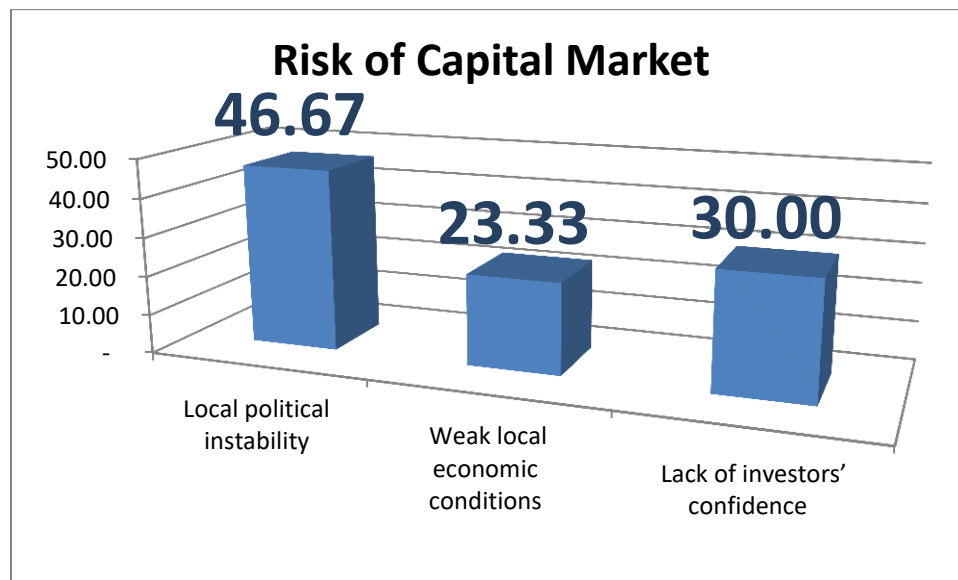
Analysis of Collected Data

A semi-structured questionnaire carrying 16 questions has been developed for knowing the current market situation. Besides, 30 respondents comprising of representatives from Financial Analyst, Trader, Individual Investor and Journalist are interviewed on the same issues. Data collected from both questionnaire and interview are combined for analysis. A mixed (qualitative + quantitative) method is followed to analyze the data.

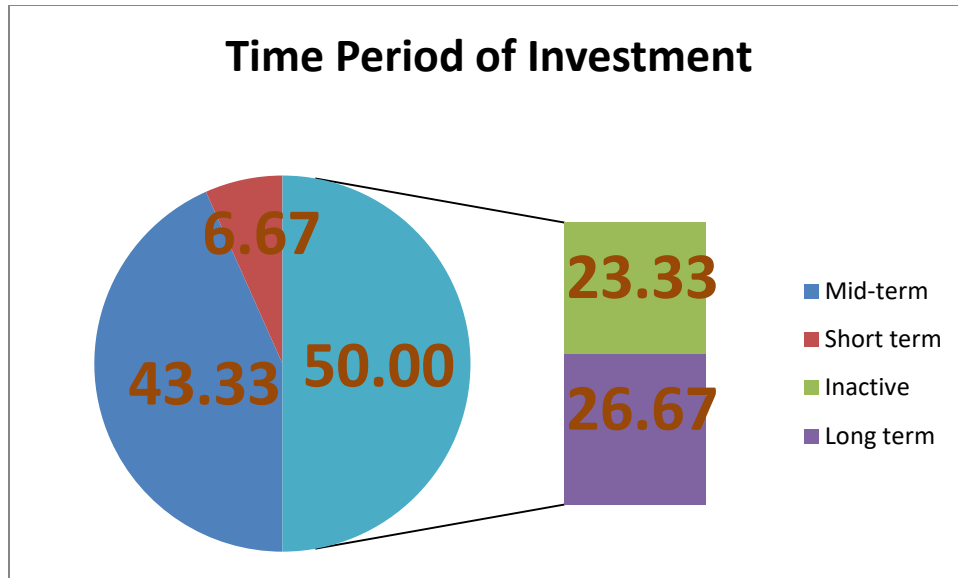
Lack of investors trust and poor corporate governance of listed companies are held responsible for drab capital market performance in 2012 by almost 47% respondents. Weak economic conditions & high cost of liquidity and regulatory failures also contributed to the bearishness of capital market in 2012; about 30% and 23% respondents believe so respectively.



Almost 47% respondents expressed their concern about local political instability and ranked it as the biggest risk to local capital market in 2013. Additionally, a higher proportion of respondents 30% believe that lack of investors' confidence would pose risk to local capital market in 2013. Respondents want to focus more on mid-term and long-term investment strategy rather than short-term strategy in 2013.

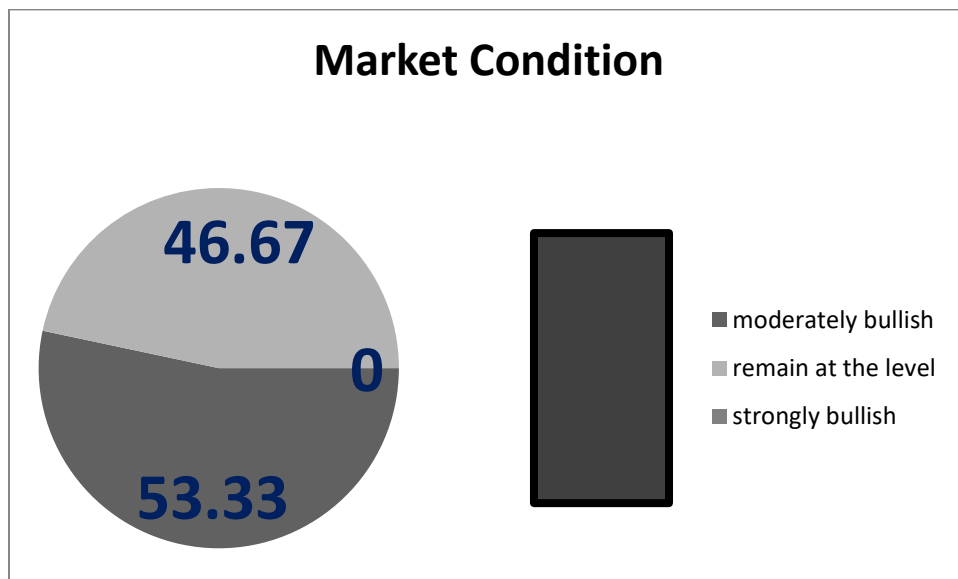


A higher proportion of respondents 43% would pursue mid-term investment strategy in 2013. The interesting finding is that 27% respondents would still want to pursue long-term investment strategy in 2013 same as like 2012. Most of the respondents prefer to be active in the market in 2013 as well.

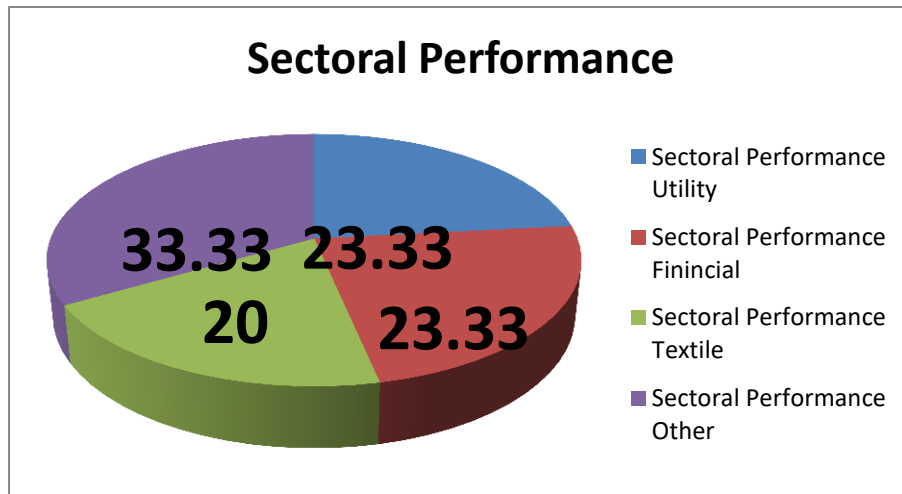


39% respondents strongly believe that stock market will react to one-way movement to earnings performance of listed companies in 2013. 31% respondents believe that political development will drive the stock market to one-way movement.

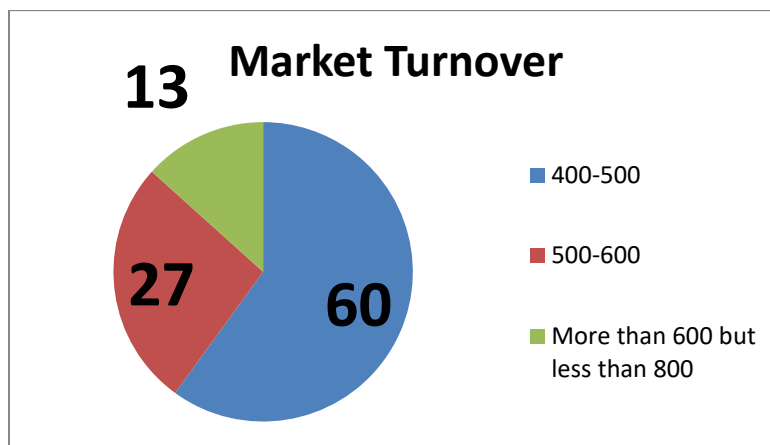
Almost 53% respondents are expecting moderately bullish capital market in 2013 while almost 47% respondents are expecting that Bangladesh capital market will remain at the level of 2012. It is important to note that none is expecting strongly bullish market.



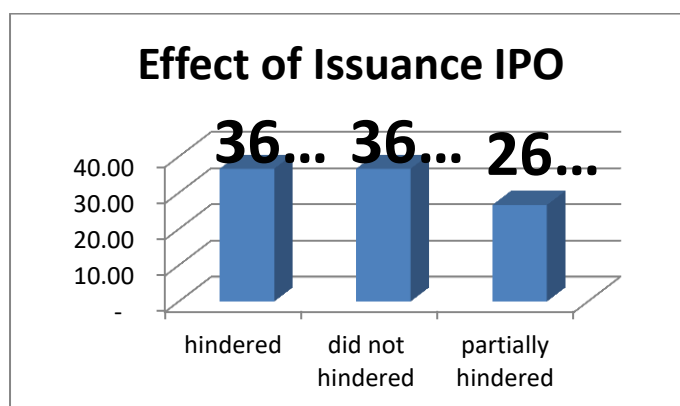
A mixed response came about which sector will outperform in 2013. 23.33% respondents believe that financial sector will outperform in 2013 whereas another 20% respondents believe that textile sector will outperform in 2013. 23.33% respondents strongly believe that utilities sector will outperform in 2013.



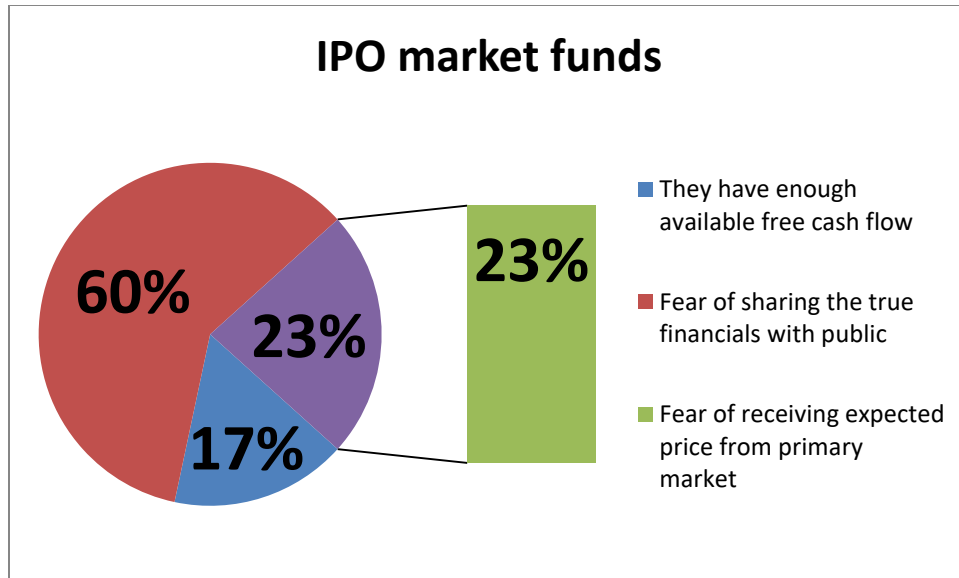
According to a higher proportion of respondents (61%), it is expected that average market turnover would lie between BDT 400 to BDT 500 crore in 2013. Only 25% respondents believe that average market turnover would lie between BDT 500 to BDT 600 crore in 2013 and meager 14% respondents believe that average market turnover would cross BDT 600 crore, but cannot cross more than BDT 800 crore in 2013.



Mixed reactions came from respondents about excess issuance of IPOs within shortest intervals that hindered influx of fund in secondary market in 2012. Almost 37% of respondents believe that excess issuance of IPOs within shortest intervals hindered influx of fund in secondary market in 2012 and again Almost 37% of respondents believe that excess issuance of IPOs within shortest intervals did not hindered influx of fund in secondary market in 2012. Additionally, 27% respondents believe that excess issuance of IPOs within shortest intervals partially hindered influx of fund in secondary market in 2012.



It is crucial that quality companies are interested to raise funds through IPO (Initial Public Offering) for smooth functioning of primary market. When asked why the large conglomerates are not interested to come to IPO to raise funds, a higher proportion of respondents 23% express that fear of sharing the true financials with public is the key reason. 60% of respondents think that Fear of sharing the true financial with public and rest 17% respondents think that they do not have enough available cash.



It is presumed that a complete demutualization will help detect manipulation in the stock market and ensure transparency and accountability. Generally, it ensures good corporate governance, introduces alternative business models, increase operational efficiency and reduces conflicts of interest. A demutualized exchange can also freely trade on the market like any other public company. The flow of foreign portfolio investment in bourses will increase after completing the demutualization process. According to the survey result, 86% respondents believe that demutualization would make the market more transparent and vibrant.

Conclusion

Capital market has been experiencing a bullish trend over the last few months in Bangladesh. The DSE index crosses 4439 landmark on November 20, 2013 and also the average daily market turnover crossed over Tk. 400 million. The market capitalization has been growing tremendously up which is now over US\$ 35 billion level on November, 2013, ever highest in the history of Bangladesh. According to DSE source, the market basically trends to bullish due to active participation of the institutions, which is, 60% of the total trade; 20% of it comes from the foreign investors and the rest 20% comes from the retail investors. This is indeed a very good sign for the capital market of Bangladesh and we are also looking to more general, institutional and the foreign participants to come in this market.

One of the main reasons why the market is growing up can be identified due to sustaining warm political stability in the country. Political and administrative reformation as well as the insurgent against the corruption also has brought the good confidence in the market. Investors are feeling more comfortable in such environment and they keep continuing their investment in the market.

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Md. Sharif Hossain
Department of Commerce
Goa University
PO box 403206
Goa
India
sharif_13@yahoo.com

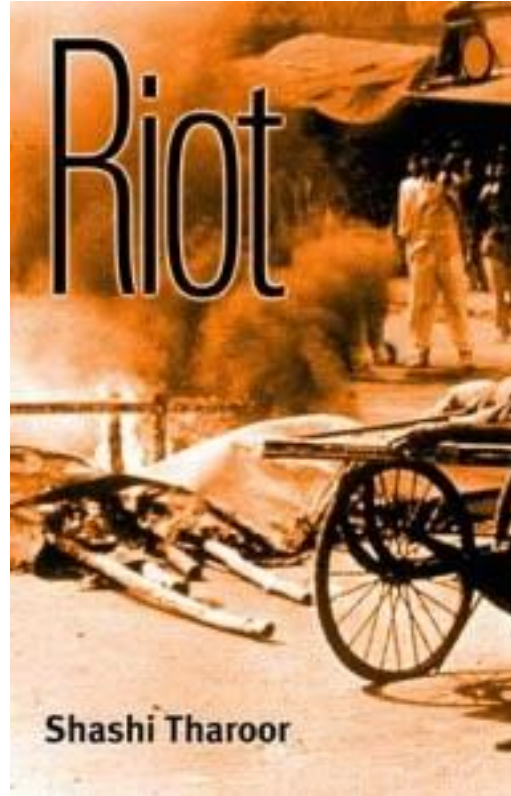
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Md. Sharif Hossain

Present Situation of Capital Market and the Role of Brokerage House: A Study on IDLC Securities Limited

**A Study on Communal Violence in Shashi Tharoor's *Riot*
and Raj Kamal Jha's *Fireproof***

B. Jeyapushpa, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.



Abstract

Shashi Tharoor and Raj Kamal Jha are contemporary writers of Indian Writing in English. Their novels mostly focus on contemporary social and political issues that affect the common man. Their works spin around the social evils concurrent in society as obstacles for the growth of the nation. Tharoor's *Riot* centres on the riot of communal clashes. He portrays how the clashes between two religions groups results in a riot in which a number of innocent lives become the prey. By presenting voices from both the Hindu and the Muslim communities, he tries to prove how history is misled by personal favours. Jha's *Fireproof* presents the brutal reality of communal violence. It portrays how innocent people are butchered by the mob. Jha

wants to prove wrong the general opinion that the communal riot is carried out only by the illiterates. He insists that it is the participation of literates which is the most dangerous for a civilized country like India. The author also lashes out at the judicial system which remains motionless during riots. Both the writers focus on the brutal reality of communal violence and insist the need for change in the mindset of people.

Key words: riot, communal violence, secularism, mob mentality, history, social reform

Introduction

Indian English Literature has come into existence as an interesting by-product of an eventful fusion taking place in the eighteenth century between a vast expanding and enterprising British Literature and Indian Literature. Indian writing in English refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native language could be one of the numerous languages spoken in India.

Sashi Tharoor and Raj Kamal Jha

Shashi Tharoor (1956-) has gained a unique position in the field of Indian Writing English as his novels focus on contemporary social issues. Tharoor has authored fifteen bestselling works of fiction and non-fiction since 1981, all of which are concentrated on India and its history, culture, film, politics, social issues, foreign policy and more. Raj Kamal Jha is a courageous writer. As a journalist and as a writer, he follows his sense of righteousness and gives voice to the silenced and the oppressed people. With impressive visual force, he proves how powerful a work of literature can be. His writing style is very simple and engages the readers with the subject. Jha's fiction is known for its stark simplicity and ability to evoke emotions. Jha's fiction is strongly rooted in contemporary Indian themes. Jha's novels engage with many social themes beginning with domestic violence, the urban-rural divide and communal strife which is unusual in many of the contemporary writings in English. Jha's work captures those realities of India that escape the mainstream media. Tharoor and Jha are novelists of Post-Independence India. Their writings are filled with concern for society, especially for the silenced and the downtrodden people. Both of them show their anxiety to have a society where

people live in peaceful reconciliation. They reach out to the readers to understand and realize the need for change in an intellectually forward nation like India.

Focus on Communalism

The ugly problem of communalism is one of the burning issues of post-colonial India. Though the seeds of communalism were nurtured by the different rulers, domestic and foreign invaders, long before the British came to rule India, it has been aggravated by the present politicians of post-colonial India. Communal violence has increased quantitatively and qualitatively ever since politics came to be communalised. It is evident from the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992 that religion was used as a tool to gain political power. At present, violence has become an inescapable reality for an ordinary Indian and one cannot escape being sickened by the daily occurrences of riots, rapes and murders by those who believe their political power confers immunity on them. There are rampant incidents of powerful persons who take the law into their own hands. Though individual police officers, administrators and judges have shown courage and commitment in the pursuit of justice, the democratic Indian state as a whole seems to be able to do little to end such occurrences.

Religious Sentiments and Conflicts in *Riot*

Tharoor's *Riot* is set against the historical background of religious tensions in India in 1989, when Hindus and Muslims clashed in bloody riots over Ram Shila Poojan, the object of controversy of a four hundred year old mosque, the Babri Masjid, which the Hindu zealots eventually destroyed in 1992. The Hindu epic, *The Ramayana*, states that Lord Ram was born in Ayodhya, a small town in northern India. It is believed that at the birth place of Lord Ram stood the magnificent Ramjanmabhoomi temple thronged by Hindu devotees for centuries. Many Hindus believe that in the sixteenth century, a Muslim King, Muhammad Babar, knocked down the Ramjanmabhoomi temple and in its place built a big mosque called the Babri Masjid. During the time of partition, when Muslims migrated to Pakistan, a group of Hindus claimed that an idol of Lord Ram had emerged in the disputed site. The dispute went to the court. The District Magistrate simply put a padlock on the temple, and said neither Hindus nor Muslims could worship there. But there were some Hindu fundamentalists who wanted to rebuild the temple of Lord Ram in that site. This led to a riot that reverberated throughout the country, in which the lives of thousands of Muslims and Hindus were lost.

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Priscilla Hart's Story

Riot narrates the life of a twenty-four year old Priscilla Hart, an idealistic, pretty, blue eyed American who comes to Zalilgarh, India to work as a volunteer for HELP- US (Health, Education, Literacy, and Population - United States), an NGO, working to control population explosion. In Zalilgarh, she falls in love with a married man called Lakshman, who is a District Magistrate and begins an affair with him. One day, when Priscilla waits in a place they usually meet, she is brutally stabbed by some unknown person who is not revealed till the very end of the novel. Her murder takes place at a time when the communal frenzy is running high. The search for Priscilla's murderer runs parallel with the search for the murderers of two locals whose death had sparked the riots and along with that, there is a search for the historical facts about the Ramjanmabhoomi - Babri Masjid issue.

Outbreak of Communal Tension and Riot

Priscilla's estranged parents Mr. Rudyard Hart and Mrs. Katherine Hart come to visit Zalilgarh along with a journalist. The story unfolds through the investigation of an American journalist, Randy Diggs who is looking for a story for the western media. In Zalilgarh, he meets the local chauvinistic Hindu fundamental leader Ram Charan Gupta, the Professor Mohammad Sarwar, Lakshman, and Gurinder Singh to investigate the politics behind the riot. Ram Charan Gupta is a staunch Hindu fundamentalist. For him, September 15, 1989 was a great day - a day when the Hindutva forces launched the "Ram Sila Poojan Programme". (R 52) On that sanctified day, bricks inscribed with 'Ram' are consecrated at the local shrine, to be transported to Ayodhya to rebuild the Ramjanmabhoomi temple. When the Hindu youths engage in preparing banners for the next day's procession, they are stabbed by some unknown men. As it agitates the Hindu leaders, the District Magistrate, and the Superintendent of Police pressure the leaders to postpone the procession, but they are not ready to withdraw. In the end, permission is granted on the condition that they would not shout inflammatory slogans against Muslims and would not use cymbals and drums near mosques. The leaders agree, but when the procession begins, the masses go out of control and in a frenzied mood they attack the mosques. The crowd

runs amok and Zailgarh indulges in full-scale communal violence. Police open fire to control the mobs and eight people are found dead at the end of the day.

Two Distinct Voices – How History Inflames Communal Passions

Tharoor uses two distinct voices of Ram Charan Gupta and Professor Mohammad Sarwar to prove how history can inflame communal passions and how it can also allay communal hatred. Gupta also affirms that in olden days a great temple stood at the specified site. There are legends that pilgrims from all over India would come to worship Ram there. But a Muslim king, the Mughal emperor Babar, a foreigner from central Asia, knocked it down and in its place he built a big mosque, which was named after him, the Babri Masjid. Gupta vehemently blames Muslims as being responsible for the partition of the sub-continent. He says, “Now these Muslims have already divided our country once, to create their accursed Pakistan on the sacred soil of our civilization”. (R 55) Gupta wishes to bring back the era of Ram by re-establishing the Ram Janmabhoomi, “no matter how many lives have to be sacrificed to ensure it”. (R 124) The comment is ironical, for the reign of Lord Ram was associated with an era of peace, love, compassion and humanity, but the fanatic Hindu leader seeks to re-establish it by butchering the lives of innocent people.

How History Can Be Used to Allay Communal Passions

Professor Mohammed Sarwar’s conversation with Lakshman, instructs how history can be used to allay communal passions. Being a faithful Historian, Sarwar in his interview with Randy Diggs often quotes Mohammad Iqbal, the great Urdu poet who wrote “Ours is a civilization that will commit suicide out of its own complexity; he who builds a nest on frail branches is doomed to destruction”. (R 67) He points out that Muslims are part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. Without them the splendid structure of India is incomplete. They are the essential element, which has gone into the building India. Sarwar does not represent Muslim’s opinion but he believes that historians with a secular soul have a duty to retrieve historical figures, especially Muslims from oblivion to forge Hindu-Muslim unity. Professor Sarwar vigorously says, “Muslims didn’t partition the country - the British did, the Muslim League did, and the Congress Party did”. (R 111) In fact, most of the country’s Islamic leaders like Maulana Maudoodi were bitterly opposed to the movement for Pakistan. They felt that Islam

should prevail over the world as a whole. “Pakistan was created by “bad” Muslims, secular Muslims, not by the “good” Muslims in whose name Pakistan now claims to speak”. (R 109)

Faith vs Historical Facts

Ram Charan Gupta's approach is based on faith rather than on the historical facts about the mosque. People like Ram Charan Gupta believe that history has done them much wrong. They want to take revenge on history, but they forget to take into account that the history in itself is revenge. Ram Charan Gupta is an extremist firebrand Hindu who feels that even the Taj Mahal is actually a Hindu temple. But Professor Sarwar believes in India's pluralism. Tharoor gives his views from both the Hindu and the Muslim camps and uses Lakshman's conversation with Priscilla Hart, to speak out his mind. Ram Charan's voice is often contradicted by the secular minded Lakshman who knows more about his religion and culture. He believes that Hinduism has no place for fundamentalism. In fact, it is a religion without fundamentals.

Lakshman wonders why Muslims are being assaulted for something that happened over four hundred and fifty years ago. He rightly remarks that it is because “politicians of all faiths across India seek to mobilize votes by appealing to narrow identities”. (R 145) By seeking votes in the name of religion, caste and region, they have urged voters to define themselves on these lines.

Far More Important Things to Consider

Tharoor seems to project that while people are butchering each other on the issues of Mandir and Masjid, while they are worthlessly slitting the throats of people of other communities in the name of Ram and Allah, there are things far more important which need to be attended to. Through this, he focusses on the plight of women which need to be given more importance. He insists that women should be given equal rights and respect in the society. The novelist wants to convey that Ram Mandir or Babri Masjid will not fetch them a better life nor will it do any good in furnishing their needs.

Irony

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Riot is the re-examination of accepted history with an eye towards updating it with newly discovered, more accurate, or less-biased information. Taking history as its base, Tharoor revisits the past with objectivity and irony. History is not a monolith. There are discontinuous and contradictory histories. Historians can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective. The Historical situation cannot be transcended. The past is not something that confronts as if it were a physical object, but it is something that is constructed from already written text of all kinds. History is always a matter of telling a story about the past, using other texts as inter-texts. History is not a matter of dates and great events but of politics, power, authority and subversion.

Contextualizing India's Past

Shashi Tharoor has attempted to contextualize India's past, to interpret and understand it better so as to redeem the present that continues to pacify the fires of communal strife. Though religion laid the basis for the partition of India, Tharoor says that at no time did the Indian Constitution endorse that India is only for the Hindus and not for Muslims. India is a country for everybody and every faith has as much a place in the Indian mosaic as the majority faith. He wants to emphasize that an Indian Muslim is as much an Indian as an Indian Hindu. If both the communities have faith in this view of Tharoor, the dawn of communal harmony in India cannot be far away. Tharoor aptly quotes the words of Iqbal at the end of the novel, "if you don't understand, O you Indians, you will be destroyed. Your story will not remain in the world's treasury of stories". (R 258)

A Balanced Picture of the Views

The beauty of the novel lies in the way the author paints a very balanced picture of the views of the different communities. It is about the majority community, the Hindus trying to establish and reinforce their identity and the minority community, the Muslims want to maintain theirs. Each and every issue is politicized in the novel.

Ordeals of Communal Violence in *Fireproof*

Raj Kamal Jha's *Fireproof*, published in 2006 is set against the backdrop of the Gujarat communal carnage of 2002 that documents the brutal facts about one of the worst sectarian riots

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in India since partition of the country in 1947. On February 27, 2002, a carriage of the Sabarmathi Express train, carrying Hindu pilgrims from Ayodhya travelled through Gujarat and was set on fire near Godhra causing the death of fifty nine Hindu passengers. This aroused a call for a strike the following day to protest against the killings. This strike turned into an attack on Muslims that continued for a month and led to the deaths of over a thousand people. More than seventy percent were Muslims and several others were forced to flee from their homes and seek shelter in the refugee camps. Jha has a firsthand experience of the brutal facts of the riot as he visited Ahmedabad in the aftermath of the event.



Begins in Ahmedabad – Birth of a Deformed Child

Fireproof starts in Ahmedabad on the night of February 28, 2002. The novel opens in the Holy Angel Hospital in Ahmedabad where Jay, the narrator, is waiting outside the operating theatre for his wife to deliver a child. The doctors tell him about the deformed child his wife has

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delivered. The child is not a merely child but also a metaphor. The child can witness and weep but do nothing more. He christens the child Ithim. He chooses this name because the child is so profoundly malformed that Jay reasons some people will see him as ‘It’ while others will see him as ‘Him’. The physical incompleteness and the deformity of Ithim symbolize the ghastly, bizarre face of communal violence that makes people limbless and crippled. But the fully grown eyes and eyes-brows of the baby symbolize stranded people who become witnesses as passive spectators of the violence. “Each eye of the baby was perfectly shaped, fully functional. His eyebrows were perfect, too, as if drawn by an artist. . . . The rest of the baby was a mess”. (F 13)



Mysterious and Intriguing Emails

At night, he gets a call from Miss Glass. She asks him to come to the railway station the next evening and follow her instructions if he wants to set his child right. She also asks him to read her email before coming to the railway station. The email also contains three attachments- “Tariq.Doc., Shabnam.Doc. and Abba.Doc” (F 163). These files, in the words of Miss Glass, are “about three people from last night who were not so lucky”. (F 165) The Tariq Document contains the story of a teenage boy Tariq whose mother is first raped brutally and then burnt alive in front of his eyes by four gentleman-looking people - A, B, C and D. Shabnam Document

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narrates the atrocities inflicted on the parents of an adolescent girl called Shabnam before her eyes. Abba Document is about Abba, an old retired teacher, before whose eyes the gang of four rapes his pregnant daughter-in-law, rips the unborn child from her belly and throws it on the oven before strangulating and burning her. Miss Glass, Doctors and Head Nurse plan to give this mutilated unborn child to Jay, the narrator, whom the daughter-in-Law recognizes as “one of the four” who came to her house “earlier that evening” (F 353) and played havoc with her life before her aged father-in-law. As they convict Jay to accept the deformed baby as his own child, Miss Glass asks him to come to the railway station next evening by promising him to set his child right.

The Tent in The Hideout

At the railway station, Jay meets “a dwarf, a midget man” (F 281) called Bright Shirt. Then Bright Shirt takes him to a place called The Tent in The Hideout. There in The Tent, the victims of the communal violence are gathered to witness the trial of the dead carried out by Miss Glass. During the trial, objects like book, towel and watch bear testimony against the atrocities inflicted on common people by bigots.

Eyewitnesses and Earwitnesses

Miss Glass presents Book, Watch and Towel as “eyewitnesses” and “earwitnesses” (F 333) for the sake of utmost objectivity. As she explains: “They are here because they are eyewitnesses and they are earwitnesses. And unlike us, people who were killed, these three are objects. That’s why their story will be objective. And their words will, therefore, carry more weight”. (F 333) Book is eyewitness to what has happened to Tariq and his mother. Watch has seen the humiliation and murder of Shabnam’s parents. Towel has withstood the horror let loose on Abba, his daughter-in-law and her unborn child. All the three eyewitnesses claim they can recognize the four criminals- A, B, C and D - involved in these three particular crimes. During the trial, Jay turns out to be B who just watched the other three committing the crimes. At the end of the play, Glass discloses that Ithim, the deformed child, is not actually Jay’s baby born to his wife in the hospital the previous night. It is rather the unborn child of a pregnant woman who has been mutilated and murdered by Jay and his cronies during the riots. Jay’s taking care of Ithim as his own child for a whole day is pronounced to be his punishment by the dead.

I can choose what to forget

Jay runs away instantly after realizing the eerie nature of the people around him in The Tent, reminding the reader never to believe the word of the dead as they are meant to entrap the living. He does not confess his involvement in the crime even to his dead mother who comes in his dream and asks what really happened “that afternoon, that evening and that night before you went to the hospital with your wife”. (F 364) This measured silence on his part before his mother with whom he shares everything speaks loudly against him. He rather tells the reader unabashedly: “There is no burden I carry, whatever the dead may say. Because I am alive, I can choose what to remember, I can choose what to forget”. (F 372)

Callous Attitude of the Powers towards Communal Violence

While running back to the city, Jay finds people crying. He wants to tell them: “keep crying, collect your tears to fight the fire because there is no water, there is no Miss Glass, there is no Bright Shirt and there is no Hideout. Or if there is, go there, go play, go watch a circus, go watch Juggler, don’t just sit here and cry”. (F 362) Thus, he reduces the whole aura of impartial justice to mere jugglery and peep show. Like the living, Miss Glass too pats her back for punishing Jay, the least offender, while letting the big fish remain out of the net. *Fireproof* draws attention to the callous attitude of the powers towards the victims of communal violence and also hints at the complicity of the administration in fermenting communal hatred.

Communal violence is a threat to the existence of the whole of humanity. It is a threat to the secular values and composite culture of the nation. India is a secular nation where everyone is free to follow the religion of his/her choice without any discrimination and the constitution provides this liberty because there is no state religion in the country. Violence is not an inherent characteristic of human nature, but emerges from outside atmosphere due to the vested interests of some select people. Humanity should be taken as a whole to create a non-violent society. Violence occurs only when people are categorized under different groups, communal groups or sects. Hence efforts should be taken to create a sect-less, communal-less and group-less society only then the progress of humanity would be possible. People should not live only for one community, religion, region, language and country but in a broader context, for humanity.

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Humaneness without discrimination and respect for the people of other communities will help us avoid communal violence.

What do Tharoor and Jha Want to Communicate

Thus the novelists Tharoor and Jha awaken the readers to realize the need of the hour which is to be humane to fellow beings. No one should be identified by their religion, caste or community. As per the constitution of India, every citizen of India has equal rights. There is no discrimination on the basis of religion. The authors convey that it is crucial for people to really change their mindset regarding religion, caste and community. Otherwise as an ancient poet rightly prophesies, ““if you don’t understand, O you Indians, you will be destroyed. Your story will not remain in the world’s treasury of stories””. (R 258)

Experience has repeatedly shown that wherever communal violence has occurred, it has nothing to do with belief, and everything to do with small-mindedness, utter lack of scruple, complete confidence in the infallibility of one’s own views and a vast capacity to manipulate public ignorance. Secularism can only be attained by peaceful co-existence of various religious groups. India is a traditional society that contains not one, but many traditions owing their origin in part to different religions. The remedy of constitutional safeguards to root out the chronic malaise of communalism will not have desired effect unless it is tackled by society. Enlightened citizens must discourage the communal based forces from the social, political and electoral process in order to make these forces irrelevant. They are to be opposed and not to be appeased. Secularism should begin in the heart of every individual. There should be no feeling of otherness as all have shared the same history.

During the freedom struggle, secularism was emerging as the most dominant principle. Under Jawaharlal Nehru and later under his successors in the Congress Party, the concept of a secular nation-state was officially adopted as India's path to political modernity and national integration. India has been declared a secular state by its written constitution and it is every Indians duty to stand by that and believe in this declaration.

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B. Jeyapushpa, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.
Assistant Professor
Department of English
P. S. R. Engineering College
Sivakasi 626140
Tamilnadu
India

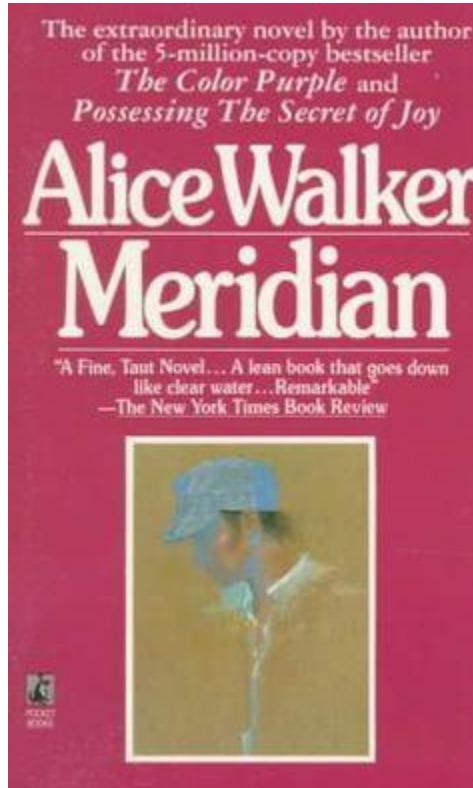
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Celebration of Self in Alice Walker's *Meridian*

S. Kaniselvi, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.



Abstract

African American women novelists offer a glimpse into the interpretation of African American experience and the exposition of that reality. The authors use their native language and their literary convention to give different perceptions of the African experience. The women novelists explore the issues of freedom and equality which were denied to Blacks in the United States for a long time. Their text consists of the native accent present in Black speech. This takes the reader accurately into the experiences of the Blacks. Most of the themes in their novels include the examination of subjects related to African American culture, racism, religion, feminism, poverty, slavery, etc. They expressed the feeble voices of the Black women in

particular, in their novels. The authors of interest had double advantage of being a black and a woman in a racially discriminated society. Hence their writings were authentic in delineating the lives of the African American people, especially that of Black women. This paper studies and presents these aspects in the African American writer Alice Walker's works, particularly, in the *Meridian*.

Keywords: Alice Walker, *Meridian*, Black culture, Racial discrimination, Feminism, Black women

Introduction

African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. It is rich in expressive subtlety and social insight, offering illuminating assessments of American identities and history. This literature explores the issues of freedom and equality long denied to Blacks in the United States, along with further themes such as African American culture, racism, religion, slavery, and a sense of home, segregation, migration, feminism, and more. This writing has tended to incorporate oral forms, such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues, and rap. Its oral culture is rich in poetry and appears in the African American tradition of Christian sermons, which make use of deliberate repetition, cadence, and alliteration. It has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects.

Alice Walker (1944-) belongs to the group of writers who write through personal experiences. Alice Walker was born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia, to Willie Lee and Minnie Tallulah Walker. Like many of Walker's fictional characters, she was a sharecropper's daughter and youngest of eight children. Alice grew up in an environment rife with racism and poverty, which, along with her passion for gender issues, remains a large part of her narratives. Walker started her writing career when she joined *Ms. Magazine* as an editor before moving to Northern California in the late 1970s.

Works of Alice Walker are certainly concerned with the liberation of all women-kind

from the culture of oppression. In her novels, Walker continues to express her wishes for wholeness, for those who have been suppressed, silenced and denied freedom. She captures the folklore, language, pain, spirit and memories of Afro-Americans only to weave them into a quilt of compassion that she spreads before the world. This philosophy of Walker makes her women characters celebrate their circumstances. It does not happen to them, they make it happen. They know that each of them is the creator of their own thoughts and states of mind. This does not mean ignoring the often painful reality of what happens, but understanding that they can choose their response to something at any given moment. So they celebrate “self” even in the worst conditions of life.

Meridian

Meridian (1976), one of her most celebrated novels, reflects her strong belief in the black womanist tenets. It tells the story of a black woman in a period of transition, the story of coming to consciousness and a subsequent development of self and search for authenticity. The novel is set in the times around 1960 when the African-American Civil Rights Movement aimed at overcoming racial discrimination against the African Americans and setting the stage for the claim and the granting of voting rights to the Blacks. The period saw important events and dates: The assassination of John. F. Kennedy in 1963; the famous speech of Martin Luther King “I Have a Dream” in 1963; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that banned discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, or national origin; and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Alice Walker, who was herself a major activist working in the movement, in Mississippi, wrote various accounts out of her own life in the novel. The novel scales a historical field with political details.

Meridian in Real Life

The novel deals with Meridian, a black woman who is acted upon in real life. The title character Meridian is born into a lower middle class family. Her parents are educated and respectable. Meridian never receives the love and nurturing that children need from their parents. As a child, she resents her mother’s life of “sacrifice”, her piety, and her “tolerance shown to different beliefs outside the community”. (M 16) To Meridian, religion is a “withdrawal from the world”, a living in “constant awareness of death”. (M 16) When Mrs. Hill, Meridian’s mother asks the question, “Have you stolen anything?” this haunts the sensitive Meridian who “weeps

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and wishes that she had not been born to this already overburdened woman". (M 122) She grew up without much thought and planning, and being one of the six children, her mother raised her without much care. She was the one who had to take care of five younger brothers and sisters while their mother was away. She remembered her mother and the day she lost her. Her mother's love was withdrawn from her when she was thirteen. Her sense of alienation and isolation deepened in her and she accepted violence as the path to change.

Moves Backward in Time – Quest for Identity

The novel moves backward in time to Meridian's recent past and her mother's past to introduce their upbringing. The flashback mentions Meridian's experience with a revolutionary group in New York City. When they pressed her to answer the question "Will you kill for the Revolution?" with a positive "Yes", her womanly tenderness revolts. (M 26) She dissociates herself from the revolutionary group and asserts that "I'll go back to the people, living among them, like Civil Rights Workers used to do". (M 18) Preferring non-violence as a new approach to social reform she had "come back south...remaining close to the people to see them, to be with them, to understand them and herself". (M 31)

Meridian's quest for self-identity begins early, even before she is fully conscious of it. Meridian always remembers her early days in the funeral home when the owner of the house, George Daxter, would give her candy and money to abuse her. Her initial exposure to sex is still a nightmare with her. But this does not prevent her from acquiring a boy friend, Eddie. Meridian knows that her social standing in her society will be determined by her ability to attract and keep a boyfriend. As Meridian leaves on her dates, her mother teaches her how to deal with the man. After her engagement with the boy friend, she finds herself pregnant. Eddie, who is an attractive high school basket ball player, marries her. When Meridian becomes pregnant, she drops out of school to have the baby boy and awaits the birth of her son, but her husband remains in school in spite of his new role as husband and father since he is a male. They move to a small house near the school. Though her parents dislike her early marriage, they acknowledge that the boy friend has high aspirations. He continues his study and works overtime at a restaurant to support his small family. His parents welcome her into the family, spend time to know her and prepare for the baby's survival.

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Vile Sexual Relations

Sexual relations in *Meridian* are presented as vile. The early details of the period of her childhood and youth emphasize the quality of the black woman's life. As a young girl Meridian is innocent and loving. Her marriage to Eddie is an accident as her mother never tells her the truth about sexuality. Her mother, Gertrude Hill, only tells her to be sweet without specifying what she means. Her mother never uses the word "sex" and has told her nothing about what to expect from men and from sex. Mrs. Hill lacks concern about her daughter's morals. Having told her nothing, she expects her to do nothing. When Meridian leaves the house in the evening with her boyfriend, who takes her straight to the nearest lovers' lane or its equivalent, which in their case is the clump of bushes behind the city dump, her mother only cautions her to be sweet. Meridian does not realize that this is the euphemism for "keep your panties up and your dress down" (M 42), an expression she has heard and been puzzled by. While not enjoying sex, she has it as often as her lover wants it, sometimes every single night. She does not know that having sex could produce a pregnancy. This is the reason why her pregnancy comes as a total shock to her.

Marriage as a Sanctuary

Meridian, as a teenager, does not seriously think about the baby, who would disturb her lifestyle. She only knows that she does not want the baby. Even her love for Eddie starts to fade. Instead of being very grateful for her husband's kindness, she is oblivious to it. Her husband is unable to measure the width of her dreams. However, their marriage soon falls apart because she feels that to live merely as someone's wife means self-effacement which she with her sense of freedom cannot accept. Thus Meridian needs to exist meaningfully in society, in the larger context. So their marriage ends in divorce.

According to Meridian marriage is a "Sanctuary", something which has cut her off from the outer world. (M 62) Her physical experiences with Eddie are linked in her mind with those earlier experiences at the funeral home. The birth of their son sounds the alarm of the end of Meridian's married life. From the start, she links the child with slavery and dreams each night of ways to kill him. Walker describes the teenage Meridian's experience of motherhood as "slavery". (M 63) The thought of her inability to enjoy or endure the troubles of happy

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motherhood frightens her and creates a sense of guilt in her, leading her to entertain thoughts of suicide. Meridian leaves with Eddie because she can neither love him nor the baby. Meridian is just like her mother, who finds no pleasure in married life. Walker indicates that marriage can stifle an individual's growth if the man fails to be the right choice for the woman.

Meridian is not happy to have the child because she did not want it. Tradition imposes motherhood on a woman and encourages her self-sacrifice for the sake of her family and society. But Meridian finds the condition of motherhood simply suffocating. The plight of her own mother makes her see motherhood as “being buried alive, walled away from her own life, brick by brick”. To her, maternal sacrifice is but another form of “slavery”. She even curses herself for “shattering her mother's emerging self”. (M 51) African American motherhood is traditionally viewed as a vehicle for preserving black heritage in the face of white cultural domination. But Meridian finds no fulfillment when she herself is entrapped into an early marriage and motherhood. But Meridian wants to get rid of her maternal bonds too, because they prevent her from realizing her personal and social self. The myth of black motherhood as a “sacred calling” is reversed in this novel. Meridian craves for freedom and feels as though something perched inside her brain was about to fly. Moreover, she does not want to rear her child in a society “where (black) children are not particularly valued”. (M 174)

Break Away from Tradition

Meridian is caught in a dilemma as she struggles to break away from tradition, for socio-historical factors have cemented the mother-child bond strongly. After much conflict, she renounces her child and decides to study at Saxon College and to actively participate in the Civil Rights Movement. But she simultaneously feels guilty for her failure to reach “the standard of motherhood that had gone before”. (M 91) The agony of such an inner conflict results in her illness from which she recovers after her reconciliation with her mother in a dream. She tells her: “Mama, I love you, Let me go”. (M 125) Meridian gets back her lost strength and sets out alone in search of her identity and social justice for her people.

Meridian rejects the role of the happy mother, recognizing that happiness is merely an empty sign that accompanies the equally empty role of a young pregnant wife. In the chapter

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entitled “The Happy Mother”, happiness does not apply in any way to the emotional state, but the conventional association of happiness with motherhood precludes her ability to state otherwise. When Meridian says ‘no’ to motherhood, she offends and loses her own mother, her family and her community. She feels guilty for leaving her child, and cannot adequately explain why she must. By shedding her prescribed happy mother role and standing up for her own needs, Meridian takes the first step towards “becoming a revolutionary petunia”. (M 2) She stops living according to the norms established by racial and sexual society, learns to discover her own identity, as she must, in order to survive. This discovery is her first rebellious step in order to launch her voyage towards self-celebration.

Free from Mythic Image of Motherhood?

Walker suggests that it is not easy for Meridian to break the outer frame and to free herself from the mythic image of motherhood which culture and society have imposed upon her. The chapter "Battle Fatigue" analyses Meridian's confrontation with her mother and her inner conflict. Mrs. Hill shows her disapproval of Meridian's desire to pursue education at Saxon College. This opportunity is given to her by a white family in Connecticut. Besides, Mrs. Hill never agrees to Meridian's involvement and participation in the Civil Rights Movement and says:

As far as I'm concerned you've wasted a year of your life, fooling around with those people. The papers say they are crazy. God separated the sheep from the goats and the black folks from the white. And me from anybody that acts as foolish as they do. (M 81)

Civil Rights Movement

Mrs. Hill has a superficial assessment of the Civil Rights Movement and she wants Meridian to opt for what she has chosen for her. She says “I just don't see how you could let another woman raise your child. It is just selfishness. You ought to hang your head in shame. I have six children”, she continues self-righteously, “though I never wanted to have any, and I have raised everyone myself”. (M 86) Apparently, Meridian's attachment to the Civil Rights Movement is just a justification to herself, in order to avoid the role of the mother.

Meridian knows very well that she must leave her child for his own good. She decides to leave him instead of treating him like a burden. She does not want the child to grow up with the same feelings of guilt. Meridian has not sacrificed her life for her child, but she is trapped between her aspirations towards self-fulfillment and the regret and guilt of leaving her child. Even if she reaches any position in society, the fact that she has given her child up for adoption is absolutely a sour truth.

Freedom from Gender Role

Meridian frees herself from her gender role, and begins to explore the possibilities of her growth, beginning with her education at Saxon College. Meridian meets Anne-Marion when she goes to Saxon College. While campaigning in the local neighbourhood for voters, Meridian meets a pregnant and homeless teenager called the Wild Child. Meridian takes the girl into her custody, bathes and feeds her. The Wild Child, however, escapes into the street, is hit by a car, and dies. Meridian, Anne-Marion, and other students and neighbourhood residents carry the Wild Child's casket onto the campus grounds. The president of the college does not allow them to use the college chapel for the funeral service. In the night, students riot and chop down the Sojourner, the school's iconic magnolia tree.

Sojourner Tree

At Saxon, Meridian has the opportunity to preserve her maternal heritage, as symbolized by the Sojourner Tree, which was the largest magnolia in the country, planted by the slave Louvinie living on the Saxon plantations. Louvinie had been loved by her master's children for her ability to tell frightening stories. Yet after a boy with a weak heart died upon hearing one, Master Saxon decreed that Louvinie's tongue be removed. Seeing her tongue ground under the heel of Master Saxon, Louvinie mutely pleaded for her tongue because she holds an ancestral belief that:

Without one's tongue in one's mouth or in a special spot of one's own choosing, the singer in one's soul was lost forever to grunt and snort through eternity like a pig. (M 33-34)

Miraculously, the tree prospered after Louvinie buried her smoked tongue beneath it: Other slaves believed it passed magic. They claimed the tree could talk, make music, was sacred to birds and possessed the power to obscure vision. Once in its branches, a hiding slave could not be seen. (M 34) Within the context of the novel, the tree becomes a rallying spot for the students of Saxon. When the college's administration announces that the Sojourner will be torn down so that a new music building can be erected, Meridian and her fellow students chain themselves to the tree in protest. Yet ironically enough, after the Wild Child is buried in a nearby cemetery, the students riot and in the process hew down the tree. Meridian's protestations are not strong enough to deter the angry students, and so again, Meridian stands alone in her defense of the black woman's heritage.

Life in Saxon College

Saxon College symbolizes white values that have been seeped into the thinking of middle class blacks. The college was a training ground for capitalists and for "ladies". Meridian, Anne Marion and other friends decided that they have two enemies: "Saxon, which wanted them to become something - ladies that was obsolete, and the larger, more deadly enemy, white racist society". (M 95) Meridian despises capitalism and by her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and the Atlanta Movement she seeks social justice and wants black women to be accepted as equal with the whites. Yet other situations arise at Saxon to remind her of her life prior to College. Once again, she is the object of an older man's sexual advances. When she discovers that her scholarship will not cover all of her expenses, she goes to work for a black professor, Mr. Raymond, typing letters. In exchange for sitting in his lap, he would give her various "goodies": "Tins of tuna, bags of mints and Baby Ruths, dime-store combs and even, sometimes, typing paper". (M 109)

At Saxon College, she stubbornly resists the growth- retarding concepts of ladyhood and chastity. The Civil Rights activists expect her to be the strong supportive silent black sister who will not hesitate to murder for their cause. Meridian, who must carve out for herself, an independent niche, rejects all the tempting images that falsely promise of safety and security but actually represent death-in-life. While still at Saxon, she begins to neglect her own body, "she hated its obstruction". (M 97) She forgets to eat, suffers from fainting spells and blurred vision

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which result in a coma. In this weakened state, she begins to experience “ecstasy”, a mystical “dying-into-life” which involves a repudiation of the body’s claims for those of the spirit. (M 98) So, Meridian tells Truman that, she has volunteered to suffer until her people are delivered from oppression.

Meaning in Life

Meridian begins to ponder about giving some meaning to her life as an individual. She is awakened to her true self, the moment she learns about the Civil Rights Movement. Trapped in her own lethargy and lack of direction, Meridian has no idea how to break through her state. But by the grace of God a bomb blast does, what the community and family have failed to do. Provoked by this violence, she longs to become a volunteer. She protests along with the other volunteers against the town’s segregated hospital facilities and participates in the freedom march to the church, in singing freedom songs and keeping a midnight vigil. In a melee the police knock her down, and she is trampled by the people running back and forth. Meridian’s work in the Civil Rights Movement, which involves typing and voter-registration, results in various confrontations with the police. During one of the protests, she is beaten by a sheriff and even imprisoned. The sheriff, representative of both gender and race discrimination grabs her by the hair and someone begins punching her and kicking her in the back. However she does not even scream except very intensely in her own mind.

Meridian studies very hard, and searches for the “extraordinary”. (M 90) At Saxon College, she has an excellent social and academic reputation. As it is difficult for her to study when others are beaten and jailed, she joins the Atlanta Movement in her second year. Before journeying to Atlanta, Meridian has vowed not to engage in sex. She makes sacrifices for the movement, but her dedication is in question as she cannot commit herself to kill for the movement. Meridian, as a result, feels more and more ostracized from the movement until she is compelled to work and live among the mostly poor and impoverished rural communities of the South. Meridian lives among these people and helps out in all sorts of ways from washing dishes to gardening. Meridian’s selfless service, suffering and perseverance are like opportunities offered for her atonement and open doors for Meridian to attain self acceptance. When Meridian is well again, she rises out of her sick bed and goes out into the future with a lot of confidence

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and self assurance. Finally, she is able to forgive herself and learns to love and accept herself for who she is.

Meridian-Truman Relationship

Walker focuses on the Meridian-Truman relationship to show further development of her protagonist's personality. Truman is described as "the vain, pretentious" activist. (M 99) In the course of their struggle for human rights she falls in love with him and conceives his child. But Meridian's rapture of love does not last long. Truman gives her up for a white woman, Lynne Rabinowitz. Though Meridian feels deeply for him, their relationship gets irreparably damaged. She decides to have an abortion rather than tell him of her pregnancy:

On her way to have an abortion she saw them riding across campus in her father's new red car. From a distance, they both looked white to her, that day. (M 112)

Truman marries Lynne in order to enjoy special privileges in white America. When Truman sees her again, she feels very embarrassed to see him dating the exchange students. In fact, this seems to her strange and unfair. He dated them because their "colour made them interesting - made her ashamed as if she were less". (M 103) He approached her, put his arms around her shoulders and said, "You walk with your head down. It should be up, proud and free". (M 103) Meridian felt disgusted at his words. She asked him whether freedom, liberty, equality could cover all his beliefs, and in her mind she wished to confront him about the exchange students but she never does because she has a belief also, a realization that nobody wants white girls except for their empty heads and white bodies.

Rising Above Sexual Weakness

The event proves crucial to Meridian's quest for self. She realizes that to discover her real self, she has to rise above her sexual weakness. When Truman leaves Meridian without explanation, she feels no obligation to tell him of the child he would have fathered. Meridian's abortion is a painful experience:

Later, as the doctor tore into her body without giving her anesthesia and she saw stars because of the pain, she was still seeing them laughing, carefree, together. It was not that she wanted him anymore, she did not. It enraged her that she could be made to endure such pain, and that he was oblivious to it. (M 112)

The relationship of Meridian with Truman, however, does not end with the abortion of his child. They remain friends and Meridian becomes a source of advice and comfort to Truman, even after she rejects Truman's attempts to have any relationship with her. Lynne also maintains an ongoing relationship with Meridian, especially after her child, Camara, dies. Though nobody comforts her after the loss of her baby, Rundi, and her later abortion, she is now able to see another mother's pain. Meridian functions like a mother to both Lynne and Truman; as they suffer heartbreak and disappointment, they seek guidance from her.

Freeing from the Bondage

Through reaching out to the two people who have hurt her, Meridian is able to forgive and in turn free herself from the bondage that has held her all along. This is reminiscent of the scene in which Miss Winters plays the mother figure to Meridian in Saxon College when Meridian gets sick. She forgives Meridian as though on behalf of her biological mother who has thus far not forgiven Meridian. Miss Winters comforts Meridian, first after Meridian fails to recite a speech and later when she is very ill at Saxon College. In these moments, women are seen giving each other support in challenging times. By stepping into the shoes of Meridian's mother, Miss. Winters helps Meridian attain a forgiveness that she needs to spur her towards personal forgiveness and growth.

Once freed from the possibility of unwanted pregnancies and the sexual advances of men around her, she is able to become a mother figure for all the children she encounters. Just as she attempted to care for the Wild Child when she first arrived at Saxon, Meridian adopts the cause of defending the black children she meets during her work in the Movement. Meridian is depicted facing a tank in a small Mississippi town as she demands that black children be allowed to view a visiting sideshow. The show consists of the sham, mummified remains of a white

woman, Marilene O'Shay. Though the show holds nothing of worth, Meridian defends that right of black children to satisfy their curiosity, as the white children have done.

Final Liberation

Abortion and sterilization symbolize her final liberation from the bondage of sex and motherhood. Freed from the compulsiveness of traditional role-playing and awakened to the complexity of living, Meridian passes from her feelings of inadequacy and guilt to a new sense of self-confidence. She now wants to meet Truman on equal terms. Within the fabric of the complex relationship of Meridian, Truman and Lynne, Walker thus how the forces of racism and sexism work together to humiliate the black woman who, in order to be fully human, has to face the challenges of life with courage and strength. She also shows how forgiveness can bring all people together.

Thus her participation in the Civil Rights Movement is also a part of her celebration of the blacks' toleration power, potentialities and an effort to launch her journey in order to reach her own horizon. Further, she continues her journey in spite of the many hardships in her life even more colourfully. Due to her participation in the Civil Rights Movement she gets a scholarship for her further studies at Saxon college. Here, she becomes familiar with the world and with its ways. Like many other black women, Meridian has managed to escape the symbolic death of being killed by patriarchal standards and petrified into a perfect woman, leaving behind the phrases related to male domination, such as 'Devoted Wife', 'Obedient Daughter' and 'Adoring Mother'. She even goes a step further and escapes becoming 'Enchanted Lover' to Truman's 'Conquering Prince'. Meridian not only fights for her celebration, but she struggles for the celebration of all her people, especially the Black women, who are made victims of the double affliction of racism and sexism. But her struggle with these traumas of colour and sex is different from the general norm.

Quilt with Love

Meridian is a believer in the weaving of a quilt with love, passion and togetherness for all long-suffering people. Her life gives a message that it is only through love, peace and non-violence one can transform slavery into liberty, and hell into heaven. Though, initially Meridian

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agrees with her friends, “non-violence has failed to bring Revolution”. (M 31) She would prefer to die than kill anybody for freedom. She knows that it may be necessary to kill to free black and poor people but she can’t imagine a society created through bloodshed and dead bodies, in which people can be free and as a spiritual whole celebrate themselves. Unable to kill, Meridian offers herself as a martyr for her people’s salvation. Shortly after each march that she leads, Meridian loses consciousness and becomes paralyzed. She is ready to die for her people, because she also feels unworthy to live like a slave. But gradually she is transformed from victim to a responsible leader. She no longer needs to punish herself physically, have fits and go blind because she acts for her people. At this phase of life, she learns to value her own life, and wants to find a community to live with rather than a company of names to be listed among.

Concern for Black Society

In the final section of the novel, Meridian’s quest for self turns into a great concern for the wholeness of the black society. After Meridian has discovered her own strength and freedom as a woman, she can relate herself to her community at large. Her warm mellowed spirit born through suffering rings in the words she writes:

There is water in the world for us
brought by our friends
though the rock of mother and god
vanishes into sand and we,
cast out alone to heal
and re-create ourselves. (M 213)

She finds the ultimate meaning of self in her commitment to transform the present social system for the benefit of all black people. The transformation she insists on is possible not through violence but through a spiritual awakening. Her memory songs will be her significant contribution to the revolution because it “is the song of the people, transformed by the experiences of each generation, that holds them together, and if any part of it is lost, the people suffer and are without soul”. (M 201)

Love and Compassion for Her Son

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S. Kaniselvi, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.

Celebration of Self in Alice Walker’s *Meridian*

Meridian's mind often goes back to her son. Her heart is roused to compassion for her son. Her heart, however, refuses to beat faster. Meridian's heart has been moved to life but not to emotions. She demonstrates that she has found her identity in her environment and attained selfhood. She now has a strong and stable heart which she calls "a Fucking heart of stone". (M 223) Meridian is now able to warm up to life as expressed in her poem:

I want to put an end to guilt
I want to put an end to shame. (M 224)

Journey from Powerlessness to Empowerment

Meridian recovers and is strong enough, and ready to move on. She has nothing to pack as she owns nothing. Her inner growth with her newly found sense of identity is evident even on her physical self. Her hair has grown again. She has returned to the world cleansed of sickness. This new Meridian has grown out of the old. This new part of her is sure and ready, even eager for the world. Meridian has allowed ideas, no matter where they came from to penetrate her deeply and she gets to affirm that her value is in her individuality and not being in the company of other people. She has divested herself of dependence on the old notions of what a good woman ought to be.

Thus the novel discusses the journey of Meridian from powerlessness to empowerment and from a docile and submissive black girl to a fighter and a pioneer of black women's liberation. Meridian celebrates her capacity, will power and her own existence by registering a protest against every kind of exploitation and anarchy. Even after facing so many storms in her life, she does not perish but continues her voyage in the dark stormy night to find a new and clear horizon of her own, to fly with her own wings.

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S. Kaniselvi, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed.
740, Bharathi Nagar
Sivakasi- 626189
Tamilnadu
India
Mobile No: 989 494 4816

Assistant Professor of English Department,
S.M.S. College of Arts and Science
Kallamanaickenpatti 626131
Tamilnadu
India
Evergreenfriend92@gmail.com

Public Awareness and Knowledge of Aphasia in Young Indian Adults

**Thomas Mahima, MSLP, Francis Roslin, MASLP, Abraham Rijesh, MASLP,
Raghavan E. Sreeshma, MASLP and Malik Ramiz, M.Sc.**

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Abstract

Background: It has been suggested that awareness and knowledge about aphasia can lead to appropriate diagnosis and enhanced intervention. Earlier studies showed that the knowledge about aphasia was very less compared to other medical conditions

Aim: To assess the awareness and knowledge of aphasia in young adults thereby developing a strategy to improve the responsiveness to the disorder

Methods: An aphasia awareness survey was administered to 189 young adults (19 – 40 years) in locations of large gatherings (youth meetings, club, and shopping malls). Questions regarding the knowledge of aphasia was administered, and the respondents to answered “yes”, “no” and not sure. Qualitative analyses of the obtained results were done.

Results: It was observed that females had better knowledge compared to males. Around 45 individuals (49.45 %) heard about aphasia during their work economy, 28 individuals (30.76%) through reading articles related to stroke and 18 of them(19.78%) known aphasia as their relatives having aphasia.

Conclusion: Though a small survey, the awareness and knowledge about aphasia in young adults, is higher in those who work in relation to it than those who do not with females getting an overall higher score. The knowledge that aphasia can affect all language modalities is limited with uncertainties about it impact on mental health, thinking and cognition.

Key words: Survey, Aphasia awareness, Young adults, Kerala

Introduction

Stroke is a global health problem and a leading cause of adult disability worldwide. (Donnan, Fisher, Macleod & Davis, 2008). It is the fourth major cause of death in India, the rate being 0.6/ 1000. (Strong, Mathers & Bonita, 2007). Stroke in young adults (15 – 45 years) is becoming an important cause of morbidity and mortality throughout the world (Park, 2013).

India, a South Asian country has a population of over 1.311 billion people. Out of this general population 15% - 30% of all stroke patients in India constitutes of young adults (Nayak, Nair, Radhakrishnan & Sarma, 1997). Atrial fibrillation is identified as an independent risk factor of stroke in the young population. Compared with stroke in elderly alcohol use, smoking, hyperlipidemia, and cardiac diseases, which are known risk factors, are higher in young stroke (Subha, Pillai, Athira & Nujum, 2015).

Aphasia a most common effect of stroke is a multi-modal language disorder that affect reading, writing, auditory comprehension and expression. According to National Aphasia Association, Approximately 25 – 40% of strokes result in aphasia (as cited in Chazhikat, 2011).

Awareness of treatment strategies for stroke and related disorders is limited. A hospital based study revealed that more than 2/3rds of the subjects were not aware of treatment programs available for stroke (Das, Mondal, Dutta, Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 2007). Awareness of warning symptoms and risk factors of stroke in the general population and in survivors stroke. The aim of the present study was to assess the awareness and knowledge of aphasia in young adults thereby developing a strategy to improve the responsiveness to the disorder.

Methods

Respondents

An aphasia awareness survey (Appendix A) used in a previous study by Simmons – Mackie and colleagues (2002) was administered to 189 young adults (19 – 40 years) in locations

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of large gatherings (youth meetings , clubs , shopping malls). The survey was terminated if the person indicated that she/ he had not heard of the term aphasia.

Assessing Knowledge of Aphasia

Questions regarding the knowledge of aphasia were formulated from the study done by Whitaker and colleagues (Whitaker, Marie and Mevshall & Carl, 2011). Eight questions of the Aphasia Awareness Survey (Appendix A) pertained to the symptoms and causes of aphasia (questions 4a – 6a to e). As with the study done by Whitaker and colleagues, the respondents answered these questions “yes”, “no” or “not sure”. An appropriate decision was made to consider any “not sure” answers from respondents as wrong answers.

Scoring

Answers of respondents to the aphasia knowledge quiz were scored right or wrong. For each participant, the number of correct responses was computed. The percentage of correct responses on a question by question basis was also computed.

Results

The survey was administered to young adults between the ages of 19 to 40 years with average of 30.0 (sd = 5.54) years, which is shown in the table 1.

Table: 1- Age group

Maximum	40 years
Minimum	19 years
Average	30.0 years
SD	5.54

The number of correct responses on the aphasia knowledge quiz for the 91 participants who has heard of aphasia ranged from 2 – 13. The mean number of correct responses was 7.15

(sd =6.33). The tables 2 illustrate distribution of scores across the respondents. Percentage of correct responses for the respondents on a question by question basis is shown in the table 3.

Table: 2- Distribution of scores

No of correct responses	No of respondents
1	0
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	4
6	3
7	6
8	17
9	17
10	7
11	10
12	16
13	10

Table: 3-Mean percentage of correct responses for participants on the aphasia knowledge quiz

Statement	Percentage correct
1	78.02%
2	71.42%
3	69.23%
4	35.16%
5	52.74%
6	64.83%
7	64.83%
8	90.10%
9	94.50%
10	75.82%
11	74.72%
12	78.02%
13	94.50%

Computing the gender wise basis of knowledge of aphasia, it was observed that females had better knowledge compared to males. Among the 13 questions, only 9 in 59 females (15.25%) and only 1 person in 32 males (3.12%) scored better among the 91 participants. The distributions of gender between samples were more of females compared to males, and may reflect the probability that greater number of females participated in socio curricular activities.

Survey Participants' Profile

Table: 4- Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
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Male	32	35.16%
Female	59	64.83%

The individuals in the current study gained knowledge about aphasia mainly through their works and by reading articles related to stroke and also some of them know aphasia because some of them have relatives who is suffering from aphasia. Around 45 individuals (49.45 %) heard about aphasia during their work economy, 28 individuals (30.76%) through reading articles related to stroke and 18 of them(19.78%) known aphasia as their relatives having aphasia.

Table: 5 - Awareness and knowledge of aphasia through different channels

Different channels	Number of respondents	Percentage
Work	44	48.35%
Relative has Aphasia	18	19.78%
Articles	28	30.76%
TV	0	0
Doctor	1	1.09%

These data shows that more than 90% of the respondents who took the Aphasia knowledge quiz knew that aphasia is a disorder which affects communication (question 8) caused by brain damage (question 9) and stroke (question 13). More than 70% correctly identified that aphasia affected oral communication (question 1 and 2) and was not caused by impaired intelligence, emotional or mental problems. (Questions 11, 10, 12).

Respondents, though, were uncertain whether persons with aphasia had problems with general intelligence, with only 35% answering correctly to question 4. Although nearly half the number of respondents were aware about aphasia through their work (n = 44) , percentage of correct responses indicating whether aphasia affected all language modalities was less than 65%. (Question 6 = 64.83%. question 7 = 64.83). Finally, only half the respondents (52.74%) were aware that persons with aphasia did not have ‘mental health’ problems.

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Discussions

This study assessed the awareness and knowledge of aphasia among young adults in Kerala there by implementing strategies to create better responsiveness to the disorder.

Among the 189 respondents' who were surveyed, it was disheartening to know that only 48.14% of the young adults had heard of the term aphasia. This low awareness of the disorder was corroborated with the study done by Chazhikat, in 2011 indicating that there is a limited awareness and understanding of the nature of aphasia among the general population in Kerala.

The distributions of gender between samples were more of females compared to males, and may reflect the probability that greater number of females participated in socio curricular activities as postulated by Gender differences in the knowledge of aphasia was figured indicating that females had better knowledge of aphasia compared to males, with similar results attained by Code and colleagues in the study of "The public awareness of aphasia: an international survey (Code et al., 2001).

Examination of table 3 shows that among the 48.14 % who responded to the survey, 48.35% knew about aphasia through their work environment. These high levels of awareness in the results could be explained by the fact that a larger portion of the respondents consisted of students and professionals like social workers, physical therapists, nurses, teachers etc. Thus we can assume that awareness regarding aphasia increased with co – relation to the type of work one was associated. This is corroborated by a study done by Simmons- Mackie and colleagues (Simmons-Mackie, Code, Armstrong & Elman, 2002). Less than 20% had knowledge about aphasia through print or electronic media thereby highlighting the lack in promoting awareness about this debilitating disorder. Even among those who knew about aphasia through their work,

if a cut of 90% was used, regarding language modalities affected and presence of impaired health and mental health conditions, few of the respondents would get a passing score.

In conclusion, though a small survey, the results indicates some clear patterns. Among young adults, the awareness and knowledge about aphasia is higher in those who work in relation to it than those who do not with females getting an overall higher score. Majority of the participants are aware that brain damage through stroke is the primary causal factor for aphasia. The knowledge that aphasia can affect all language modalities is limited with uncertainties about its impact on mental health, thinking and cognition. The survey responses highlight the lack of awareness and hence poor responsiveness to the disorder thereby delaying the treatment strategies and overall prognostic value. With heightened awareness programs these drawbacks can be eradicated to ensure a beneficial outcome to the patients.

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APPENDIX A

Awareness of Aphasia Survey

Date of Survey: _____ Place of Survey: _____ Time of Day: _____

1. Age of respondent _____ Gender _____ Occupation _____

2. Have you ever heard of aphasia? Yes _____ No _____ Not sure _____

If no stop here

3. What is aphasia? Tell me in your own words.

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4. Would you say that people with aphasia
 - a. Have trouble with pronunciation of speech (yes, no, not sure)
 - b. Have trouble with language or putting their ideas into words? (Yes, no, not sure)
 - c. Have problems understanding what people say to them? (yes, no, not sure)
 - d. Have problems with thinking or general intelligence? (yes, no, not sure)
 - e. Have “mental health” problems? (yes, no, not sure)
 - f. Have reading problems? (yes, no, not sure)
 - g. Have writing problems? (yes, no, not sure)
 - h. Have communication problems? (yes, no, not sure)
5. What causes aphasia? Tell me in your own words. (Write verbatim)
6. Is aphasia caused by?
 - a. Brain damage (yes, no, not sure)
 - b. Emotional problems (yes, no, not sure)
 - c. Impaired intelligence (yes, no, not sure)
 - d. Mental problems (yes, no, not sure)
 - e. Stroke (yes, no, not sure)
7. Where did you hear about aphasia? (In what context did you hear about aphasia?)
 - a. Relative/friend has/had aphasia _____
 - b. On TV/radio _____
 - c. Newspapers/magazines _____
 - d. Doctor _____
 - e. Through my work _____
 - f. Other (specify) _____
8. What do you think can be done to help people with aphasia? (write verbatim)

Aphasia Knowledge Quiz. (Answer true or false)

1. PWA have trouble with pronunciation of speech
2. PWA have trouble with language or putting their ideas into words
3. PWA have problems understanding what people say to them
4. PWA have problems with thinking or general intelligence
5. PWA have “mental health” problems
6. PWA have reading problems
7. PWA have writing problems

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8. PWA have communication problems
 9. Aphasia is caused by brain damage
 10. Aphasia is caused by emotional problems
 11. Aphasia is caused by impaired intelligence
 12. Aphasia is caused by mental problems
 13. Aphasia is caused by stroke
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Thomas Mahima, MSLP
mahimathomas13@gmail.com

Francis Roslin, MASLP
roslinfrancis04@gmail.com

Abraham Rijesh, MASLP
abrahamrijesh@gmail.com

RaghavanE.Sreeshma, MASLP
sreeshmaer@gmail.com

Malik Ramiz, M.Sc.
ramizmalik.m@gmail.com

Mar Thoma College of Special Education
Institute of Speech and Hearing
Mar Thoma Mount
Perdala 671 551
Badiadka, Kasaragod
Kerala
India

Enhancing Reading Skill through WebQuest in Collaborative Learning Environment

**M. Megala
Dr. P. Madhumathi**

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Abstract

The methods of English language teaching and learning are getting changed with the advent of latest technologies. Especially in recent days, abundant online tools are being used in ESL classrooms for the effective teaching of English. Hence, this paper focuses on the effectual ways of using WebQuest (<http://webquest.org/>) to enhance the reading proficiency of the students in a collaborative learning environment. Most of the research articles stated that web-based learning created a positive impact in student's language learning process. But, they failed to envision the ways in which students accomplished the language and to project the limitations while using it. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is, to identify appropriate strategies to implement in the WebQuest based collaborative study mode. Further, the paper also suggests the need for using WebQuest to inbuilt language skill eventually in content area learning sessions.

Key Words: Technological Intervention, WebQuest, Collaborative learning, Reading skill, Strategy.

Introduction

English is an important foreign language which has attained the status of link language in most of the countries. The main aim of teaching English is to obtain practical command over the language. People considered the language learning process as an exigent task. Therefore, educationists espoused many methods to make the language learning process much easier. But they failed in achieving the expertise of the learners. In turn, they involved themselves in the search for better and more effective method. Meanwhile, 21st century confronts with the advancement of technology. As an output of this, the ESL/ EFL teaching has undergone an enormous change. In this way, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) started to influence ESL/ EFL classrooms.

Beatty (2010) stated that CALL is a term which ensures creativity and collaboration among the learners with the help of social networks. In other words, Alshumaimeri (2008) acclaimed CALL by affirming its authentic learning resources and its scope to converse with native speakers. He also noted the opinion of researchers and educationist about CALL, as an interesting means for facilitating foreign language learning. There are several online tools in existence, for instance, Schoology, Edmodo, Vimeo, and WebQuest. They are of similar kind but all have slightly differed on the basis of cause and aim. Through CALL, it is convenient to boost up web-based learning in a virtual classroom. Penetration of internet supplements teachers for language teaching and it also promotes student-centered learning. Moreover, it guaranteed self-access learning. Thus, the present paper highlights the inevitable necessity of computers and the internet in ESL classrooms. The main objectives of this paper are,

- To achieve collaborative learning with the aid of webquest.
- To find the means of using strategies in a collaborative learning environment with webquest in ESL classrooms.
- To ensure the proficiency of reading skill and its sub-skills through webquest.

WebQuest in ESL Classroom

A WebQuest is one of the online tools (<http://webquest.org/>) which provide opportunities for authentic learning experiences. Dodge (1995) defines Webquest as “an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet, optionally supplemented with videoconferencing”. Further, he classified Webquest into two types. They are; Short-term and Long-term. Short-term requires one or two class sessions and it is highly meant for acquiring information. In contrast, long-term expands for the week or even month which aims to improve the prior knowledge. Eventually, Webquest promotes students ability in evaluating, cataloging, stimulating, reasoning and scrutinizing. Webquest can be created by both teachers and learners with the help of tools like zunal, quest garden, and teacher Web. Generally, it consists of five steps. They are,

- Introduction
- Task
- Process

- Evaluation
- Conclusion

Apart from these pages, we have welcome page and gaming page as an eyes breaking sessions. In the introductory part, the author/ teacher have to introduce the topic that helps the learners to attain the background knowledge of the topic (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007). The tasksection is mostly assigned with the suitable task. Process section is considered as the heart of Webquest page. In this stage, students involve in an action to complete the task while the teacher supports them by providing essential materials. The links of the resource page are already stored in the page for students ease (Dodge, 1995). In the evaluation section, teachers prefer rubrics instead of a traditional testing method. It can be helpful in self-assessment. Finally, in the concluding part teacher has to discuss with a student to learn their experience and receive feedback to promote the Webquest page.

Therefore, Webquests is a good platform for its accuracy. Students felt comfort when they use Webquest and they can also gain technical strength. Moreover, it increases curiosity in learning process (Goodwin-Jones, 2004; Marco, 2002; Snider and Foster, 2000). There are some limitations in Indian educational system to carry out CALL. They are Communicational barriers, lack of observation, uncomfortable learning environment, the burden of homework, lack of technical knowledge (Garrett, 2009; Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, & Freynik, 2012; Warschauer, 2004). As a solution to this controversy, educationists began to use collaborative learning method in Webquest class. It would help the learners to assist themselves with their peers and also lessens the financial aspects when the student began to work in the group with common computers instead of possessing individually.

Collaborative Language Learning

The term Collaborative learning refers to learning in the group. They tend to do discussion, analyze a problem, and argue with peers to prove their point of view and so on. Kessler (1992) in his research stated that collaborative learning is a societal mode of education where the learners gain the knowledge of different dimension through the interactive session. It also cultivates their vision in future learning aspects. Johnson & Johnson (1999) rightly quoted in their research that real cooperative learning happens when students try to increase their knowledge level in finding a solution to the common problem. It also

promoted the knowledge of the group members. In case, if the contribution level of students in the group is invariably equal, it will be the high-performance collaborative group.

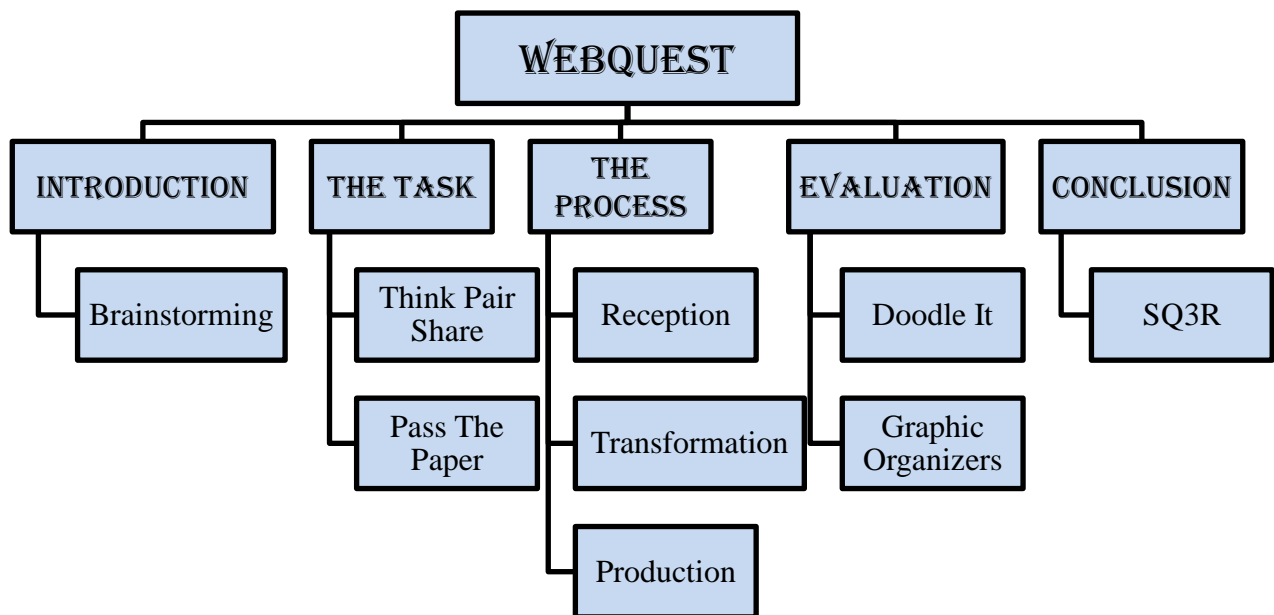
On other hand Crookes and Schmidt (1991) assured that collaborative learning is helpful for the average learners. The advanced learners of the group help their peers to know the hidden ideas of the concept. They also help them in a better understanding of the critical concepts. With the aid of technology collaborative technique can be executed even more effectively in ESL classrooms. According to Nguyen (2008), Computer helps learners to adapt suitable material and situation to learn with peers. To add proof to this Tang and Austin, (2009) declared online learning environments (OLEs) like social medias and other means of technology pave way for discussion with peers as well as to the university professors of overseas. Therefore, collaborative learning is acquainted well in the technological world comparing to the conventional learning style.

Means of Incorporating Collaborative Strategy in Webquest Page

Inquiry mode of study in Webquest is a good means to frame a collaborative learning situation. Students in different group involve themselves in answering a similar question or solving a common problem. It helps to attain the multi-dimensional aspect of concern topic. Further, the special features of Webquests like assimilation of technology into a learning experience, stimulating creative thinking, using information instead of looking for it, authenticity and collaborative learning situations endorse language learning progression. Moreover, in Webquests, there are number of pre-framed lessons available for all subjects. Therefore, it can be directly utilized in language learning classrooms. (Jones, B & Godwin, 2004).

The most interesting part of Webquest is generating competitive approach in completing a given task with the group. Since, it is an inquiry-oriented study where student involves themselves in sharing experience, taking quick decision and leading a group smoothly. Even though teachers play a facilitator role, they have to observe and guide students to move on the right path. Here language teacher has to teach the approaches that students have to take over. In other words, it can be called as Strategy instruction. Strategies are techniques or procedures which are consciously selected by the students to learn target language or to assist learning. It concerns more about the situation of employing the particular strategy (White, Cynthia, 2008). Therefore, teachers are responsible for introducing

such strategies to the student in Webquest page. The following table clearly projects the means to execute the strategic instruction in collaborative circumstances by using Webquest.



In the introduction section of the WebQuest teacher has to introduce brainstorming strategy. The teacher has to explain what is Brainstorming and then makes the students involve in discussion to come across the first level. In the second level, students are assigned with the task which they are going to complete with the help of a group. Process stage is the risky and important stage where students themselves engage in completing the tasks. In this section, they receive the information from the resources that already selected by the teachers to answer the questions appropriately. From the preselected websites, students have to observe the learning content and they have to modify it by their own understanding and recreate it with the new dimension. During this stage, students are executing the strategy.

For instance, in think pair share strategy students think about the issues individually. Then they explain that to their peers and they share it with a larger group. In this process students are analyzing, interpreting, summarizing and sequencing the ideas of the lesson. Similarly, it is happening in all other strategies. Finally, the evaluation stage brings out the success of the WebQuest page. In this stage, students are asked to project the learning content by any means like written or spoken document. Sometimes it can be like filling graphic organizers or even doodle it tasks. The concluding part consists of summarizing the lesson, sharing opinions about teaching learning method and student’s feedback over this method.

The collaborative learning through webquest promotes the reading skills well comparing to other language skills. With the implementation of this cyclic process, students learn the basic steps to approach a text. In each step, it becomes clear that the sub-skills of reading like summarizing, synthesizing, notes taking and guessing meaning for the words is being developed. It is easy for them to tackle the problem with their team. Moreover, it reduces the stress factor of students while approaching the English text. (Hubbard & Levy 2006). The communicative skill test identifies the integration and triggering motive in a group. It gives a positive result. Consequently not only the communicative aspect rather skimming, summarizing, synthesizing can be easily done through the group work with webquest model (Tsai, 2006).

Conclusion

Though, there are some limitations in executing technologically oriented education in developing countries; steps have been taken to solve it. For instance, the Indian government has taken an effort to afford opportunities to the students through NCERT and by creating portals for teachers and students like 24X7 Guru. By this means, the language teachers started to implement it in classrooms. Apart from reading skill it also helpful in motivational part, fostering autonomy in learning, cooperation among learners and so on (Lipscomb, 2003; Torres, 2005; Koenraad&Westhoff, 2003&Luzón, 2007, and Prapinwong, 2008)

Additionally, Webquest tends to develop higher order thinking of the students. For instance, cognitive skills like comparing, analyzing, generalizing and metacognitive skills like planning, monitoring and evaluating is well functioned. The limitation of this study is it concerns only on implementing the strategies in webquest learning. But it fails to categorize it based on the levels of the learners. Therefore, further research is needed to explore what kind of strategies can be incorporated based on the level of the readers including their age, learning capability. Researchers can also investigate methods to develop language skills through webquest in content oriented syllabus except reading.

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M. Megala
Full - Time Ph.D. scholar,
megala.m2016@vitstudent.ac.in

Dr. P. Madhumathi

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M. Megala and Dr. P. Madhumathi

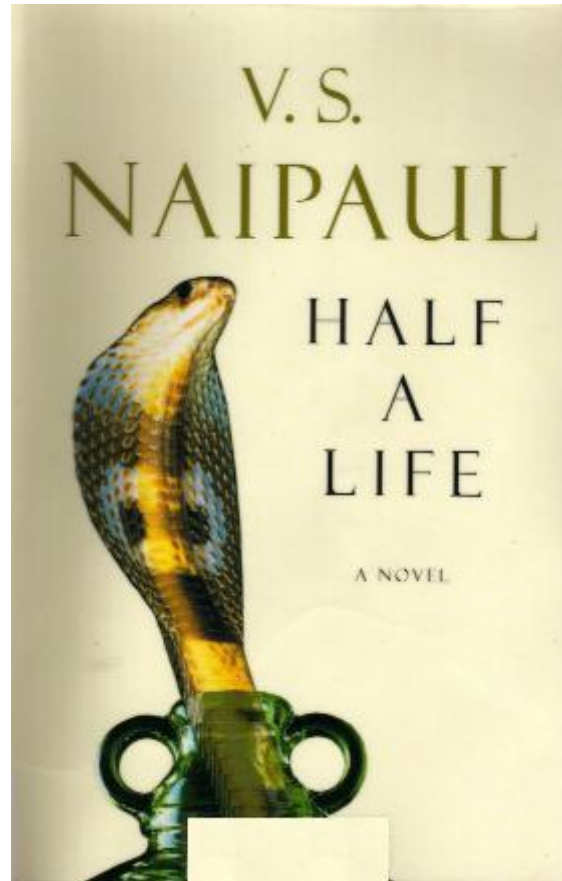
Enhancing Reading Skill through WebQuest in Collaborative Learning Environment

Assistant Professor
madhumathi.p@vit.ac.in

Department of English, SSL
VIT University
Vellore – 632014
Tamilnadu
India

Identity Crisis in V. S. Naipaul's *Half A Life*

S. Muthumala, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.



Abstract

V. S. Naipaul is undoubtedly one of the most significant novelists of the twentieth century. His novel *Half a Life* delineates Willie Somerset Chandran's search for self-development and self-knowledge. Naipaul masterfully manipulates the protagonist Willie Somerset Chandran's colonial predicament, his anxiety, dislocation and search for his own identity in this novel. *Half a Life* portrays Willie's continuing banished life from India to England, England to Africa and then to Germany to rediscover his self-identity; nevertheless he loses his true identity.

Key words: V.S.Naipaul, *Half a Life*, self-development, self-knowledge

V. S. Naipaul

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, is commonly known as V. S. Naipaul. He is undoubtedly, one of the most significant novelists of the twentieth century. He was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad on August 17, 1932. Naipaul studied literature in England at University College, Oxford. Being an Indian by descent, a Trinidadian by birth, and an Englishman by education, V. S. Naipaul possesses a multi-cultural background. Naipaul has produced a huge corpus of writing that includes novels, short stories, non-fictional novels, travelogues, fictional biographies, fictional autobiographies, journalistic writings and history. His works are *Miguel Street* (1959), *A Flag on the Island* (1967), *The Writer and the World: Essays* (2002), *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *The Suffrage Of Elvira* (1958), *Miguel Street* (1959), *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), *In a Free State* (1971), *Finding the Centre* (1984).

Identity

Identity is shaped as a result of a collaboration of social and personal experiences a person endures during the course of his/her life. Identity is a multifaceted component of human experience. Identity is a very intriguing concept both in psychology and literature. Many modern literary texts revolve around this concept. A number of themes in literature centre on identity. An identity crisis is a period of serious personal questioning where the individual makes an effort to determine one's own values and sense of direction. Identity is confined to man, his reason and freedom of the self in a society. The theme of V. S. Naipaul's 2001 novel *Half a Life* in relation to the question of identity and identity- formation. For Naipaul, identity is not given, but constructed and contingent.

Half a Life

Naipaul's *Half a life*, published just before he received the Nobel Prize, portrays and evaluates the lives of the mixed descent in three countries - India, England and Portuguese Africa (Mozambique) and their struggle to discover their identities. The novel is set in three locales - India, England and Africa.

Half a Life runs into three uneven sections, subtitled as (a) 'A Visit From Somerset Maugham,' (b) 'The First Chapter,' (c) 'A Second Translation.' In spite of the thin structure of the novel, the novel has a wide cast of characters: Perci Cato, a Jamaican, Marcus, an

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ambitious businessman, Roger, a young lawyer, Perdita, Roger's fiancée, Carla, the convent girl, Ricardo, a Military man, The Noranhas, Julio, Correia, a formidable Portuguese, Greca Carl, the manager's wife, Gouveria, an architect, Mrs. Noranha, a good storyteller and Ana.

The theme of Exile and Longing for Identity

The theme of exile and longing for identity is very much central to the novel *Half a Life*. It is apparently a record of Willie's quest for identity. The central idea of the novel revolves around the protagonist Willie Somerset Chandran. He is born in India in the 1930's, moves to London with a scholarship to study in Nottingham. He remains in a state of tension, he publishes a book then he marries Ana, a woman of mixed African parents, and then goes along with her to Africa, her family estate. His trace formed a circle, and unfortunately, he still went back to the starting point without finding his sense of belonging. The novel also delineates Willie's continuous exiled life from India, England, Africa, and Germany moving toward affirming self-identity.

The Protagonist Willie Chandran

At the outset of the novel *Half a Life*, the protagonist Willie Chandran seems to be curious to know about his middle name 'Somerset'. On several occasions, the elders fail to satisfy his questioning spirit in their family. Even at the beginning of the novel Willie asks his father the reason for his name "Willie Somerset Chandran". Here the quest starts,

"Why is my middle name Somerset?
He says that the boys at the school have just
made out and they are mocking at me". (HL 1)

His father tells him that half of his name does not belong to him. It is borrowed from the well-known writer Somerset Maugham who had an encounter with him in the 1930s. Willie's father Chandran answers the question by recounting his own life as a young man. Chandran goes through a series of upheavals in search of identity. In an effort to break with his ancestry, Chandran insists on marrying a Dalit woman following the ideals set by the Mahatma during pre-independence period. Chandran has an obsession to become a great man like the Mahatma. Chandran's forced life of spirituality gives him an identity. His grandfather's lineage linking him to the temple life shows that the man was to undergo starvation till he could break with it, to become a letter writer outside the Maharaja's palace. Chandran's father, a courtier of the Maharaja, was however obsessed with the temple cult.

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Chandran belongs to a Brahmin family but he marries a low caste woman and has two children, Willie and Sarojini. So Willie thinks himself as a half Brahmin and half untouchable; so his contradiction with self begins in his childhood. He was very shameful on his condition because he couldn't accept the discrimination. Willie begins to hate his parents more particularly his father, and a sense of isolation makes him a traveller. At home his mixed inheritance had spoiled everything. Even the love he felt for his mother, which should have been pure, was full of the pain he felt for their circumstances.

Sense of Isolation

Willie's father soon grasps that his son is suffering from the sense of isolation and thinks that to save him he should provide him freedom which would help him to expand his view about life style. He says:

I used to think that you were me and I was worried at what I had done to you. But now I know that you are not me what is in my head is not in yours. You are somebody else, somebody, I don't know and I worry for you because you are launched on a journey I know nothing of. (HL 49)

Chandran has a crisis of his own identity which he thought he could achieve through his children; this is how he replies to Willie's query: "You were named after a great English writer. I am sure you have seen his book about the house". (HL1) Willie comes to know the reality about his family's history, culture, heritage and roots from his father's story. Willie has an incomplete identity of his origin due to his father's deprivation from Brahmin culture.

Mixed Identities

On the one hand his first name gives a clue that he possesses a Christian identity. On the other hand his surname indicates his mixed ancestry. Here Willie feels that his name also increases his sense of identity crisis. Willie is disturbed about his identity. Perhaps Willie's father while giving Somerset's name to his son, is himself in a split personality, mixing illusions and reality. Willie's father is not only leading a half- life himself, he rather creates a background to the dilemma of his son, leading a half- life throughout.

Later on, Chandran was rather disillusioned to see that Willie, his son was drifting away from his ideals. There is also a reference to both the identities of Chandran and Willie in the question of the Canadian teacher in the mission school: “What does your father do?” (HL 37) The strange reply of Willie with irritation is also interesting to note: “You all know what my father does”. (HL 37) In the mission school where their mother had been a student, Willie and Sarojini, his sister studied. But it was a branded school where backward caste children also studied. It was noteworthy that Willie was doing excellently in the composition class by composing poems like Shelly, Wordsworth and others.

A week after when Chandran again went through the exercise book of his son, he found another offensive composition against mom and pop. He therefore thought that the boy was the “true son of his mother, was challenging him, with all the slyness of a backward class fellow, and he wasn’t sure what he should do”. (HL 41)

Though Chandran did not discuss anything about the composition with his son, he was rather disturbed. This realization of his father was a great compliment to his son. To his father Willie is meant for a special purpose. He therefore writes to the contact persons abroad whom he helped in India to help him, to get a place for his son in some institute. Finally, there is a positive response:

But he was spared the humiliation of an all-round refusal. There came a letter in a blue envelope from London, from the House of Lords, from a famous man who had paid a brief visit to the ashram just after independence. His fame and his title had made him memorable to Willie Chandran’s father. (HL 50)

This man wanted to display his power to Willie’s father. It was a letter containing some gold for Willie: “The letter contained a little of the gold the little man had spun: a place and a scholarship had been found for Willie Chandran in a college of education for mature students in London”. (HL 51)

Seeking to Find Son’s Identity

This letter creates an opportunity for Willie to go to London. It is therefore the father’s achievement because Chandran has done what he had himself promised his son in his

early life. But then, Willie's father does not know the concrete journey of his son. He does not know what his son's destiny is, what his identity would be. Even Willie, a boy of twenty, does not know what his London life would bring for him in the future:

And that was now, when he was twenty, Willie Chandran, the mission- school student who had not completed his education, with no idea of what he wanted to do, except to get away from what he knew, and yet with very little idea of what lay outside what he knew, only with the fantasies of the Hollywood films of the thirties and forties that he has seen at the mission school, went to London. (HL 51)

Frightening Experiences in London

Willie's life in London is fraught with many frightening experiences. He is portrayed here as a young man 'with nothing to his name but his promise as a writer, drifting aimlessly, groping for a voice'. He suffers from alienation and emptiness. He sleeps with prostitutes and friends' girl-friends only to discover his own sexual incompetence. In London, Willie feels that he has to

re-learn everything that he knew. He had to learn how to eat in public. He had to learn how to greet people and how, having greeted them, not to greet them all over again in a public place ten or fifteen minutes later. He had to learn to close doors behind him. He had to learn how to ask for things without being peremptory. (HL 56)

Reconstructing Identity

Willie reconstructs his identity through his father's connection to the great writers and the journalists. In this way, Willie remakes himself which gives him a feeling of power. This seems like Willie is settling down in London. With some confidence Willie moves on in London first making friendship with Percy Cato, a Jamaican of mixed parentage. Likewise, Percy Cato, "a Jamaican of mixed parentage who was more brown than black," (HL 61) falsely fabricates his family history. He misleads Willie to believe that his father is a clerk in Panama. In fact, his father went there "as a labourer". (HL 62)

Willie and Percy

Willie and Percy's fictional recreations only seem to end up with their cheating themselves. They are an escape from an unbearable reality. Their make-believe identities are their performances. The creation of identity here has double meanings. Apparently, Willie seems to forsake his Indian tradition and family history. Even so, when he looks back on his life, he will understand his loss of cultural heritage at the stage of being in London. Willie now realizes that it is necessary for everybody to establish his identity in the world. Through Percy, Willie is being introduced to the "special, passing bohemian- immigrant life of London of the late 1950s". (HL72)

Percy Cato flees from London. Meanwhile Sarojini comes to see him. Willie plays an unwilling host to her. Sarojini, on the contrary, proves her worth here. She chastens him for wasting his life in London. Disturbed and desperate Willie phones Perdita, Roger's wife to help him dissolve his tension. Perdita denies his entreaties dispassionately.

In his early London days, he realizes his ignorance, and therefore he reads a number of books on world history and politics. He could not understand many of them. Meeting many people he realizes the hardships of a real life. He therefore admires his father's ability: "I misjudged my father. I used to think that the world was easy for him as a Brahmin and that he became a fraud out of idleness. Now I began to understand how hard the world must have been for him". (HL 58) Willie knew a lot of rules to cope with the college as well as London life.

Bohemian Life

Willie leads a bohemian life in London along with such friends as Percy, Roger, Richard, Perdita and so on. Roger, helps him to get chances to write scripts for the B.B.C. He suggests Willie should write stories not necessarily having a neat beginning and a neat ending because life in reality is not like that:

Life doesn't have a neat beginning and a tidy end. Life is always going on. You should begin in the middle and end in the middle and it should be there. (HL 83)

Story Writer

Willie, accepting the suggestion of Roger, revises his early stories of the missionary school days, and then writes some more stories to find a publisher for them. Then he writes some stories about India and on Indian themes. He is anxious for the publication of the book. Finally Richard agrees to publish it. This book has India as its background setting. Through the book he wants to have an identity. However, his book could not be reviewed much favourably so he gives up writing. He has nothing to hold him. He drifts from bars to dinner parties to newspaper offices, and the fun lies in watching him observe odd social customs and sad class incongruities. Willie is gradually getting fed up with those bohemian parties with Percy and June and others. Badly broken, finally he goes into a cafe full of prostitutes.

Now Willie could learn in London that “Everything goes on a bias. The world should stop, but it goes on”. (HL 113) Without getting so much favourable reviews of the book, Willie is very frustrated:

Let the book die. Let it fade away. Let me not be reminded of. I will write no more. This book was not something I should have done, anyway. It was artificial and false. Let me be grateful that none of the review spotted the way it was done. (HL 123)

Adjust with a New Kind of Identity

Though Willie goes to London to get his real existence and identity but very soon he faces the reality and accepts the harsh fact that he does not need to mutiny. Willie tries to adjust in a new kind of life which is also not of his own and begins to lead his life with that false identity.

A number of insulting events happen to him. He suffers the typical isolation in a foreign country. In London Willie can find no way of forming relationships on his own. Whatever joy and freedom Willie experiences here are incomplete. Even the girls Willie comes into contact are not his friends but the beloved females of his own friends. They do not come to him through his identity. Even in love making, Willie is incompetent.

Once, a prostitute throws him off. He is full of shame. He wants to leave London, but he doesn't know where to go. He doesn't like to return to India and lead the life of his mother's uncle, a firebrand who forced the union of his mother and father.

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He thinks that he can create his own identity unreservedly and he begins to understand that he is free to present himself as he wished. His life becomes worthless when he finds that he has nothing in this world to live for. He starts believing that he is alone and finds himself in acute neurotic anxiety. People go abroad for making money, power and prosperity and they achieve it, but in return they fail to achieve the peace, pleasure and satisfaction.

Freedom of Expression and Identity

In England Willie begins to understand that he was free to present himself as he wished. He could, as it were, write his own resolution. These possibilities were dizzying. He could, within reason, remake himself and his past and his ancestry. After getting tired of leading a life of false identity in England, Willie decides to find out his own identity. At this point Willie finds himself in confusion. He does not know where he is going. Willie fails to see his future in London.

In England, he lives with the idea of getting himself liberated from the cruelties and rules of home. At this point of time Willie receives a letter from Sarojini, his sister from Cuba enquiring about his plans for the future and the publication of his book. But Willie had not planned anything for his future. He had been living in a fool's paradise.

Then he receives a letter from an admirer of his book, Ana, a young girl, from an African country, living in London. Since her African culture goes easily with his own culture, he falls in love with her, gets married and moves to Portuguese East Africa. Ana's grandfather, a Portuguese married an African and later when he grew rich, he chose a Portuguese son-in-law. Ana's mother left her Portuguese husband and remarried a man of mixed race. In her step father's home Ana was seduced by him. Because of all the experiences Ana has developed a vacuum in her mind and longed for love that would remove her loneliness.

Encounter with Ana

Willie finds love in the chance encounter with Ana, a girl of mixed race from Africa and admirer of his book. They meet in his hostel room. Willie has been a little tense before her arrival. But 'as soon as he saw her, all his anxieties fell away, and he was conquered'.

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(HL 125) The most intoxicating thing was ' that for the first time in his life he felt himself in the presence of someone who accepted him completely. When he has completed his studies, he decides to go to Africa with his lover Ana.

His time is going to be over in the college. It is time for him to get a job and a place to live in with Ana. After much contemplation he realizes that he would have to go with Ana to Africa where they could live together. After such a proposal, Ana agrees. Willie decides to marry Ana who has also a multi-cultural background. Willie decides to go to Africa with Ana to find his own self-identity. But once again he proves to be wrong in his decision to settle in Africa. His condition becomes even worse in this African country where he has expected himself to belong. He has to face the same problems in this country as he has faced in London. He remains a stranger and unknown in this new land. In this situation, he thinks:

I don't know where I am. I don't think I can pick my way back.

I don't ever want this view to become familiar. I must not unpack.

I must never behave that I am staying. (HL 135)

When Ana comes to meet him in college, Willie could understand that for the first time in his life he met someone who accepts him completely. At home in India, his life was governed by mixed inheritance, rules and regulations. His experience of love with Ana, he hopes, might bring him the fulfilment he so desperately seeks. At Ana's estate house in Africa, Willie feels like a stranger, and says, 'It may be because of something in our culture that in spite of appearances, men are really looking for women to lean on'. (HL 141) And further, 'Ana was important for me because I depended on her for my idea of being a man'. (HL 142)

Ana finds completeness in marrying Willie. But at last when Willie leaves her, she looks at life as an illusion. She says, "Perhaps it wasn't really my life either". (HL 217) Willie eases into the borrowed life of his wife's world. There is no commitment. He has his weekends with Ana's European friends and submits to the consolations of bourgeois comfort. It includes sex with young African girls. But very soon Willie finds less and less pleasure in sex. "It has grown mechanical". (HL 195) He spends 18 years there, an outsider again. Ana takes him to her estate house in Africa. He has intense days of love making with Ana which is disturbed when he finds another lover Graca.

Discover Some Purpose in Life

Willie wants to discover some purpose in life through his sensual associations and sexual encounters in Ana's Africa, "Willie's submission to sexual desire is wholly believable for the very reason that he has previously been stunted into half life by the constrictions of caste in India and class in England, Africa releases him into sensuality". (HL 9)

Willie spends eighteen years in Africa with Ana. After he ships out one day, he is injured for which he is to be treated in the military hospital among the wounded black soldiers. After recovery, he says to Ana, "I am going to leave. I have given you eighteen years. I can't give you any more. I can't live your life any more. I want to live my own". (HL 136) Willie expressed his desire to leave Ana in the hospital itself. However, Ana consoles him and tells him: "People exaggerate the fighting in the bush. You know that. There's not going to be a new war". (HL 135)

Symbolic Loss

The loss of passport by Willie is symbolic. Willie, by losing his passport, perhaps loses his identity, the pastness of his past, his ancestral inheritance. In Africa, he is completely a new man: "the loss of passport worried me more than everything else. Without my passport I didn't see how I could prove to any official in Africa or England or India who I was". (HL 157)

He suffers from the same problems which he has seen in London. He imitates that in London people know him by his own name that is Willie Chandran but in Africa people address him as 'Ana's London Man'. (HL 45) In this condition he feels that he has lost his identity. Being educated in London Willie manages English well. But now in Africa he has to learn a new language to adjust there. The loss of language indicates his loss of existence in this new land. Willie once again finds himself in a predicament.

Alienated Person in Africa

Willie feels like a more alienated person in Africa in comparison to London, he leads eighteen years of his life in Africa in stable search of his identity. And finally he again takes a decision in his life, to leave Ana with the expectation of finding his true existence and his lost name and identity that is Willie Chandran, not Ana's English man.

With the passage of each year in Africa Willie is acquiring new identities with new experiences. However, each time with a new experience he goes back to his ancestry his roots even though he has already denounced such a life of Indian ancestry with rules, codes and regulations. When his life with Graca is known, Ana suggests to him after two years of his drive with Graca that as a man of self-respect and order, he should refrain from all these ungentle ways.

Now that Willie is forty-one and has spent the part of his life with Ana during the last eighteen years, he expresses his gratitude to her for obliging him. However, he has done nothing because he has led a half life by hiding there for a long time. To Willie, his life was a shadow life, the life of Ana rather than his own. Even to Ana, this was not her life either. The anguish of Willie is the result of the shattering of all his illusions in the post colonial scenario of Africa. Willie leaves Africa and decides to go to Germany where his sister Sarojini lives. After his dreams are shattered, he prepares to go to Berlin to his sister, but it is not his home. Willie has not yet arrived at his final identity. He is yet to explore something more about his identity.

The Aftermath of Willie's African Life

In a way this novel carries on with the aftermath of Willie's African life when he comes to Berlin to his sister, Sarojini after spending a "half-life" with his wife Ana. Willie Chandran tries to explore his identity soon after coming back to his sister. He passively allows his sister Sarojini to tell him, in her bossy way, what he should think. He is easily and thoroughly disheartened by the reviews of his book of stories: 'Willie thought, "Let the book die. Let it fade away. Let me not be reminded of it. I will write no more"'. (HL 189)

There he sees several Tamil boys playing on the street and manages to see the glimpses of his character in them. They are of another generation, but Willie sees himself in them. He thinks, "That was how I appeared in London, I am not as alone as I thought". (HL 138) Then he thinks

But I am wrong. I am not like them. I am forty-one in middle life. They are fifteen or twenty years younger and the world has changed. They have proclaimed who they are and they are risking everything for it. I have been

hiding for myself. I have risked nothing. And now the best part of my life is over. (HL 138)

Looking Back

Willie's statement that 'now the best part of my life is over' indicates the time he has passed in London and Africa and he has achieved nothing. He might have used his time for better, which he has wasted in the search of his identity. Thus the novel concludes with the self-realization of Willie.

At the age of twenty, Willie's flight from the burden of his family's painful situation takes him from India to London, where he tries to arrange a new identity. Failing to do so, he is rescued from self-doubt and determined to become a writer by adhering to a woman. Together they go to her African country to live out the last doomed days of colonialism, where Willie remains for eighteen years as a spectator in yet another life that is not his own. With the help of his sister he flees to Germany.

Willie's predicament is that he does not know himself well initially. He tries to explore his own self to know his identity. In India or London or Africa he is always the half-man, and therefore leads a half-life only. The book is therefore about the half-lives of various people:

In a larger sense the novel points to various predicaments of various half- and-half people and of people uprooted from a way of life on account of factors often out of their own control. A war, an uprising, a change of government, ethnic hostilities that make people threatened, caste considerations are some of those factors. The book also suggests that most of us get only 'half a life' . . . to live choices of various kinds that we make do shut out other ways of life to us. (Chandra Pradhan 99)

Uprooted

It is true that the protagonist of the novel, a man uprooted from his home and ancestry, is facing a crisis of identity. Willie leaves his native land to earn a good amount of money, but surprisingly he has to lose so many things instead, like loss of identity, loss of human relationship and so on. Willie, the Indian immigrant cannot identify himself either

with his previous land or to his new land. With *Half a Life*, V. S. Naipaul has succeeded in addition to society's perception of race, identity and failure.

All the major protagonists of Naipaul suffer from the dilemma of displacement and identity crisis. *Half a Life* portrays Willie's constant banished life from India to England, England to Africa and then to Germany to rediscover his self-identity. Nevertheless he loses his true identity.

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S. Muthumala,M.A., M.Phil.
Assistant Professor
Department of English
SMS College of Arts and Science
Kallamanaickenpatti 626131
Tamilnadu
India
smmala791@gmail.com

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S. Muthumala, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.

Identity Crisis in V. S. Naipaul's *Half A Life*

A Study of Choubak's Works through Naturalistic Perspective

Mansoor Nikpanah, Ph.D.

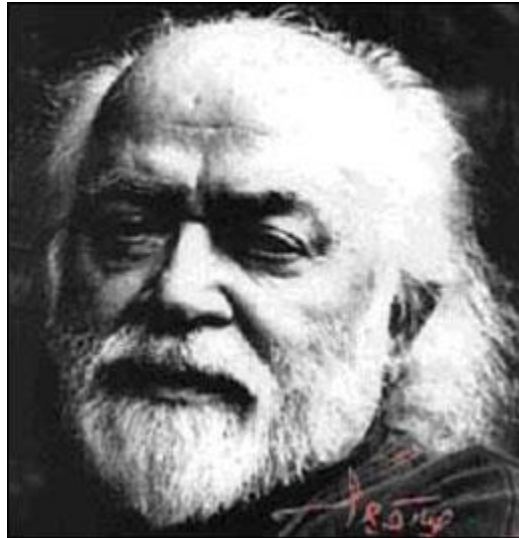
Higher Educational Complex of Saravan, Iran

Sima Gharibey, M.A. of English Literature
Bushehr

Ahmad Mollaei

Teacher of University Applied Science, Iran

Nasrin Mozaffari, Ph.D. (Corresponding Author)
Bushehr University of Medical Sciences



Sadek Choubak (1916-1998)

Courtesy: http://www.iranchamber.com/literature/schoubak/sadeq_choubak.php

Abstract

Persian fiction has undergone changes during recent decades in a way that at times some paradoxical and exaggerating comments have been put forth regarding some writers and consequently readers have been left perplexed. One of these authors is Sadeq Choubak about whose writing style much has been said and written. Naturalism, realism, symbolism, Freudianism, existentialism, etc., are the features and isms that have been attributed to this great contemporary novelist of Iran. In between, Choubak's being naturalistic has been proposed among some critics. This article attempts to answer

some problems regarding Choubak's being naturalistic in some literary circles through a comparative study of Choubak's writing style and Emil Zola the principle representative of the naturalism school. In this regard, it studies the features of the works of these two authors and compares them with one another.

Keywords: Choubak, Zola, naturalism, realism, story



Introduction

Nineteenth century has been accompanied with the emergence of industrial revolution effects upon the European countries. Industrial Revolution that began in the late eighteenth century led to extensive changes in European societies: Progress in the exploration and exploitation of mining technology, the development of fast economic growth, increasing wealth and social change are the most important effects that can be mentioned. "The scientific theories such as evolution, heredity and natural selection by people such as Prosper Luca and Darwin in the field of biology, were introduced in this period" (Forrest 26). In addition to scientific, technical and economic progress, in this period we observe major social changes in European societies. "The expansion of cities, building vast factories in them and

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mining led to the influx of a lot of people to the cities in order to find occupation. It caused the emergence of social classes among workers upon whom the burden of most factories and mines were put; people who had done the hard work would just receive a small wage. Although the industrial revolution increased wealth, this wealth was either in the hands of a few people who were owners of factories or mines or had them at their disposal. As a result, the income gap in European societies increased daily "(See Ross E. Dunn 83, vol3).

“Wealth would never be gathered this easily and poverty would never be this extensively and discordantly accompanied with all the new victories of engineering, ugliness, boredom and dirt as such that no civilization in the past had created it” (Bernal 391). These changes soon showed their face in the works of authors and a little later in the media in a way that it influenced the literary schools at that time and a plurality of pen holders in the wake of these developments created a series of works from which our writers were not alienated.

Writing Fiction in Iran in 1990s



Writing fiction in Iran entered a new phase since 1900s. Acquaintance with European literature was an important contribution to these developments. Jamalzadeh’s leadership and Sadegh Hedayat and Sadegh Choubak’s tracking established a firm foundation in Iran’s fiction. But the relationship between

Iranian authors and Western works led to expressing different opinions; at times it was theorized in a way that a kind of exaggeration and even transmutation was felt.

Influence of Western Authors

Sadegh Choubak is one of the authors about whose works lots of comments can be noticed and also the influence of western authors can be observed.

"Some signs of the impact of the style of Hedayat, Hemingway, Faulkner, ... can be found in Choubak's works but also their originality and innovation can not be denied" (Dastgheib 408). But the same author comments somewhere else that "his humor reminds us of Chekhov. But Choubak's humor is more bitter Chekhov's, but perhaps his work is closer to that of Guy de Maupassant" (413).

Another expert comments thus: "He has read Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*...he has read foreign storytellers' stories and from among those he likes Chekhov, Maupassant, O Henry, Mark Twain, Thomas Mann, Selma Lagerlöf very much. He loves Wagner, and has listened to the English translation of André Malraux's "anti-souvenirs" (Elahi 112). In this way this idea is thus : "he has lost the sense of direction and has got nothing to say and yet fascinated by the movements of experimentation authors like James Joyce, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos, Thornton and Illar without comprehending the significance of their experimentation" (Dehbashi 28).

Overemphasis on Influence of Western Isms

Apparently at times this kind of commentary comes from too much perusing of authors 'or their much knowledge of other countries' literature or it is perhaps a show off. From among these beliefs is being under the influence of Western isms which necessitates much thought and reflection in order to comment on this regard. Certainly these ideas can be raised about Choubak. As pointed out before, his mastery over the works of other countries' authors and several translations that he has done on their works are evidence enough of his being influenced. But if we exaggerate in this regard and attribute different isms to him every now and then, it would be some kind of overindulgence.

Naturalism School

The term does not refer only to the field of literary criticism, but it has also a different meaning there in philosophy and fine arts, especially painting. "In fact, naturalism in philosophy was stated as a

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belief that" saw man as the inhabitant of the world of comprehensible phenomena. Some kind of cosmic machine that had the destiny of mankind and nature in its hand and in short, a world devoid of transcendent supernatural forces, or divine "(Forest 11) and the perception that was worked out in the eighteenth century by French Oulbackh . "Also, naturalism in the old philosophy would be applied in the sense of materialism, hedonism and avoidance of any kind of religion.

For instance, Ambrose Pare, a famous sixteenth century surgeon, thought of it as the hedonic atheists' belief. Diderot wrote (naturalist) is a person who does not believe in God; instead, he believes in the material substance. St. Bo, the French scholar, in 1839's put naturalistic materialism with the belief in God all in the same row and regarded them as replaceable and even half a century later, in 1882, Carou, the Colombian thinker placed naturalism in contrast with spiritualism "(11).

Detachment from the Supernatural

Of these interpretations, we can find that naturalism in the philosophy, promotes detachment from the supernatural world and research in nature and appearance or according to Litter, in the French language culture it is ""the intellectual system of those who find all final causes in nature" (11.). " It was almost from the so-called fine art that the term "naturalism" entered literature and its importer was undoubtedly Emile Zola who applied the term the foreword of the second edition of the novel (Thérèse Raquin 1867)" (11).

Emily Zola's Contribution

No doubt that nowadays the school of naturalism in literature is known with the name of Emile Zola. What introduces Zola as a naturalist novelist is the novel Thérèse Raquin. When Zola writes this book he is immensely dominated by the ideas of his time and through applying those ideas he depicts the main characters of the novel, i.e. Therese and Laurent, as human beings who are under the influence of their neural and hematic properties and are devoid of any kind of will and authority. Zola spends much effort in the creation of novel and believes that novels should be "a comprehensive study of nature and man" (Wellek 11) and the scientific method be used in it.

The scientific method that Zola selects for novel is based upon experiment and finding cause and effect relationship between events. Zola has collected his most significant ideas about the scientific

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novel in a book named *The Experimental Novel* which is known as the most important theoretical source of naturalism. He writes under the influence of Claude Bernard in which he regards the novelist as a physician who explains the situation of people's temperament (Forest 27). He also believes that "the one who works upon experience is an investigator of nature" and states that "novel is the report of experiences and experiments". Thus he believes that he should put imagination aside, for as they used to say that that author has got a strong imagination, I want to say he has got a sense of reality..." (Seyed Hosseini, 65:242).

Also, Zola under the influence of Dr. Prosper Luca's thesis of natural heredity puts forth the heredity theory in the story and influenced by the theories of heredity, writes *Rougon-Macquart* collection that is comprised of twenty independent novels that are chained together. On the other side, in literary criticism Zola believes that we must imitate naturalists and through the help of books and pictures restore people behind the works and by using their real life restore their societies (Wellek, *ibid*: 30).

The Most Important Features of Naturalist Works

By studying three works by Zola (*Thérèse Raquin*, *L'Assommoir* (Murder Weapon) and *Germinal*), the following features in naturalist style are observed:

1. Choosing a scientific approach to the story (*Rogen family Assets* p. 76 and *Germinal*: 281, 314 and 384).
2. Paying attention to the environment and society (*Germinal* 107).
3. Describing poverty and misery present in the communities (*L'Assommoir* 459, 433 and multiple pages in *Germinal*).
4. Describing the ugly and immoral scenes (*Germinal* 377 and 131 *L'Assommoir* 286).
5. Objective overview and detailed description (*Rogen Family Assets* 20 and *L'Assommoir* 47).
6. Algebra (*L'Assommoir* 293 and *Germinal* 219).

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7. Intercourse as a legitimate experience (Germ: 236, 170, 353)

8. Spoken language 9. The tragic ending of naturalistic stories (the ending of the three studies stories are as such).

Is Choubak a Naturalist Author?

While observing naturalism school, it was found that naturalists and most importantly, pioneer of this school Emile Zola "thought of naturalism as an only experimental method of observation and testing " (Allott 592). Zola believed that method is the most important problem in naturalistic novel; given the impact of science philosophy (positivism), a novel follows an empirical scientific method. Naturalists turned their stories into a laboratory to show physiological status of human beings and that inheritance laws and the transfer of characteristics of individuals are described through blood.

Following Cause and Effect Rules

Naturalistic novels follow cause and effect rules that have been proved through several tests. Naturalists had a high tendency to be describing the miserable, full of ugliness and pollution life of disillusioned, forgotten and petty people and would purposefully bring these issues into their stories. Their supposition of human beings was limited and under the influence of Darwin's ideas and his theory of evolution during that period. Besides writing *Thérèse Raquin*, the first naturalist novel, Zola wrote the twenty-volume *Rougon-Macquart* in order to prove his theories. Although each story has autonomy, all of them are chained together and explain the same scientific principles of heredity and the environment in which Zola and his contemporaries believed. All the stories are related to people's lives and different generations of a hypothetical family at the time of the second empire in France. Another point is that Zola's naturalism in France did not abide more than forty years and almost finished in 1887.

Genuine Naturalism Depends on the Method of the Work, Not on the Subject of the Work

Most of naturalism's principles, especially those were in accordance with scientific findings of that period, were removed from the scene of writing. After this period perhaps many stories have been written merely for the reason that the subjects of the story had a relationship with naturalism; It means that since it is about slums, alcoholism and sexual decadence character, the story is considered

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naturalistic; however, it should be noted that the genuine naturalism in literature without being dependent upon the subject of the work, is related to the method of the work. In fact it is the method that overshadows the choice of subject.

When naturalists believe that physical and physiological defects are transferred from people of one generation to another or if there is an alcoholic or prostitute in a family, there would appear inborn criminals and prostitutes in the subsequent generations and on one hand the "naturalism as a revolt against the moral and religious prejudgments and contracts puts the right foot. It breaks down the censorship that the society has imposed on some parts of manifestations of nature and life. It talks about things and describes scenes that had not entered literary works until that day.

Beginnings of Naturalism Literary Works

Talking about evil, disasters, poverty and injustices, that had at first began in Dickens's works but bourgeois society wanted to dismiss, culminated in naturalists' works (Seyed Hosseini 65: 245). Since they cannot get involved with anything other than evil, poverty, alcoholism and corruption, they fill the atmosphere of their works with the description of foul scenes.

Western Influence on Choubak

There is no doubt in Choubak's being influenced by Western story writing, for what has basically been accepted as contemporary fiction in Iran was the legacy that found its way to the Persian language and literature after the Constitutional Movement and Iranians' familiarity with the culture and literature of Western countries. The important point is that Western literature went its way from seventeenth century on the basis of development and change in social, political and economic current of writing stories. It means that all literary schools did not come into existence at the same time and in the same way, but that due to changes that occur in communities authors turn to new issues and create different schools. process begins with Cervantes' novel Don Quixote and all the experiences of writing novel ,periods and literary schools come sequentially and the schools of classicism, romanticism, realism, etc come into existence under the influence of social, political and economical factors of their time" (Abdollahian 19-20).

We have been imitators in writing modern stories and have learned the techniques of this literary genre by means of translating Western literary works. “Our imitation in writing novel did not have a natural course; it means that we did not begin from a specific point to reach a specific destination. For this reason we at times find a combination of different schools’ features in the works written by Iranian authors” (Soleimani 1:26-27).

Choubak also as an Iranian author was under the influence of modern literature of the century. “Due to his acquaintance with English, the translations he did and his attending the oil company that had provided lots of opportunities for its staff with to learn European languages, he got acquainted with story writing movements in Europe and applied some feature of literary schools in his works” (Taghizadeh 4:83-84).

But to say that he is a naturalist and that his stories have the characteristics of naturalism is not all that right, for what has been mentioned as a similarity between Choubak’s works and naturalists’ works were not confined to naturalism. Descriptions of disillusioned and petty people of society, the details of events and phenomena, description of people’s poverty and misery are all cases that can be observed in realist stories as well. Thus, just like other authors Choubak has got the features of different schools in his works. For instance, in his novel *Tanggesir*, he acts differently in comparison with his other works; he makes an invincible character of Zayer Mohammad and it is something typical of epic and romantic stories while in the story he makes use of naturalistic and realistic descriptions. Another point that should be mentioned about

Noticeable Differences

Choubak’s being a naturalist is the difference in the main characteristic of naturalism school. Naturalists and above all Zola believed that “novel must be a comprehensive study of nature and mankind on the basis of experimental sciences’ teachings”. Man is captivated by heredity rules and the pressure of the environment and the whole system of the universe. A novelist must not violate these rules and it is his responsibility to study their structures...” (Welleck 29). That is why their works are full of scientific descriptions of the characters and their actions. For example, Zola in describing Ursula’s status in *The Fortune of the Rougons* analyses her behavior on the basis of teachings of experimental sciences, observations and testing. He demonstrates her under the influence of the two

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factors of heredity and environment: “in Ursula on the contrary, the physical and mental similarities of mother dominate and the fusion of course was hidden here as well. The ill-fated girl but was the second child and was born just when Adelaide’s eagerness had overwhelmed Macquart’s sedated and tamed love as if she had inherited the deeper effect from the mother together with the fetus. Of course here a human born with two nature did not exist; instead, the distinction with close union between the two could be seen. Ursula who was quirky would recoil like a pariah, would rebel, would get depressed and would later get into a hysteric laughter and guffawed” (Zola 61).

Choubak as a Naturalist Writer

In naturalistic stories the author carefully observes what has happened in the past and then analyses them according to his perceptions. This is the same as a scientific experiment which a scientist performs on things and phenomena; he studies the phenomena in his laboratory thoroughly and infers from them his scientific conclusions.

While Choubak could not be committed to the objectives of the novel, for first of all as mentioned before, naturalism especially its scientific characteristics did not stay with him for long and after a short time was erased from the scene of story writing. Second it must be noted that Choubak does not have scientific perception of his characters and the issues of his stories, for the scientific perception must be done objectively and the description of characters must also be separate from the author’s motives and objectives. Choubak, however, intervenes in his descriptions and thus they are devoid of scientific perceptions.

Choubak is present at the most scenes of the stories and moves the characters according to his thoughts and wishes quite in contrast with naturalists who would study an issue separate from their own objectives and motives and the dominant scientific spirit of the story was there for this reason. With a little reflection upon the similar items in Choubak’s works we find that he in selection the themes and issues like poverty and miserable people of the low level of the society, depicting disillusioned people, emphasizing the foul scenes of society and applying informal language he act more like naturalists. That is why he is considered a naturalist by authors and critics. In order to elaborate more on this, we will refer to some contemporary critics’ opinion concerning Choubak and his being a naturalist.

Contemporary Critics' Opinion Concerning Choubak as a Naturalist

Jamal Mirsadeghi

“Choubak’s viewpoint of problems is naturalistic and like all naturalist authors he raises issues that do not appeal to all people for the society like an embellished prostitute has hidden its real face from view. Thus, the profound difference between the realities of life and common social life is hidden from public view; its vulgarity and filth cannot be noticed. A deep attention to the evil and the foul, a deep and careful naturalist attention prevails through all Choubak’s works. The characters of the stories are pain-ridden tortured deprived beings who forlorn from all are floating in their swamps of their environments; in a cruel and ruthless society with totalitarian rulers, they can find no way to get out and thus are entangled in their immutable destiny (Mirsadeghi 261-264).

Reza Barahani thinks Choubak is the one who depicts the foul and starved appearances of society and believes that these are just naturalistic appearance and must no be taken into consideration (Barahani 686).

Fathollah Biniiaz Because of Choubak’s selection of subjects, his attempts for survival and avarice equals him with naturalists: “Attempts for survival and avarice were the primary elements that the Naturalists mercilessly illustrated in their works” (Biniiaz 18:145).

Given this evidence, we find that most Choubak’s critics, not because of scientific analysis in the story which is the main feature of naturalist novel, but because of the description of the disillusioned and petty people of the society and the foul scenes that regard an author as a naturalist. In fact, all these issues following the basic philosophy of Naturalists and the selection of an experimental method to create novel comes in as of secondary importance.

“Scientific analysis includes the law of the necessary correlation of events and phenomena and causal relations between them. What occurs in the universe and human communities correspond with the explicit laws. But if the look is non-scientific, rebuffing the issue of causation, blind determinism (the natural history of the phenomena is not subject to the law of cause)and the occurrence of incidence

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thoughts and opinions unconsidered in the analysis of phenomena find a way into the analysis "(Torabi 47: 114).

"When the scientific analysis is applied to the study of the characters and writing the story, characters are quite impartially analyzed, observed and described. Their behavior is regarded in the way a machine works and thus moral judgment would be impossible for according to the three factors (heredity, environment and moment) they have an inevitable fate and the author solely gets involved with the results which the critic has gained by his observations" (Forest 29). That was the relationship that naturalists established between science and literature, however, in Choubak's stories there is no scientific perception or analysis of the characters. Basically Choubak has no impartial or objective observation in his stories and the characters of his stories are the outcome of his personal thoughts and reflections that through highlighting them he intends to influence the audience.

The Differences of Choubak's Works and Naturalism

Expressionistic Description

Naturalist fiction writers, including Emile Zola, mainly tended to describe objectively, for this description had more compatibility with their physiological insight of human. In other words "naturalists were extrovert and focused on the outward vast landscapes.

But those fiction writers who pay attention to the internal and intellectual struggles of people are more inclined to expressionistic description" (Irani 106). Choubak unlike naturalists who apply objective description and stating details in their description is based upon scientific and objective observation of phenomena, in some parts of his stories he selects expressionistic description. Since he deprives the living creatures of their will and confines them in something philosophical and eternal, in his description he describes them as irresolute and downtrodden. His mentalities can be noticed in many parts of his stories. "If we study "The Patient Stone" from psychological perspective, it must surely be considered as an honest confession that in addition to Choubak's nihilist disillusioned and common Freudian worldview has a trace of his mental and emotional disorder as well" (Mohammadi 69). In the story "The Patient Stone" for example, Ahmad Agha who is a bitter and cynical intellectual in a way has the role of the author of the story, thinks of the word as absurd and black" (See Patient Stone / p. 10-9).

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In “The Kerosene Man” from The Puppet Show collection of stories, Azra’s specific states are described according to her sexual needs and lechery. As if it were Choubak who due to his thoughts, reflections and the symbolism in Freud’s psychology restates Azra’s sexual passion (See The Puppet Show / pp. 13-12).

Algebra in Choubak’s Stories

Naturalists thought of human’s will and power as subdued by conditions. From their viewpoint, human destiny is made by the surrounding environment and his physiological and hereditary characteristics; it is for this reason that a the naturalistic novel is the person’s interaction with community and his environment. This type of algebra which is called (scientific determinism, does not conflict with human authority; it means that the human being is the same autonomous and strong-willed being. Man with his will can know about the present and governing rules of the community and by using them take benefit from the social advantages; But he can by no means change the dominant rules or destroy them (Torabi 118-119). The hereditary defect and features added to it and, ultimately, human being has no choice but to defeat; for he with defects and illnesses he has inherited cannot overwhelm the dominant conditions and would be defeated by the environment and his physical features.

Determinism and Other Issues

In fact determinism appears in two forms: 1. social determinism 2. biological and physiological determinism. Social determinism is criteria, requirements and social conditions prevailing in individual life and physical determinism is born of heredity. Thus according to naturalists human is the result of heredity determinism and environmental determinism and his personality and fate are mainly explained and analyzed by these two principles (Nazerzadeh Kermani 69: 15). From among the themes of Choubak’s stories we mentioned determinism, but this does not mean that determinism and its meaning in Choubak’s stories are the same as it meaning in naturalistic point of view. Choubak who is innately bitter and pessimistic believes in philosophical and eternal determinism. “Choubak in an interview with Nosrat Rahmani, a contemporary novelist, thinks everything is replete with futility and believes that there is nothing but sadness, and even believes that our spirituality is nothing but the repeated sound of absurd ”(Rahman, 82: 269). "He thinks liberty and freedom are associated with death and destruction. In his apathetic and cynical view, moaning and resentment, resistance and yielding, separation and mating

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have become one and valuing fate has overshadowed his stories "(Solomon, 80: 261). He, like Khayyam and Schopenhauer sees the world as all suffering and torture and demonstrate the characters in misery and calamity.

Schopenhauer says: "The nature of each person, prevents pain and suffering. This module will not remain empty nor will it overflow ...If the pressure of a grief is taken off the heart, another grief would take its place. Its essence has been made before, but could not be felt. It was because the former grief had not left an empty place for it...but as soon as the place is empty it comes and instantly occupies it... (Durant, 80: 290).

Sadegh Choubak in "The Patient Stone" state something similar these ideas: "...its bottom cannot be turned out. It's all suffering, torture, migration and separation. The suffering of human being has no end. They are just sitting there waiting for death. Go and read Khayyam" (The Patient Stone/ 15).

"Choubak in theories and plays of "The Patient Stone", which are not specifically related to novel's design, revealed the author's intention and his presence in the story is clear" (Abedini, 80: 523).

Choubak, like smelly violent and pessimistic Zarvan, keeps his created beings in misery and loneliness and deprives them of any kind of beauty.

"You know that your life is in my hands and if I want I can squeeze you between my fingers so that it oozes out of you? If I kill you they would say fate wanted this. Go so that Ahmad Agha kill you..." (The Patient Stone/ 21).

World Has Nothing But Suffering and Sorrow

Choubak unlike naturalists does not think of people's misery and corruption as dependent upon environmental conditions and physiological and hereditary characteristics; instead, he believes that from the beginning of creation human has been treated cruelly and that the world has nothing but suffering and sorrow.

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“Determinism in Choubak’s story is the effect of the narrator’s knowing about the ending of the disaster he wants to state. Since the narrator leads all the events of the story toward the inevitable fate that he intends and seeks the root of vulgarity and corruption in history and myth” (Golshiri, 80: 250).

The Description of the Mental States of Characters

Another difference between Choubak’s stories and naturalistic ones is the description of mental and intellectual characteristics of the characters. Since naturalists paid much attention to the people’s appearance and body and would regard the individual’s physiological characteristics and genetic features, they would pay less attention to the inside and the mentality of characters and in their descriptions would pay more to the objective appearance of their characters. But in Choubak’s stories one of the most important features is the characters’ mental and psychological conflicts with others and the surrounding environment. In addition to describing the appearance of characters Choubak also penetrate into their heart and their inside.

“One of the aspects in Choubak’s stories that proves paying attention to the mental happenings and the characters is projection. Projection is the psychological manifesto through which a person ascribes those features which are undesirable to him to another person or thing” (Sanati 82: 172).

“Choubak’s fictional characters grow up in their environment with passivity and inertia. They expand it to all issues and events. For example Makhmal in the story “The Monkey Whose Master was Dead”, has got his master’s fear with him all his lifetime; if he doesn’t obey his master, his punishment would be hunger and no smoking. Makhmal has been raised like this; fear and passivity becomes internalized for him and he extends this feeling to his other relationships and thus can never escape from his chain of captivity. For this reason the world for Makhmal is full of fear and insecurity where no human being can be trusted (The Monkey Whose Master Was Dead /82).

Another point about Choubak’s stories’s being mental is the memories that enter the mind of the characters. Choubak’s characters who are mostly passive and aimless mostly get themselves into thinking about a problem than to do something about it; consequently, their being passive becomes more highlighted. For example, “Ahmad Agha in “The Patient Stone” only in his mind thinks about helping

Gohar and Kakol Zari but he can never implement this idea. It means that it does not have the will and authority. In this case, the characters' lack of identity is distinctly determined (The Patient Stone / 206).

Or the story of The First Day of the Grave, "Haji Motamed due to his fear of death, he persistently in his thought and mind gets involved with issues of life and death, this world and hereafter and sorrow. Choubak by describing Haji Motamed's mental events reveals his past and his behavior at the present time for the reader to the extent that the reader becomes aware of all the aspects of the character's personal "(The First Day of the Grave / 113).

"Atma, My Dog" is one of the stories in which Choobak following psychoanalytical authors demonstrates the character's internal conflicts. The protagonist of the story who inadvertently becomes his German neighbor's dog owner, decides to kill the dog so he puts a poisoned food in front of the dog but after a while he notices that the dog has not lipped the food. - As a result the dog, named Atma - which means the world's spirit - turn into a giant inside the individual and retells his guilts one by one. The man who cannot tolerate the accusations takes to his pistol and shoots towards the dog but he himself gets unconscious as well. When he recovers he finds that the bullet has hit his own shoulder and the dog's flaring eyes burns his inside" (Dastgheib 80: 436).

Applying Some of Freud's Theories

Another factor that makes Choobak's works different from naturalistic works, is the emergence of the theories of Freud in his stories. Choubak in his stories deliberately puts forth Freud's psychological speech and theories in his stories about human and his instincts and as Golshiri says "plans to create works based on Freud's ideas, with the same predetermined frameworks" (Golshiri, Ibid: 248).

Although instincts and physical needs of people are described in naturalistic works and the characters are often those who are wretched and degraded when it comes to lust and sexual needs, but the basis of naturalist novels are never based upon gender and human relationships. In these works instinct and physical needs are put beside other needs and even love is regarded as a kind of physical need. From Freud's point of view gender has a unique and an independent meaning: "All human actions from artistic creation and scientific inventions to moral deviations and physiological male and female l

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Mansoor Nikpanah, Ph.D., Sima Gharibey, M.A. of English Literature,

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intercourse are sexual" (Ariapour, 57: 91). Freud considers a principle for all psychic phenomena and that is Libido, i.e, sexual instinct. Choobak brings ideas similar to those ideas in the novel "The Patient Stone" and other and actually has a Freudian thinking of gender and human instinct.

Ahmed Ali after having intercourse with Belgheis says: "I did not kill you yourself are not aware of your man's pleasures. That is what this change of eggs and sticks after dropping all kinds of art and music and poetry and literature have brought about " (The Patient Stone / 283).

"The Kerosene Man" which is put in the collection The Puppet Show has a wholly Freudian theme. Azra yearning for a sexual relationship goes to a shrine. In fact, her sexual need gives direction to all her actions and behavior to the extent that her perception of the environment's objects like "the rough leaden spell" is also erotic. Choubak illustrates Azra's mental atmosphere for the reader and the audience becomes aware of her mood. This sexual and sensual theme can be seen in Choubak's other works as well. On the other hand, Choubak relates Azra's sexual desire to a memory from the past and a travel to Ghom. In fact, with a kind of Freudian psychoanalysis and retrospect, considers the sexual pleasure influential in the behavior of Azra "(The Puppet Show / p. 17).

Another point about Freud's theories is the laws and social constraints that cause physical and psychological detachment. Freud believed that "the most important cause of mental detachment is social rules and constraints. A civilized man more than a savage man and a mature man more than an immature child is subjected to psychiatric disorders; The constraints of civilized nations and adult life are more abundant and complex than the critical and childish constraints" (Ariapour 309).

But the most important issue in Freud's viewpoint and its emergence in Choubak's works is the Oedipal complex or the boy's love of mother. "Choubak in some parts of "The Patient Stone" points out that the reason for Ahmad Agha's intense love for Gohar is because she looks like his mother (The Patient Stone 313).

Or elsewhere: "Every day when the sun would bit by bit you sleep into the sea I would go with my mum to the beach. Still the intense heat was there in the corners of Bushehr when we would slowly

go into the soft warm sand then we would take out our clothes and go into the sea. My mum would become naked and I would look at her. I would look at all parts of her” (The Patient Stone 293).

Overall, Choubak’s using Freud’s ideas and theories in “The Patient Stone” and other works are considered as the non-naturalist cases of his stories. Choubak intends to state that the basis of all human activities is the sexual need. While in naturalistic works the sexual need is put beside other human needs and instincts and characters respond to this need according to the environmental, social and physiological conditions. In fact, the basis of none of the naturalistic novels is based upon Freud’s sexual theories.

Conclusion

With taking into consideration what was mentioned before we notice that the apparent similarity of some elements in Choubak’s works to the naturalists’ works cannot be regarded as an absolute and certain reason for a blind imitation of Zola and other authors of this school. Choubak has got his own independent characteristics which includes as follows:

Contrary to the assumptions of naturalists Choubak considers Freud’s theories, The impact of the Oedipus complex ideas in the works CHUBAK, the existence of the social laws leads to mental and psychological detachment in humans, psychological analyses in Choubak’s works that cannot be found in naturalistic works. The difference between determinism in Choubak’s works and naturalism; Choubak’s stories are devoid of experimental and scientific approaches which are favored by naturalists.

Some critics have referred to the aforementioned. It should be noted that naturalism beside violence and at times vulgarity in language has a fundamental principle upon which the educational school and the criminology prevalent in the nineteenth century were formed. That school believed in the intense hereditary and genetic impact; such a belief can be observed in Choubak’s works and it would be a mistake to think of him as a naturalist. Naturalists think that all human mental disorders are caused by his lack of physical balance. They have never done what Choubak has done in his works and thus he should not at all be regarded as one of the followers of this school.

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Mansoor Nikpanah, Ph.D.
Faculty Member
Higher Educational Complex of Saravan
Iran
m.nikpanah@yahoo.com

Sima Gharibey, M.A. of English Literature
Bushehr
Iran
simagrb@gmail.com

Ahmad Mollaei
Teacher of University Applied Science
Baloochestan Education Center of Jahade Danshgahi Zahedan
Iran
Mollayi1359@yahoo.com

Nasrin Mozaffari, Ph.D. (Corresponding Author)
Bushehr University of Medical Sciences
Bushehr
Iran
mozafare@yahoo.com

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Mansoor Nikpanah, Ph.D., Sima Gharibey, M.A. of English Literature,
Ahmad Mollaei, and Nasrin Mozaffari, Ph.D. (Corresponding Author)
A Study of Choubak's Works through Naturalistic Perspective

Consonant Phonetic Mutation in English Words Borrowed From Hindi

Ratul Sabui, I M.Sc.

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Abstract

In its endeavor to become a universal mode of communication, English started borrowing words from Arabic and oriental languages like Sanskrit and Mandarin. Semantic inadequacy is often cited as one of the chief incentives to the growth of loan word vocabulary. But in the process of borrowing, such words undergo changes in the pronunciation and other phonetic attributes. This article seeks to unravel the phonetic mutation undergone by Sanskrit and Hindi loan words in their English adaptations. The article deals majorly with consonant sounds which have undergone such changes.

Key words: phonetic mutation, consonant changes, borrowed words, Hindi and English

Introduction

Most languages build themselves around the external influences that fall their way. The lexicon of a particular language is constructed over ages, with words and phrases being borrowed from myriad tongues and English is no exception to this. As the industrial revolution was in the process of propelling the Europeans to greater heights, colonialization coaxed their languages to transgress beyond Anglo-Saxon and Latin. In its endeavor to become a universal mode of communication, English started borrowing words from Arabic and oriental languages like Sanskrit and Mandarin. Semantic inadequacy is often cited as one of the chief incentives to the growth of loan word vocabulary. But in the process of borrowing, such words undergo changes in the pronunciation and other phonetic attributes². This article seeks to unravel the phonetic mutation undergone by Sanskrit and Hindi loan words in their English adaptations. The article deals majorly with consonant sounds which have undergone such changes.

Hindi-Sanskrit Words in English – Mutations

- a) Before the advent of Hindi-Sanskrit loan words, English was unaware of the option that a word could begin with a post-alveolar fricative followed by a velar plosive in quick succession. We find such a combination in the word Kshatriya (|kʃætriə |), even the words moksha and rakshasa, where the consonant cluster (|kʃ|) appear in the middle of the word, show slight difference from the words like action (/'ækjən/) and auction (/'ɔ:kʃən/). While in the first two words, the plosive is more uvular, the latter show a general inclination towards the palate. This difference is so subtle that they are generally categorized together under velar plosives. In the widely used Devanagari script, such a pronunciation is designated by the grapheme क्ष.
- b) One of the most prominent mutations that characterize loan words is the change from a labio-velar approximant to more commonly used labio-dental fricative. We find such use in words like
- Veda (|'veidə|) from वेद (|weḍə|)
- Bodhisattva from बोधिसत्त्व
- Ayurveda (|aɪə'veidə|) from आयुर्वेद (|aɪuweḍə |)

Exceptions

There happens to be an exception in the word swastika (|'swəstikə |) where we see exactly the opposite taking place. In the English pronunciation, swastika starts with a |swɒ|, whereas in Sanskrit, it starts with |svɜ|. (This is a crude way of putting the pronunciation of the Sanskrit swastika. Most speakers of the north Indian languages use a labiodentals approximant |v| instead of |v|.)

- c) A common nature of all loan words containing 'd' is the change of sound from a palatal (|ð|) to the voiced dental plosive (|d|). The former is denoted by ढ in the Devanagari script which is the predominant script of Sanskrit, Hindi and their various dialects. As both Hindi and Sanskrit are phonetic languages, the grapheme carries a similar sound in

words. Incidentally in all loan words containing a root word with द, d is chosen as the apt replacement, thus bringing such a change in the sound. For example,

Hindi (|'hɪndɪ |) from हिन्दी

Sandalwood (|sændlwʊd|) from चंदन

Other examples include sudra, Hindu, Purdah, Dal, ayurvedic, tandoor, Veda.

Exception

An exception to this is seen in the words dacoit, pundit, and dinghy, where the 'd' sounds like (|d|) both in English and their Sanskrit root words.

In Hindi and Sanskrit, we also find the usage of an aspirated (|ð^h|) sound in the grapheme ध. whenever a word containing (|ð^h|) is included in English, the sound undergoes a transformation similar to its unaspirated version. For examples, Buddha (|'bu:də|) and dharma (|'dɑ:mə|). Other such words are bodhisattva, bandana, sadhu and sandhi.

- d) Unlike English, a palatised version of a voiceless dental plosive sound is prevalent in most of the languages of oriental origin. In Sanskrit, this sound is denoted by the grapheme त which carries the sound of a palatised |t|. Due to the absence of an adequate representation and absence of an equivalent, this sound changes in the alveolar plosive |t|.

For example,

Mahatma (|mə'hætɪmə|) from महात्मा

Mantra (|'mæntɾə|) from मन्त्र

Some other words which show such a change are cheetah, dacoit, Kshatriya, mahout, prakrit, satyagraha, sitar, suttee, sutra, swastika, tantra, blighty, bodhisattva, Sanskrit, and atman.

Removal of Aspirated Sound

Another prominent subcategory of this is the removal of an aspirated sound and insertion of |t|. This happens in chit (|tʃɪt|), and thug (|θʌg|). The reverse is always not true. All loan words with a |t| sound are not necessarily products of phonetic mutation. Words like chutney (|'tʃʌtni|), cot (|kɒt|), puttee and ghat retain the |t| sound both in the root word and the loan words. (Davis, Stuart. "Loanwords: phonological treatment.")

- e) In loan words containing the alphabet q, the English tongue tends to use the sound |k| which is a voiceless velar plosive. In words like Quran (|kə'rɑ:n|) and lacquer (|lækə|), a similar sound is implied. But their root words generally use a more uvular form of the plosive. Words with such a change generally come from Urdu, which is a language built on the platform of Arabic and Hindi.
- f) In words where the alphabet 'h' is not preceded by a consonant, we generally extend the vowel sound that precedes it. Such words, in their native form generally come with a glottal fricative sound which may be voiced or voiceless. For example, Brahmin and mullah. In English this sound comes only when a word starts with the grapheme 'h', such as hat and hang or when it is flanked on both sides by vowels.² Such an exception is visible in words such as sahib and sepoy (although sepoy does not contain an 'h', its root word is sipahi. Sipahi contains a voiceless glottal fricative.)

It may seem to be a particular variation from our point as some of the words mentioned do not have an 'h' preceding a consonant. Some of them are followed by vowels and some by diphthongs. Even in these words we see a similar deviation from the original sound and the glottal fricative sound is omitted in the English adaptation.

In words like maharaja (|mɑ:hə'rɑ:dʒə|), mahout (|mə'hɑʊt|) and mahatma (|mə'hætəmə|), the articulation before and after the /:h/ sound remains the same. In English, these sounds are separated by a brief period of voicelessness where the glottis is kept open. The succeeding vowel is then continued with its normal articulation. In most north Indian languages, the entire vowel following /h/ is phonated with a whispery voice.

- g) When it comes to the removal of aspiration, English phonetics does not seem to make an exception even with the velar plosives |k| and |g|. For example, we have words like ghee, ghat, dinghy, gymkhana and cot. These words differ from the previous section as the vowel following |h| is not aspirated. Even in the other plosives (labial, dental, etc.) the Indian languages extend the aspirated sound to the succeeding vowel where we use the superscript |h̄| instead of |h|. ¹
- h) Though not as common as the previous phenomenon, the transformation from the affricate |tʃ| to the fricative |s| or |ʃ| is seen in a few words which had been borrowed from the north Indian tongues. For example, shampoo (|ʃæm'pu:|), sandalwood (|sændlwəd|).
- i) English as a language displays a prominent dearth of geminate sequences (sequence of two identical or nearly identical consonant sounds). Phonetically speaking, words like 'book case', 'this set' contain geminate sounds but we do not consider them in our situation. This is because the two consonants belong to separate words (than not, book case) or to separate meaningful sections of a word or to separate morphemes ("unknown"). On the other hand, Sanskrit, Hindi and most other north-Indian languages contain pure geminate sequences. When words with these sounds are adopted by the English dictionary, the geminate sounds give way to normal consonant articulations. Very often such a change is seen in words where there is a geminate sequence of plosives. For example, chakkar, tikka, puttee, pepper, etc.
- j) There is a vast difference in the sounds attributed to the graphemes 't' and 'd' in English and north Indian tongues. While in English, they carry the apical alveolar plosive sound, in Hindi, the articulation occurs further back. The apical part of the tongue touches the post alveolar region. Sometimes the sound becomes retroflex. For example, chit, chutney, dacoit, dinghy, pundit, toddy.

To Conclude

A language as widely spoken as English, it is natural to have various pronunciations for the same word. The growth of any language has multiple factors influencing its progress. The traits that have been referred to in this article are common to many pronunciations and thus form a common pattern in most tongues of the English Language. The causes of this mutation are various, including the lack of association with the source language.

“However, in time more speakers can become familiar with a new foreign word or expression. The community of users for this word can grow to a point where even people who know little or nothing about the source language understand and even use, the novel word themselves. The new word becomes conventionalized: part of conventional ways of speaking in the borrowing language.”⁴ (Prof. S. Kemmer, Rice University)

This conventionalization has been occurring since the first languages were developed. In this era, where globalization and networking has connected the entire world into a single unit, this process has accelerated, giving rise to new expressions and words.

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Ratul Sabui, I MSc. Physics
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning
Sri Sathya Sai Senior Boys Hostel
Puttaparthi
Anantapur 515134
Andhra Pradesh India ratulsabui@gmail.com

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Ratul Sabui, I M.Sc.

Consonant Phonetic Mutation in English Words Borrowed from Hindi

Exploring Gender Differences in Cross-disciplinary Discourse: Interactional Metadiscourse Markers in the Discussion Section of Research Articles

Behrang Mohammad Salehi, Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL
Islamic Azad University, Izeh Branch

Reza Biria, Ph.D.
Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch

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Abstract

The present comparative study sought to explore the gender differences in the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in the discussion section of Research Articles (RAs) in the two disciplines of microbiology and applied linguistics. Using Hyland's (2005a) metadiscourse model, the research study investigated the use of five subcategories of interactional metadiscourse in a corpus of 64 research articles written by all-male, all-female, and male-female authors in the respected fields. Based on quantitative analysis, it was found that there was a significant difference between male and female writers and male-female ones in using attitude markers as one of the interactional metadiscourse elements. Besides, the results showed that there was a cross-disciplinary variation in using interactional metadiscourse. These findings acknowledge the fact that different disciplines use various rhetorical thought patterns in their writings.

Keywords: Gender Differences; Interactional Metadiscourse; Research Article

1. Introduction

Academic discourse has gained centrality during the past thirty years. In this regard, there is a close relationship between academic discourse and the way a writer's identity is shaped. One of the ways through which the writer's identity is constructed and practiced, is writing (Richardson, 2000). In fact, as Bazerman (1988) and Hyland (2000) indicated writing tends to

construct disciplines and its practitioners' identity. One part of a writer's identity is the expression of the writer's gender in written academic discourse. Writing like other tools of communication is a rich resource for gender representation. Tse and Hyland (2008) have noted the significance of gender studies in academic discourse. This is to say that there might be variations between males and females in terms of their use of language in communication. Taken this fact into account, Tardy (2006) posits that one of the influential factors in interactions is the gender of the text's writer. That is, men and women writers might not approach interaction through writing in the same way and with the same resources at hand.

The role of metadiscourse in academic communication has been the focus of many research studies during the past decades (Hyland, 1998; 2005b; Mauranen, 1993; Vande Kopple, 1985), and many other researches have investigated the use of metadiscursive elements in different types of academic writing especially RAs. (Abdi, 2002; Abdi & Ahmadi, 2015; Abdi, Tavangar Rizi, & Tavakoli, 2010; Cao & Hu, 2014; Hyland, 1998, 2005b; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012; Mur Duenas, 2011). Moreover, gender-based studies on metadiscourse in written discourse have received increasing academic attention (Holmes, 2009; Rezaei Zadeh, Baharlooei, & Simin, 2015; Salek & Yazdanimoghaddam, 2014; Tafaraji Yeganeh & Ghoreyshi, 2015; Zareifard & Alinezhad, 2014). Metadiscourse elements enhance the text organization; help the reader through the text; help the writer to establish his/her identity (Hyland & Tse, 2004). Since metadiscourse is used to express persuasion and author's participation in written academic discourse, some of the studies have focused on comparative and contrastive analyses of these elements by discipline (Cao & Hu, 2014; Estaji & Vafaeimehr, 2015; Rashidi & Alihosseini, 2012; Tse & Hyland, 2008).

There have been few studies (Crismore, Markkanen, & Steffensen, 1993; Francis, Robsen, & Read, 2001; Ghafoori & Oghbatalab, 2012; Herbert, 1990; Johnson & Roen, 1992; Tse & Hyland, 2008) which have investigated the effect of gender on employing metadiscourse elements by writers and speakers. These studies have emphasized the importance of gender in language use and confirmed that male and female writers used specific features of language

differently but none of them examined cross-disciplinary variations in terms of using interactional metadiscourse features in discussion section of research articles (RAs).

There are various conceptualizations and taxonomies of metadiscourse (Ädel & Mauranen, 2010). A key taxonomy that has been widely used in diverse research studies in the field is Hyland's (2005a) model of metadiscourse. Hyland's taxonomy is an extension of earlier models by Crismore et al., (1993) and Vande Kopple (1985). His model takes into account the contextual situatedness of metadiscursive elements and considers social factors which encircle and affect the use of language by writers. The rationale behind choosing Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal metadiscourse model was its widespread utilization in previous studies of metadiscourse; thus, its adoption in current study would allow the findings to be compared with those from the existing bulk of research.

Hyland describes metadiscourse as “reflective language used by the writer/speaker to interact with the reader/hearer in a specific context of communication and draws a distinction between interactive and interactional metadiscourse” (as cited in Cao & Hu, 2014, p. 16) Interactive and interactional metadiscourse were introduced by Thompson (2001) each with five other subsections, which supplanted textual and interpersonal markers respectively. In academic discourse, in one hand, interactive metadiscourse is used to “help readers understand a text by explaining, orienting and guiding them through the information” (Hyland, 2005a, p. 75). On the other hand, interactional metadiscourse is applied to indicate the writer's knowledge-oriented position on propositional information and his/her attitude toward readers in order to engage them in construction of the text in a joint effort (Hyland, 2005b). Although both categories of metadiscourse are important in academic communication, few studies, if any, examined cross-disciplinary variations in using interactional metadiscourse in the discussion section of research articles (RAs).

There is a growing body of research that recognizes the importance of metadiscourse in dealing with text and talk in academic genre of research article. What follows is a synopsis of literature found on the topic under investigation.

Crismore, et al., (1993) in a comparative study examined the use of metadiscourse elements in persuasive essays by American male and female student writers. They recommended that rhetorical use of metadiscourse markers depended on the writers' gender and culture. They came to the conclusion that in spite of using interpersonal metadiscourse more than textual by both genders, female writers used interpersonal metadiscourse more than male writers.

In another study by Tse and Hyland (2008) using a corpus of book reviews which were written by male and female writers and interviews with experts in biology and philosophy, they found that both male and female book reviewers used twice as many interactional markers as interactive ones. The more frequent use of interactional elements by male writers indicated the presence of the writer and demonstrated the evaluative nature of book review genre. According to them, the more frequent uses of 'engagement markers', 'hedges', and 'self-mention', by males originated from the engaging factor which was connected with female style of writing (Holmes, 1989).

Tse and Hyland (2008) defended the results of their analysis by relating them to dominant position and higher status of males in academic settings. The examination of interactive elements demonstrated that 'transition markers' were the most frequent features in females' texts and the second most frequent elements in male's texts. This showed that writers of both genders attempted to help their readers with clear interpretation of their arguments. Females made heavy use of 'evidentials', but variations between males and females in their uses of 'code glosses' were not significant. In the same vein, the interviews with members of academic disciplines exhibited the same results as 'hedges' and 'boosters' were frequently used by male interviewees. However, the analysis of 'evidentials' and 'code glosses' showed that they were more frequent among female interviewees.

Holmes (2009) analyzed 78 conference articles written for a conference in Australia as the main corpus of the study in order to explore gender differences in the use of hedges and boosters in academic discourse. The results of the study indicated that male authors had more inclination to use boosters even though difference in the frequency of hedges was not significant.

Nevertheless, it was suggested that men were more likely to use the less common hedges compared to women writers. The effect of collaboration and the first author was also taken into account.

Ghafoori and Oghbatalab (2012) did a comparative study of metadiscourse in academic writing using a corpus of 20 applied linguistics RAs which were written by native male and female English writers. Drawing on Hyland's (2005a) taxonomy, they wanted to see whether there were differences in the use of metadiscourse by the writers or not. The results of the study showed that writers of both genders were not different in their use of metadiscourse elements but significant differences were found in categorical distribution of these elements.

Salek and Yazdanimoghaddam (2014) analyzed three groups of research articles consisting of native English (NE), native Persian (NP), and non-native English (NNE) articles based on Hyland and Tse's (2004) taxonomy plus two metadiscourse strategies by Abdi et al., (2010). The cultural differences between English and Persian present in texts was also examined in terms of the effect of English as L2 on the non-native English research articles written by Iranian researchers. Chi-square statistical technique was used to find the differences among the three corpora. The results of analyzing about 9000 lines of 26 published research articles on ELT and theoretical linguistics revealed that native Persian writers used interactive metadiscourse markers in their L1 writings more than the native English and non-native English academic writers (Iranian) whereas they used the fewest number of interactional metadiscourse with self-mentions as an exception. Interestingly, Persian academic writers used interactional metadiscourse markers the most when they wrote in L2 (English). The findings indicated no relationship between gender and metadiscourse markers utilized by the native English and native Persian academic writers. It was further demonstrated that NP research articles were the clearest and the most comprehensible articles because they comprised the majority of interactive markers in contrast to NE and NNE research articles.

Zareifard and Alinezhad (2014) examined the relationship interactional metadiscourse and gender in theses of Persian speakers. Quantitative analyses of the metadiscourse markers

used by eighteen male and female candidates' theses in humanities and social sciences showed a statistically significant difference in the use of interactional metadiscourse markers by the candidates. It was noted, however, that qualitative analysis demonstrated the existence of some similarities among male and female candidates in using the types of metadiscourse markers in the defense seminars of Persian speakers. In a comparative study of paradigmatic and disciplinary influences on interactive metadiscourse in research articles by Cao and Hu (2014), they scrutinized the use of five types and subtypes of interactive metadiscourse in 120 research articles. The results revealed marked cross-disciplinary differences in the use of exemplifiers, comparative transitions, linear references, and integral citations.

In a more recent attempt, Tafaraji Yeganeh and Ghoreyshi (2015) investigated gender differences in abstract and discussion sections of 40 English articles written by native speakers of Persian using Hyland's (2005a) metadiscourse classification scheme. Using the scheme, the occurrences of hedge and booster in these two sections were analyzed. The results of quantitative and qualitative study demonstrated that gender differences played a crucial role in making use of these devices in the corpus. Besides, the study also showed that Iranian males were more oriented to use boosters in their academic writing while Iranian females preferred to use more hedges to express the information they supplied.

In short, the present study aims at exploring gender differences in the discussion section of research articles in the field of microbiology and applied linguistics using interactional metadiscourse features. More precisely, the research attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Are there any differences between the two disciplines in terms of using interactional metadiscourse?

RQ2: Are there any gender differences between the two disciplines in terms of using interactional metadiscourse?

2. Framework for Analysis

In order to find answers to the research questions, Hyland's (2005a) model of interactional metadiscourse was adopted as the analytical framework. This classification scheme recognizes five major types of interactional metadiscourse markers (Table1). These interactional resources engage readers in the text and provide opportunities to them to have contributions to the discourse by making them aware of the author's perspective towards both propositional meaning and readers themselves. According to Hyland (2005a, pp. 51-52), these resources are as follows:

1. Hedges: hedging system is used to 'withhold commitment' and avoid certainty.
2. Boosters: these resources on the other hand emphasize certainty by showing evidence and facts.
3. Attitude markers: these elements express writer's attitude towards what is going to be stated or implied in the text.
4. Self-mentions: they refer to the extent of the author's presence and involvement in the text.
5. Engagement markers: these markers are used to create relationship with reader throughout the text.

Table 1 *An Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005a, p. 49)*

Category	Function	Examples
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges	withhold commitment and open dialogue	might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	emphasize certainty or close dialogue	in fact; definitely; it is clear that
Attitude markers	express writer's attitude to proposition	unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self mentions	explicit reference to author(s)	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement markers	explicitly build relationship with reader	consider; note; you can see that

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

The corpus created for the purpose of this study comprised Research Articles (RAs) from the two disciplines, one from microbiology and the other one from applied linguistics. The

rationale behind constructing the corpus based on these two disciplines derived from Becher and Trowler's (2001) classification of the disciplines. They divide the academic disciplines into soft and hard sciences. In Becher and Trowler's idea, soft disciplines refer to the humanities and social sciences and hard disciplines refer to natural sciences. Soft and hard disciplines are further divided into pure and applied subcategories. In the current study, it was decided to select two disciplines from soft and hard sciences which are applied in nature, namely microbiology and applied linguistics. Besides, the corpus was confined to the *Discussion* section of RAs in that the *Discussion* part of any RA relates the reported study to the previous work mentioned in the introduction. Moreover, the *Discussion* section is the part of research study in which the scholars attempt to persuade their audience.

Time is another significant consideration in choosing the corpus of the study (Bazerman, 1988). In order to cater for the time factor, all the articles were selected from the time interval of 2011 to 2016.

A total of 64 research articles were randomly chosen from among several scholarly and refereed journals in microbiology and applied linguistics. All the articles were retrieved from the electronic versions of journal websites. From each discipline, it was determined that 10 articles were written by male authors; 10 were written by female authors and the rest of 12 articles were written by both male and female authors. Most of the articles in microbiology had more than one author except for one. 13 articles in applied linguistics were authored by single male and female writers. In most of articles, the gender of the author(s) was easily identified from their names. In some other samples in which there were some doubts regarding the gender of the authors, required information was obtained from the Internet websites of universities where they worked. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the corpus under investigation by discipline and gender.

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics for the Corpus*

Discipline	RA	Gender			No. of words	Mean
		M	F	M-F		
Microbiology	32	10	10	12	31473	983
Applied Linguistics	32	10	10	12	37611	1175
Total	64	20	20	24	69084	2158

3.2. Procedure

The texts in the corpora were converted into Microsoft word documents. Some of the items were removed from the texts including tables, figures, references, and reference numbers. Basic data such as number of words, paragraphs, and words per sentence were taken from the corpus using Microsoft word tools. Microsoft Word Find feature was then applied to identify the interactional metadiscourse subtypes, namely Attitude Markers, Boosters, Self-Mention, Engagement Markers, and Hedges. Every instance of these subcategories was studied in its sentential co-text so as to avoid potential ambiguities and diverse functions each one of them may have had. In order to arrive at valid end result, the data were manually checked to see whether the instances were compatible with the obtained results of the word-processing software. In the meantime, some ironic uses of the metadiscourse items were accounted for.

3.3. Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was conducted on the interactional metadiscourse identified in the corpus, which were used by male, female, or male-female authors. An independent samples t-test (using IBM SPSS Statistics V. 23), was run to examine cross-disciplinary variation (microbiology vs. applied linguistics) in using interactional metadiscourse subsections. In the meantime, to examine the differences between male, female, and male-female writers in employing interactional metadiscourse subtypes, A one-way ANOVA test and Post Hoc ANOVA (Tukey test) were utilized to show whether there are differences or not.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the quantitative analysis are presented. The results presentation is organized according to the main types of interactional metadiscourse under examination. As table 3 exhibits, the descriptive statistics by discipline and all five subcategories of interactional metadiscourse in the corpus are provided. On the whole, hedges, engagement

markers, boosters, self-mention, and attitude markers had the most number of occurrences respectively.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Interactional Metadiscourse by Discipline

	Discipline	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude	microbiology	32	1.94	1.848	.327
	applied linguistics	32	4.25	1.951	.345
Boosters	microbiology	32	8.22	4.542	.803
	applied linguistics	32	10.41	3.999	.707
Self Mention	microbiology	32	3.81	3.217	.569
	applied linguistics	32	2.78	2.181	.386
Engagement	microbiology	32	7.34	4.194	.741
	applied linguistics	32	11.59	2.551	.451
Hedges	microbiology	32	13.66	7.298	1.290
	applied linguistics	32	24.34	4.783	.846
Total	microbiology	32	34.9688	14.33805	2.53463
	applied linguistics	32	53.3750	7.86889	1.39104

In order to answer the first research question regarding the differences between microbiology and applied linguistics in terms of interactional metadiscourse use, an independent samples t-test was run to answer the question. According to table 4 and based on the results of the independent samples t-test, it can be stated that there is a significant difference between microbiology and applied linguistics in terms of using attitude markers, ($t = -4.868$, $p = .000$), boosters ($t = -2.045$, $p = .045$), engagement markers ($t = -4.898$, $p = .000$), and hedges ($t = -6.928$, $p = .000$), by the authors. The significance level was set at $p \leq .05$, but there was no significant difference found regarding Self Mention between the two disciplines.

Table 4 Independent Samples T Test for Discipline and Interactional Metadiscourse

	t	df	t-test for Equality of Means			
			Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Attitude	-4.868	62	.000	-2.313	-3.262	-1.363
	-4.868	61.8	.000	-2.313	-3.262	-1.363
		19				
Boosters	-2.045	62	.045	-2.188	-4.326	-.049
	-2.045	61.0	.045	-2.188	-4.327	-.048
		21				
Self Mention	1.501	62	.138	1.031	-.342	2.405
	1.501	54.5	.139	1.031	-.346	2.409
		25				
Engagement	-4.898	62	.000	-4.250	-5.985	-2.515
	-4.898	51.1	.000	-4.250	-5.992	-2.508
		77				
Hedges	-6.928	62	.000	-10.688	-13.771	-7.604
	-6.928	53.4	.000	-10.688	-13.781	-7.594
		82				

Total	-6.366	62	.000	-18.40625	-24.18578	-12.62672
	-6.366	48.1	.000	-18.40625	-24.21913	-12.59337
		21				

In order to answer the second research question regarding the gender differences among the authors of the articles in the two disciplines, A One-way ANOVA was run to see whether there are any differences between the two variables. As table 5 indicates, there were significant differences between the male and female authors, and male-female authors in using attitude markers, ($F = 7.297$, $df = (2, 61)$ and $p = .001$). The significance level was set at $p \leq .05$.

Table 5 One-way ANOVA for Gender and Interactional Metadiscourse

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude	Between Groups	59.741	2	29.870	7.297	.001
	Within Groups	249.697	61	4.093		
	Total	309.438	63			
Boosters	Between Groups	12.533	2	6.266	.319	.728
	Within Groups	1199.217	61	19.659		
	Total	1211.750	63			
Self Mention	Between Groups	1.487	2	.744	.094	.911
	Within Groups	483.872	61	7.932		
	Total	485.359	63			
Engagement	Between Groups	22.591	2	11.296	.680	.510
	Within Groups	1013.346	61	16.612		
	Total	1035.938	63			
Hedges	Between Groups	12.911	2	6.456	.094	.910
	Within Groups	4175.089	61	68.444		
	Total	4188.000	63			
Total	Between Groups	198.995	2	99.498	.449	.640
	Within Groups	13514.114	61	221.543		
	Total	13713.109	63			

In the same vein, Post Hoc ANOVA using Tukey test (table 6) shows that the difference between male and female, and male-female authors in using attitude markers with the level of significance of .001 was established clearly, but this difference was not significant among other interactional metadiscourse elements.

Table 6 Post Hoc ANOVA (Tukey Test) for Gender and Interactional Metadiscourse

Dependent Variable	(I) Gender	(J) Gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound

Attitude	male	female	-1.395	.665	.099	-2.99	.20
		male- female	.957	.606	.262	-.50	2.41
	female	male	1.395	.665	.099	-.20	2.99
		male- female	2.352*	.616	.001	.87	3.83
	male-female	male	-.957	.606	.262	-2.41	.50
		female	-2.352*	.616	.001	-3.83	-.87

Based on the results of one-way ANOVA and the independent samples t-test, there was a significant difference between disciplines and the gender of authors in attitude markers.

The results of the present study are in line with Abdi's (2002) study which examined the use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in Social Sciences (SS) and Natural Sciences (NS) to illustrate the writers' identity and their choices on the use of attitude markers, emphatics, and hedges. Moreover, such results support other findings by Hyland's (2005b) comprehensive study, which demonstrated statistically significant difference in use of metadiscourse markers in eight disciplines based on analyzing 240 published RAs and interviews. In the meantime, the current results are in agreement with those obtained from Atai and Sadr (2008) who demonstrated a significant difference in the use of hedging devices in the academic writing of English native and non-native speakers in applied linguistics research studies. As reported in the preceding part, the two disciplines investigated in this research study were found to vary considerably in the use of some interactional metadiscourse resources including attitude markers, boosters, engagement markers, and hedges but not in self mention feature. This is in line with Tse and Hyland (2008). Attitude markers are used to make participants and writer's feelings visible. They are valuable rhetorical means whereby different academic identities can be presented (Abdi, 2002). These findings approve of the fact that different disciplines use different rhetorical thought patterns in their writings.

This gender-based cross-disciplinary research between all-male and all-female and male-female authors can be attributed to some other studies done in this respect such as Ghafouri and Oghbatalab (2012); Holmes (2009); Tafaraji Yeganeh and Ghoreyshi (2015) whose findings are similar to the ones found in this study.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring cross-disciplinary and gender differences on the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in the discussion section of research articles. Through the analysis of subcategories of interactional metadiscourse in a corpus of 64 RAs, it was found out that there was a clear difference between microbiology and applied linguistics disciplines in terms of making use of attitude markers, boosters, engagement markers, and hedges. Meanwhile, statistically significant differences were found in male and female, male-female writers in employing attitude markers in their pieces of writing in their respected academic fields.

Due to some limitations in the process of the study, the results cannot be indicative of the whole picture. First of all, the research articles used in the study to construct the corpus were gathered from a limited number of journals in the related fields. This can affect the external validity of the study to some extent. To do a more comprehensive and full-fledged study, it is suggested that more disciplines be included in the research to replicate the results of this study. Second, as this study focused on interactional metadiscourse in the discussion section of RAs, other studies are needed to take into account other rhetorical sections of RAs in some different fields of study to create a better picture of research in metadiscourse area. Finally yet importantly, research can be carried out to include other genres of academic discourse such as book reviews, book blurbs, theses, and dissertations, and technical reports with a focus on gender differences in these areas.

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Appendix A

Resources of Interactional Metadiscourse

Attitude markers

!, admittedly, agree, agrees, agreed, amazed, amazing, amazingly, appropriate, appropriately, astonished, astonishing, astonishingly, correctly, curious, curiously, desirable, desirably, disappointed, disappointing, disappointingly, disagree, disagreed, disagrees, dramatic, dramatically, essential, essentially, even x, expected, expectedly, fortunate, fortunately, hopeful, hopefully, important, importantly, inappropriate, inappropriately, interesting, interestingly, prefer, preferable, preferably, preferred, remarkable, remarkably, shocked, shocking, shockingly, striking, strikingly, surprised, surprising, surprisingly, unbelievable, unbelievably, understandable, understandably, unexpected, unexpectedly, unfortunate, unfortunately, unusual, unusually, usual

Boosters

actually, always, believe, believed, believes, beyond doubt, certain, certainly, clear, clearly, conclusively, decidedly, definite, definitely, demonstrate, demonstrated, demonstrates, doubtless,

establish, established, evident, evidently, find, finds, found, in fact, incontestable, incontestably, incontrovertible, incontrovertibly, indeed, indisputable, indisputably, know, known, must (possibility), never, no doubt, obvious, obviously, of course, prove, proved, proves, realize, realized, realizes, really, show, showed, shown, shows, sure, surely, think, thinks, thought, truly, true, undeniable, undeniably, undisputedly, undoubtedly, without doubt

Self Mention

I, we, me, my, our, mine, us, the author, the author's, the writer, the writer's

Engagement Markers

(the) reader's, add, allow, analyse, apply, arrange, assess, assume, by the way, calculate, choose, classify, compare, connect, consider, consult, contrast, define, demonstrate, determine, do not, develop, employ, ensure, estimate, evaluate, find, follow, go, have to, imagine, incidentally, increase, input, insert, integrate, key, let $x = y$, let us, let's, look at, mark, measure, mount, must, need to, note, notice, observe, one's, order, ought, our (inclusive), pay, picture, prepare, recall, recover, refer, regard, remember, remove, review, see, select, set, should, show, suppose, state, take (a look/as example), think about, think of, turn, us (inclusive), use, we (inclusive), you, your

Hedges

about, almost, apparent, apparently, appear, appeared, appears, approximately, argue, argued, argues, around, assume, assumed, broadly, certain amount, certain extent, certain level, claim, claimed, claims, could, couldn't, doubt, doubtful, essentially, estimate, estimated, fairly, feel, feels, felt, frequently, from my perspective, from our perspective, from this perspective, generally, guess, indicate, indicated, indicates, in general, in most cases, in most instances, in my opinion, in my view, in this view, in our opinion, in our view, largely, likely, mainly, may, maybe, might, mostly, often, on the whole, ought, perhaps, plausible, plausibly, possible, possibly, postulate, postulated, postulates, presumable, presumably, probable, probably, quite, rather x, relatively, roughly, seems, should, sometimes, somewhat, suggest, suggested, suggests, suppose, supposed, supposes, suspect, suspects, tend to, tended to, tends to, to my knowledge, typical, typically, uncertain, uncertainly, unclear, unclearly, unlikely, usually, would

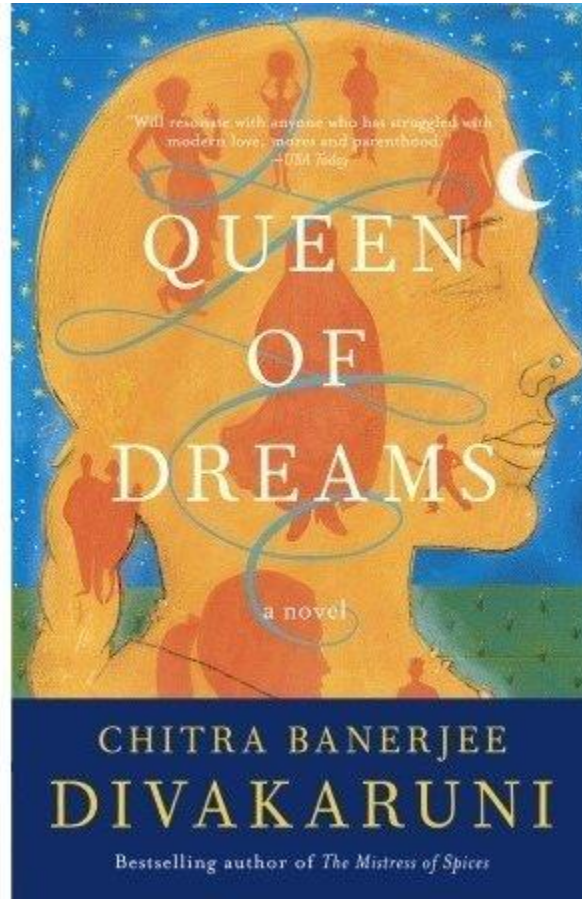
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Behrang Mohammad Salehi, Ph.D. Candidate in TEFL (Corresponding Author)
Islamic Azad University, Izeh Branch, Khuzestan, Iran
behrangsalehi@gmail.com

Reza Biria, Ph.D.
Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran

Sense of Uprootedness in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*

P. Selva Mari, M.A., M.Phil.



Abstract

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the remarkable novelists in Indian Writing in English. Divakaruni is a South Asian woman writer who deals with various oppressive issues confronted by women. She is one of the founders of Maitri, which is a free, confidential, referral non-profit organization based in the San Francisco Bay Area that primarily helps families from South Asia facing domestic violence, emotional abuse, cultural alienation and human trafficking and continues to serve on the advisory board. The novel *Queen of Dreams* clearly brings out the

multifaceted problem of identity and rootlessness through her characters. The protagonists in *Queen of Dreams* have constant identity crisis and suffer from exile, alienation and embarrassment largely born of cultural prejudices throughout the novel.

Keywords: Identity crisis, Alienation, Domestic violence, Emotional abuse, Oppression of women

Introduction

Indian writing in English refers to the body of writers in India who write in the English language and whose mother tongue is usually one of the numerous languages in India. Indian writing in English means the projection of the cultural patterns of India. Their works reflect the political, economic and spiritual elements that constitute the mind of India. The Indian English Fiction has had a brilliant growth during the dawn of the millennium year and the writing in all genres of literature has gained momentum, particularly the Indian English novelists, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and others are some of the notable writers of Indian writing in English who promoted the conventional method of writing.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Indian writing in English has had many noted writers of both genders. In due course, the women writers have outnumbered the men writers and the awareness of women's writing and their specific problems portray the realities of women in different dimensions. During the 1990's India had become a popular literary nation, because a number of women authors emerged at this period. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi have used realism as the main theme of their novels. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning writer. She is an Indian novelist who is settled in America. Divakaruni, is not just a voice among the Diasporic writers of the time, but an author infusing the essence of multiculturalism in her writing, and she blends beautifully her Indian heritage and her immigrant encounters of isolation and approval.

Divakaruni deftly handles the tribulation and misconception related to cultural barriers. Her focus is on the diasporic Indian women caught between two opposing worlds. The women who either live abroad and/or happen to be visiting India are caught between two opposing

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forces. They think more rationally, but they mentally retain some of the Indian traditional beliefs. They are torn between old and new values. When a person leaves his own culture and enters another, his old values come into conflict with the new ones.

Queen of Dreams

The novel *Queen of Dreams* portrays the American reality which is the source of the American Dream, fears and anxieties that the Americans are vulnerable to, and the immigrant Indian's response to the emptiness and loneliness that haunts the inhabitants of this modern wasteland. It generates some issues regarding the identity-crisis of an individual, who being away from the homeland tries to negotiate with the culture and tradition of the host land. *Queen of Dreams* is a novel about three generations – immigrant mother Mrs. Gupta, Rakhi, a single mother in Berkeley who has grown up in the United States, and her unquestionably American daughter, Jonaki.

Mrs. Gupta, a First-Generation Indian Immigrant in America

Mrs. Gupta, a first-generation Indian immigrant in America is the *Queen of Dreams*. Her job consists of interpreting other people's dreams and warning them about the imminent danger and problems. Mrs. Gupta, the 'queen' of dreams, retains much of her Indian roots. She was to promise never to marry, though she could live with a man, because only then, "In the eye of the Great Power then my spiritual essence would not be joined to his". (QD 176) So rejecting the ceremonial wedding in the temple, she legally weds Gupta making him deeply displeased and making him feel they were not really married. To let the dream-spirit invade her, she is forbidden to squander her body in search of physical pleasure. Later, the couple leaves for the United States, where the young dream-tellers' powers leave her almost completely. Unable to dream, Mrs. Gupta loses her identity and sinks into depression.

Handful of Earth from India as Gift

Mrs. Gupta's aunt had given her a gift – a pouch with a handful of earth collected from the walkway in front of the caves, "ground that centuries of dream-tellers had stepped on". (QD 176). She had wondered how it would be of any use to her in America. In California, Mrs. Gupta feels increasingly alienated from her talent. Dreams do not come to her. She begins to

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experiment with the red dirt, a gift pouch. At first, she scatters a little in her garden. It makes her flowers bloom, but does not help her dream. Then she mixes it in her food, but it gives her cramps. Finally, she places the pouch of red dirt under her pillow, and her sleep “was filled with the colors and scents of home” (QD 177), but her husband wakes up with a headache, complaining that “his sleep had been filled with terrible images, blood and rubble and dying animals” (QD 177). She realizes that in order to have her dreams, she will have to stop sharing her husband’s bed, “for dream tellers cannot squander their nights as ordinary women do”. (QD 178) To her dismay, however, the red earth in the pouch becomes less each time she uses it. By now she recognizes her mistakes and realizes that she must break off all ties with her husband and find a way back to the caves. Shortly after, however, the dream-teller discovers that she is pregnant with Rakhi and cancels her plans.

Author’s Own Immigrant Experience

Divakaruni has poured out her immigrant experience in her fiction which deals with assimilation that takes place in different situations. For instance, Divakaruni refers to changes her food and dress habits. Divakaruni’s characters reflect the paradox of being caught between two conflicting cultures, the Indian and the American. Thus the immigrants get assimilated when they are exposed to many new things in the new world. In *Queen of Dreams*, Belle who is a friend of Rakhi bitterly complains that Rakhi is not dressed properly. Belle says “you’re getting old ... besides, they probably think you’re the outrageously dressed one. Outrageously old fashioned, that is”. (QD 25)

Mrs. Gupta’s Attire and Life Style

Mrs. Gupta dresses herself as Indians do, either in a saree or salwar kameez. She usually restricts herself within the confines of her house and only ventures out to pass the message of her dreams to her clients. To her, her identity is not as great an issue as she maintains most of her Indian culture and tradition. She adjusts and accommodates expediently though her sense of uprootedness does disturb her peripherally. Mrs. Gupta remains tender, accepting most of the changes and adapting to them, not so much affected by it. She creates an identity for herself which revolves around her dream world which none dares enter, not even her husband or daughter. Her unfathomable past and her clandestine working of the present are brought to light

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through her dream journals posthumously. Her dream journals are her only nostalgic reminiscences of her past life in the caves with the elders which actually establishes her cultural identity.

No Faith or Trust in the Myth of America

Mrs. Gupta does not buy herself any myth of America, and her journals sharply resurrect the long forgotten Indian myths, beliefs, tradition and culture and even dreams which are so essential for existence. The pivotal point of the whole novel rests on the words of Mrs. Gupta as she elucidates the dream and interprets the meaning of it. Instead of reminiscing about her past in India she is stubbornly reticent about it. She hides her past in an attempt to prevent her daughter from experiencing an inevitable split between her Indian and American identities.

Rakhi against Mental Trauma, Cultural Alienation and Identity Crisis

In Rakhi, Divakaruni has tried to fuse the feelings of an immigrant who has an oriental past trying to live up to the expectations of an occidental culture. The character grows from questioning many aspects of what is happening around her in a state, where she is ready to accept the reason behind all happenings. Rakhi raises her voice against mental trauma, cultural alienation and identity crisis of the dislocated people from their homeland India. Rakhi's terrible sense of alienation and homelessness create the impetus that forces Rakhi into the necessary changes to get her life back on track. She attempts to acculturate herself to an alien country. This results in the erasure of the painful, unpleasant incidents with her husband and her family from her mind.

Rakhi, Mrs. Gupta's daughter is an American by birth and grows up with a feeling of belonging to her land of birth. She is a young divorcee and a struggling artist. Rakhi, born to Indian parents, is a second generation migrant in America in this novel. Rakhi, in this sense, fits into the concept of second generation immigrant being born to Mr. and Mrs. Gupta whose country of origin is India. Failing to have any first-hand experience of the ancestral land, Rakhi suffers from a confusion regarding her belonging. Though Mrs. Gupta took the utmost care to educate Rakhi purely in an American way, she could not cope with the American life totally and therefore, intends to know about and experience the Indian way of life. Her identity crisis stems

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from her confused sense of belonging. Divakaruni fosters an interest in such stories as in one of her interviews, the author says:

... I share an interest in the lives of the second generation – the children of Indian ancestry who are born in America. How do they relate to India? How are they different from their parents? (Chakaravarty 197)

Rakhi in Pursuit of Her Roots

As belonging is ‘interwoven’ with the notion of home and a ‘determinant’ of an individual’s identity, Rakhi, as a second generation migrant is quite concerned with that. Her sense of belonging and identity is interconnected with her search for roots in India, her ancestral homeland where her parents were born and brought up. Rakhi in Divakaruni’s novel is a daughter, a mother of a girl child, owner of a coffee shop and a passionate painter. All these identities do not truly define her due to her willingness to have knowledge about her ancestral root. Since her childhood, she had a craving for a clear vision of her parents’ bygone days in India, a place which she could not visit despite having the will to do so.

Rakhi has grown up in America amidst American schools, culture and tradition. The reason behind Rakhi’s passionate desire to go back to her roots is not merely the yearning of an immigrant. Her craving is intensified because of the fact that her parents deliberately turned down any scope of discussion about India with her. As a child, Rakhi was also interested in story-telling, one of the favourite activities of children. But she was disheartened as the bed time stories were not told by her mother, but by her own self. The stories Rakhi told grew out of her imagination, but they failed to provide her with her mother’s identity or her ethnicity.

Constituents of Culture

Culture, which includes food habit and language, makes up some of the constituents of diaspora. However, Rakhi’s mother did not let her identity as a dream-teller come out as an obstacle between her role as a mother and a wife. Even in her choice of cooking, Mrs. Gupta maintained Indian culture. Rakhi says, “At home we rarely ate anything but Indian, that was the one way in which my mother kept her culture”. (QD 7) However, the more Mrs. Gupta wanted Rakhi to maintain distance from the life of a dream-interpreter, the more Rakhi showed curiosity

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to know about that identity of her mother, because she felt that she would be able to solve the problem of her quest for roots and belonging, by being a dream-interpreter:

As far back as I can remember, I wanted to be an interpreter. But when I turned twelve, I grew obsessed with the idea. I saw it as a noble vocation, at once mysterious and helpful to the world. To be an interpreter of the inner realm seemed so Indian. (QD 35)

Live in a Perpetual State of Tension and Irresolution

Rakhi is compelled to live in a perpetual state of tension and irresolution because she is unable to sever her ties with the imaginary homeland, though she has adjusted with the host culture. To her, assimilation into the host culture does not fully restore a sense of equilibrium. The trauma of the mother's life as an orphan remains largely unspoken and even in her journals she does not tell much about her childhood. Living as an orphan in the slums, facing hunger and deprivation, the mother is saved by her talent of dream-telling: "It afforded me some protection in that place where orphans were used in cruel ways". (QD 230) Rakhi's discovery of herself comes out of her discovery of who her mother actually was. Rakhi desires intensely to know India, and also wishes for a closeness with her own mother, a closeness that has always been to her, out of reach because of her mother's profession of being a dream-teller: 'My mother always slept alone'.

Role of Dream Interpretation

In western cultures, dream interpretation is a science, practiced by the psychologists. In the Indian culture, dream interpretation is a gift. This gift is possessed by Mrs. Gupta and she relishes the gift. She does not want to share her secrets with her daughter, Rakhi. American culture is natural to Rakhi, but she wants to analyze her mother's gift. Rakhi is fully tuned to American culture. She is shocked to see her mother's behavior as a dream interpreter. At one time Rakhi wants to analyze and at another time she feels happy that she has not learnt the ways of her mother. This brings out the insecure feelings in Rakhi. For a second generation Indian-American like Rakhi, the sensation of being in-between is particularly accentuated. Conflicts typically arise from the cultural clash between American individualism and Indian communitarianism. The value system and culture of the second-generation is unclear.

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The dreams support Mrs. Gupta to have a sense of belonging, but Rakhi has nothing. She feels that it's her birth right to know about India, they hide it more and reveal less. Her conception about India, therefore, is coloured with the brush of her imagination only. While speaking about the Indian migrants, Salman Rushdie in his essays "Imaginary Homelands" says that "our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India's of mind."

Moves to Understand India

Rakhi wants to be familiarized with India by collecting books on India, Bengali CDs and even by nourishing the wish to visit India. "But it never worked out". (QD 82) This search for origin in India also appears when she chooses Sonny as her life partner. Both of them were of Indian origin, though Sonny, like Mrs. Gupta, never spoke about his "past - parents, hometown, high school, habits". (QD 70) The only means by which Rakhi can associate her feelings with India is her paintings. "Each day that passes without painting has hollowness to it, a sense of waste?" (QD197)

The only satisfactory means by which Rakhi feels close to her root and feels a sense of belonging are the dream journals of her mother, which Mrs. Gupta left behind posthumously. Mrs. Gupta's mysterious death struck Rakhi with a shock, but the dream journals emerged as a sigh of relief. The journals helped to establish the cultural identity of the mother and served as the sole nostalgic reminiscence of the past life as a novice in the caves where she had taken training as a dream-interpreter. While translating the dream journals, Mr. Gupta tells the stories of his past life of struggle in India. Like the mother's journals, the father's stories contribute towards the unraveling of some parts of Rakhi's basic quest for ethnic belonging, mutuality and continuity thus helping her to reconstruct her sense of ethnic identity.

Sonny's failure to interpret his wife Rakhi's mental state correctly indicates the couple's basic inability to communicate, which results in further alienation. Sonny's dismissal infuriates Rakhi and they have a fight, yet she never gets to the main reason for their separation. The gap of silence Rakhi intentionally creates between herself and Rakhi's husband parallels her detachment

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from her mother, which Rakhi has experienced throughout her life. This dysfunctional pattern of communication replicates itself with Rakhi's daughter, Jonaki, who inherits her grandmother's dream-telling talent. When Rakhi finds out that her daughter can predict the future by seeing other people's dramas, she realizes that just as she did not know her mother, she does not know her daughter as fully as she thought she did. By helping her daughter recognize and exercise her talent, Rakhi facilitates the construction of Jonaki's identity as a dream-teller, thus amending the mistakes of her relationship with her own mother and creating a harmonious balance between the past and the present.

Dream Journals

After Mrs. Gupta dead, Mr. Gupta starts translating the dream journals written in Bengali into English so that Rakhi is able to understand them. He even narrates stories of his past and quenches Rakhi's thirst for India. Mr. Gupta even proves his talent in cooking and then in singing old Indian songs, and these help them to rebuild their faith and determination. The Chai House is given a new look, a novel Indian perspective and this changes the scenario. Rakhi also comes to know about her father's unique characteristics as a singer, cook and most importantly as a guide and adviser. Thus all complaints of Rakhi against her father tend to be sidelined, the father and daughter happily co-operate with each other to re-build their Chai House which was at stake, because of the appearance of Java that offered their customs Native American dishes, Mrs. Gupta advised Rakhi and Rakhi's friend Belle to be authentic to attract customers.

However, the word could not make any sense to Rakhi at that time and she could understand the depth of this word only after her mother's death, when her father made every possible effort to usher in the Indian food, culture and tradition in the Kurma House:

They have decided to transform the Chai House into an Indian snack shop, a chaer dokan, as it would be called in Calcutta. They're going to model it after the shop the father worked in so many years ago, with a few American sanitary touches thrown in. (QD 165)

The Kurma House serves as an emblem of her ethnic identity, a place to which she can feel a sense of belonging and a means through which she can come closer to her roots. The

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stories about India, the attire of the Indians who used to come and gather in the Kurma House from varied backgrounds, their oneness in sharing thoughts and feelings, enjoyment in playing Indian instruments and singing Indian songs – all fascinated Rakhi with a strange satisfaction. The Kurma House in the novel thus becomes the only meeting place for a few diasporic communities in California. In Divakaruni's novel it is observed that the young and the veteran immigrants are emotionally connected to the Kurma House. It is their emotional bonding that drives them to help repair the Kurma House when its kitchen is burnt accidentally.

Diaspora Community in America - Torn Between Two Identities

The diaspora community in America suffers the effects of the new political crisis. There is an aura of hatred and fear mixed with a sense of insecurity due to the racial riots in the aftermath of 9/11. Although it is not open violence to non-Americans, but to a large extent a concealed distrust for the diaspora, and Rakhi observes how she has suddenly become an outsider in a land that she was born and brought up in. After this harrowing experience Rakhi feels that all people who lose their loved ones in such racial struggles lose their sense of belonging in a foreign country.

Rakhi feels herself torn between her two identities. She has imbibed the American culture by birth and Indian culture by ancestry. She feels the pulls of both the cultures in her veins but fails to understand where she really belongs to. After the terrorist attack, the identity of an immigrant in America suffered from a different kind of experience. It can be noticed in the novel that people had started asserting their patriotic and nationalistic feelings after the devastating attack by putting up banners that announced PROUD TO BE AMERICAN or GOD BLESS AMERICA. Rakhi, a second generation migrant has in her heart, a quest for roots in the culture and tradition of her ancestral homeland and she aspires to belong there but at the same time, she has accepted her life and livelihood in America.

9/11 and After

In *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni portrays the real agony of the immigrants who were treated violently after the incident of 9/11 through her fictional characters. The Kurma House which was rebuilt with so much affection, care and effort was to be shut down just for the fact

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that it was run by a South-Asian community. A group of people claiming themselves to be patriots, carrying baseball bats, chains and switchblades broke into the Kurma House alleging that Rakhi and his group were celebrating the calamity of the Americans and so branded them as terrorists. They did not only cause damage to the shop, but also vented out their hatred for the entire South-Asians in general by using abusive language and usurping violent means. Jespal, the lover of Belle who is Rakhi's best friend, tried to appease them saying: "We haven't done anything wrong. Those men in here were mourning. We're Americans, just the way you are. We all feel terrible about what happened". (QD 267)

The violence unleashed in the American society on account of the bombing of the World Trade Centre takes a great toll on the lives of the immigrants. Branded as terrorist for keeping the shop open, they are thrown into a nightmare where they start to question their identity. But obscene words were hurled at Jespal and he was beaten black and blue. His ethnic appearance as a Sikh with turban and beard impelled the perpetrators to unleash more torture on him:

Looked in the mirror lately? One of them spits. You aren't American! Its fuckers like you who planned this attack on the innocent people of this country. Time someone taught you faggots a lesson. (QD 267)

Rakhi, thus, suffers from multiple stresses and is forced to construct a gender identity where she has to locate herself. The ethnic identity in which Rakhi seemed to have so much interest, stood as an obstacle against her peaceful existence in America.

Thus, the aftermath of 9/11 racial riot brings Rakhi's broken family together. The family moves towards success and stability in life. Through Rakhi's character Divakaruni tries to portray the struggle she had to meet with during her stay in the country where it was not very easy for the settlers to live as freely as they were doing before the 9/11 event. Rakhi starts questioning her belonging to India or to the place where she has been born and brought up. Divakaruni brings this dilemma in Rakhi's subconscious extremely well.

Adaptation and Assimilation

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Rakhi's adaptation to America starts as early as her birth, but her assimilation to American culture is a highly difficult one. Yet, living in an immigrant offers her immense possibility for creativity and she is empowered enough to create new narratives of belonging and identity. According to Nair: "Through assimilating and acculturation, an Indian immigrant woman in America can create an identity for herself. But this is an identity that is constantly evolving being open to change and perpetual motion" (Kezia 59). Though born in America, it does not offer her the possibility of being an American. Yet, the stamp of a true American is seen in her. Her flexibility of spirit in life and accepting challenges creatively reflect the individualistic trait of the American.

Rakhi makes acculturation her strength, as towards the end of the novel, she learns to appreciate Indian instruments which produce music that is not purely Indian but an American mix. By adopting American ways, Rakhi moves towards success and stability in life, although temporarily she suffers a setback due to doubts about her sense of belonging and identity. Caught between two cultures, her identity is suddenly at crisis. Throughout she has tried to justify herself at the best possible manner and throughout she has faced criticism and cruelty. She wanted to be like her mother – a dream interpreter but it is her daughter who inherits the quality and she wanted to belong to India by knowing about the past of her mother, but her mother never exposed herself to her and she broke-off her relationship with her husband at one stroke; later the situation forces her to reconsider and she wanted to be a part of America and America disowns her. At this juncture she realizes that her life revolves around her family and close friends only. This gives her peace of mind as she tries to hold on to her individuality: the identity that she had lost comes back to her in a different way. It is family that gives one an identity naturally and one need not seek for it.

Towards the end, Rakhi begins to question her most basic assumptions and motives, the true nature of love and the capacity to forgive, to re-ignite her love for her husband and her family, and eventually her own community. The dynamics of some of Rakhi's important relationships are changed in the phase between her identity crisis and acculturation. The characters in this novel are in search of their true image, torn between the traditional values they have absorbed from childhood and the new values which they have been introduced to during

their immigration. This is a confrontation with the occidental ethos in order to discover one's own self.

The terrorist attack for Americans is a revelation of the destructive power of hatred, it also sparks in the Indian immigrants a new faith in their Indian values and inspires them to search for their past, for their roots. As Rakhi goes through her mother's dream journals after the latter died in a road accident, she discovers her mother's long-kept secrets and sacrifices, and her past in India. This enables Rakhi to confront her fears and to develop a new bond with her ex-husband Sonny and her father with the help of her daughter Jonaki. The negative forces of terrorism in her adopted country thus contribute to Rakhi's growth and evolution as a more mature and confident individual and she emerges as a stronger person at the end. She loves India but at last she has adapted to American life.

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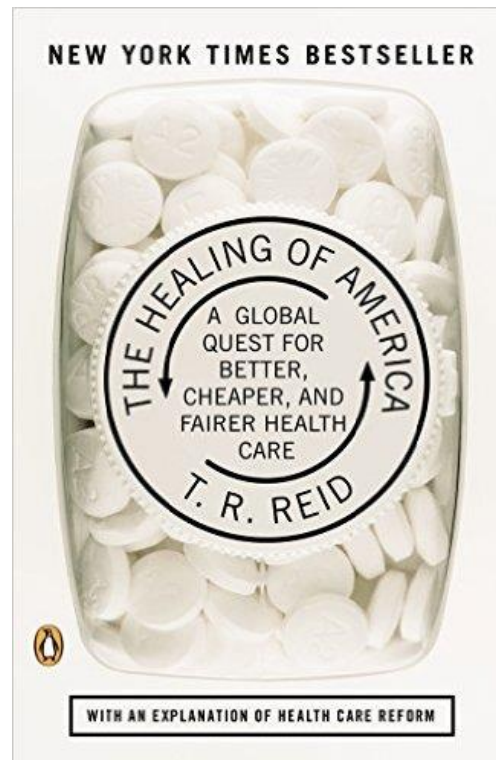
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P. Selva Mari, M.A., M.Phil.
Assistant Professor
SMS College of Arts and Science
Kallamanaickerpatti 626131
Sivakasi
Tamilnadu
India
massmani84890@gmail.com

T. R. Reid's *The Healing of America*

Selvi Bunce



US Health Care System: The Plight of the Uninsured

Through my reading of T.R. Reid's book, *The Healing of America*, I learned that the United States health care system has a long way to go before it will even be competitive as one of the top health care systems in the world. This was news to me, as I have had health insurance all my life. However, while I had been aware of the wide number of uninsured citizens, I had not fully been aware of their plight, and this book really opened my eyes to how America's health care system fails the poor.

By reading this book I learned that there are many ways the United States can improve by completely restructuring our health care system so that it is more united and less conflicted, allowing our insurers and physicians to become more perfect agents. The policies that other countries hold in health care, and what we should adopt is biblically significant because we have been called to be stewards of this Earth and of each other, in addition to ensuring justice as God planned. However, while it is easy to pinpoint where the United States has gone wrong and needs improvement, it is more difficult to say how possible that improvement is.

Bismarck Model

Reid states that America's health care system "does require major surgery... Any proposal for 'reform' that continue to rely on our fragmented structure of overlapping and often conflicting payment systems for different subsets of the population will not reduce the cost or the complexity of American health care" (Reid 228). In other words, Reid is saying that our system needs a makeover, not just a touch-up. I think the United States could benefit most from a system based on the Bismarck Model, similar to France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Japan. Not only do I think the Bismarck Model would be best for the United States because France has the number one health care system in the world, but I think it also includes our capitalist values quite obviously.

For example, countries under the Bismarck model offer universal coverage through private providers and private insurance plans, with the government using various regulations to keep coverage and pricing in check. This system of private insurers and private providers would be a much easier sell to an America that is rooted in capitalism and afraid of "socialism".

The Beveridge Model

In contrast, the Beveridge model, (used by Great Britain, Spain, Italy, and Cuba) has the government serving as both the provider and payer. This would not sell all too well in America.

Switzerland System

The Bismarck Model would be the best model for America to follow if it were to chase reform because that is what Switzerland, a country that once had a fragmented and extremely

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expensive health care system similar to ours, switched to in 1994. Not only did Switzerland have a similar health care system as the United States, but they are also a

“vigorous democracy marked by fierce competition between political parties that look a lot like our Republicans and Democrats. They also had finance and insurance industries that were rich and politically influential. They are also ferociously capitalist and have jumped aboard the digital revolution to build advanced, high-tech economies” (Reid 166).

High Profit Insurance Companies into Non-Profits

When faced with the Challenge of reform, the Swiss rejected the Beveridge Model for the same reasons the United States would – they were too capitalist for it. However, by choosing the Bismarck Model, the Swiss were still challenged with the question of how to make their previously high profit insurance companies into non-profits. While creating a law that no longer allowed any insurance company to make a profit (if they did, the money had to go into reducing premiums for the next year) they softened the blow to these companies by requiring every family to buy insurance. If they did not, the families were automatically assigned to a plan and the premium would be deducted from their paycheck.

Possible Benefits

A switch from our market based, fragmented, high cost model, to the Bismarck Model would decrease many of the economic problems with health care delivery that plague the United States now. For example, we currently have the highest rate of health care expenditure in the world, while we are not even in the top 20 countries for health care efficiency or overall health. The Bismarck Model would change this by eliminating the profit driven preferences of both insurers and physicians and allow them to become more perfect agents. In addition, overall health would increase because clinics and physicians would be able to focus more on long term care and preventative care, instead of immediate help and flat of the curve medicine.

The Major Difference between Switzerland and the United States

Overall, the major difference between Switzerland and the United States is that the Swiss were able to make a commitment to universal coverage and agree to adopt health care systems

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that would allow everyone to be covered. In Switzerland, the right to medical care, was no longer a political fight, but “a basic truth of modern life” (Reid 178).

Truth of Modern Life

I agree with the Swiss, that the right to medical care is a truth of (modern) life. From every humanistic point of view, including spiritual values, how can we deny basic health to others simply because they do not have enough money to afford it? In addition, since we are called to stewardship this means that we are called to work and care for creation. Human beings are part of creation, therefore a large part of our focus should be placed on caring for each other, especially those that need help.

Both Developed and Developing Nations Still Have Much to Learn

Comparatively, America does have the lowest ranked health care system among all other developed countries. However, America is ranked above many developing nations. But this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from these nations. For example, Reid states that on his trip to India the treatment that was first recommended for his bad shoulder was acupuncture. He stated that although this was not a long term fix, it did make his shoulder feel better almost immediately. America tends to focus on high technology, high cost medicine without thinking of alternative approaches to healing. However, just because India offers these options, does not mean that they are readily available. India operates mostly on the basis of an Out of Pocket health care system, where the patient pays for the services they receive, and if they cannot pay, they cannot receive care. Clearly both developed and developing nations still have much to learn.

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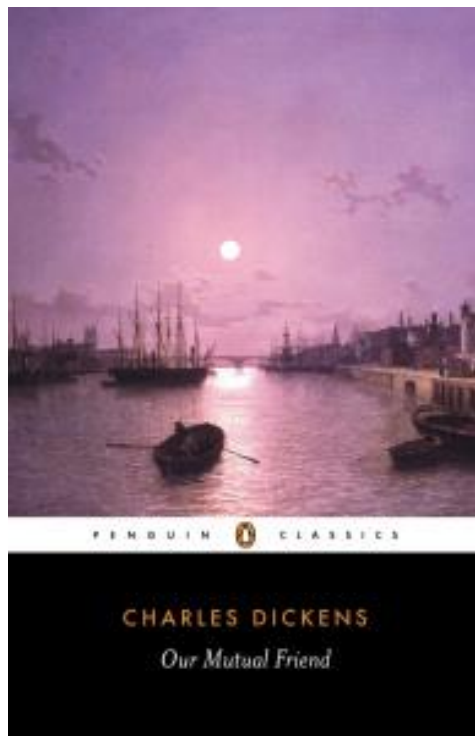
Selvi Bunce

c/o languageinindia@gmail.com

Human Relationships in Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*

**K. Shantikumar Sharma, M. A., Research Scholar
Dr. H. Shimreingam, M.A., M. Phil., Ph.D.**

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Abstract

Charles Dickens, the top novelist of the Victorian Age created human relationships and took keen interest in portraying the life of London city and also its pleasure in his novels. Various kinds of relationships i.e. the relationship between lovers, relationship between Master and servant, the relationship between caretaker and boarders, relationship between friends, etc. are dealt with in the novel. He himself had the experiences of life of the London streets for which he was regarded as the first genuine story teller of London life. He not only came up precisely at the right time in the history of English novel on the literary side but also on the other social issues. In his novels he brought about all classes of people living in different social strata which London city had during the reign of Queen Victoria and relationships between individuals. The novelist tactfully sketched all sections of society including women and children who struggled for existence and survival for fittest in the London society. And he never tries to modify the facts to go well with the existing standards

of society. The paper talks about Dickens' human relationships and see how he keeps the relationships among the characters which might have existed in the Victorian society.

Key words: Charles Dickens, Victorian Age, London streets, portrayal, human relationship, struggle, survival for fittest.

Introduction

Charles Dickens was born on 7 February 1812. His mother taught him privately. The novels which he obtained from his father includes: *Roderick Random*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, etc. When the family faced with financial crunch, a friend of John Dickens offered his son, Charles Dickens work in a blacking business at Hungerford Stairs where Charles started work at the age of twelve, labeling bottles for six shillings a week. There he suffered unbearable mental torture for the unskilled work of washing and labeling blacking bottles. When John Dickens was taken to the Marshalsea Debtor's Prison for debt, Charles Dickens spent his Sundays with his father in the prison and on other days at the warehouse as usual. After three months of imprisonment, his Charles's father was released on receipt of a bequest from his mother, who died leaving an amount of four hundred and fifty pounds for him. Some weeks later, John Dickens withdrew Charles from his work and sent him to school. Again at age fifteen, Charles Dickens began to work in the office of a firm of Gray's Inn attorneys. These painful experiences of life form background for the creation of his many children characters. Meanwhile he taught himself shorthand and started working as a freelance reporter in the court of Doctors' Commons.

Charles Dickens Writing

Charles Dickens began his writing career with *Sketches by Boz*. He started publishing his works in various periodicals which he subsequently republished as *Sketches of Boz*, *Illustrative of Every Day Life* and *Every-Day People* (1836-37). *The Pickwick Papers* were published in 1836-37. He married Catharine in April 1836. Then, Charles Dickens published *Oliver Twist* (1837-38) followed by *Nicholas Nickleby*, (1841). Dickens and his wife visited America in 1842. His 'American Notes' (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44) caused much uproar in America. With the publication of the series of Christmas books brought him immense popularity. *A Christmas Carol*, appeared for the first time in 1843. *Dombey and Son*

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(1844-46) and *David Copperfield* (1849-50) were serious in theme and more carefully planned than his other early works. He published *Bleak House* in 1853 followed by *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1860-61), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65). In 1858, he was separated from his wife, Catharine. Charles Dickens died on 9 June 1870 before completing his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Our Mutual Friend

The novel, *Our Mutual Friend* was the fourteenth and the last of Charles Dickens' completed novel appeared in parts of nineteen monthly instalments that ended in November 1865. Mei Chin remarks that "*Our Mutual Friend* is the most radical of Dickens' novels, for in it the classes merge and remain merged." (Harold Bloom: 2003:84)

J. Hillis Miller remarks:

"The narrator of *Our Mutual Friend* is in exactly the same position as the characters of the novel in relation to one another. For the narrator, the characters' inner lives are there, available, in what he can see and hear of them, their bodies, gestures, behavior, and surroundings ... Dickens keeps the objectivity of the third person narrator." (Miller, 1958:290)

Our Mutual Friend is "the story of two people who marry each other for money then find out that each was crushingly mistaken in estimating the other's fortune." (Bloom, 2003:52)

Different Personal Relationships

In the investigation, among many characters, we find different personal relationships such as the relationship between Bella Wilfer and her father R. Wilfer, the relationship between Bella and John Harmon, and the relationship between Lizzie Haxam and Eugene Wrayburn etc. About the characters in the novel, J. Hillis Miller gives his remarks: "All the characters in *Our Mutual Friend* are perfectly self-aware. We hear almost all of them, even the more or less unintelligent characters like Betty Higden, talking about them, or even see him from the inside in soliloquy. The self-consciousness takes a special form: the characters

are shown as aware of their situations, of their given engagements in the world.” (Miller, 1958:282)

The Theme of Corruption

Corruption is one of the themes of the novel. The main character, Bella Wilfer always thinks of herself to become a rich person by marrying moneyed man or a rich man, John Harmon who is heir to the Harmon estate. “The character feels that his life is altogether ridiculous because every move in it has been decided beforehand, and he is prevented from acting because he feels that, for him, all human relationships are doomed to failure.” (Miller, 1958:300) “There is no central protagonist in *Our Mutual Friend*.” (Hillis Miller, 1958:281) “Apparently, then, *Our Mutual Friend* is a multi-plotted novel presenting a collection of unrelated lives each fulfilling itself privately, enclosed in its own personal world. The novel seems to be a large group of impenetrable milieus with characters buried untouchably at their centers. These milieus exist side by side, but do not organize themselves into a larger whole.” (Miller, 1958:284)

Marry for Money

In the investigation, the relationship between John Harmon and Bella Wilfer found in the novel is another kind of personal relationship in which Bella loves Harmon for his wealth as he is the heir of the Harmon estate. His father Old Harmon wishes his son to marry Bella Wilfer who is beautiful and mercenary. Being born in poverty, Bella wanted to be rich and a lady of property by marrying money for which she and her father always often talked about to become rich. She had two sisters and a brother. She dreamed of marrying a wealthy man, John Harmon whom she never had seen before but heard about him. And John Harmon wished to marry Miss Wilfer for his father Old Harmon liked her for him. Being born in poverty and a big family to support fallen in her hands so she had emotional feeling for love, but had to marry for money, because according to her, money cannot be begged or borrowed or stolen. She says to her father:

“I have made up my mind that I must have money, Pa. I feel that I can't beg it, borrow it, or steal it; and so I have resolved that I must marry it.”.... ‘My de-arr Bella!’ ‘Yes, Pa, that in the state of the case, If ever there was a mercenary plotter whose thought and designs were always in her mean occupation, I am

the amiable creature. But I don't care. I hate and detest being poor, and I won't be poor if I can marry money. Now you deliciously fluff, Pa, and in a state to astonish the waiter and pay the bill.” (OMF,1960:334)

Though she was crazy for money, she later underwent a significant moral change and not for money but for love married to John Rokesmith who was another name of John Harmon which was changed after his incidence of drowning into the deep sea in which he was thought to be dead but was saved by one Gaffer Haxam, a Thames waterside man. After the incident in which he was declared to be dead, all his property was inherited to their employees Mr. and Mrs. Boffins which results in changing master and servant roles i.e., the employees become the owner of the estate and the owner, employee. However, John Harmon later changed his name as John Rokesmith for he wanted to watch all the works of his estate done by Mr. Mrs. Boffins and Bella's nature as well. “Thus John Harmon turned into John Rokesmith feels like a lonely ghost returned from the grave. He lives a shadowy life which is undetermined by his awareness of its falsity.” (Miller, 1958:324) He served as their confidential Secretary and man of business without salary. Nobody knew him that he was John Harmon because he was thought to be dead after the incident. He felt something different when he remembered his past. He said:

“I remember there were poles and pushed out of upper windows on which clothes were drying and I remember a low public – house, and sound flowing down a narrow passage belonging to it of the scraping of a fiddle and the shuffling of feet. But here are all these things in the lane, and here are all these things in the alley. And I have nothing else in my mind but a wall, a dark doorway, a flight of stairs, and a room.” (OMF,1960:379)

All these circumstances made Bella Wilfer lose her hope of marrying John Harmon. In the mean time she was recognized by John Rokesmith that she was the woman whom his father told him to marry. And he also wanted to perform the will of his father for which he one day proposed Bella but she denied it as she did not know him that he was her John Harmon. As she always thought of money and contrary to this, John Rokesmith, as a poor employee working at the same estate under Mr. and Mrs. Boffins, she declined to his proposal. One day Rokesmith told Mr. Boffin how he began taking interest in Miss Bella Wilfer. He said to Mr. Boffin:

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“My interest in Miss Wilfer began when I first saw her; even began when I had only heard of her. It was, in fact, the cause of my throwing myself in Mr. Boffin’s way, and entering his service. Miss Wilfer has never known this until now. I mention it now, only as a corroboration (though I hope it may be needless) of my being free from the sordid design attributed to me.” (OMF, 1960:614)

Bella and John Rokesmith – Finally Marry for Love and Not for Money

As the time progress, Bella had to leave Mr. Boffin’s place for he had been so miser, and worst, day by day as a result of becoming rich with all the Harmon’s inheritance. During Rokesmith’s stay as a secretary with Mr. Boffin he watched the works of Mr. and Mrs. Boffins and found that they began to treat him cruelly and looked in contempt and he would also watch Miss Bella Wilfer’s nature. The behavior and nature of Mr. Boffin made John Rokesmith sympathy for Bella Wilfer. At the same time, Bella also felt sympathy for John Rokesmith for he had been treated badly and dismissed him for aspiring to marry Bella Wilfer, which resulted in Bella’s stand for John Rokesmith. She came back to her father and was followed by John Rokesmith as he wanted to save Bella who was in despair. Then they three, Bella, Rokesmith and R. Wilfer met together and he (Rokesmith) told excitedly and joyfully R. Wilfer all his will for Bella.

“Mr. Wilfer,’ said John Rokesmith, excitedly and joyfully, ‘Bella takes me, though I have no fortune, even no present occupation; nothing but what I can get in the life before us. Bella takes me!’.....‘You don’t know, Pa,’ said Bella, ‘what a shocking creature I was growing, when he saved me from myself!’ ‘You don’t know, sir,’ said Rokesmith, ‘what a sacrifice she has made for me!’.....‘Yes, do, Pa, do!’ urged Bella, ‘I allow you, and my will is his law. Isn’t it ___ dear John Rokesmith?’” (OMF,1960:627)

Afterwards, Bella would marry Rokesmith for love not for money. She soon conceived. Bella says:

“Do you remember, John, on the day we were married, Pa’s speaking of the ships that might be sailing towards us from the unknown seas? ‘Perfectly, my

darling!' 'I think among them there is a ship upon the ocean bringing.... to you and me a little baby, John.' (OMF, 1960:712)

Bella and Her Father

There is another personal relationship found between Bella Wilfer and her father, Reginald Wilger. Her father is a poor henpecked clerk in the story. Their relationship though they are father and daughter, is that of friendship. The two are rather close than her mother or her sister or brother.

As Bella and her father were close friends and she would treat her father as her school boy and her father too behave so. She sometimes treated as if she was a mother of her father in the relationship of a mother and son. She always accompanied with her father sharing all the sorrows and happy moments they encountered.

Her relationship with her father is more like that of a mother and her son as she always cares for him and calls him 'cherub'. Her father also would agree with his daughter's treatment of him like a child. Reginald Wilfer was a very kind, gentle and innocent. As the family was living below poverty line, she was insisted to get married to a wealthy man since she was small. She also thought of marrying for money with which she would manage her family. Therefore she was once proposed by one old Harmon for his son, John Harmon who would be inherited all the property of his father. "To reconcile love and riches in *Our Mutual Friend* Dickens is content with nothing less than the secret rebirth and double identity of Harmon Rokesmith; a second, more wayward hero, Eugene Wrayburn is subjected to near drowning, Doubledickonian marriage, and moral rebirth." (Welsh, 1971:204)

However it was in vain after a shocking incident in which John Harmon was believed drowned into the deep sea. When she was about to be engaged with one John Rokesmith alias Julius Handsford who really was John Harmon himself, her mother was against her will but her father would consent with her will to marry Rokesmith, secretary to Mr. Boffin.

The beautiful relationship between a daughter and her father is portrayed by the novelist. Bella Wilfer and her father who were always attached with one another. She was very free to say anything to her father. She treated her father sometimes like her own brother to share anything.

“I’ll tell you, pa, I don’t mind telling you, because we have always been favorites of each other’s and because you are not like a Pa, but more like a sort of a younger brother with a dear Venerable chubbiness on him.” (OMF, 1960:333)

One day she was about to go somewhere near the garden up by the Trinity House on Tower with her father for a dinner. She told her father to take a leave for the rest of the day to pass with her for dinner to a very beautiful and quite place. For this, she had let her father promise and vow to be obedient, for she wanted her father do anything whatever she wanted to do.

This kind of father-daughter relationship is one of the important relationships found in the novel.

Eugene Wrayburn and Lizzie Hexam

Again, there is another personal relationship found among the various characters of which Mr. Eugene Wrayburn and Lizzie Hexam is one of them. “Lizzie loves another gentleman Eugene Wrayburn and will eventually marry him. However, if Lizzie talked like her father, it is quite possible that Eugene would have never been attracted to her in the first place, or at least would have never pursued her with ultimately noble motives in mind. Lizzie would have become another Nancy.” (Harold Bloom, 2003:84) Lizzie Hexam was an affectionate daughter of Gaffer Hexam who saved John Harmon and charged him as accuse for killing John Harmon. Eugene Wrayburn is seen as second hero of the novel, who loves Lizzie Hexam, but she does not reciprocate to the proposal. Lizzie was always reproachful because she knew that they had a gulf of gap between Eugene Wrayburn and her in terms of social classes as she was a working girl. She said:

“I don’t mean in that way. Think of me, as belonging to another station, and quite cut off from you in honour. Remember that I have no protector near me, unless I have one in your noble heart. Respect my good name. If you feel towards me, in one particular, as you might if I was a lady, give me the full claims of a lady upon your generous behavior. I am removed from you and your family by being a working girl. How true a gentleman to be as considerate of me as if I was removed by being a Queen!” (OMF, 1960:716)

Lizzie was pursued romantically by both Eugene Wrayburn and one Bradley Headstone, a schoolmaster. But she was afraid of Bradley because of his violent nature. Therefore Bradley always hated Wrayburn and he never wanted Wrayburn to come near Lizzie. In the later part of the novel, Eugene Wrayburn was attacked by Bradley Headstone after he left Lizzie alone from his following her. She said while he was following her:

“You will drive me away. I live here peacefully and respected, and I am well employed here. You will force me to quit this place as I quitted London, and – by following me again – will force me to quit the next place in which I may find refuge, as I quitted this.” (OMF, 1960:717)

However by chance she saved Eugene who was nearly dead. Mei Chin opines on the novelist’s choice of hero in his novel: “It has been often said that, with the exception of Eugene Wrayburn, Dickens has never created a gentleman hero. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that Eugene Wrayburn is Dickens’ only elite hero.” (Harold Bloom, 2003:85) From that moment on she began to think of Wrayburn and yearned for his love. Again Mei Chin remarks on the character, Eugene Wrayburn: “Eugene Wrayburn, gentleman in status, does not become a real gentleman until he redeems himself with Lizzie Hexham, and Lizzie Hexham has always been suited to be his wife because she has a genteel soul.” (Bloom, 2003:85)

Then after this incident, she married him. Though they belong to different social strata, Wrayburn always had a heart for her and was attracted for her good character and her inherent goodness which resulted in marital happiness. They soon got married before Wrayburn was not fully recovered from his injury. The novelist says:

“As the bridegroom could not move his hand, they touched his fingers with the ring, and so put it on the bride. When the two plighted their troth, she laid her hand on his, and kept it there. When the ceremony was done, and all the rest departed from the room, she drew her arm under his head, and laid her own head down upon the pillow by his side.” (OMF, 1960:776)

Then they lived a happy life. Eugene said after all the rest departed from the room:

“Undraw the curtains, my dear girl,’ said Eugene, after a while, and let us see our Wedding –day.” (OMF, 1960:776)

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Dr. H. Shimreingam, M.A., M. Phil., Ph.D.

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To Conclude

James R. Kincaid remarks on the novel: “Though Dickens has not perhaps quite come full circle, his last completed novel does recapture the humorous directness of his first. Laughter is used to expel the villains and make the new world safe for love.” (James R. Kincaid, 1971:252) Such kind of man-woman relationship is beautifully portrayed by the novelist. In short, we can note that Charles Dickens has portrayed various kinds of human relationships in this novel that make one of the most popular among his novels.

To bring a conclusion of our critical assessment of the famous English novelist, Charles Dickens will never be an easy task. He is not only a social reformer but also a humanitarian novelist. He constructed his plots found among the English people of London city and their relationships which ultimately became of universal significance. His novels provide a fine and vivid scene of London life which evolved after rapid industrial revolution of England. Arthur Compton-Rickett has rightly observed thus:

“The novel provides such a facile and attractive means of popular appeal, and is so adaptable to literary fashions, that its continued vitality will surprise no one.” (Compton-Rickett, 2012:661-662)

Charles Dickens along with his contemporary, W.M. Thackeray is able to provide a new genre of fiction for the fiction covers all over the world. Though Charles Dickens portrayed the London life of his age, his fame was not confined to England. It was of universal significance.

As his age was an age of industrial revolution, life in London was very hard with the rapid changes taking place in England. He knew the hard facts of life of the country thereby made him to depict these pictures so as to reform it to make a sustainable environment by waking up the authority’s eyes. His novels have many characters starting from childhood to manhood as a society is comprised of children, men and women and other old people. All these characters are seen in his novels. Therefore, in such a situation, the human relationships have been fabricated throughout the novels. We know that one generation is replaced by another generation, and to see a generation, society starts from a child growing to manhood and womanhood which is seen in most of his novels. He experienced the hard life of children

and this is his main theme of novels. Many children are portrayed in his novels as a society consists of children and men and women together. Here to quote W.R Goodman's remark:

“In the crowd of human beings that through these books there are many boys and girls. Often, indeed, a novel is the story of a child growing into manhood and womanhood; and no preceding novelist had written so much of the experiences of childhood.” (Goodman, 2010: 373)

He has produced about fifteen novels altogether including his last unfinished novel, *Edwin Drood*, with readers from different parts of the world from America to Russia. He was received warmly in America in streets by big crowds and welcomed by many, including politicians, judges and bishops. His child image is tactfully portrayed with miserable life of child as an orphan.

In *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens introduces some characters who always were crazy about money. So, the theme of the novel is a kind of money crazy. Here, Bella Wilfer and her family wants money for according to them, money can do everything. Besides Bella there are other characters in the novel who always crazy about money. Mr. Boffin becomes worse than before after receiving all properties of Old Harmon in the absence of real owner who is supposed to be the only recipient of all inheritance of his father. The heroine, Bella though she thinks of marrying money as money can't be begged, or stolen, she ultimately changes her moral behaviour and get married to Rokesmith not for money but for love. Such kind of human relationships are employed in the novel and it is Dickens' contribution that has the new taste to novel readers. Through Bella, one can see the relationship between father and daughter, between man and woman, between lovers, between siblings and between friends in the novel.

Through such novels, Charles Dickens has achieved high ranks of reputation which his contemporary novelists can never achieve. He was popular with all classes in English society thereby creates for him a special place among the novelists. Analyzing the human relationships found in the novels of Dickens help us to acquaint ourselves with the types of people living in the age of Dickens and of their nature, and aspirations and also help us to deepen our understanding and appreciation of Dickens' novels.

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K. Shantikumar Sharma, M. A.
Research Scholar
Department of English
Himalayan University,
Arunachal Pradesh
skongbrai@gmail.com

Dr. H. Shimreingam
Assistant Professor
Pettigrew College
Samsai, Ukhrul 795142
Manipur
India
hungyoshimreingam@gmail.com

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K. Shantikumar Sharma, M. A., Research Scholar and

Dr. H. Shimreingam, M.A., M. Phil., Ph.D.

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Culture and Dislocation from Subaltern Perspective from the Selected Novels of Bharati Mukherjee and Amitav Ghosh

S. Varalakshmi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. Candidate

Abstract

In the contemporary world, shifting one's root becomes a normal happening. Based on it several studies have emerged and one among them is Diaspora studies. In general, the term Diaspora denotes displacement, but at present the term Diaspora has various meanings and there is no clear-cut definition to understand it. I have analyzed the basic characteristics of Diaspora and the sufferings each individual character have gone through in their voyage of. Particularly, my paper highlights the sufferings of dislocation and cultural conflict from the selected novels of Bharati Mukherjee and Amitav Ghosh. Amitav Ghosh's "The Glass Palace", "Shadow lines" and "The Circle of Reason" and Bharati Mukherjee's "The Desirable Daughters", "Jasmine" and "Wife".

Key words: Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, culture dislocation, subaltern perspective

Introduction

A study by Robin Cohen gives nine basic characteristics of Diaspora community:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions.
2. Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions.
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements.
4. An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation.
5. The development of a return movement which gains collective approbation.
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate.
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group.

8. A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement.
9. The possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism (Cohen 1996: 515).

Robin is also of the opinion that among the nine features, all Diasporas will have only some of these features and not all of them.

No Homogenization

The Diaspora community and its features cannot be homogenized as different Diasporas are available. The Diasporas have been categorized based on the ethnicities or nationalities into various kinds such as Jewish, Greek, Armenian, African, Chinese, Indian, etc. Based on these categories, distinction has also been made in terms of culture and life style of each of these groups.

Three Phases of Indian Diaspora

The history of the Indian Diaspora can be broadly divided into three phases, based on the reasons of their movement.

The first phase of migration has started by the end of the nineteenth century, during the British colonization. Many uneducated people left their home land for the British colonies to work as indentured laborers in sugar plantations and in railroad construction. The second phase of migration occurred in the mid twentieth century, when educated people went to the developed nations to experience independence and for economic development. The third phase of migration took place by the end of the nineteenth century, and in the beginning of the twenty-first century. This time people's movement to the developed nations is for the sake of education and employment.

The second and the third phase of migrants are educated and they documented their life in the form of letters, memoirs, stories, poetry and fiction. Although the Diaspora life which is portrayed is to some extent realistic, yet it is also fictionalized. Emphasizing this point, Jasbir Jain refers to it as a split narrative. She further discusses the past and the present of Diaspora literature as being different the past has a different history', tradition', regional and colonial memories 'and 'political equations'and the present has different kinds of loneliness, isolation, social ghettoisation, success, affluence and recognition'. In spite of living in the present they co-exist in the past too (Jain 2004: 76).

Four Major Movements

S K. Sareen divides the history of the Indian Diaspora into four major movements as,

- (i) the indentured labor that built for the empire in South Asia and the West Indies;
- (ii) the seekers who went mainly to the West in search of security, freedom or identity;
- (iii) the aspirants who went again to the West in search of opportunities (money); and
- (iv) the re-migrants who, for self-preservation, had to move from where they had arrived from India to other locale such as the Ugandans to UK and USA and the Fijians to Australia. (Sareen 2004: 82).

Commonality: Sense of Guilt for Not Being Loyal to Both Societies

Even though writings of the Diaspora writers differ according to the reasons of their movement, the commonality among their writing is their sense of guilt for not being loyal to both societies. With such feeling their mind oscillates between the home country and the settled land. The tension of living in-between the two worlds is reflected well in their works.

Features of Diaspora Novels

Discrimination is the major problem faced by almost all the Diaspora communities. Regarding this aspect, Parekh states, “that no society can ever ensure full equality to all its cultural minorities” (Parekh 1998: 411).

All the novels talk about the basic features of Diaspora such as isolation, nostalgia and cultural clash. In Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* and to some extent Ali’s *Brick Lane* double discrimination faced by a woman in the new land is described. As *Jasmine* happens to be an uneducated woman from the lower middle classes, she faces survival problems and gender discrimination. Whereas, in Lahiri’s *The Namesake* and in Sidhwa’s *An American Brat*, due to their economical as well as educational background, chances to face discrimination are less. *Jasmine* talks more about leaving of home country, problems of settling in a new country and the emergence of new identity in the new land. This novel focuses mainly on the initial stage of settlement and its problems. *An American Brat*, *The Namesake* and *Brick Lane* concentrate less on the description of entry into the new land and the suffering of isolation. The novels’ main focus is the problem of identity and cultural clash.

Indian Migration as the Major Focus

Much of the literature available on the Indian Diaspora pertains to Indian migration, their socio-economic and cultural experiences, experiences of adaptation and assimilation in the host societies. Biographer Fakrul Alam categorizes Mukherjee's life into three phases which correspond to her works. Her earlier works, such as —The Tiger's Daughter and parts of Days and Nights in Calcutta can be taken to be her attempts to find her identity in her Indian heritage.

Bharati Mukherjee



Courtesy: <http://www.missnewindia.com/p/about-bharati.html>

Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian settled in Canada who later moved to America with her husband. Her novel *Jasmine* is about the transformation experienced by Jyoti who turns into Jasmine first and finally Jane. “Jyoti of Hasnapur was not Jasmine, Duff's day mummy and Taylor and Wylie's au pair in Manhattan; that Jasmine isn't this Jane Ripplemeyer having lunch with Mary Webb at the University Club today” (Mukherjee 1989: 127).

Amitav Ghosh

Amitav Ghosh is another famous diasporic writer who deals with the problems of immigrants. Amitav Ghosh was born on July 11, 1956 in Calcutta. He grew up in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Sri Lanka, Iran and India. When he was young, he was brought up on the stories of Partition, Independence and the Second World War. In an article in the *New Yorker*, Ghosh remarked: —My mother grew up in Calcutta, and her memories were of Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence, Civil

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Disobedience and the terrors that accompanied Partition in 1947. In all the stories his mother told him, Mahatma Gandhi appeared as “an incomparably vital and endearing protagonist”.



Amitav Ghosh

Courtesy: <https://www.amitavghosh.com/padma.html>

His father, a diplomat, narrated to him stories of the Second World War, about the Indian soldiers of the British Indian Army who fought against the Japanese and the Germans. “My father came of age in a small provincial town in the state of Bihar. He turned twenty-one in 1942, one of the most tumultuous periods in Indian History. That was the year the Indian National Congress, the country’s largest political party, launched a nationwide movement calling on the British to quit India, it was when Mahatma Gandhi denounced the Raj as a ‘position that corrupts all it touches’. And in that historic year of anti-imperialist discontent my father left home to become an officer in the British colonial army in India”.

Thus, history has become Amitav Ghosh’s prime obsession and his fiction is imbued with both historical and political consciousness. These memories have constructed the concept of freedom and its numerous connotations in the modern world, which is the dominant theme of *The Shadow Lines*-an interweaving of memory, history and contemporary life. Amitav Ghosh worked briefly with *The Indian Express* after his graduation from St.Stephen’s College, University of Delhi. Then he studied Social Anthropology at Oxford and worked as a lecturer in Anthropology at the Delhi School of Economics. In 1982, he received his D.Phil., in Anthropology from Oxford University.

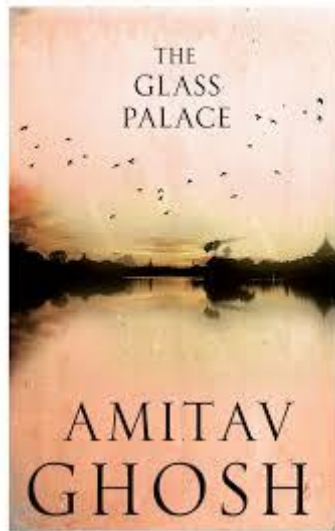
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Cultural Conflict and Dislocation

Amitav Ghosh's "*The Glass Palace*" contemplates about the effects of history on the lives of individuals from a subordinated perspective. It also foregrounds the lives of socially, politically, economically and historically insignificant characters. Like Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, it does challenge the notion of boundaries, euro-centrism and the ill-effects of Western expansionism.



This novel is partially based on the personal experiences of Amitav Ghosh's uncle, Jagat Chandra Dutta, who had been a timber merchant in Burma. In his 17 July 2000 interview with *Outlook*, Ghosh mentioned that his father's family had lived in Burma for several generations. Therefore, writing this novel is a way of re-claiming the personal history of his family for Amitav Ghosh. Amitav Ghosh has profoundly been interested in the history of Burma not only due to a personal urge to re-locate the history of his family but thereby to record a portion of history that might otherwise simply pass out of public record or won't remain accessible and audible to the world.

In the beginning of the novel, we come across a universal statement by the narrator-author as a post-colonial critic: "This is how power is eclipsed: in a moment of vivid realism, between the waning of one fantasy of governance and its replacement by the next; in an instant when the world springs free of its mooring of dreams and reveal itself to be girdled in the pathways of survival and self-preservation." (3).

In the constant flux of larger historical events, it is the individual histories of the postcolonial subjects that endure massive shifts in their fate. Ultimately, some of them survive, while most of them succumb to anonymity. *The Glass Palace* is a 'virtuoso demonstration' of Amitav Ghosh's

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method of remembering the past, that is to say, not as an imperial chess game, but as biographies of otherwise unknown people. The application of Subaltern Studies, and particularly, its approach of reading 'history from below' to this novel is significant in the sense that it reveals the survival strategies adopted by ordinary individuals, families and collective groups at times of violent historical movements. The question that lies at the heart of this novel is, 'Whose life should be counted as significant and whose not?' In this context, Subaltern Studies may be of great help in the sense that its primary focus has always been on the masses rather than on the elites. As a victim of larger historical forces, the exiled King broods over his own fate and of his empire as a postcolonial critic. He ruminates:

"The King raised his glasses and spotted several Indian faces, along the waterfront. What vast, what incomprehensible power, to move people in such huge numbers from one place to another—emperors, kings, farmers, dockworkers, soldiers, coolies, policemen. Why? Why this furious movement—people taken from one place to another, to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile?"(133)

Though treacherous and wicked herself, Queen Supayalat hurls severe indictment as a colonial subject, when the British officials visit Outram House to investigate the princess' marriage to a commoner. She grumbles: "Yes, we who ruled the richest land in Asia are now reduced to this. This is what they have done to us; this is what they will do to all Burma. They took our kingdom, promising roads and railways and ports, but take my words, this is how it will end. In a few decades, the wealth will be gone—all the gems, the timber and the oil—and then they too will leave. In our golden Burma where no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to write and read, all that will remain is destitution and ignorance, famine and despair. We were the first to be imprisoned in the name of their progress; millions more will follow. This is what awaits us all: this is how we will all end—as prisoners, in shanty towns born of the plague. A hundred years hence you will read the indictment of Europe's greed in the difference between the Kingdom of Siam and the state of our own enslaved realm."(5).

The Circle of Reason

Amitav Ghosh's first novel, *The Circle of Reason*, is a genre much developed in Latin America, a continent where the condition of the people is not conducive to novels of rational cause and effect. India, with its pullulating poor and its superstitions, has recently given us, though the

book was written in London, Salman Rushdie's "*Shame*," which belongs to the tradition of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Mario Vargas Llosa.

The hero of "The Circle of Reason" is named Nachiketa Bose, but he is called Alu, which means "potato." This is because of the shape of his head, knobby, bumpy and far too big. A deformed protagonist is to be expected in some brands of magic realism. He enters a fantasy that builds on a basis of misdirected pedantry when Alu's uncle Balaram sets phrenology to work on him.

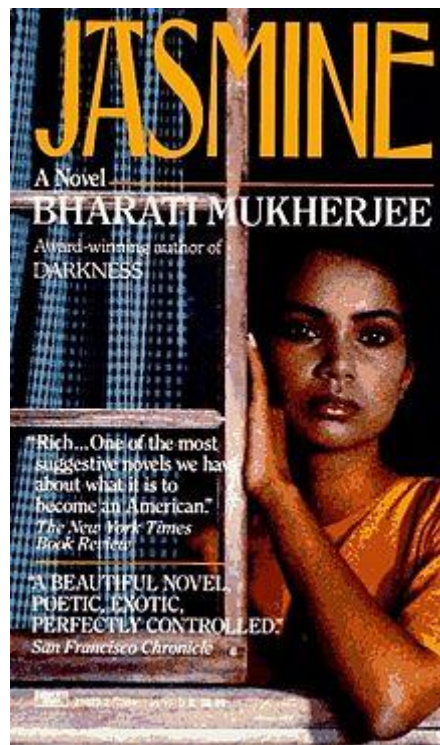
War comes, a plane crashes near the village, and the villagers cannibalize its remnants until blue-clad troops arrive to take these away. After the war, terrorism. Alu is suspected of burning the village and makes his getaway, pursued by a Police Officer named Jyoti Das. Das, true to Mr. Ghosh's image of the bewildering complexity of Indian men, is primarily an ornithologist, but he has to keep that quiet. ALU sails to the East African port of al-Ghazira on a derelict ship called the Mariamma, owned by a certain Hajji Musa, not a very good Moslem: "An almost empty arrack-bottle had been tucked with drunken parsimony into the waist of his lungi. At the end, the main protagonists" Alu, Zindi and Boss await at Tangier a ship that will take them home. The picaresque narrative, crammed with characters who would do well in Cervantes, comes to an end without having taught us anything.

The Shadow Lines

Through the novel *The Shadow Lines* Amitav Ghosh unfurls various notion as exhibited by the characters in different time span. Ghosh's unmitigated brilliance is ostentatiously manifested, as the Readers experiences different place and time throughout the novel. The —Sahitya Akademi award winner prudently erects his characters and farther experiments with them by placing them in an eccentric situation. The characters are well-defined and holds different notion of liberalism. The enthralling melodrama is portrayed in two parts Going Away and Coming Home. The protagonist Tridib is the narrator's uncle, and has a momentous impact on narrator's life. It is through Tridib's idiosyncratic, rational and detached eyes Anonymous narrator get the captivating picture of outside world and gradually Narrator was trained to contemplate through Tridib's vision; Evidently highlighting narrator's reliance on Tridib. The narrator was cocooned in the protective shell of his iconic figure Tridib.

Lack of Rootedness and Cultural Contradiction in Ila, later makes her pay the price as she was cheated by Nick Price. She shrugs off the past with her notion of freedom which was merely viable in her own Make Belief world. On the contrary, —Tha'mma belongs to the generation that uprooted themselves in 1947—. Ghosh has grandeurly maneuvered his juxtaposition of historical realism with the notion of freedom through the character of Tha'mma. Going back to the partition of Bengal, Ghosh showcases Tha'mma character as someone who was torn between her place of birth and her place of living. For Tha'mma freedom is something to be won through bloodshed and violence; Thus, lucidly manifesting her stereotype National Interest.

Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*



In *Jasmine* both physical and psychic violence reject the linear, logical and traditionally Western concepts of stable identity and control over destiny. Sati has also become a point of focus in theoretical discussions on the Oriental zing of Indian culture and undergoes “tangling” similar to other cultural artifacts. Both Said and Spivak cite sati as a major example of Western cultural misrecognition, namely for the English colonizers' tendency to forbid sati as it was seen as a barbaric act. Mukherjee, like Said and Spivak, asserts through *Jasmine* that sati can act as a vehicle for positive change for women, especially when it can be performed as an act of personal freedom or personal expression. Timothy Ruppel argues, “the narrative structure [of *Jasmine*] is that of a journey and passage, a liminal state, which places the third world inside the first world. In the

process, the narrator must continually remake herself to avoid the threat posed by enforced identity” (184).

The Desirable Daughters

In *The Desirable Daughters* Mukherjee skillfully moves the story back and forth between the dying society in India where Tara grew up and her American life with Rabi and Andy. When Tara decides to tell her stories, she writes about the Tree-Bride and the class of Calcutta girls born a century later. Bish does not understand. "What is the value of a passing moment?" he wonders. "What is the value of groups marked for extinction?" (92).

Bharati Mukherjee depicts a liquid society in her novels, ie a society in flux. It is a society of constant flow, the flow of migrants, the flow of machines, flow of criminals, flow of power structures, flow of people and commodities. Amidst all the confusions the message was brought out clearly and it is represented as a fascinating beautifully written work of art that exhibits vulnerability that cannot be missed out. Dimple's sense of her own identity (and marginality) frames all of her responses to her new environment, which consists generally of Indians, mostly Bengalis. That the ethnography of Indians, including "Americanized" Bengalis, constitutes —the experience of being abroad—is one of the many reversals of ideological positioning Mukherjee employs in *Wife*. When Jyoti and Amit discuss "guns and licenses" over dinner, Dimple "thought she had never really been friends with anyone before this, never stayed with someone for weeks and discussed important things like love and death. That's what America meant to her" (84-85).

Dimple's subservience reiterates a culture and ideology (both her own and American) that denies her the right to personal feelings and desires that serve her own interests, and which would allow her to forge her own identity. Brought up to defer to her father/husband's final authority to examine and judge her every emotion and behavior, she cannot serve as an agent of change on her own behalf, because she cannot comprehend any reason to justify her feelings. As an Indian woman, and held up as the symbol and repository of —virtue," it was her feminine duty to subjugate her feelings and desires to the will of her husband: —She wanted Amit to be infallible, intractable, godlike, but with boyish charm" (88-89).

Summation

Amitav Ghosh questions the arbitrariness of borders as well as debates the issue of loyalty to one's "true" identity, mainly through the characters of Hardayal and most prominently Arjun. Hardayal asks Arjun:

“Well, didn't you ever think: this country whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time—what is it? Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don't have a country—so where is this place whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time? And why was it that when we took our oath it wasn't to a country but to the King Emperor—to defend the Empire?(123)

As a masterpiece, this novel represents the recurrent themes that are found in almost all postcolonial novels—absurdity of wars, boundaries as ‘shadow lines’, colonization and its ill-effects, quest, dislocation, fragmentation or disintegration of identity, amalgamation, divided loyalties, the process of growing, exile, temporary settlements, etc. Looked at from the Subaltern perspective, this novel deals with the specific history of individuals, and thereby the collective histories of communities and nations in turmoil, rather than historiography generalizations.

Amitav Ghosh nevertheless succeeds in telling this forgotten history from below or from an alternative point of view. Such a novel as *The Glass Palace* can be categorized on the borderline territory between history and fiction. This novel deals with the history of losers and survivors, yet with the champions of humanity. It is a provisional world of constant meeting or gathering and separation.

Jasmine's narrative naturally places itself in the technological realm of hybridity as well as the role of cultural hybrid she adopts because of her resemblance to the cyborg way of adapting described in Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto". Haraway argues that women of color are to some extent cyborgs, more specifically what Audre Lorde describes in *Sister Outsider*. Sister Outsider within the United States, Haraway argues, is "a cyborg identity, a potent subjectivity synthesized from fusions of outsider identities" (2293). More specifically, as an Indian Jasmine is representative of her native country's reputation of having remarkable skills in technological fields that originally were associated with the West. Aneju points out that Jasmine's exile from India "marks the place where all immigrants struggle with antithetical forces and then come to terms with a third, hybrid way of

existence that allows them to move back and forth between two worlds with the least possible dissonance—” (Aneju 73).

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S. Varalakshmi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. Candidate

Kingston Engineering College

Vellore 632059

Tamilnadu

India

ramanivaralakshmi@yahoo.com

varalakshmi@kingston.ac.in