● VOL. 8, 2018 ● Print - ISSN : 2074-6628 ● Online - ISSN : 2790-2315

East West Journal of Humanities

East West Journal of Humanities is published by East West University Center for Research and Training (EWUCRT). Secretarial support for the journal is provided by the EWUCRT.

Annual subscription rate for 2018 (including surface mail postage):

One issue per year: US$10 or Tk. 500

For Subscription, contact:
Departmental Officer, EWUCRT
Plot No-A/2, Main Road, Jahurul Islam City
Aftabnagar, Dhaka 1212
Phone: 09666775577, Ext. 387
Emails: ewucrt@ewubd.edu, ewjh@ewubd.edu
Websites: www.ewubd.edu, www.ewubd.edu/crt-center-research-and-training

East West Journal of Humanities

VOL. 8, 2018
Print - ISSN : 2074-6628
Online - ISSN : 2790-2315

East West University Center for Research and Training
East West University

Plot No-A/2, Main Road, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Dhaka 1212
Phone: 09666775577, Ext. 387, Emails: ewucrt@ewubd.edu, ewjh@ewubd.edu
Website : www.ewubd.edu, www.ewubd.edu/crt-center-research-and-training

Editorial

East West University Center for Research and Training (EWUCRT) promotes and fosters research and publication by providing research grants, organizing workshops, seminars, symposiums, roundtable discussions, conferences and training. Furthermore, it publishes all the regular academic publications of East West University. I would like to acknowledge the contribution EWUCRT for its relentless support towards paving the way to achieve a sustainable research-oriented environment at East West University.

East West Journal of Humanities (EWJH), Volume 8, 2018 comprises ten articles from the fields of literature, linguistics and educational technology. The topics range from biotechnological exploitation in science fiction, ramifications of insurgencies on family lives, panoptical analysis of text, translator's role in addressing untranslatability in poetry, representation of Sex-workers' plight, exploration of human alter ego in Animals, perspectives of female sexuality, viewpoints of Notting Hill Carnival, Indigenous women's sovereignty, to blended learning and the future of higher education in Bangladesh.

Muhammed Shahriar Haque, Ph.D.

Editor
East West Journal of Humanities

CONTENTS

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

The Spectre of Globalized Biotechnological Exploitation in the Science Fiction of Muhammad Zafar Iqbal

Abhishek Sarkar
Jadavpur University

Abstract

This article discusses select science fiction texts by the Bangladeshi author Muhammad Zafar Iqbal with reference to a recurring theme, namely, the globalized exploitation of Third World bodies. This article discusses how these texts demonize technological modifications of the human body and suggest a core of "human" sentiments as the guiding force for combating such biotechnological intervention. This article focuses on a few texts where two key plot elements are, (i) artificially and illegally manipulated human bodies, and, (ii) the surveillance of the central characters by ruthless, technologically superior First World actors and their local collaborators. The texts analyzed in detail are "Dr. Triple A" (2000), *Prodigy* (2011), and *Animan* (2014). In these texts, Iqbal reposes faith in a human exceptionalism that is predicated upon emotions and morality. He thus steers clear of Western philosophical trends such as posthumanism or transhumanism. This is borne out by these texts' celebration of strong interpersonal attachments and selfless love, which help (morally and emotionally alert) underdogs engage with and ultimately defeat their self-centred, technologically advanced oppressors.

Keywords: Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, science fiction, multinational corporations, globalized milieu, biotechnological exploitation, third world victims, human emotions

The Bangladeshi author Muhammad Zafar Iqbal (1952-), who has been publishing science fiction in Bengali since 1976, enjoys a phase in his public career where acquaintance with his biographical profile precedes or coincides with his textual reception by the target audience. Apart from being the most distinguished and best-selling science fiction writer of Bangladesh and a successful practitioner of several other genres of fiction, Iqbal is widely admired as a professor of science and technology and an activist for the popularization of science and mathematics in his country. Besides, thanks to his memoirs and newspaper columns, Iqbal is widely known as the son of a martyred freedom fighter, a leading proponent of punishment for war crimes committed in the erstwhile East Pakistan and a staunch critic of religious fundamentalism in contemporary Bangladesh. As such, it is tempting to relate his science fiction corpus to his well-known social commitments, reading it in terms of an allegory or cautionary fable indexed to his concerns about the here and now. However, such an approach will have only a limited viability since Iqbal's science fiction texts do not form a transparent vehicle for political commentary or address all his public agenda at the same time.

The nearest Iqbal's science fiction comes to a direct critique of the present globalized world situation is through a representation of the asymmetry and violence in the relationship between developed nations and economically backward countries (such as Bangladesh). While Iqbal has a substantial body of around fifty science fiction titles, featuring varied themes, chronotopes and stylistic registers, my article will primarily deal with texts selected according to three criteria. First, these texts are set in the present (rather than a distant, imaginary future) and in a recognizably postcolonial or globalized milieu. Second, a key plot element of in these texts is the predatory technological misappropriation and alteration of Third World human bodies. In these texts such biotechnological intervention constitutes what Darko Suvin (1979) calls a *novum*. It may be defined as an imaginary phenomenon or situation in science fiction that serves to estrange the fictional setting from the reality known to the reader but at the same time that is based on scientific extrapolation and endorsed by cognitive logic (pp. 63-64).[1] The third criterion for the selection of texts for detailed discussion here would be that, these texts depict as another prominent plot element the surveillance and manipulation of the central characters by ruthless, technologically superior First World actors and their local collaborators.

One of the best examples of Iqbal's science fiction satisfying all these three stipulations would be the short story "Dr. Triple A," first published in 2000. The Third Person narrative follows one Abid Hasan, a US-trained manager of a software company as he seeks to buy a dog for his daughter and is led to a posh but secretive firm called "Pet World" newly set up in the Tongi area of Dhaka (Iqbal, 2000, p. 344). The Dr. Triple A of the title, the American multinational firm's managing director, explains his objective of breeding intelligent dogs through genetic

[1] Borrowing the term *novum* from Suvin, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. (1996) describes the second "beauty" or indispensable ingredient of science fiction as follows: "Novums (or nova, from the Latin for "new things") – imaginary inventions, discoveries, or applications that will have changed the course of history. (E.g., hyperdrive, time travel, faster-than-light travel, cloning, neural-interface computing, artificial consciousness, cyborgs.)" (p. 386).

engineering for the high-end First World market (Iqbal, 2000, pp. 347-48). The firm gives Abid Hasan's family a dog free of cost as a trial of its enhanced abilities (Iqbal, 2000, pp. 348-49). But Abid becomes suspicious of the firm's claims on observing the similarity of the dog's behaviour and intelligence to a human child's, and correctly guesses that this phenomenon is enabled by illegal brain transplant. When Abid challenges Dr. Triple A about his violation of animal and human rights, Abid is chased by the firm's hired goons and even shot at by them (Iqbal, 2000, pp. 357-58). On his way to the Ramna Police Station, he is abducted by two professional assassins armed with automatic weapons. In keeping with the international outreach of the corporation, the criminals deployed by them are from different countries. Abid guesses that one of the two goons abducting him is a Mexican and the other hails from the American south (Iqbal, 2000, pp. 359, 360). As a prisoner of Dr. Triple A, Abid gets to hear from him how his firm pretends to offer medical help to underprivileged pregnant women in Bangladesh and surreptitiously harvests the brains from their foetuses for commercial use. This is how he tries to make the most of the 3.5 billion US dollars invested in his project (Iqbal, 2000, p. 362). Dr. Triple A now seeks to extricate Abid's brain for grafting it on to a dog (Iqbal, 2000, p. 363), but Abid manages to turn the tables on him and replaces himself with Dr. Triple A as the donor for the transplant surgery. He also escapes the corporation's premises, stealing a briefcase that contains documents about Pet World's nefarious activities (Iqbal, 2000, pp. 365-67). The story ends on a note of poetic justice, as Abid discovers that Dr. Triple A's brain, together with his consciousness and memory, is now locked in the body of a Great Dane, whose mathematical skills make him a star attraction at a travelling circus (Iqbal, 2000, p. 368).

A later novel by Iqbal entitled *Animan*, published in 2014, uses the same theme and plot kernel. Whereas the story "Dr. Triple A" is set in Dhaka with indicators of a globalized milieu, the action of *Animan* takes place entirely in the US. The omniscient Third Person narrator follows two characters whose paths meet halfway through the novel. First, a young American innovator and self-confessed psychopath called Lydia who is hired by a multinational corporation called "Epsilon"; and second, Tisha Ahmed, the 13-year old daughter of an emigrant Bangladeshi family. After she miraculously survives an accident in a frozen lake and her pet dog dies trying to rescue her, Tisha's school gifts her a new pet, an "animan" (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 48, 53). The official description of the animan circulated in the media is that it is an animal with some human-like endearing traits, artificially produced in the laboratory through genetic engineering for marketing as a pet (Iqbal, 2014, p. 49). But the readers learn by following Lydia's narrative that the animan is Lydia's brainchild, produced by implanting cloned and genetically altered zygotes in the wombs of poor, unsuspecting women in the Third World under the guise of offering them free medical help (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 41, 58-59). In order to distinguish it from humans, the animan has been given large eyes, a pug nose, pointy ears and a cat-like fur-covered body. Besides, it is sex-less, unable to speak or weep, equipped with a weak memory and granted a lifespan of only ten years (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 41-43). The corporation marketing it clears all legal hurdles by bribing scientists, senators and congressmen and also manipulating the administration in Third World countries. When the demand for animen rises, Lydia plans to

increase their production by implanting as many as five zygotes in the womb of a Third World woman, thus pushing her to sure death but saving the cost of R&D and advanced laboratory equipment (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 59-60). After observing her pet animan named Mishka closely, Tisha begins to suspect that the animan is an unhappy creature. She makes a blog post to that effect, creating an upheaval and ruffling the feathers of Epsilon (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 67-69). As if this were not enough, Tisha, with the help of her hearing-impaired classmate John Witkamp, subsequently trains her pet animan Mishka to use sign language and makes a video post where it relates the traumatic upbringing it received at the hands of the corporation (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 94-96). Consequently, Tisha and her friend are chased and abducted by Lydia's men. They try to create a doctored video, showing Tisha and John to be drug addicts and anti-socials, before they would be killed off ostensibly through a self-administered drug overdose (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 105-6, 116-18). But they escape a sure death as the animen in the facility start an uprising led by Tisha's pet and subdue their oppressors (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 121-24). As in the story "Dr. Triple A," the bioengineering scam is stopped by the government, but the exposé is soon hushed up because of the corporation's enormous influence.

The same spectre of biotechnological exploitation of Third World bodies is revisited in the novel *Prodigy*. Here, a young journalist called Ishita with the help of Raafi, a young lecturer of computer science from a non-metropolitan university in Bangladesh, unearths and foils a conspiracy hatched by a multinational corporation called "Endeavour." Ishita discovers that the corporation has caused an epidemic in the T and T Colony of Dhaka by having an NGO spread a deadly virus called FT26 through vitamin tablets distributed among slum children (Iqbal, 2011, p. 71). Besides, the affected children have all been taken to the upscale headquarters of Endeavour in Tongi, never to return (Iqbal, 2011, pp. 65-66). When the mother of one such slum-dwelling boy raises a hue and cry, she is immediately killed off by the corporation (Iqbal, 2011, pp. 69-72). Her death is passed off as a suicide in the local newspapers and her missing son is labelled as a delinquent drug-addict (Iqbal, 2011, p. 72). Raafi takes the help of Sharmin, a poverty-stricken and dyslexic school drop-out who happens to be a mathematical genius, to hack the security of Endeavour and help Ishita enter their premises (Iqbal, 2011, pp. 95-99). It is revealed that Endeavour clandestinely makes implants on the brains of slum children and stimulates their brain cells as part of the experiments to make cutting-edge progress in neural computing, killing the children in the process (Iqbal, 2011, pp. 100-103).[2] Soon enough, Ishita gets caught and is imprisoned inside the premises

[2] Iqbal uses the theme of neural computing also in the short story "Neural Computer." It shows an upsacle commercial corporation, owned and managed by two people whose names suggest Bangladeshi nationality. This story omits reference to any USA connection, unlike the novel *Prodigy*. In the story, the corporation has surreptitiously cloned human children and developed in them advanced powers of cerebration through genetic engineering. These twelve children, all six years old, are otherwise hideously misshapen and devoid of normal human traits. What is more, they think and function together like a single machine. These children have been reared in captivity away from human society and their brains are stimulated with electrodes by their masters for superfast, cutting-edge computing. The story ends as the children imprison their two human masters and prepare to vivisect them. This story, like Iqbal's other texts featuring the *novum* of biotechnological intervention, emphasizes the susceptibility of technology to unethical and inhuman exploitation.

of Endeavour, while Raafi and Sharmin are also abducted and brought there (Iqbal, 2011, p. 126). The team of ruthless white scientists hired by the corporation seeks to exploit Sharmin's brain cells for their research (Iqbal, 2011, p. 135), and one of the scientists even plans to smuggle her brain cells at the rate of a billion dollars per gram (Iqbal, 2011, p. 136). But thanks to her superlative mathematical prowess, she manages to fight back the lethal volumes of high frequency magnetic signals applied to her brain by the scientists in the name of an experiment (Iqbal, 2011, pp. 145-46). What is more, she triggers an explosion, destroying their apparatus, setting off a conflagration and exposing their clandestine operations to the general public (Iqbal, 2011, pp. 146-47).

This novel, like the previous two texts, reveals a sordid nexus between multinational corporations, politicians, local law-enforcement, NGOs, the mass media and professional criminals, and indicates how technology can be used to perpetuate the prevailing economic divide between nations. These three texts re-inscribe a time-honoured trope of science fiction, i.e., the evil scientist, in the figure of a managerial technocrat who, however, forms only a dispensable cog in the resilient wheel of a vast corporate syndicate. These three texts are preoccupied with the social repercussions of technology, but they also show an affinity with the category of "Hard Science Fiction" in their reliance on tenets of the "hard" sciences (Biology, Physics and Chemistry) and their commitment to scientific plausibility.[3] It is this element of closeness to the target reader's familiar lifeworld that gives an extra edge to the unease introduced by these texts. Set in the present, these texts also bear a resemblance to two of the four subcategories of science fiction narratives itemized by Samuel Delany in his 1969 essay "About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Five Words." The categories in question are "things that might happen" or predictive futures and "things that have not happened yet" or cautionary dystopias (Delany, 2009, pp. 11-12).

Two other novels by Iqbal, *Project Nebula* (2001) and *Serina* (2015), may be considered as thematically related cases since they depict the exploitation of Bangladeshi people by First World scientists, although not in the context of a commercial syndicate. In *Project Nebula*, a group of white scientists led by an American called Fred Leicester direct aliens towards Bangladesh and hope to secure advanced technological knowhow from them by offering in exchange local human beings for their experiments (Iqbal, 2001, pp. 66-67). The American scientists, acting without government orders, also train nuclear missiles on Bangladesh so that they can destroy the entire country if their planned contact with the extragalactic aliens goes awry (Iqbal, 2001, p. 67). The aliens colonize a village and symbiotically co-opt the bodies of some local criminals to generate zombie-like hybrid human forms having luminescent red eyes, a swollen head with multiple tentacles, a metallic torso and an extendable arm (Iqbal, 2001, pp. 90-95). In the second novel, a mutant girl from rural Bangladesh, who can breathe

[3] For a helpful and succinct account of "Hard Science Fiction," see Roberts, 2006, pp. 15-19. Notably, the popular Bengali science fiction texts by Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) featuring the scientist Professor Shanku as the protagonist most often do not offer scientific explanation for the wonderful inventions and phenomena they showcase or care for their plausibility in terms of the "hard sciences."

through her skin and stay underwater indefinitely, is ruthlessly chased by a First World intelligence network. It forces her to separate from her foster father and morph into a hideous marine organism. In addition, the menace of surveillance and violent intervention by First World actors is visited by two other novels, both written for a much younger readership, *Tukunjil* (1993) and *Tituni ebong Tituni* (2016). In these texts an extragalactic alien through its interaction with a Bangladeshi child acquires capacities for friendship, empathy and solicitude and helps its human friends tide over minor adversities in their daily lives. These sentiments of fellow-feeling and selfless benevolence are lost on the cruel white scientists and their Third World associates who relentlessly chase and terrorize the child for gaining access to the alien and seek to vivisect it for their research.[4]

Going by these examples, one might be induced to speculate that Muhamad Zafar Iqbal's experience as a Third World intellectual who had a research career in the US underlies his distrust of multinational corporations as shown in his texts.[5] The motif of the stolen and manipulated Third World bodies may be possibly seen as an allegory of brain-drain or even cybernetic outsourcing. Incidentally, almost all of these examples date from after Iqbal's return to his motherland, while *Tukunjil* was published towards the fag end of his research career in the USA. As opposed to these, his science fiction produced during the 1980s is predominated by the Asimovian themes of space travel and artificial intelligence in futuristic societies. But it is notable that Iqbal's brushes with religious fundamentalists, which form an important part of his subsequent public career, have never been (at least as directly and unambiguously) registered in his science fiction. In the novel *Prodigy*, there is a passing instance of a university lecturer from a minority community being verbally abused by a couple of goons in the name of religion and threatened to leave Bangladesh (Iqbal, 2011, p. 63), but this issue is not of central concern to the novel.

---

[4] The phenomenon of globalized exploitation of Third World people is mentioned, but not fully elaborated upon, in Iqbal's novel *Icarus*. Towards the beginning, the novel shows a devious scientist called Dr. Kader who runs a clandestine medical outfit in a remote island of Bangladesh, where he has conducted inhuman experiments on 300-350 impoverished women brought from the streets. His research kills more than half of them and renders the rest insane. Dr. Kader, as is revealed during his cross-examination by a Bangladeshi military officer, implanted in the wombs of these defenceless women artificially engineered embryos that combined genes of human beings with those of animals, birds or reptiles (Iqbal, 2009, pp. 33-34). These experiments lead to the birth of the titular character of the novel, a human child with wings and capable of flying like a bird. Dr. Kader reports that his project is financed by an American genetic engineering corporation (Iqbal, 2009, p. 33). Later on, it transpires that the physician Dr. Salim is in talks with an undisclosed foreigner about dissecting the human-bird and selling its tissue samples abroad (Iqbal, 2009, pp. 56, 59). Dr. Salim makes an effort a few years later to capture Bulbul, the bird-child, but fails. Bulbul as an adolescent is then chased by Dr. Ashraf, a Bangladeshi ornithologist, and his students (Iqbal, 2009, pp. 129-42). There is otherwise no mention of First World actors trying to exploit Third World nationals in this novel.

[5] Iqbal earned his Ph. D. in Nuclear Physics from the University of Washington and was subsequently associated with California Institute of Technology and Bell Communications Research before returning to Bangladesh in 1994 and joining the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet.

In his memoirs *Rangin Chashma* Iqbal states that as a student of Dhaka University he had dramatized and staged the Soviet author Anatoly Dneprov's story "The Maxwell Equations," projecting all the evil characters of the play as members of the Pakistani army (Iqbal, 2007, p. 42). But he is never so frank in his science fiction about the condemnation of military aggression or totalitarianism that he witnessed at close quarters in his formative years. His harrowing experience of East Pakistan may be glimpsed obliquely, if at all, in repressive regimes and predatory communities of his futuristic tales such as *Tratuler Jagat* (2002), *Ruhan Ruhan* (2006) and *Ritin* (2017). It cannot, however, be inferred that Iqbal revisits the theme of the globalized biotechnological exploitation of Third World people *only* because of his background as a Third World intellectual who has had a research career in the First World. It may be recalled that Iqbal's elder brother, Humayun Ahmed (1948-2012), who started his career as a university lecturer and took a Ph. D. in Polymer Chemistry from the North Dakota State University, hardly ever deals with the theme of globalized exploitation of Third World people in his science fiction. Rather, Humayun Ahmed is inclined towards futuristic societies and travellers from different galaxies, times and dimensions, often recalling the New Wave science fiction author J.G. Ballard (1930-2009) through his bleak, morbid vision.[6]

Iqbal in his memoirs or prefatory remarks does not show any keenness about Western science fiction authors or acknowledge their influence. But if we read his texts in the light of critical insights that have emerged in reaction to Western science fiction, Iqbal's corpus appears to be sceptical about technology and unwilling to problematize the essentialist category of "human." The texts by Iqbal under review are philosophically consistent with his futuristic tales such as *Tratuler Jagat* and *Ritin* in that they demonize technological modifications of the human body and show them to be means of exploitation. Even voluntary and purportedly ameliorative

[6] One may attempt here a quick survey of the themes encompassed by Humayun Ahmed's science fiction oeuvre. Among the texts included in volume 1 of Humayun Ahmed's *Science Fiction Samagra*, *Tomader Janya Bhalobasha* deals with a confrontation between inhabitants of the three-dimensional world and those of a four-dimensional world; *Tara Tin Jan* features extragalactic visitors; *Anya Bhuban* revolves around a mysterious girl who is revealed to be a hybrid between a human being and an alien plant and has the capacity for telepathy and thought-reading; *Irina* deals with the prospect of human immortality set in a post-apocalyptic dystopia; *Ananta Nakshatrabeethi* includes the themes of space travel and time warp; while *Kuhak* centres around an accidentally induced ability of thought-reading. Considering the texts included in volume 2 of Humayun Ahmed's *Science Fiction Samagra*, *Fiha Samikaran* deals with mind control, time travel and genetic enhancement in a futuristic society, *Shunya* features an alien from the world of zero; *Ni* involves some mysterious beings who create dreams; *Tahara* deals with telepathy and mind control; *Paresher 'Hailda' Bori* features a common man's mysterious knowledge of the future; *Ayna* revolves around a girl living inside a mirror; *Newtoner Bhul Sutra* shows a man obsessed with Newton's Laws and mysteriously managing to defy gravity; *Jantra* deals with the immortality of man and mechanization of human life in a futuristic society; while *Nimadhyama* features human-alien interface and accidental intergalactic travel of a common man from contemporary Bangladesh. Among the texts anthologized in volume 3 of Humayun Ahmed's *Science Fiction Samagra*, *Omega Point* shows a human-alien contact; *Ima* deals with space travel and artificial intelligence; *Dwitiya Manab* revolves around the concept of human mutation; *Anhak* features inter-galactic travel; *Jadukar* shows a benevolent extraterrestrial alien; *Kudduser Ekdin* deals with inter-dimensional travel and time travel; whereas *Samparka* features a traveller from an all-woman Earth of the future. Apart from these, the novel *Manabi* addresses the themes of artificial intelligence, alien interface and epidemic in a highly mechanized human society of the future.

cyborgian modifications of the body are shown to be fraught with dystopic possibilities in the novel *Jara Biobot* (1993). This novel shows a race of humans who have through generations voluntarily diminished their natural anatomy and integrated it with machines to enhance their abilities and transcend biological limitations. However, this race of *biobots* or biological robots have turned into an intolerant, power-hungry force who try to exterminate the human minority still opposing their policy of compulsory human-machine hybridity (Iqbal, 1994, pp. 561-63). At the finale of the novel, the biobot leader Claudian is incapacitated from fighting when a human girl sings a doleful song and stimulates its suppressed emotions, which serves to rupture the integration of its minuscule organic body with the technological enhancements (Iqbal, 1994, p. 587).

As is evident from these examples, Iqbal's science fiction does not concur with transhumanist theorists such as N. Katherine Hayles (1999) and Asher Seidel (2008) who believe in the technological perfectibility of human beings and regard an indistinguishable human-machine hybrid to be their only desirable *telos*.[7] At the same time, Iqbal's science fiction is not congruent with the critical posthumanism of theorists such as Cary Wolfe (2010) and Rosi Braidotti (2013) since Iqbal through his texts does not seem to interrogate the distinctions between humans, non-human life forms and machines, or see them as belonging to a continuum.[8] More importantly, Iqbal's science fiction is opposed to critical posthumanism since it emphatically believes in the uniqueness of humans as a species and identifies an irreducible core of humanity. Iqbal's science fiction, in fact, consistently and jubilantly reposes faith in a human exceptionalism that is premised on emotions and morality. In Iqbal's science fiction, what in Western critical parlance is called "liberal humanism" becomes, in fact, "sentimental humanism." This propensity is amply borne out by the texts' valorization of strong emotional bonds and selfless commitments, which often teeters on the verge of lachrymose melodrama. For example, in *Project Nebula* the colonizing aliens are convinced of human courage and unselfishness and made to leave the Earth when a village woman named Rahela braves all the physical persecution caused by them to rescue her abducted son, her tribulations being described over more than three pages (Iqbal, 2001, pp. 109-12). The novel *Prodigy* closes as Ishita, after escaping the clutches of Endeavour, elicits from Raafi the promise that he will hold her close to him for the rest of their lives and she wipes cautiously with the back of her hand the tears of joy accumulating at the corner of her eye (Iqbal, 2011, p. 151). Similarly, in *Animan* Tisha's attachment to her pet makes her defy a powerful multinational corporation and risk

7 Seidel (2008), for example, argues in favour of a post-human existence characterized by "enhanced longevity, parallel consciousness, cognitively enhanced visual perception, sexlessness, and social isolation," which will side-step current moral contingencies and make everyone "somewhat like what Plato had in mind for his Republic's philosophers, when left on their own on completion of their service" (p. 119).

8 Rosi Braidotti (2013), who styles her strand of posthumanist theory as "critical posthumanism," advocates "an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others, by removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism" (pp. 49-50). This reconstitution of human ontology is directed against "Eurocentrism, masculinism and anthropocentrism" and seeks to place the [non-unitary] subject "in the flow of relations with multiple others" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 50).

her life. The novel ends with a tear-jerking description of the pet's death and Tisha's sorrow for it (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 127-28). The novel *Serina* ends with two chapters detailing the emotional afflictions of Serina and her foster father as they are perpetually separated from each other (Iqbal, 2015, pp. 120-25). In this unusually bleak story for Iqbal's corpus, Serina's continuing humanity after her aquatic metamorphosis is substantiated by her love for her foster father.

Apart from this, Iqbal's emphasis on affect as a basis of humanity is evidenced by his occasional investment in budding heterosexual love between fellow-victims and fellow-warriors. This can be seen between the scientist Riyaz and the journalist Nishita in *Project Nebula*, between the university lecturer Raafi and the journalist Ishita in *Prodigy* and between the teenage students Tisha and John in *Animan*. Moreover, some of these texts take a guarded stance against an unqualified demonization of white people and the First World. For example, towards the end of *Animan*, Tisha announces to a vanquished Lydia that her own motherland Bangladesh is a beautiful country since it does not have monsters like Lydia, and at the same time, the USA is also a beautiful country since it has such noble people as her friend John Witkamp (Iqbal, 2014, p. 124). Besides, the eponymous Dr. Triple A of the short story is in fact a Bangladeshi national originally named Asif Ahmed Azhar (Iqbal, 2002, p. 346), whose clandestine expertise and amoral intentions have been harnessed by an American corporation. The Third World agents and associates of the multinational corporations in these texts reveal the ubiquity of amoral greed.

Against such devious syndicates and their evil networks, these texts regularly pit a small alliance of disadvantaged but determined individuals. For instance, in "Dr. Triple A" Abid Hasan manages to defeat his captor and escape sure death with the help of his pet, a human-dog named Tweety, minutes before it dies (Iqbal, 2002, pp. 364-65). Similarly, in *Animan* the murderous conspiracy of a powerful multinational corporation is defeated by two teenagers assisted by hundreds of animen or genetically modified human children (Iqbal, 2014, pp. 121-25). Further, in *Project Nebula* the two-pronged aggression of aliens and a group of white mercenaries is combated by the journalist Ishita, the young scientist Riyaz and Captain Mahruf, a Bangladeshi army officer acting against his seniors. In *Serina*, a highly skilled white commando is scared away by a mob of schoolgirls wielding sticks and brickbats, one of them even managing to break his nose with a projectile (Iqbal, 2015, pp. 90-91, 98-99). The coalition against the multinational syndicate takes a more spectacular form in the novel *Prodigy* since it includes the eponymous mathematical genius, the university lecturer Raafi, the journalist Ishita, together with Raafi's colleagues, a firefighter who writes mushy, third-rate patriotic poetry under the pen-name *Maju Bangali* and also a shady, money-grubbing student politician at Raafi's university who goes by the name of *Bhotka Hannan*.

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. (1996) recognizes the final of the seven indispensable ingredients of science fiction enumerated by him to be the "parable." This is his name for the intrinsic moral tale that operates through the scientific content and historical extrapolation but that does not

originate in or base itself upon science and technology (p. 386).[9] In Iqbal's science fiction texts under review, this "parable" is in fact enacted through the motif of solidarity between morally and emotionally alert underdogs and their eventual triumph over technologically advanced oppressors. Iqbal's choice of problems and their solutions in his science fiction is therefore likely to appear as simplistic to the more discerning reader. It may also be pointed out that Iqbal's science fiction seems to take the empiricist-materialist-positivist model of Western science to be sacrosanct, does not problematize the categories of "truth" and "reality," and does not speculate about alternative paths to (or forms of) knowledge and consciousness. Besides, Iqbal hardly admits of metaphysical or even psychological puzzles in his science fiction. This may, in fact, account for the phenomenal popularity of his science fiction among the Bengali readers. The texts under review acknowledge in an extrapolatory fashion some of the threats inherent in the politico-economic inequality of the present world system, and in view of the menace they stage the solutions are likely to appear as make-believe and unduly propitious. Conversely, it is also possible to argue that science fiction in Iqbal's treatment conspicuously privileges the inset moral fable, even to the point of being subsumed by it. Iqbal's brand of sentimental humanism refuses to accord finality to the spectre of human corruptibility, greed and malevolence. It reposes confidence in the resilience of human goodwill. The simplification of moral challenges that Iqbal's science fiction may be accused of actually emanates from and reinforces this robust and confident humanism.

References

Ahmed, H. (2005). *Science Fiction Samagra*.Vol. 2. Dhaka: Aithijhya.

Ahmed, H. (2005). *Science Fiction Samagra*.Vol. 3. Dhaka: Aithijhya.

Ahmed, H. (2009). *Manabi*. Dhaka: Anyaprakash.

Ahmed, H. (n.d.). *Science Fiction Samagra*.Vol. 1. Dhaka: Anwesha Prakashan.

Braidotti, R. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., I. (1996). The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction.*Science Fiction Studies23*(3), 385-88.

Delany, S. R. (2009). "About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Five Words." In *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction* (pp. 1-15). Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Hayles, N. K. (1999). *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

9 According to Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. (1996), "whatever the scientific content and historical extrapolation of an sf tale, it is constructed in the form of literary parable. The science and technology are vehicles for moral tales; the morals may have a lot to do with science and technology, but they do not come out of science and technology" (p. 386). The unmistakable presence of a moral message is one of the enduring features of Muhammad Zafar Iqbal's science fiction.

Iqbal, M. Z. (1994). *Jara Biobot*. In *Science Fiction Samagra*. Vol. 1 (pp. 535-87). Dhaka: Pratik Prakashana.

Iqbal, M. Z. (1994). *Tukunjil*.In *Science Fiction Samagra*. Vol. 1 (pp. 449-532). Dhaka: Pratik Prakashana.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2001). *Project Nebula*. Dhaka: Gyankosh Prakashani.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2002). "Dr. Triple A." In *Science Fiction Samagra*. Vol. 3 (pp. 341-68). Dhaka: Pratik Prakashana.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2002). *Tratuler Jagat*. Dhaka: Samay Prakashan.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2005). "Neural Computer." In *Science Fiction Samagra*. Vol. 4 (pp. 99-107). Dhaka: Pratik Prakashana.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2006). *Ruhan Ruhan*. Dhaka: Samay Prakashan.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2007). *Rangin Chashma*. Dhaka: Pratik.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2009). *Icarus*. Dhaka: Samay Prakashan.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2011). *Prodigy*. Dhaka: Prathama.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2014). *Animan.*Dhaka: Samay Prakashan.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2015). *Serina*. Dhaka: Samay Prakashan.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2016) *Tituni ebong Tituni.*Dhaka: Kakali Prakashani.

Iqbal, M. Z. (2017) *Ritin*. Dhaka: Tamralipi Prakashani.

Roberts, A. (2006). *The History of Science Fiction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Seidel, A. (2008). *Inhuman Thoughts: Philosophical Explorations of Posthumanity*. New York: Lexington Books.

Suvin, D. (1979). *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*: *On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press.

Wolfe, Cary. (2010). *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

The Ramifications of Insurgencies on Family Lives—A Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

Nasih Ul Wadud Alam
Chittagong Independent University

Abstract

In this paper titled "The Ramifications of Insurgencies on Family Lives—A Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland", this researcher has attempted to analyze the novel's fictional characters from Marx's views on "capitalism"; Beauvoir's analyses on men's domineering relationship on women: their struggles in society; Said's concept on "Intellectual Exile"; Gramsci's note on "Hegemony"; Althusser's discussion on "Ideology"; Heng's argument on "Third-World Feminism" and Chomsky's View on "Anarchy". In light of these theoretical frameworks, the researcher has tried to prove how insurgents or separatists' groups, buoyed by their revolutionary zeal, get involved in nefarious activities; for which, many of them like Udayan as depicted in The Lowland, face execution at the hands of law-enforcing agencies. Udayan's death crumbles his family members. This paper aims to show the ramifications of insurgencies on Gauri's life, Subhas' life and Bela's life.

Keywords: Hegemony, anarchy, execution, ramifications

In her interview with Cressida Leyshon (October 18, 2013), Jhumpa Lahiri says that family is her main focus when it comes to writing a novel in which she tries to understand the concept of family and what it pertains. Lahiri (quoted in Leyshon 2013) says, "I often think the novel is, among other things, very much about what a family is, and what a family means".

In *The Lowland*, Jhumpa Lahiri (2013) emphasizes the concept of family, its disintegration and regeneration in the context of the Naxalbari Movement. She shows how one brother's involvement in insurgency puts a negative impact on the family lives of Subhas (Udayan's younger brother and his wife's future husband), Gauri (Udayan's wife and Subhas' sister-in-law before his death but his divorced wife later on) and Bela (daughter of Udayan born after his death; raised mostly by Subhash but initially by Gauri). Lahiri collected the plot of this novel from an anecdote of two naxalite brothers. They got killed at the hands of law-enforcing agencies in front of their own relatives. Of that incident, Lahiri (quoted in Lynn Neary) expostulates that the scene of those two brothers' deaths continued to horrify and motivate her to complete writing *The Lowland.*

As has been depicted in *The Lowland* (2013), the peasants in Darjeeling were angered by the continuous domination of capitalist landlords. Kanu Sanyal, the leading Marxist politician of that period, rallied the Naxalbari peasants to stage remonstrations against the suppressive stakeholders for more autonomy and equal land redistributions among all. The government's violent action led to the outbreak of massive protests in many parts of India. The Naxalbari Movement became a source of inspiration for many youths of that era. The Communist Party of India, Marxist -Leninist, CPI (ML) was officially formed in 1969. The members proclaimed themselves as Naxalities whose sole concern was to free the country from capitalists. During the ongoing protests, one police was killed. Following that day in May, police ordered the rebels to return home. The protestors did not obey. Then, police took the matter into their own hands. (Lahiri, 20-1) They killed eleven people including eight women. In *The Lowland*, Lahiri portrays Udayan to be revolutionary. He was living with the utopia of ending Indira Gandhi's tyrannical reign. His binary was Subhas, a Research Fellow (PhD) from the United States of America, a land. In the novel, Subhas believed in living with the status quo. He found comfort in the capitalistic mode of production.

Marx (Ryan & Rivkin, 2004: 656) in "The German Ideology" opines that the capitalistic mode of production creates a gulf between the haves and have-nots. For Marx, the rise of privatization reduces the workers' opportunity to express their voice; as a result of which, the bourgeois society continues to expand its unchartered territories at the cost of marginalized peoples' shrinking space. Therefore, Marx (656) argues that the 'haves' have a wide-range of networks that establishes their own ideologies. They compel the 'have-nots' to follow their ideologies. And, this relationship is one of subjugation.

Udayan absorbed the spirit of ending not only the juggernaut of autocratic socio-political structures but also forming a class based on equanimity. In "Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (John Storey, 1998: 191) show how the network of capitalism grips leading intellectuals or "producers of ideas" with "ruling ideas of the epoch". According to David Macey (2000: 31), "The classic Marxist theory of IDEOLOGY holds that there is a relationship of determination between an economic base (the forces and relations of production) and a superstructure made up of the state, and legal, political and ideological

forms." Althusser in "From Infrastructure and superstructure", compares base to an edifice and superstructure to "two floors" metaphorically and topographically. According to him, every base is as important as superstructure. The relationship between structure (base, my emphasis) and financial structure (my emphasis) can be autonomous and interdependent. For a social revolution, superstructure is the last determiner for abolishing the current base and creating a new form of superstructure. In his summary of "Marxist Theory of the State", Althusser (Vincent B. Leitch, 2001: 1488) says,

> …the proletariat must seize state power in order to destroy the existing bourgeois state apparatus and , in a first phase, replace it with a different, proletarian, State apparatus, then in later phases set in motion a radical process, that of the destruction of the state (the end of State power, the end of every state apparatuses.

Udayan echoed Althusser's ideology of creating a proletariat base for a better superstructure that has parity in actions and thoughts. Whereas, Subhas, endowed with capitalist society's fixed sets of beliefs, continued to show his conformist attitude towards the oppressive regime. Althusser (Vincent B. Leitch, 2001: 1487) identifies "the State as a force of repressive execution and intervention in the interests of the ruling class". He further comments that the state always attempts to keep the ruling class happy. A state attempts to establish its position by supporting the bourgeoisie ideology. Udayan believed that there is a reciprocal relationship between the government and its bourgeoisie class. The state ensures that the bourgeoisie society would avail maximum opportunities in trade and commerce, which, Udayan, in the society he lives in, had. And, the ruling class also tries to provide enough opportunities with sustenance that comes from its material mode of production. Both of these agencies, in a capitalistic society, function their activities in their frequent struggles for power which Udayan did not want to be a part of. Udayan showed his resistance to state ideologies. He continued to show his rebellious nature against the authoritarian state. His complicit intellectual brother Subhas warned Udayan to shun that part of his nature off. Udayan continued to dream of bringing equality against all odds.

The Indian capitalistic society, built upon the strong networks of ruling ideas, contained and constrained Udayan's freedom of movement. Subhas' tryst with the bourgeois ideology helped him settle down easily; whereas Udayan's constant run in with the law put him in constant limbo. Udayan was branded a rebel. His space to move around and find a larger platform to impart his ideas and disseminate his party's information among general people was limited. Leading a peripatetic life, he was always on the run. However, Subhash enjoyed having more space the bourgeois society had stipulated for him. Gramsci (John Storey, 1998*:* 210) notes that the more powerful group has its functionaries which come in the form of intellectuals, who, through social, cultural and political networking systems, continue to show others their ways. Subhas was one of that kind. He did not believe in raising his voice against any kind of oppression. He was more concerned about his individual safety and security.

The Lowland, partly an epistolary novel, has one letter exchanged between Udayan and Subhas; the former, being a Marxist, admonished the latter for showing ignorance towards the plights of the downtrodden people. The Guardian's Jason Burke (28 May 2010) comments on Maoists' struggle against state-sponsored agencies which the noted writer Arundhoti Roy also supports. Roy (31 August 2018) claims that private companies encroach upon farmers' lands for establishing new industries. Many of these landless farmers, seeing no other way to end their financial problems, commit suicides. Although she supports the idea of the communist parties' continual to struggle for workers' rights, yet the lynching, mob violence and massive murders that come with them are denounced by her. Thus, she has been urging the states to treat landless farmers' rights delicately and as sensibly as possible. Roy criticizes the states for their use of arms for disbanding mob congregation,

The poststructuralist Udayan, with the help of his educated wife Gauri, got inspired by his party leaders' political ideologies to kill a police official. Gauri, though not actively involved in the party activities, helped him with information about the policeman's whereabouts. The Naxalite Movement inspires not only the male participants, but it gives many women the chance to vent their furies at the oppressive Indian government. They have their freedom of expression and own space to maneuver around, but only in a limited capacity. Like Gauri, many of them assist their male counterparts in disseminating information while working as double-agents for the states and the rebels. Geraldine Heng (Ryan & Rivkin, 2004: 873) in her seminal article, "A Great Way to Fly": Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism"', argues that the guerilla warfare or any nationalist movements do not appreciate female participants' activities in mass movements. They restrict women from taking active decisions. Many of them are allowed to devoice but only under patriarchal observations and monitoring systems. Heng opines that women should speak for themselves; they should have their own associations to show their oppositions. Wanting equality under the patriarchal gaze will not give them enough room for improving their rights. For Heng (873), "in Third-World states, ultimately, all feminisms are at risk; all must write their own scripts and plot their continuing survival from moment to moment". She opines that revolutionary men downplay women's contribution. They make women subservient to their wills and desires. There is a class division in these groups where women from affluent classes receive more perks than females coming from less- privileged families. Moreover, the female participants leave the party fearing for their own safety. State oppresses them and party insiders do so. Women like Rebeccas (BBB report, 20 November 13) join the rebellion for staging remonstrations against state agencies but they do not stay there much longer. Disillusioned, they accept the government amnesty that is on offer.

Lahiri also shows the inefficiency of the Indian police when it failed to detect Gauri as a possible accomplice in the murder of their colleague. Police questioned her a few times but they failed to find her to be guilty even though she had some evidences of wrongdoings that police failed to detect. Udayan's death made Gauri an exile in her own land. To make matters worse for her, she was also expecting a child. Subhash thought he had rescued his sister-in- law Gauri's fate

by marrying her. Gauri and Udayan had mutual attractions for each other. But her relationship with Subhash was one of responsibility devoid of passion and mental attachment. Said will be helpful here for understanding Gauri's situation. He (Stein, 2013:123) says, "Finally, as any real exile will confirm, once you leave your home, you cannot simply take up life wherever you end up and become just another citizen of the new place". Having an unsettled mind, Gauri left her private space to nurture her talent in the public domain. Beauvoir thinks that women have not done enough to resist patriarchal domination. She laments that men have more opportunities for grooming themselves up for creating a better career pathway. In *The Lowland*, Subhas, already a PhD, was attaining a postdoc 50 miles away from his family members. On the other hand, Gauri's rigorous study hours required to complete her PhD had added more pressure on her. She found it arduously difficult to maintain a balance between home and work. Gauri could assuage the pain of losing her ex-husband when she indulged herself in her studies. By going through the process of sublimation, she could at least mitigate her pangs of frustration. But the constant sight of Bela carrying Udayan's blood brought her back into her side of the past that would disrupt her in the following years. It took her a lot of time to come to terms with the loss of her ex-husband. Said (123) says,

> You can spend a lot of time regretting what you lost, envying those around you who have always been at home, near their loved ones, living in the place where they were born without ever having to experience not only the loss of what was once theirs but above all the torturing memory of a life to which they can never return.

Gauri had decided to leave her husband and daughter to become a better scholar. When she lived in India, she had a revolutionary spirit but her family tragedy transformed her into complicity. In America, she tried to make the American capitalistic society happier. She wanted to establish her position by keeping the capitalistic network content. By doing so, she lost her revolutionary zeal and ironically became more unsettled in her American life. Said (2013:117) analyzes that exiles yearn to find their home in a foreign land but the idea of home remains an illusion for them. Their yearning for home never comes to fruition. After a prolong thought, Gauri went on her separate ways with Bela and Subhash. She found a job as a college teacher in another state. She failed to find the image of Udayan in others. Her relationship with a fellow female student doing a PhD on naxalites turned out to be a sour one. Gauri was searching for her sexual identity. After making love with her female student, she felt that she was neither a frigid nor a lesbian.

Subhash, despite being an open-minded person, could not accept Gauri's departure with calmness. Beauvoir feels that a liberal man, despite being empathetic towards women, may not understand a woman's pain. In "Biological Data" Beauvoir (2011: 32) compares mother to a male mosquito which at times dies after the process of "Fertilization". Similarly, a woman, literally or metaphorically, "dies as soon as the next generation's future has been assured". Gauri did not want to face a metaphorical death when she became a mother. She found her recluse in her profession. As a result, she put more focus on her professional career growth, not household chores.

In "Women and the Proletariat" Babel (quoted in Beauvoir, 2011: 65) calls women and proletariat as "oppressed". Both of them, according to Beauvoir and Babel, need to battle hard against economic dependency for establishing their rights. However, Beauvoir criticizes Engle for not putting emphasis on women's condition. It is not also clear, Beauvoir argues, whether women become more of victims because of the establishment of private companies. If men and women only work as workers, without thinking of reproduction, then society will stagnate itself. By leaving her family members, Gauri did not emphasize family reproduction; instead, she got busy in her scholarly pursuit. Beauvoir also emphasizes the need to allow more women to work and have flexible options for helping them find a balancing act between home and work. Beauvoir thinks that women's domestic errands are labourious and they do not contribute a significant lot to the overall economic mode of production. Beauvoir (2011:75) rightly says that women's domesticity produces "nothing new" but we should not underestimate the significance of domestic labour. What we should highlight is the men's lack of activities in running household errands. As a result of men's apparent languishing attitude towards household chores, women have to work more at home. It makes their life tougher to maintain a balance between home and job. They do not have enough space and energy left for working equally.

Beauvoir also notes that society shows more attention to the one who murders, not to the one who gives birth. She calls the exclusion of woman in "warrior expeditions" as "the worst curse on woman". Beauvoir urges women to continue fighting for their existence not as women but as human beings for establishing their position. She wants them to fight for equal roles without gendered specificity. Beauvoir also shows the differences between male students and female students who have less time for study because they have to give into social pressure of living an organized life. Beauvoir does not think that women have less talent to shine. She fails to understand why women give up their passionate interests after getting married or becoming a mother. That is why; she encourages women to earn money on their own. She wants them to have more say in the decision-making process. Beauvoir also thinks that women choose to get married for a better security system. Meagre salaries also prompt many of them to get married for a better financial package. In many cases, she becomes (quoted in Beauvoir 2011: 75) "an object to be purchased". Just to make her husband happy, women give dowry, sacrifice their desire and busy themselves in making others happier. Beauvoir criticizes women for putting too much importance on their household chores. She opines that many women consider doing household chores as a part of their godliness. Women sacrifice their interests for the welfare of their family members. Then comes a time when the married mother becomes more frustrated after she finds her family's male members blossoming in their field at the cost of her sacrifice. She plays a peripheral role in assisting her breadwinning husband who continues to enjoy all the privileges at the expense of his (Beauvoir 2011: 484) "subjugated, secondary, parasitic' wife". Beauvoir (Beauvoir 2011:658) argues that women performs the best when "the future is open to her", and "she no longer hangs on to the past when women are concretely called to action, when they identify with the designed aims, they are as strong as brave as men"). In *The Lowland*, Gauri was one such woman who showed her rebellious nature by ignoring her family

responsibilities. She thought about making a bigger contribution towards society. She tried her best to create a professional identity regardless of age, race and gender.

Gauri had to sacrifice her personal life to become professionally successful. Subhash did not have to make the same sacrifice. The patriarchal society assigns too many responsibilities on women. It does not give women enough scope to shine. Satirically, Lahiri shows how the patriarchal society is going to heap praise on Subhash for marrying the widowed Gauri and giving her a life in America.

In *The Lowland*, Gauri's departure gave Bela the space to establish her position in society. When Gauri met Bela for handing her the signed divorce papers, Bela had not received her long lost mother gleefully and cordially. Bela did not mince her words. She continued to berate Gauri for leaving her and her adoptive father Subhas behind. Gauri became a social pariah, an outsider. Being alone, she was not able to give a suitable reply to her daughter. George Elliot's Eppie and Jhumpa Lahiri's Bela were territorial in nature. They did not allow outsiders like Godfrey, Nancy and Gauri to encroach upon their territories. They defended their positions against more affluent members of society. By secluding Gauri from the mainstream society, Lahiri, in the novel, devoices Bela and gives her more time and space to establish her position amist her family members. The settlement of Bela made Gauri more unsettled. Of Gauri, Lahiri says in one of her interviews, "She's in love with her revolutionary husband. She watches him shot in cold blood. She discovers after the fact that she is carrying his child. How does one move on from that?" Lahiri opines that patriarchal society will blame Gauri for her desertion. She has empathy for her. That is why, Lahiri covertly requests her readers to analyze Gauri from a different angle. Definitely, she is neither an angel nor a devil in the house. Gauri is, like each of us, is a flawed creature made of flesh and blood. She is just a victim of circumstances that were out of her control.

Emma Goldman (1910) argues that anarchism brings out positive results in society. She criticizes others for calling it "violent" and "impractical". Instead, she believes that anarchists oppose to all forms of violence. They protest against the use of governmental ideological interpellation and manipulation that restrict human beings from professing their free wills. Goldman in the same article, says,

> Anarchism therefore stands for direct action, the open defiance of, and resistance to, all laws and restrictions, economic, social, and moral. But defiance and resistance are illegal. Therein lies the salvation of man. Everything illegal necessitates integrity, self-reliance, and courage.

Therefore, Goldman proposes the same Marxist belief that people will dismantle the existing disorder in the lethargic system for bringing socio-political, cultural and financial sovereignty. Gauri, untill she lost Udayan in a skirmish, preserved the same belief of Goldman. His murder put a dent on her belief of ending social disparity. Her latter life was overshadowed by the capitalistic belief system that she had received from America. Gauri and Subhash

became willingly unwilling subjects of state ideologies. They believed in the order of things. But Goldman castigates these people becoming subjects of the corrupt system and obeying to the state rules and regulations that are contrary to the liberation of the mind and body. Noam Chomsky (quoted in Michael S. Wilson, 2013) purports that private companies do not bring solutions the same way Adam Smith dreamt of by assuming that private ownerships and governmental non-interference would lead society towards equality. Chomsky terms it Libertarianism, the binary of Anarchism. Chomsky postulates (in Wilson, 2013),

> Anarchism is quite different from that. It calls for an elimination to tyranny, all kinds of tyranny. Including the kind of tyranny that's internal to private power concentrations. So why should we prefer it? Well I think because freedom is better than subordination. It's better to be free than to be a slave. It's better to be able to make your own decisions than to have someone else make decisions and force you to observe them. I mean, I don't think you really need an argument for that. It seems like … transparent.

Chomsky (in Wilson, 2013) analyses that libertarianism; in other words, believing in Adam Smith's ideologies, is virtually an acceptance of the unequal system that obliterates our original thoughts and subjugate us into believing something that we do not like to accept. Gauri went through the same phase. She did not have any control over her working condition. The pressure of earning money and leading a stable life to be a valued member of the capitalist society abrogated her from finding peace in her family life. Professionally, Gauri made a steady growth but at the cost of her family settlement and contentment. She never stopped Udayan from getting involved in violent activities. After Udayan's death, she opted not to follow her husband's revolutionary path. She used Subhash as a ladder to re-situate her own position in America Ironically, Gauri lived the capitalistic life that Udayan always hated. On the other hand, Subhash, not as professionally active as Gauri, had been depicted to have found happiness in life with his daughter Bela (biologically not his own), son-in-law Drew, granddaughter Meghna (biologically not Drew's own) and newly-wedded wife Elise. By giving the novel a happy ending, Lahiri puts forward her premise of a settled family life. She shows how political death; even though it disrupts Gauri's life and makes her a libertarian, gives Subhash the scope to rise up from dolefulness and move on with life which he finds amidst the comfort of his close family members.

References

Althusser, L. (2001). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. Vincent. B. Leitch (Ed). Norton: USA. Pp. 1487-8.

Beauvoir, d. S. (2011). Biological Data. *The Second Sex*. Vintage: London. P. 32.
The Point of View of Historical Materialism. Vintage: London. P. 65.
History. Vintage: London. P. 76.
The Married Woman. Vintage: London. Pp. 456, 484.
The Woman's Situation and Character. Vintage: London. P. 658.

Burke, J. (2010, 28 May). Maoists in India: Long Struggle for the Landless Poor. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/28/maoists-india-naxalite-landless.Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

Chomsky, N. (2013, May 28). The kind of Anarchism I Believe in, and What's Wrong with Libertarians. AlterNet.Retrieved from Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

Goldman, E. Anarchism: What it Really Stands for. New York. Mother House Publishing House.P.7. Retrieved from Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

Gramsci, A. (1998). Hegemony, Intellectuals and the State. J. Storey (Ed), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture,* Pearson: England. P. 210.

Heng, G. (2004: 873). A Great Way to Fly: Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism. In J. Rivkin & M. Ryan, (Eds), *Literary Theory: An Anthology. (2nd).* USA, UK & Australia.Blackwell Publishing.P. 873.

Lahiri, J. (2013, June). *The Lowland.*Replica Press: India.

Leyshon, C. (2013, October 18). Unknown Territory: An Interview with Jhumpa Lahiri. *The New Yorker.*Retrieved from https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/unknown-territory-an-interview-with-jhumpa-lahiri. Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

Macey, D. (2000). Base/Superstructure. Penguin: England, USA, Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa. P.31.

Marx, K & Engels, F. (1998). Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas. J. Storey (Ed), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture,* Pearson: England. P. 191.

Marx, K. (2004). The German Ideology. In J. Rivkin & M. Ryan, (Eds), *Literary Theory: An Anthology. (2nd).* USA, UK & Australia.Blackwell Publishing.P. 656.

Neary, L. (2013, September 23). Political Violence, Uneasy Silence Echo in Lahiri's Lowland. *npr.Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2013/09/23/224404507/political-violence-uneasy-silence-echo-in-lahiris-lowland.*Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

Roy, A. (2018, Aug 30). Arundhati Roy Says: # Me too Urban Naxal. *Huffington Post. https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2018/08/30/arundhati-roy-says-me-too-urban-naxal_a_23512718/.*

Said, E. (1994). *Culture & Imperialism. Vintage: London. P. xxix.*

Said, E. (2013, 23 April). Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals. Pubs. J. Stein. Retrieved from https://postcolonialseminar.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/article-said.pdf. Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

Why women Join India's Maoist Groups. (2013, 20 Nov) BBC.News (Asia). Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-24456634.Accessed on 2019, Feb 08.

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

A Panoptical Analysis of Kurtz and Jack

Tanzina Afrin
East West University

Abstract

This article offers a Panoptical reading of the characters Kurtz and Jack of *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 1902/2006) and *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954) respectively. It discusses how the circumstantial detachment from human civilization and seclusion of these characters led them to their moral degradation. In his writing "Discipline and Punish" (2001, 2004), Michele Foucault proposes that European civilization is a Panoptical one, i.e., resembling a prison. He suggests that through the means of knowledge, power, surveillance, fear and physical domination, an authoritative figure can subjugate the weaker ones. A close reading of the characters of Kurtz and Jack discloses how they have exercised power to exploit the natives or the weak by using the means of surveillance and panoptic vision and other terms proposed by Foucault. Though, both the texts deal with the theme of the exercise of power differently- Kurtz uses his knowledge and power to subjugate the natives of Congo whereas Jack and his disciples try to dominate the little children only to prove their authorities- the implication of Foucault's terms in these texts is apparent. This research will be conducted through the use of several secondary sources mainly focusing on the terms used by Foucault.

Keywords: Power, discipline, surveillance, isolation, panopticism

Both *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 1902/2006) and *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954) deal with what happens to human beings when they live far away from human civilization. Both novels

deal with the way the characters try to justify their rights to exercise power. These texts portray how civilized people become worse than the savages when they live far away from civilized society. They exercise power to dominate those they consider are inferior to them. In the pretense of upgrading their subjects, they dominate them. The terms used by Michel Foucault in his writing "Discipline and Punish" (2001, 2004) could be used to analyze these texts, focusing principally on the elements of surveillance and fear. This paper will deal with the idea of how the characters of these two texts have exercised power to exploit the natives or the weak by using the means of surveillance and panoptic vision. By the means of "discipline" and "surveillance," the dominants keep their subjects in constant fear so that they do not dare to oppose them.

The main argument in this article is how Foucault's terms used in "Discipline and Punish" (2004) to explain the relationship between the subjugation of body and soul and an individual to demonstrate the power of the authority can be used to analyze the characters of the above mentioned texts. To support this argument, several secondary sources dealing with the topic has been used in this paper. The characters of these texts were members of civilized societies. Yet, due to different circumstances, they get detached from the human civilization and as a result, they become reckless and cruel. Different terms used by Foucault in his "Discipline and Punish" (2004) is applicable to all these characters to explain why they act this way when they are far away from civilization.

Michel Foucault begins his writing "Discipline and Punish" (2004) with the history of the body. He discusses the effect power has on the body of the prisoners and how the power relation invests the body with "relations of power and domination" (p. 549). He also says that before the eighteenth century, there was capital punishment to create a fear of punishment among the criminals, but after that, it became more controlled. By subjecting the body, the new penal system also affected the soul through severe order and subjection "without involving violence" (Foucault, 2004, p. 549). Then he talks about the 'Panopticon' system of Bentham and how the constant vigilance of the prisoners by the jailor creates a sense of invisible presence among them and how they act properly because of the fear created "by means of an omnipresent and omniscient power" (Foucault, 2004, p. 552). He also states that the exercise of power is a strategy and that power and knowledge are correlated. He further comments that panopticism exists throughout the society in the form of schools, hospitals, and the army. In this text, he compares western civilization to "the Panopticon" of Bentham.

Exercise of Power through Fear and Indiscrimination

According to Foucault (2004), there will always be an exercise of power as a strategy to dominate others. We can see this in *Heart of Darkness*, as the Belgian Trading Company send their people to colonize the natives in the guise of ivory collection. To collect the ivories, the Company have to exercise their power because they are afraid that the natives would attack them. The exercise of power in this novella is apparent in the way the company people torture the natives. A native gets beaten in the suspicion that he has burned the shed, "A nigger was being beaten near by"

(Conrad, 2006, p. 43). Similarly, the Pilgrims carry the white sticks to show their authority and to generate fear among the natives, "They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands" (Conrad, 2006, p. 42). The White Pilgrims have created a sense of fear among the natives by flaunting their self-righteous sticks. The justification of this display of power could be seen further when "the indefatigable man with the mustaches" justifies the beating of the native, "serve him right. Transgression – punishment – bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That's the only way" (Conrad, 2006, p. 45). All thesedisplays of power are done in the name of colonizing the natives. AsZengin (2007) states,

> *Heart of Darkness* has enabled us to locate the text in the complex system of power relations and cultural representations which compose the discourse of colonialism and to see how the text is, in fact, participating and complicit in the European discourse of colonial control. (p. 111)

In *Lord of the Flies*, the exercise of power is evident in the way Jack's gang ties up the twins Sam and Eric as a punishment for the twins support Ralph. They leave them tied overnight until they too join their gang, "Now the painted group felt the otherness of Samneric, felt the power" (Golding, 1954, p. 220) and Jack threatens them with a spear until they do so. However, unlike *Heart of Darkness*, the children do not use physical punishment to dominate the weaker ones; they only create a sense of fear of it.

The true presence of fear is explicit in the way the weaker ones are afraid of the leaders. In *Lord of the Flies*, this is visible when the "biguns" (the older kids) scare the "littleuns" (the younger kids) by talking about the presence of "a beastie" (an imaginary monster) in the island. However, in the end, the biguns also become the victim of collective fear of the beast, and they all, in turn, begin to believe in the existence of the beast. Jack is the ferocious one among them and he and his gang terrorize the younger kids. Jack shows his authority by causing the fear of physical punishment among the little kids. Daniella Carpi (2007) describes Jack in this way:

> Jack is a sadistic individual, that contests the legal authority represented by Ralph, which defies the law of obedience to the chosen chief (Ralph). He symbolizes the great criminal that exerts a perverse fascination on the rest of the children, that challenges rules bringing to the forefront the hidden violence of rules themselves, that stifle the anarchic sense of freedom of every single individual. (p. 6)

Although, the real sadistic one is Roger, who eventually kills Piggy because he is feeling abandoned. He is the one who almost shoves Jack out of the way to punish Sam and Eric "as one wielding a nameless authority" (Golding, 1954, p. 224).

In *Heart of Darkness*, the implementation of fear is constant. This is discernible in the starvation of the cannibals. They fed on rotten hippo meats, but they were not bold enough to fight for their basic rights with the white even though they outnumbered the white people. Marlow notices this restraint on them, "why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't

go for us" (Conrad, 2006, p. 65). As per Foucault (2004), the individuals within the spaces of a Panopticon do possess agency and engage in multiple forms of resistance to the structures of surveillance in which they exist, but the crew never act upon them.

Another point of Foucault (2004) was that power is exercised irrespective of designation in a Panopticon. This exercise of power creates a sense of fear among the natives, so it becomes easy to rule them because the authority does not hesitate to punish even the leaders of their subjects. This form of punishment is apparent in *Heart of Darkness* (2006) in the way Fresleven went and "started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick" (Conrad, p. 24), thinking that he had been wronged in a bargain of a hen. As Foucault (2001) says, "the best way of avoiding serious offenses is to punish the most minor offenses very severely" (1637). From the steamboat, Marlow saw "near the house half-a-dozen slim posts remained in a row, toughly trimmed, and with their upper ends ornamented with round carved balls" (Conrad, 2006, p. 79). Kurtz uses the severed heads of the natives as a caution to other natives not to cross the white. As Zengin (2007) asserts:-

> His brutality is apparent in the part in which Marlow sees the sunken heads on poles at Kurtz's station… Kurtz had probably turned their faces to the house to be seen by the natives so that the natives would recognize his power. (p. 121)

This type of fear creates a sense of surveillance among the natives and they remain disciplined, without the threat of any rebellion. Thus, Foucault's notion of the exercise of power to subjugate the weaker ones is apparent in both *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord of the Flies*.

Panopticon: An Instrument of Surveillance

While discussing the modern penal system, Foucault (2004) has used Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Panopticon is a circular building where the prisoners are kept under the surveillance of only one guard. Foucault (2004) states that it is "an annular building, at the center, a tower…the panoptic mechanism arranges spetial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately" (p. 554). This term is applicable to these two literary pieces in consideration. In *Heart of Darkness,* the hut where Kurtz lives is surrounded by the forest giving it the shape of a Panopticon; Kurtz can easily keep eyes on the natives, and the natives can in return keep a lookout from the jungle without the risk of being seen. Marlowe describes the jungle, "the woods were unmoved like a mask- heavy like the closed door of a prison" (Conrad, 2006, p. 56). Here, Marlowe has directly compared the jungle to a prison emphasizing on the impossible gaze of the natives on Kurtz. Foucault (2004) talks about the prisoner kept in a Panopticon, "he is seen, but he does not see" (p. 554). Here, Foucault talks about the constant watch the authority has on the prisoner, which is similar to the way Kurtz and the natives keep eyes on each other.

Foucault (2004) asserts that there is no need for constant surveillance if the captives think they are being watched. This notion creates an automatic functioning of power the authority

has established. Kurtz must have created automatic surveillance over the natives since the beginning, so thathe can keep the discipline intact. Even when he gets sick, the natives do not try to overthrow or disobey him, because he has been successful in creating a sense of permanent observation among them. It can safely be assumed that in the beginning, it was Kurtz who used to keep surveillance on the natives to keep them in constant fear of being watched, but in the end, it was the natives who began to fix their gaze upon him. The woods surrounding his hut could be used by both the Company people and the natives to keep a lookout around their surroundings and on each other. However, when Marlow comes to take Kurtz away, the natives are the ones keeping vigilance on Kurtz or the ones who try to rescue him, "… where Mr. Kurtz's adorers were keeping their uneasy vigil" (Conrad, 2006, p. 94).

Similarly, in *Lord of the Flies,* the platform where the kids have their council, is a circular place made by stumps of woods. There are several references in the book where the kids say they feel like someone is watching them through the woods. After the fear of the beast grips them, they feel the beast is constantly watching them. This feeling is described in the novel, "but when you're on your own… if you're hunting sometimes you catch yourself feeling as if-" (Golding, 1954, p. 67). Here Jack's unfinished sentence indicates the feeling of being watched. There are several instances of spying on the opposition groups in this novel, too. Ralph keeps vigilance on the Castle Rock to observe the activities of Jack's group when Jack was hunting for him. The hunting of the pigs also needed strong surveillance as knowing about the beasts' movements and habits are necessary in order to hunt them.

Foucault (2004) discusses about the necessity of background light in the Panopticon. He says that to be invisible to the prisoner, the warden has to be placed behind the source of light so that the inmate cannot see him but has the feeling of being watched and would behave accordingly. Foucault contrasts darkness and light while discussing the effect of light, "Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which is ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 2004, p. 554). The main setting of *Heart of Darkness* is a jungle, where there is a constant play of light and darkness. Inside the jungle, it is hard to comprehend if someone is keeping a lookout on anyone. Likewise, in *The Lord of the Flies*, when Ralph administers a group meeting, he seats behind the fire (Golding, 1954, p. 96) and his co-inhabitants of the island are unable to see him because the fire in front of him makes it impossible to see the reactions on his face, and this acts on his favor as he can easily hide his emotions from others. This made him similar to the guard in Panopticon as Foucault (2004) asserts, "in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (p. 555). This placing of backlighting allows the characters of both the texts to display their authority by being invisible.

Foucault (2004) comments that western society itself is a Panopticon. He argues about how important it is at present times because the society itself has created some institutions where constant vigilance is required to establish discipline. He compares family, school, hospitals, and police with each other as the new versions of Panopticon where the children, the students, the patients or the inmates are under constant supervision. He remarks, "Our society is one

not of spectacles, but of surveillance" (Foucault, 2004, p. 562). Foucault (2001) also says, "the carceral archipelago transported this technique from the penal institution to the entire social body" (p. 1640). When Roger finds Henry and another kid playing on the beach, he throws stones at them, but then he stops because he realizes that "round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policeman and the law" (Golding, 1954, p. 78). Even though the kids are far away from the protection of the civilized society, Roger is hesitant to be brutal to them because his society has implemented a sense of constant surveillance in him by teaching him that torturing another human is bad. As Carpi (2007) observes, "Even in absentia the rules they have been reared to are still strong: the commandment "don't kill" is what blocks their first killing of the wild pig" (p. 4). In *Heart of Darkness* too, the influence of society and law is visible. When discussing Kurtz's isolation, Marlow talks about the power "the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums" (Conrad, 2006, p. 75) have, because the fear of these terrors stops the citizens to commit crimes, but as Kurtz is away from all these systems, he commits unimaginable crimes.

Devotion and Power

Kurtz, in the process of ruling the natives, has created a group of devout followers- "Kurtz has taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land" (Conrad, 2006, p. 75). Foucault describes that a real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. This is explicit in the way the Savage Woman and the Intended show their devotion to Kurtz, or how because of the Russian's fascination for Kurtz, Marlow sarcastically calls him Kurtz's "last disciple." In *The Lord of the Flies* in the case of Jack, this kind of devotion is evident, too. He generates terror among the kids, especially among his choir group, but still, they hang to his speech. As Piggy says, "If you're scared of someone you hate him but you can't stop thinking about him" (Golding, 1954, p. 116). The constant fear of being watched over by the Beast, especially at night, also creates a sense of devotion among the kids to it. In turn, they sacrifice a pig to satisfy it and dance like savages which results in the killing of Piggy.

Power and Knowledge

Foucault also asserts how power and knowledge are inter-related. He says that to successfully exercise power, one has to have proper knowledge of his target subjects. This knowledge of power is apparent in Kurtz. He is a British citizen and an educated person, "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (Conrad, 2006, p. 76), so he is a representative of European civilization. Marlow's childhood dream of conquering the undiscovered lands makes him attain knowledge to rule the 'savages,' just like Kurtz. This thirst for knowledge also helps the characters to know about each other. Before even meeting Kurtz in person, Marlow gets a good idea about him from the descriptions he recieves from the people who know Kurtz. However, Kurtz implements his knowledge to dominate the natives. Foucault (2004) says, that to dominate the ruled, it is important to know how to subjugate them. He also comments that "in its function, the power to punish is not essentially different from that of curing or educating" (p.1644). In the paper that he wrote for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, Kurtz shows

how well he knows the way to dominate his subjects; he discusses the processes the white should apply in order to control the blacks. According to Foucault, the dominants have to know how to subjugate the body to show power over the subjects. He says, "power produces knowledge… power and knowledge directly imply one another(Foucault, 2004, p. 550). In his paper, Kurtz shows how well he knows about the demonstration of authority:"By the simple means of our will, we can exert a power for good practically unbounded" (Conrad, 2006, p. 76).

The knowledge of power could also be found in *Lord of the Flies*. The boys are British, they are from a choir school, so they are from a disciplined society. The way they tried to establish a democratic habitat on the island indicates their knowledge of how a civilized society works. The Conch acts as a tool here; whoever holds it, is allowed to talk while others are supposed to listen. They try to establish a democratic society where whoever holds the conch can speak uninterruptedly.Regarding the conch, Bhadury (2013) comments, "The conch as the symbol of power and authority has in itself double fanged teeth and the orifice is maze like structure, not something straight" (p. 110).Their display of power does not include the brute strength Kurtz talks about, but of their solid knowledge about democracy, hunting and the sense of authority over the weak, or in this case, the little ones. Jack arrogantly claims himself as the chief because he knows that he is superior to the other kids, "because I'm chapter chorister and head boy" (Golding, 1954, p. 29).

Body as a Tool of Power

Michel Foucault (2004) proclaims that "the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body" (p. 549). He says that there is an inherent relationship between the subjection of the body and soul and the rate of production. He further discusses how production can increase if the workers are completely subjected. The subjection makes the body a forceful and productive instrument. He also says that this could be achieved "without involving violence" (Foucault, 2004, p. 549). In *Heart of Darkness*, we can see it in the way the crew was starved, as well as in the beating and torturing of the natives, and the exploitation of the subjects of Kurtz. The Company people went to Congo to collect ivories and they disciplined the souls of the natives by inflicting physical pain; or worse, the fear of physical pain, to make them work more, and to increase the amount of ivory collection. The white sticks and weapons of the Faithless Pilgrims are examples of this kind of display of fear. Though they never beat the natives or effectively use the weapons, they get the best result from their subject by merely displaying their armaments. Without actually inflicting physical torture on the natives, the Pilgrims make them work more and they acquire more ivories. Foucault (2001) comments about the jailor of Panopticon, "their task was to produce bodies that were both docile and capable" (1637). In *Lord of the Flies*, the older kids bully the younger ones by making them collect the firewood, fruits, water and when they were making shelters, the bigger kids frighten the little ones to be more active. As Carpi (2007) comments about the unequal distribution of work among the younger children, "they must distribute duties (Jack should be the head of the hunters), some children provide food, some others direct the assemblies, they

should keep a fire burning, etc" (p. 5). Thus, the big kids of *The Lord of the Flies* make the little kids work more by frightening and threatening them.

Seclusion and Power

The main aim of the Panopticon is to isolate the prisoners from society and from the other prisoners too when they are imprisoned in different cells. Foucault (2004) has used the example of Panopticon to compare the Western democrats to their jail-keepers because like the latter, they too, check their criminal instincts and become their jailors. Foucault (2001) further comments on the isolation of the inmate, "isolation is the best means of acting on the moral nature" (p. 1637). Kurtz is all alone among the natives in the jungle because the Belgian Company felt the necessity to colonize them. Kurtz is the Company's representative in the jungle, but his isolation is apparent in the novella. Marlowe talks about Kurtz's alienation among the natives several times. He says that alienation has a great impact on the soul of an individual and it can drive him to unimaginable urges, "things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solicitude" (Conrad, 2006, p. 87). Similarly, the kids in *Lord of the Flies* are isolated too. They take refuge in an uninhabited island, where there are no adults, which they celebrate at first, but as time goes by, they feel like they are too lonely in the vast island. Just like Kurtz became a victim of his isolation and did unthinkable acts, the kids also became savages. Their solitude is apparent from the very beginning, through the description of the jungle, Golding (1954) has emphasized on the alienation of the kids.

Conclusion

Thus, even though both the books are set far away from England, these texts could be examined through Foucault's theory of Panopticon in terms of the exercise of power, surveillance, subjugation of human body and mind, devotion and different types of Panopticons. The texts deal with various apparent themes, but in a subtle way, Foucault's concept is existent in these books. One of the main ideas propagated by Foucault is that isolation is the key to correct a criminal, however, in the case of Kurtz and Jack, this works in reverse. At the end, the children get rescued from the island so there is a possibility of their redemption but Kurtz dies without receiving the opportunity to salvage himself.

Through this discussion, it is clear that Foucault's theory is existent in every sphere of modern life. Both Kurtz and Jack try to rise in their position by instigating fear among their subjects. Mostly, this exercise of power is explicit through surveillance and fear. Foucault has explicitly described the necessity of the feeling of being watched constantly which generates fear among the inmates. The characters of both these texts suffer from this feeling - the natives are watched by Kurtz and the Company people, and there is an unknown presence, symbolizing western civilization that keeps the children in constant observation but fails at the end when the children act like savages. Complete devotion to the leader is also prominent which results from fear. The devotion of the people around Kurtz is the result of the fear he can inflict upon them, while Jack receives devotion because he has a natural ability to be a leader.

Foucault has concluded his article by asserting that western civilization is itself a modern prison because the people have the fear of getting punished by the power of the authority. Both the analyzed writings are examples of the way western people are imprisoned through the use of the institutions they have made, which keep them in constant vigilance even when they are away from human civilization.

References

Bhadury, P. (2013). Beyond The Binary: A Study Of The Fiction Of William Golding. Retrieved from Shodhganga: a Reservoir of Indian Theses. http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/23025

Carpi, D. (2007). William Golding's *Lord of The Flies*: The Failure of The Law, presented at *Inter: A European Cultural Studies Conference in Sweden*, Norrköping, 2007. Sweden: Linköping University Electronic Press.

Conrad, J. (2006). *Heart of Darkness*, Dhaka: Friends' Book Corner. (Original work published 1899).

Foucault, M. (2001). McGowan, J., & Williams, J. J. (2010). From Discipline And Punish: The Birth of The Prison. In V. B. Leitch, W. E. Cain, L. A. Finke, B. E. Johnson, & T. D. Sharpley-Whiting (Eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2nd ed., pp. 1636-1647). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Foucault, M. (2004). Discipline and Punish (J. R. & M. R., Eds.). In *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (2nd ed., pp. 549-565). London: Blackwell Publication. (Original work published1975).

Golding, W. (1954). *Lord of the Flies*. London: Faber And Faber.

Gormez, A., & Sukran, D. (2015). Struggle for Power in *Macbeth* and *Lord of the Flies. Gazi ÜniversitesiSosyalBilimlerDergisi, 2*(4), 1-8, Retrieved December 9, 2017, from http://dergipark.gov.tr/gusbd/issue/7522/99129

Zengin, M. (2007). "A Study on Joseph Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness, Lord Jim* And *Nostromo*In A New Historicist Perspective." Retrieved fromhttp://acikarsiv.ankara.edu.tr/browse/4105/

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

The Translator's Role in Addressing Untranslatability in Poetry: Observing Translations of Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Bidrohi*

Dravida Anjuman Huda
American International University – Bangladesh (AIUB)

Abstract

Among the many concerns about poetry translation, untranslatability is the most critical one. Translators often face difficulties in offering an authentic translation in target language. It is, after all, the translator who may decide how to address this issue. One phenomenal Bengali poem entitled *Bidrohi,* written by the "rebel" poet Kazi Nazrul Islam can be regarded as a text that contains untranslatability issues to a large extent. It is to be noted that there are some translation-techniques - both for any type of source text and for poetry in particular –that are suggested by translation theorists like, for example, Vinay and Darbelnet, Andre Lefevere, and Peter Newmark. Whereas Vinay and Darbelnet categorized the general translation procedures into two methods (direct and oblique translation), Lefever suggested a catalogue of seven possible strategies for translating poetry. On the other hand, Newmark's strategies include semantic and free translation. However, as the translator is the agent of authenticity and closeness in translation, s/he has a huge role to play in assessing, choosing, and combining the existing translation techniques according to the source text. This paper aims to explore the role of the translator and to figure out if there is a certain effective approach that can be made towards a poem that is difficult to translate. In order to achieve that ground, two translations of *Bidrohi*– one offered by Professor Kabir Chowdhury, and the other by Mohammad Nurul Huda have been analyzed. The findings of this research paper indicate that the two translations in major parts show two different combinations of translation strategies. This paper takes the

terms "Direct" and "oblique" translation as coined by Vinay and Darbelnet to show that both the translations tend to switch between these two general translation approaches. In addition, both the translations highlight some poetry translation-techniques like Lefevere's "phonemic translation" or Peter Newmark's semantic translation, which too, serve the purpose of overcoming untranslatability. The findings also show that there is no single effective approach in overcoming untranslatability in poetry. Overall, it can be concluded that when a poem appears nearly-untranslatable, a balanced combination of "direct" and "oblique" translation as well as some selected poetry-translation strategies can be an effective standpoint. This paper does not claim to discuss untranslatability issues in any other genre but poetry.

Keywords: Untranslatability in poetry, role of translator, direct and oblique translation, phonemic and semantic translation, combination

One important branch of pure translation studies is Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). This branch includes three major translation research areas– Product-oriented DTS, Function-oriented DTS, and Process-oriented DTS (Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 128). This paper is written based on the traditional area of translation-related research, that is, product-oriented DTS. A phase of product-oriented DTS is comparative translation description, which, according to Hatim and Munday, is about analyzing various translations of the same source-text (ST) in one or multiple target languages (2004, p. 128). This paper functions according to the comparative analytical norms of translation research.

Comparisons can be made between a source-text (ST) and its translation(s) for different research purposes; the comparison offered in this paper is aimed at exploring a vital issue of translation studies: the translator's role in dealing with untranslatability in poetry translation. In translation studies, much time is spent on exploring facts about poetry translation because of the formal and semantic difficulties that poetry creates by default. The problems in general lie in poetic structure, the usage of figures of speech, and the sound-effect created using rhyme and rhythm. However, the problems can be so specific and unique as to create largescale untranslatability issues. Now to assess the specific difficulties and to choose the strategies in overcoming these issues are subject to the translator's decision. The 'choices' that he makes is crucial, as Clifford E. Landers comments in *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*, "… at every turn the translator is faced with choices – of words, fidelity, emphasis, punctuation, register, sometimes even spelling" (2001, p.10). This paper considers *Bidrohi*, a poem written in Bengali by the national poet of Bangladesh Kazi Nazrul Islam, as a fit choice for exploration of untranslatability issues that can arise in case of poetry translation. In order to explore the translation process, this paper attempts to examine two existing English translations of the text, both done by two Bengali-speaking translators namely Prof. Kabir Chowdhury and Mohammad Nurul Huda, compares the two, and observes how the two translation deal with untranslatability issues. The paper also discusses whether the two translations are combinations of different approaches. Finally, the paper attempts to figure out if there is or not a single effective combination of different translation strategies to overcome untranslatability in poetry.

Before starting the discussion, a brief overview of the translation strategies that will be discussed throughout the paper is required. An analysis of the two translations as mentioned above shows that in both the translations at least two sets of translation strategies have been used in order to overcome untranslatability. Both the translators used some general translation strategies in their work. These translation strategies are what the noted translation theorists Jean Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet term as "direct or literal translation" and "oblique translation" (Vinay and Darbelnetas cited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p.148). Vinay and Darbelnet define direct translation as the process of "transposing the source language message element by element into the target language" (2004, p.149). On the other hand, oblique translation procedures are more complex and are used if "certain stylistic effects cannot be transposed into the TL without upsetting the syntactic order" (2004, p.150). Vinay and Darbelnet also bring some specific translation techniques under these two more general terms. According to their categorization, direct translation includes techniques like borrowing, calque, and literal translation, whereas oblique translation includes transposition, modulation, and equivalence (2004, p.149-151). While the former approach falls into a more fundamental category of translation studies, the latter includes comparatively advanced translation techniques. However, poetry as a genre might create unique untranslatability issues, as its brevity makes it the "most personal and concentrated" among the major literary genres (Newmark, 1988, p. 163). Therefore, the general translation techniques might not be adequate to solve certain issues of untranslatability in poetry. In those cases, the translators may take help from the specialized suggestions as given by theorists like Andre Lefevere or Peter Newmark. Lefevere prepared a catalogue of seven strategies that can be used while translating poetry: phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, poetry into prose, rhymed translation, blank verse translation, and lastly interpretation (Lefevereas cited in Bassnett, 1980, p.84). Newmark, too, suggests some special translation techniques in his book titled *A Textbook of Translation;* he categorizes different translation strategies according to the translator's decision to put emphasis on either the source language (SL) or the target language (TL). If the emphasis is put on the SL, the suggested translation techniques are word for word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, and semantic translation; if the emphasis is put on the TL, the translation techniques are adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation (1988, p. 45-47). These theories support the paper in analyzing and assessing how the two translations of *Bidrohi* combine the general translation techniques with the specific poetry translation-techniques in order to overcome untranslatability.

The original text of *Bidrohi* (*The Rebel*) consists of 139 'uneven versified lines' (Huda,2001, p. 63). However, the intense content of the poem, which articulates the poet's unquenchable thirst for rebellion and his youthful vigor, gives the poem a sense of magnitude. Huda befittingly marks the poem as "a word-picture of the extraordinary text of a rebellious self that was shaping within his creative being" (Huda, 2001, p. 58). In short, the poem is a universal voice for all rebel souls from time immemorial, a masterpiece that is "destined to stand the test of time" (Huda, 2001, p. 57). The poet's intention is no way kept vague; he indisputably wants to promote the supremacy of the rebellious and the invincible. Nazrul proves himself

to be the emerging voice of Bengal with all its religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity by means of a catalogue of literary, linguistic as well as intertextual variation in *Bidrohi*– majority of which is derived from the soil of Indian sub-continent or from other areas that are close to the region politically or emotionally. For example, except for the small-scale allusion to Greek mythological characters in places, a major part of the poem is filled with Hindu mythological and Muslim religious allusions, and even with references that are more neutral and richer in terms of the national history and heritage of Bengal region.

As for the form, *Bidrohi* presents a style that connects the form with the content. Also, the musicalquality created by the interaction between highly stylized auditory and visual imageries is due to the poem's rhythm. It is then, quite inevitable that the complicated stylistic features as well as the content of the poem make translating it difficult. A translator might have to struggle if s/he has little or even basic knowledge of the source language and culture. While it is true that the tone of the poem can be perceived by any average reader, a certain level of erudition is required in order to understand the text in its totality, including the extended hyperboles, metaphors, and intertextuality. A possible catalogue of the difficult issues that *Bidrohi* presents to a translator roughly includes lexical variety, mythologically as well as culturally enriched allusions, unique rhythms and the resultant musical quality, frequent alteration between different languages, as well as the effect this movement creates, and multilayered figures of speech. Some examples from the original text might make the understanding of this point about the poem's difficulty clear. The very first stanza can be quoted in this regard. (This is to disclaim that, the author of this paper will provide a phonemic translation of the original Bengali text wherever needed for the non-Bengali speaking readers' better understanding. The English translation provided alongside or under the phonemic translation is also done by the author, using words in the target language that can serve as the primary equivalent of the source language words used in the original text) –

Bolo Beer	*Say, Hero*
Bolo unnato momo shir	*Say, high is my head!*
Shir nehari amari' notoshir oi shikhor himadri	*Seeing my head even the Himalayans seem to bend!"*

(line 1-3; translated by the author)

This appears to be a refrain throughout the poem. The refrain announces the dignity of a brave soul. The word *Beer* might mean a hero or a valiant soldier, or both. In the second line, the stressed word is *Unnato,* which in first reading might mean *High* to the reader. The third line has a straight reference to the Himalayas. With this knowledge, one might understand what the first three lines are trying to convey; the poet here is asking all courageous and heroic people to articulate their inherent heroic spirit and valiance. Not only that, but also the poet attempts to make them feel proud about their soared up-spirit. The question then arises: is that all the poet intends the reader to understand upon reading these lines? In trying to answer this

question, a brief lexical analysis can be done. As mentioned earlier, the key word in the second line of the given stanza is *Unnato.* If this disyllabic Bengali word is divided, the two syllables are *un-* and *-nata;* the prefix (*un-)*indicating a sense of' negation' and the base word(*-nata*) meaning 'something that is put upside down'. Hence the meaning of the whole word happens to be 'something that is not put downwards'. The word that follows is *Momo* which in English translates as 'mine'. If the two words are read separately or with partial knowledge of the source language, the readers are at great risk of not understanding the actually-intended meaning. If any individual tries to keep his/her head straight and not facing down, so much to make even the Himalayan bend, that person needs to put in immense effort. As the poet has chosen a Bengali word that contextually expresses 'effortful elevation', translating *unnato* as *high* might not convey the closest meaning to the target reader. If he just wanted to talk about 'something high' he could have used another Bengali word *Unchu,* which is the primary Bengali equivalent of the English word 'high'. Therefore, an expression in the target-language that provides the sense of effort to keep something straight amid a lot of struggle would be quite equivalent to the original. This minute speculation into the first three lines of the 139 lines-long poem indicates at the kinds of significance posed by the lexical variety of the poem. In fact, compared to the rest of the poem, the lexical difficulty created by the word *unnato* can be considered to be of lesser degree.

Given that *Bidrohi* challenges a translator with difficulties at different levels of discourse, the specific difficulties come under the more generalized heading of untranslatability – either partial or total. However, it cannot be denied that a linguistically and culturally-enriched text like *Bidrohi* creates untranslatability issues and hence is bound to undergo 'loss' while being translated; here the concept of "loss" referring to "the difficulties encountered by the translator when faced with terms or concepts in the SL that do not exist in the TL" (Bassnett, 2002, p. 36).

To start discussing the strategies used to translate the difficult parts of the poem, the first point that comes to attention is the issue of lexical variety. One of the translators as in discussion, Prof. Kabir Chowdhury translated the title of the poem quite literally – *The Rebel*. Huda's translation uses the same title. It is to be noted that Hudagives a disclaimer along with the translation where he acknowledges his indebtedness to the earlier translators in preparing his text (Huda, 2001, p.64). About their translation techniques in dealing with lexical variety and the resultant difficulty, it can be said that both used the general translation techniques, as suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet, in accordance with their respective focuses. As for the word *Unnato* as discussed earlier, Chowdhury decides to translate 'word for word' (Vinay and Darbelnet cited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 149) and use the TL equivalent word *high*. For the same SL word, Huda chooses to translate semantically, a concept that, as per Peter Newmark's definition, "differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value" (Newmark, 1988, p.46). In so doing, Huda translates the SL word as *elevated*, and captures the intended meaning. Same happens with the word *Beer*, which is translated by Chowdhury using a literally equivalent word as *valiant*, while Huda translates

the word as *hero the valiant* – here, in the latter translation, it is to be noted that the translator adds *the valiant* to *hero*, which recaptures the emphasis put on the word *beer* in original text. However, the alliterative effect of the /h/ sound is somehow discarded due to the addition of the word. Moreover, the two translators have translated the very first word of the poem – *Bolo* differently: in Chowdhury's text the translation is *say*; in Huda's text *Hail*. If both translations were put side by side, it would look like this –

Say, Valiant,	*Hail hero, the valiant*
Say: High is my head!	*Hail elevated is my head,*
(Chowdhury, lines 1-2)	(Huda, lines 1-2)

Apart from the punctuation marks, the translation by Huda appears to be semantically more accurate than Chowdhury's one if the closeness of the SL words and their TL equivalent meanings are considered. The force with which *Bolo Beer* is uttered in the original poem is almost similar to war-cry. In that sense, as a synonym of the first TL equivalent of *Bolo*– 'say', 'hail' is more appropriate to use. While in this example it is seen that Chowdhury's translation intends more to the primary lexical equivalence of the original words, Huda tends to search among the secondary as well as distantly synonymous words for options that would render a closer meaning to the original. If only the lexical issue is considered, with its attention to providing equivalent diction in TL that also captures the meaning of the original, Huda's translation attempts to offer a semantic translation of the original text. On contrary, Chowdhury's translation concentrates on preserving the SL word's "most common meanings" (Newmark, 1988, p. 46). Moreover, Chowdhury's emphasis on the alliterative effect of the sound /h/ is quite apparent here.Hence, considering the translator's emphasis on creating a substitute sound effect in target language and thereby an attempt made at Lefevere's 'rhymed translation' (Lefevere ascited in Bassnett, 1980, p.84),choosing the word *high* while translating *Unnato* is justified.

The two translators are observed to combine the general and poetry-specific translation strategies every now and then while dealing with the poem's choice of poetic diction. For example, both take help of Lefevere's 'interpretation' or Vinay and Darbenet's 'literal translation' strategies in order to convey the meaning of the Bengali words to the TL reader. However, the difference in their positions in this case is marked by their respective ways of manipulating the strategies–one of them makes adjustments by means of interpretation as well as ellipses; the other provides phonemically unchanged words. The first measure is taken largely by Chowdhury while the second is adopted by Huda. It is to be noted that there is no ellipted verse in Huda's translation, whereas in Chowdhury's translation both ellipses and interpretation can be found. The Bengali word *Aarosh* from the first stanza can be taken as an example in this regard. The line containing this word in original is as follows (along with a translation by the author of this paper):

Bolo mohabishwer mohakash fari
Chandra surya groho tara chari
Bhulok dulok golok bhedia
Khodar ashon Aarosh chhedia
Uthachhi chiro bismoy, ami biswa bidhatrir!

Say, tearing apart the great sky of the universe
Passing the Moon, the Sun, the planets, the stars
Penetrating the world, the heaven, the universe
Piercing through God's seat – the Ars
Have I risen, the everlasting wonder of Mother Earth!

(lines 5-9: translated by the author)

The Bengali word *Aarosh* (used in the third line of the given stanza) roughly means 'the seat of God almighty'. Therefore, this word has a strong religious connotation. Use of the word *Khuda (*used in the third line of the given stanza), a borrowed word from Persian language meaning 'the Almighty himself' –conveys a sort of religious as well as emotional attachment to Persian language that commonly exists among the Muslim people of Indian sub-continent. According to Muslim religious belief, God Almighty is seated seven heavens-above the ground. The hero of Nazrul's poem pierces through that seat while elevates himself. To keep the religious connotation of the words intact, the translator must look for TL expressions that can be regarded as close equivalence. In Chowdhury's text, the translation of the lines

(8 and 9) is as follows:

Pushing through Almighty's sacred seat
Have I risen,

(Chowdhury, line 8-9)

While the word *Almighty* or the noun-phrase *sacred-seat* is interpretatively accurate, the religious connotation is observed to be lost. On the other hand, Huda provides a phonemic translation of *Khuda* and *Aarosh* along with a one-word interpretation of the latter –

"Rending through *Khuda*'s throne the *Ars*,
I've risen– "

(Huda, line 7)

It is to be noted that the verse has been written in appositive format ("*Khuda*'s throne the *Ars")* in order to add a TL equivalent of the SL word *Aarosh* - 'the throne'. Using the exact word preceded by a meaningful interpretation meets both the ends of keeping the religious tone intact and conveying the quality of the situation (a human being piercing through Almighty's Kingdom) with careful usage of a TL word ('throne') that carries the meaning. On the other hand, despite the reduction of religious connotation and the resultant loss of originality, the meaning of the word is successfully conveyed through Chowdhury's literal translation.

The technique of using adaptation while dealing with lexical difficulties of the poemhas largely been used by Chowdhury. At times, however, this has been done at the expense of 'loss' in

translation without any certain 'compensation' being made. Such an instanceis found in the second stanza wherein original an adjective *Elokeshe* has been used –

Ami Dhrujati, ami elokeshe jhor okal boishakhir

I am Dhrujati, I am the disorganized hair of the untimely storm of Summer"

(Line 22, translated by the author)

The tumultuous storm of Summer which is a yearly phenomenon in some parts of this sub-continent is commonly known as *Kalboishakhi* in Bengali. In the original text, Nazrul sees the storm as an untimely one, hence connoting a situation created by the rebel's restlessness. To enhance the emotional effect, he personifies the storm as a woman with 'disorganized hair' – the literal meaning of the word *Elokeshe*. In his translation, Chowdhury offers an adaptation of this word and translates as follows:

" I am Dhrujati, I am the sudden tempest

of untimely summer,"

(Chowdhury, line 23)

Instead of attempting a literal or dynamical translation, Chowdhury resorts to determining the 'invariant core' (Popovic, cited in Bassnett, 2002, p. 33) of the word as a 'sudden occurrence' and translates the rest accordingly. Even if it is undeniable that the meaning is communicated to some extent, the culture-bound imagery along with the visual effect conveyed by the word *Elokeshe* is omitted in this translation. Although 'omission' is listed by Clifford E. Landers as a way of dealing with "the lacunae in the TL reader's knowledge of the SL culture" (2001, p.93), he also comments that omitting any part of the original text is similar to "an unconditional surrender" by the translator to certain translational difficulties (2001, p.95). However, Chowdhury conveys only the core meaning of the line by means of both word for word translation and 'adaptation'. 'Adaptation' is an oblique translation method used when "the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture" (Vinay and Darbelnet as cited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 151). Although Chowdhury's decision to adapt appear to be correct if weighed against Vinay and Darbelnet's definition, his action does not match what Vinay and Darbelnet also suggest doing in case of using adaptation as a translation technique. According to them, "in such cases translators have to create a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent" (2004, p. 151). Instead of doing so, Chowdhury does not at all translate the Bengali word *Elokeshe* and translates the rest of the verse word for word. On the other hand, Huda has attempted at the same line in his translation as follows–

"I'm *Dhurjati*, the untimely summer storm with disheveled hair."

(Huda, line 23)

The literal translation of *elokeshe* (*disheveled hair*) as provided here captures the personification of the original word. Huda translates the line by means of simple word for word translation. However, both the translations gain something at the expense of losses. Chowdhury's translation captures the nuance of an extremely windy weather (as it accompanies the allusion to *Dhrujati* – the enraged image of Lord Shiva and as well as an indication to bad nature) by using the TL word *tempest* instead of *storm*. Huda on the other hand, is observed to omit the repetition of the Bengali first person pronoun *Ami (I* in English) and also to change the syntactic order by interchanging the positions of the words and phrases *jhor okalboishakhir /the untimely summer storm* and *elokeshe/disheveled hair*. This instance of interchanging the elements of a sentence is close to the strategy of 'transposition', a translation technique that allows "replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message."(Vinay and Darbelnet ascited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 150). Huda replaces'one word class with another' by interchanging the adjective (*elokeshe/disheveled hair)* with the nouns (*jhoro okalboishakhi / the untimely summer storm)* and changesthe syntactic order without disrupting the meaning. As Vinay and Darbelnet adds, translators may use transposition as a tool of translation "if the translation thus obtained fits better the utterance or allows a particular nuance of the style to be retained (2004, p.150). Huda's decision to use transposition as a translation tool meets this end. Finally, it can be said that although both Chowdhury and Huda is observed to use oblique translation strategies, the combinations as well as modifications of the techniques are different.

The lexical variation of the poem might seem to be a minor issue in translation on the face of the widespread allusions used in the poem. In this regard, Chowdhury's translation uses both 'ellipses' and 'explication' as translation tools. In translation studies both tools are accepted as part of 'adjustment', that is, a technique applicable when there is no way out other than to gradually "move away from form-by-form renderings and towards more dynamic kinds of equivalence" (Hatim and Munday, 2004, p.43). However, excessive use of any one of those might create inevitable loss in terms of the original's meaning. Specifically, Chowdhury's translation omits the culturally-nuanced allusions to a large scale than explicating them. One perfect example is the allusion made to *Nataraj*, the other name of Lord Shiva, the Hindu mythological god who dances ecstatically to destroy everything only to create anew. In the original text, the line is as follows:

Moha proloyer ami Nataraj, *I am Nataraj- the Dancing Shiva of doomsday,*

(Line 14)

Here the speaker compares himself to *Nataraj,* the dancing avatar of Lord Shiva who can destroy the world and build again with his dance. In his translation, Chowdhury omits the very name of lord Shiva – *Nataraj*; and translates the line as –

"I am the king of the great upheaval,"

(Chowdhury, line 17)

In this translation, only the kingship of Shiva is referred to; the specific nature for which he is often addressed as *Nataraj* is absent. Hence, the explication does not suffice, considering the significance of the name itself. This type of translation is also called 'free translation', as mentioned by Peter Newmark in *A Textbook of Translation,* where he defines this type of translation as the reproduction of "the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original" (1980, p. 46). On the other hand, in Huda's version of the line, it is seen that the name of lord Shiva is mentioned and at the same time is followed by an explanation:

"I'm *Notoraj*, the dance-king of the doomsday upheaval,"

(Huda, line 14)

In another section of the poem, in order to convey the all-embracing as well as sacrificial nature of the true rebel, the poet alludes to another myth about *Lord Shiva*. The line is as follows:

Ami Krishna-kontho, monthon bish piya	*My throat turned blue, drinking the poison sifted*
byatha-baridheer-baridheer	*from the ocean of sorrow*

(Line 50, translated by the author)

The allusion here refers to a story from Hindu mythology. The story is as follows: in order to save all living beings, Lord Shiva almost drank a life-threatening poison known as *Halahala* that got sifted while he was churning the ocean. However, his wife, the goddess Parvati gripped her husband's neck with both hands in order to stop the poison from being swallowed. Although he was saved, the poison was so potent that his throat turned blue, and earned him the name *Nilakantha-* the one with a blue throat ("Halahala," n.d., para. 2). The poet, however, uses the Bengali word *Krishnakantha* (the one with a black throat) instead of *Nilakantha* to allude to the myth. The allusion compares the ocean that Lord Shiva drank *Halahala* off to a metaphorical ocean of the sufferings of Mother Nature and her offspring. Now it must be noted that in the 139 lines of the poem, the speaker identifies himself to several mythological characters, each or groups of them connoting to the multi-faceted character of the ultimate rebel. Therefore, omission of any such allusion is bound to leave a gap in the reading of the poem. While Chowdhury's translation remains silent in creating this effect, Huda's translation attempts to keep the allusion along with a due explanation–

I'm Krishno's throat, I drink poison from the ocean of pain,

(Huda, line 53)

If the incorrectly-made allusion towards Lord *Krishna* is overlooked, the attempt made here is appreciable. Nevertheless, while Chowdhury's translation is mostly observed to be silent about the effect of allusion, his focus on making a connection between the content and the untranslatable rhyme as well as rhythm of the poem shows the purpose behind doing so. It is, however, questionable whether the translator has the authority to remain silent about a section of the original text that contains culturally enriched allusion. At this point, it is to be

noted that unlike Huda, Chowdhury did not go for literal translation in this case. In Huda's translation, the translation is done at the cost of losing the original's rhythmic and alliterative effect. If Chowdhury rejects to do that, he is justified by the rules of 'natural translation', a term used by Peter Newmark while commenting that a translator "should write in a manner natural to (him)self, a manner that expresses (his) own sense of good style (Newmark, 1988, p. 76). Therefore, in the process of 'naturalizing' the original's poetic effect while translating in the target language, Chowdhury's decision to omit any line of the original text seems acceptable.

Probably the most untranslatable part of a poem is its music. *Bidrohi* appears to be thoroughly musical if its rhythm and frequent use of onomatopoeic expressions are considered. What becomes a challenge for any translator is to recreate the music by using the rhythmic components of another language. It must be said in the first place that the rhythm remains for the most part completely untranslatable, considering the basic grammatical fact, if not anything else, that the norms of creating rhythm are not same in Bengali and English language. Even then, a partial attempt has been made in Huda's translation to 'restructure' the rhythm of the original in the translation. His rendition of the first three lines is a good example in this regard:

Hail hero, the valiant
Hail elevated is my head,
Seeing this my head the Himalayan peaks are bent and knelt.

(Huda, line 1-3)

This appears to be a well-made recreation attempt made on the three lines. Especially, the third line closely imitates the internal rhyme-scheme of the original. Hence the rhyming of *Natashir* / *Himadrir* in the original has been duplicated by 'bent'/'knelt'in the translation. Nevertheless, the attempt at duplicating the original rhyme scheme has been made only after a sort of 'stylistic modulation' has been done: in the original *Natashir* alone means both *bent and knelt*, whereas its rhyming pair *Himadrir* refers to the Himalayan peak. Therefore, it can be said that there is a sense of 'gain' in providing a second word (*knelt*) as translation of *Natashir*.

While an attempt to restructure the original rhythm in the translation is madein Huda's text, in Chowdhury's text the attempt is made not towards replicating but towards adapting the rhythm. His translation of the third line of the poem uses the /h/ sound alliteratively, which is not present in the original text –

Say, high is my head!

(Chowdhury, line 3)

Regarding the sound created by onomatopoeic words, the whole poem has ample instances where these words add to its musicality so intrinsically that omitting them would be irreparable. However, in poetry translation, such difficulties are quite commonly found and are in most cases considered untranslatable. Moreover, to overemphasize on this feature at the expense of the whole might create an imbalance (Cluysennaras cited in Bassnett, 2002, p. 84). The same

comment applies for the imaginary effect created by different sensory images. In the third stanza of the poem, a transition in tone takes place, as the rebel spirit seems to tame its rage (as articulated in the preceding lines) and to celebrate its rebellious nature instead. The transition comes with brilliant visual imagery denoting leaping and dancing in various manners–

Ami Chalo-Chanchol, Thomoki Chhomoki	*I am always-restless, frolicking-romping*
Poth jete jete chokite chomoki	*Getting caught by a sudden thought on my way*
Fing diya dei tin dol;	*Tossing and turning thrice;*
Ami chapola-chapol Hindol.	*I am a fast-moving swing.*

(Line 31-34, translated by the author)

In Chowdhury's translation, the immensely detailed visual imagery of dancing with intermittent swaying and flipping three times *(fingdiyadei tin dol/ tossing and turning thrice)* has been translated using dynamic equivalence of the words like *chomoki/thomoki; fing; chapola-chapol-*

I caper and dance as I move!

(Chowdhury, line 36)

The translator has analyzed the overall meaning of the words and the lines they belong to and has restructured in just two words – 'caper and dance'. Whereas this section in the original adds to the richness of the imagery used in this poem, in his translation, Chowdhury is seen to omit the onomatopoeic words in order to convey the intended meaning in brief. While the core meaning is successfully conveyed through Newmark's 'free translation' method, the imagery and the sound-effect is lost. Newmark observes that 'free translation' is usually "a paraphrase much longer than the original" (Newmark, 1988, p.46); Chowdhury, however, does the opposite by translating the four-line stanza in one line. This approach says that the translator emphasized on maintaining brevity instead of offering extension by means of explicative translation. On the other hand, Huda's translation is observed to keep the core meaning intact, but not at the expense of the imagery as presented in the original. In so doing, however, even if the sound-effect of the original is 'lost', the literal or word for word translation 'compensates' by offering at least the exact set of visual imagery:

I move restless, I caper and dance,
Suddenly frenzied on my way,
I swing, leap, and make three somersaults.
I'm indeed swift-moving hindol.

(Huda, line 33-36)

Another unique feature of *Bidrohi* is the use of phonemic translation of words that originate from other languages. This creates one big untranslatability issue, as in this case the translation must be done at multiple levels of meaning. Even before the translator encounters the usual difficulties of poetry translation that are in most cases created by rhyme and rhythm, the

translator must decipher the primary meaning of the line in his/her native language. After that being done, s/he is required to translate in a way that does not dismiss the special semantic effect that the line creates. In the fourth stanza of the poem, the major part of the second line consists of borrowed words from Persian, Urdu and Hindi language–

> *Ami doordam, momo praner peala hardam hain hardam varpoor maud.*
>
> *I am indomitable, My heart's cup of life is always full of liquor.*
>
> (Line 43, translated by the author)

This verse poses at least two difficulties for the translator. One, there is a mixture of four different languages in a single line. If the line is divided into two parts, the first part starts with a Bengali noun phrase *Ami doordam* (*I am indomitable*), and ends with the first punctuation mark – a comma. After the punctuation mark, the second part of the line is a combination of Bengali, Persian, Hindi and Urdu words. The second partstarts with a Bengali noun phrase *momo praner* (*my heart's*), and then continues with a Bengali borrowed noun from Persian - *Peala* (*cup*); Urdu adverb *hardam* (*always*) as used twice; Hindi verb *hain* (*is*) and adjective *Bharpoor* (*full of*); and finally ends with a Bengali noun *maud* (*alcohol*). The difficulty of translation turns to be more intense if the close regional connection among the four languages is considered. Bengali has many words borrowed from Persian and many identical ones with Hindi; for example, *Peyala* and *Bharpoor* from the line under discussion. At the same time, Urdu and Hindi are close in meaning and utterance. Because of the earlier unified state of the whole sub-continent and the resultant literary as well as cultural connection between different regions, even the origin of most of these languages matches. For example, both Hindi and Urdu are two different forms of the "Khariboli dialect" of Hindustan ("Hindi-Urdu Controversy", n.d., para 2). Hence a translator from this sub-continent might be able to decipher the meaning of all the words and understand that of the line. However, since all the languages are different, the usage of even the same word might be different in different languages. In addition to these linguistic complications, the reason why Nazrul combines four such languages in one sentence is also supposed to be one of the translator's concerns. In his essay "Nazrul-Kabye Aabri-Farsi Shabda" ("Arabian-Persian Diction in Nazrul's Poetry") Syed Ali Ashraf comments that Nazrul has used different languages not only for giving a regional flavor, but also for creating an effect of alcoholic exultation that automatically comes with the combination of these languages and that consequently strikes a sub-continental reader (Ashraf, 1991, p.305). Hence the translator can either attempt to translate the words according to the primary literal and figurative meaning of the words, or to capture the poet's aesthetic intention and overlook the remaining issues. Either way, this single line puts a challenge before the translator.

The second issue that arises from linguistic variation is that of rhythm. Nazrul not only blends four languages in this line, but also creates a brilliant rhythmic effect. Because the author has shown such dexterity, the translator's task gets even more challenging: to choose one semantic approach while not violating the original text's rhythmic effect. While the former is somehow attainable, the latter is largely accepted as quite unattainable in cases. In this line - as

is loosely understandable from the primary meaning of the words - the speaker says that he is indomitable, that his life is like a cup full of liquor. The brilliant metaphor between human life and a cup of alcoholic liquor creates a sense of indulgence in life and limitlessness of life's desires. Now it is equally notable that the rhythm of this line adds to creating this effect to a large extent. A close observation shows that the alliterative use of the sound /h/ suffuses the whole line, with the repetition of Urdu *hardam* twice. As the disyllabic word *hardam* is repeated twice with the monosyllabic word *hain* in between, it creates an internal rhyme. The irregular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables along with the internal rhyme creates a lighter mood than the rest of the poem, hence connoting the usual unstable condition due to excessive alcohol consumption; here, for the speaker it is a lifelong condition since his life itself is a cup full of liquor. Viewed from another perspective, this sound effect might also connote the kind of unbound as well as raw exhilaration that alcoholic effect creates in a human being. Such rawness of emotion is what the poet presents in different manners throughout the poem.

Overall, such movement among multiple languages, along with the connotation of the diction, contributes to the thriving tone of the poem. Therefore, a translator must attempt to translate a significant line as such. However, in Chowdhury's translation, this line has been left undone. Now a translator can take the decision not to translate a particular portion of the SL text because, as Susan Bassnett observes, "Equivalence in translation…should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version." (Bassnett, 2002, p. 36). The multilingual line might be seenas such a portion of the poem. It can then be observed that Chowdhury decided to remove a line that appeared to him largely untranslatable. Also, Bassnett's statement indicates that such approach can be made by a translator in an attempt to keep the translation free-flowing and not forced in any way. Even then, this line cannot be termed as untranslatable. A text is considered as untranslatable either when there is little or no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for an SL item; or when a similar context for the SL text is not found in the TL culture, hence creating cultural untranslatability (Bassnett, 2002, p. 38). That this line has an 'invariant core', that is, a core meaning, is beyond argument. In that case, according to Popovic's definition of translation equivalence, a kind of stylistic equivalence, that is, a kind of "functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation aiming at an expressive identity" (Popovic as cited in Bassnett, 2002, p.32) can be found between the SL and TL text. An SL-speaking translator who is supposed to decipher the meaning of all the four languages as contained in the line can at least provide an interpretative translation. In so doing, the poet's intention is also conveyed in the translation. While Chowdhury's translation is observed to avoid an interpretative translation, in Huda's translation such an attempt has been found. Huda translated the line as –

I'm irrepressible, my cup of soul is always full of elixir.

(Huda, line 45)

While this translation does not duplicate the rhythm as well as the cultural connotation that the usage of different languages in the same line offers in the original, the invariant message is communicated. Moreover, the choice of secondary diction replacing the primary ones (*soul*

for *life; elixir* for *alcohol)* can also be seen as an attempt to capture and recreate the highly emotional and exhilarated tone.

From the above discussion, it is observed that in cases of untranslatability Chowdhury mostly adheres to literal translation, phonemic translation, free translation, and adaptation - a combination of direct, oblique, and poetry-special translation techniques. He applies these techniques mostly for the sake of preserving the flow of the original text. His preference of brevity to the chance of mechanic and 'unpoetic' translation – mostly observed in case of allusions and language variations – also brings the observation that this translator's central concern was to provide a translation that remains 'faithful' to the source language (Newmark, 1088, p. 46). Such an approach does not require a translator to attend the issue of stylistic authenticity at a regular basis. At the same time, however, the translator is seen attempting to 'compensate' for the resultant overall 'loss' by offering equivalent or at least independent sound effects in the target language (as is seen in case of the first three lines of the poem). It can then, be observed that Chowdhury's translation is an example of Newmark's observation that "whether a translator gives priority to content or manner…must depend not only on the values of the particular poem, but also on the translator's theory of poetry" (Newmark, 1988, p. 166). Moreover, being one of the earliest translations of *Bidrohi*, Chowdhury's *The Rebel* has been a model for later translators (as is evident from Huda's disclaimer), which indicates that his translation is successful in building a basis for further translation. As a much later translation, Huda's translation appears to be inclined more to a recreation of the original, combining the same translation techniques as Chowdhury wherever it seemed appropriate to him. The assessment of the techniques and the usage of those is where the two translators' works become different from each other. Therefore, there are instances in the translations where the same SL textis omitted by Chowdhury but translated word for word by Huda (the case with the SL word *Elokeshe)*. Now the decision as to which approach is more effective depends entirely on the translator. As Newmark's earlier observation continues, "…no general theory of poetic translation is possible and all a translation theorist can do is to draw attention to variety of possibilities and point to successful practice…the translator has to decide whether the expressive or the aesthetic function of language in a poem or in one place in a poem is more important. Deliberately or intuitively, the translator has to decide whether the expressive or the aesthetic function of language in a poem or in one place in a poem is more important" (1988, p. 166). Thus justified, Huda's combination of the translation techniques is mostly effective in 'recreating' the SL text in and for the TL culture wherever the elements of the original text turn to be either nearly untranslatable, or if translated forcefully or omitted completely, it has to be done at the expense of any significant formative or semantic loss. Huda's translation, then, demonstrates the translator's emphasis on offering a translation that conveys the SL message to the TL reader as clearly as possible. On the other hand, Chowdhury's combination of translation techniques approach towards maintaining the 'naturalness' of the Source text in the target language. At the same time, his translation seems to remain faithful to the source text, if assessed against Newmark's suggestion "if (the translation) remains unnatural to you, you should avoid it" (1988, p.76). It can then be concluded that both the translations are

effective in overcoming the untranslatability issues of *Bidrohi.* Also, as Newmark's observation clearly gives the translator an autonomy over his/her translation, no all-encompassing as well as effective translation approach can exist for all instances of untranslatability in poetry. Now this should be acknowledged that one shortcoming of this research paper is that it analyzes only two translations of *Bidrohi* because of word and length limitation; further research on the other translations of the poem is likely to highlight other translators' approaches and bring more insights into the translator's role in overcoming untranslatability in poetry.

References

Ashraf, S.A. (1991). Nazrul Kabye Aarbi-Farsi Shabda.in Mustafa Nurul Islam. (Ed.) *Nazrul Islam: Nana Prashangya.* Dhaka, Nazrul Institute.

Bassnett, S. (2003). *Translation Studies.* New York: Routledge.

Halahala. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved Jan 20, 2018, from "https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halahala" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halahala

Hatim B. and Munday J. (2004). *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book.* New York: Routledge.

Huda, M. N. (2001). Universalization of the Rebel. *Nazrul's Aesthetics and Other Aspects.* Dhaka: Nazrul Institute.

Islam, K.N. (2012). Bidrohi. Huda M. N. (Ed.) *Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam in English Translation.* Dhaka: Nazrul Institute.

Islam, K. N. (1997). The Rebel. (K. Chowdhury, Trans.). Huda, M. N. (Ed.). (2012). *Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam in English Translation.* Dhaka: Nazrul Institute. (original work published in 1922)

Islam, K. N. (2012). The Rebel. (M. N. Huda, Trans.). *Nazrul's Aesthetics and Other Aspects.* Dhaka: Nazrul Institute. (original work published in 1922)

Landers, C. E. (2001). *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translations*. New York: Prentice-Hall International.

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

Representation of Sex-workers' Plight in Mahasweta Devi's *Bedanabala* and Rizia Rahman's *Letters of Blood*

Md. Maruf Ul Alam
University of Chittagong

Abstract

Mahasweta Devi's *Bedanabala* and Rizia Rahman's *Letters of Blood* portray the life of sex-workers in colonial Bengal and post-independence Bangladesh respectively. They are gripping tales of the marginalised lives of prostitutes. These two novels by Devi and Rahman can intimate great insight into the plight of sex-workers. Academic surveys and studies are not readily accessible or available to common people. Fiction has wider access and so novels like Mahasweta Devi's *Bedanabala* and Rizia Rahman's *Letters of Blood* can achieve what academic studies or narratives sometimes fail to do. This paper will attempt to analyse the potentials of the two novels in portraying the plight of sex-workers.

Keywords: Sex-workers, plight, brothels, narratives, representation

Prostitution is an age-old practice which has been continuing for hundreds of years all over the world. Indian subcontinent is not an exception to that though brothels are of recent origins here. Brothels were established in India during the British Colonial rule (Tahmina & Moral, 2004, p. 52). While the conditions are quite different in India now as sex-wokers have strong organizations to represent them, talking about brothels or sex-workers is still a taboo in Bangladeshi society. So it is not difficult to assume that when Rizia Rahman's *Letters of Blood* was originally published in 1978 as *Rakter Akshar* in Bengali, it received mixed reactions.

But at the same time, it was like an eye-opener to sympathetic people of the country. Both Mahasweta Devi's *Bedanabala* and Rizia Rahman's *Letters of Blood* represent the wretched lives of prostitutes or sex-workers.

Mahasweta Devi was an Indian Bengali novelist and a recipient of Sahitya Academy Award for her contribution to Bengali as well as Indian literature. She, in her novels, portrayed mainly the lives of downtrodden people. *Bedanabala* is an enthralling tale of prostitutes, yet to be known and recognised as 'sex-workers', in colonial West Bengal. The first person narrative of the novel makes it an arresting tale of lives of prostitutes in and outside brothels. The narrative begins mentioning a year in the very first sentence, 1910, the year in which the narrator was born. So, here is a tale of colonial India. The narrative starts with the story of Kamal, the narrator's mother, who escapes the 'destiny' of becoming a prostitute herself despite being abducted in her infancy by a Mashi, the owner of a whorehouse, and raised among the prostitutes. In the brothels, "a girl's great value" (Devi, 2005, p. 1). Realizing the value of girls, the inmates of brothels try to keep the girls, not the boys; which is quite opposite of the world outside the brothels. Kamal who was born to some *zamindar* (landlord) family falls prey to Did'ma. Did'ma runs a whorehouse and so hunts for pretty girls especially from rich homes or respectable households. She buys infant girls and employs them as prostitutes when they reach their puberty after a certain ritual which involves marrying the girl to a *boti*, an iron blade, before initiating her into the age-old business, prostitution. While the brothel in *Letters of Blood* is not something like the one that one finds in Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay's novels *Srikanta* or *Devdas* or the inmates in the brothel in *Letters of Blood* are not like Rajlakshmi or Chandramukhi, two prostitutes from these two novels by Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay, the characters in *Bedanabala* remind the readers of Rajlakshmi or Chandramukhi. The prostitutes in *Bedanbala* learn to read and write as well as to sing and dance which make them more alluring to their customers. One or two of them, though rarely, can manage to get a 'bandha-babu' (regular customer) who sometimes builds them a house and gives them a regular pay. But the other girls who are not so lucky live their days in miseries, get infected by sexually transmitted diseases and die. Even murders of some of them are not unlikely. Throughout their lives they remain branded as sinners but their customers, the men, do not have to bear the shame. For men, it is simply a change of taste. They go to brothels for "new flavours" and nobody brands them sinners (Devi, 2005, p. 10). A whore girl cherishes the dream of having a household, and in the hope of getting one, elopes with an eager customer only to return later when her customer-cum-lover ditches her. Mani is such an example in *Bedanabala.* When she returns after her lover betrays her, Did'ma does not want to take her back but ultimately relents giving her a sound beating. Committing suicide after being betrayed is also not uncommon in a brothel. Did'ma's own biological daughter commits suicide failing to bear the pain and insult of betrayal. Otherwise "whores die when their bodies break" (Devi, 2005, p. 6). Some of them die on the streets begging having no customers and no income due to aging. After death, "No whore gets to heaven" (Devi, 2005, p. 7). The male accomplices in their 'sin' might go to heaven, but they, the whores, will not. Such is the religious sanction.

Kamal, in the narrative, can escape the life of a prostitute but Mani fails to do so. When Did'ma says to Mani that Kamal is "not such a one" and so she does not want her to join the trade, a protest from Mani is heard, though faint (Devi, 2005, p. 27). She says, "Which girl is, Ma? Which?" (Devi, 2005, p. 27). Mani was abducted by Did'ma when she was six years old. Since she comes from a village, she has no chance of escape. Is it because she is not as beautiful as Kamal or does not come from such rich home as of Kamal's, that she lacks a chance? This question seems valid. If someone is fallen once, she is fallen forever. After Kamal's marriage with Balaram-Babu, Mani initially pays a few visits to Kamal. But later she discovers that she is unwelcome there since her presence can raise suspicion among the people of the society. Balaram-Babu does not even allow Did'ma to meet her foster daughter Kamal whom she loves so much that she has transformed herself completely. She is even unwanted to her daughter. Kamal, being married to zamindar family now, does not want her mother to visit her in fear of a scandal.

With the plot constructed in the backdrop of Swadeshi movement in colonial India, the novel *Bedanabala* presents the outlook of *swadeshis* regarding the sex-workers. *Swadeshis* do not refuse donations from the brothels. Rather they appreciate their contribution to the noble cause. Prostitutes like Satayabhama are ready to spend their hard-earned money for the cause of homeland. Brothels give shelter to the revolutionaries. But the typical mindset surfaces when the young man fails to hold back his shocked state seeing Balaram-Babu married to a girl from a brothel. He asks the 'shocked' young men, "Is just the burning of foreign goods enough? And what about the superstition heaped upon your soul?" (Devi, 2005, p. 53). It is hard to imagine what would be his reaction if he was not directly involved in the situation. But all those tall talks by Balaram in defence of marrying a girl from a brothel fall short if his treatment with his mother-in-law comes to mind. Negligence of the society of the plight of these women is evident when people like Vidyasagar and Rammohan Roy who did so many things to alleviate the predicaments of women were so forgetful of the oppression that the prostitutes endure.

Even after the death of prostitutes, their lot does not change. Their shame continues. Kaminibala Dasi cannot go to see her pregnant daughter Kamal, now that she is married in a respectable family. She cannot feed her with her own hands before her child is born. It is an unbearable pain to her. She cannot keep in touch with her since Balaram does not "want any of them coming and going" because "people will talk" (Devi, 2005, p. 42). Birth of Kamal's child Bedanabala is a happy event but it could be the very opposite if she stayed in the brothel. Phulmoti's child is unwelcome in *Letters of Blood* since the child is a 'whorechild'. Kaminibala Dasi's daughter, Kamal, escapes the inevitable lot of a whore's daughter of becoming a whore because she is not born of a whore but there is no escape for Phulmoti's daughter. Phulmoti is a whore and the destiny of her biological daughter is nothing but the life of a whore.

Some prostitutes consider leaving the trade a sin. One enters the profession performing some rites. Some fear to fall in love seeing or hearing about Taramoni murder case. Taramoni falls in love with Selim, the jockey. But she does not want to marry or have a household. She

does not like the idea of being "a mother at thirteen and an old hag at twenty" (Devi, 2005, p. 6). Lakshmidas-babu wants to 'keep' her and failing to do that, he gets her killed. Some prostitutes like Mani want to go back to their families but their families do not take them back once they are 'polluted'. Mani meets her mother and comes to know the reality of the society. Her mother cannot take her back as the society will make their life miserable. The two younger sisters of Mani will not get husbands if Mani's truth is revealed. Mani understands her foolishness meeting her mother that she cannot return home as "the police records had her name down as a professional" (Devi, 2005, p. 14).

Another cruel reality of a brothel is sexually transmitted diseases. People with filthy diseases visit the brothels with the belief that if they copulate with virgins before they reach puberty, it will cure their diseases. And "the girls rot and crumble soon after" to meet their death ultimately (Devi, 2005, p. 15). Society does not bother about the death of a prostitute, neither does law. *Letters of Blood* shows that situations have not changed even after freedom from a foreign rule.

One very interesting story in *Bedanabala* is the story of Surjomukhi. Her name was Chhoto-potli. But after she has played the role of Surjomukhi, "that named stuck" (Devi, 2005, p. 17). She becomes a Muslim and changes her name. She marries a Nawab who gives her a house and her mother is also taken care of. She is no longer a professional whore. "Chhoto-potli had been a Hindu. But Firoza Begum is someone's legally wedded wife who had neatly slipped through a loophole in the government's laws" (Devi, 2005, p. 18). But Surjomukhi's case is "one in a million" (Devi, 2005, p. 18). There is no such case as of Surjomukhi in *Letters of Blood.*

Formal education for 'whorechildren' is not available. Did'ma understands that no school will take Kamal since "she's a whore's girl" (Devi, 2005, p. 19). Even a man like Vidyasagar forgot to think about them. So in the hope of securing a better future for Kamal, Did'ma starts teaching her whatever she knows. "Did'ma was fairly fluent at reading Bengali. She was in fact addicted to reading" (Devi, 2005, p.18). She cultivates this reading habit in Kamal too. Her teaching and her love save Kamal from being a 'damned woman'. Kamal declares, "If I am made to join the trade I shall hang myself" (Devi, 2005, p. 29). But all are not as lucky as Kamal. Bedana says, "Few are as lucky as my mother and I" (Devi, 2005, p. 37).

Bedanabala is written in the first person narrative, the narrator being Bedana. While she narrates the household of Kamal from her own experiences, she relies on Mani for her stories on the brothel. The reliability of the narrator is not beyond question here. For example, Bedana says, "Ma was born in 1892" (Devi, 2005, p. 47). How does she know it? Kamal was abducted by Did'ma and her parents were never found. Badana learns the whole story of Kamal's childhood from Mani. How can Mani tell her the year of birth of Kamal? Here and there such incongruities are found in the narrative. Probably fact and fiction are intermingled here. While in *Letters of Blood,* realistic portrayal of life in a brothel is pretty evident, *Bednabala* is not free from elements of romance.

Now if we turn to the work of Rizia Rahman, who is a Bangladeshi novelist who won the prestigious Bangla Academy Literary Award and Ekushe Padak for her outstanding contribution to Bangla literature, we see that her fictional characters come mainly from the margins of the society. In her novels she has portrayed the lives of sex-workers, tribal people of Bangladesh, Arakan migrants in Bangladesh, tea-garden workers, fishermen, etc. Rahman's *Rakter Akshar*, *Letters of Blood* in English translation, is a novel about the miserable and tormented lives of women in brothels. Rizia Rahman in her "Author's Note" section of *Letters of Blood* says that she got inspiration to write this novel reading the cover story titled "The Prostitutes of Dhaka" in a weekly Bengali magazine *Bichitra* some thirty years ago. The article presented the day-to-day lives of prostitutes in brothels. The author initially decided to visit a brothel to write the novel but it was not possible for a woman from a respectable background to visit a novel as it was quite dangerous. So, in writing the novel, she had to depend on reports prepared by journalists and enlarged photos of brothels taken by the *Ittefaq* journalists. That is how she got introduced to the living areas, kitchen, bathing well, etc which helped her to portray the domestic enclosures of the sex-workers efficiently.

The novel begins with the description of a typical morning in a brothel. A typical day starts with quarrels, screams, and obscenities in a 'whorehouse'. Verbal abuses ring in ears of all who are in a queue at the common toilet. First of all, the readers are introduced with Golapjan, an inmate of Golapipotti brothel, who was once a prostitute, later to become a 'madam' and now a destitute. She now crawls about outside the doors of prostitutes and begs. After Golapjan, Sakina appears on the scene. Several generations of Sakina are in the trade, the flesh trade. "Stale green putrid water" of the brothel well presents a dark side of it (Rahman, 2018, p. 4). Mashi says that the well is full of rotting human blood (Rahman, 2018, p. 5). Murder is a common phenomenon in a brothel. At this stage, Kusum, a fourteen-year-old undernourished girl, appears and a truth about this age-old profession is unfolded. Flesh is the biggest capital in a brothel, charming rounded flesh. Kusum does not have that capital and very often she has to starve. She is not an independent prostitute and if she does not get a customer, she has to starve. Kalu, a goon in the brothel, bought her and she is still under his control. On the contrary, Shanti's fortune is on the rise. Like Shanti, the other prostitutes Jahanara, Bokul, and Manu are also well-off. They can afford meat twice a day and can bathe everyday while Kusum cannot sometimes afford a bath a week or even a month. One has to buy water for a bath. The skinny girl who can hardly eat one single meal a day cannot afford water for a bath. All these portray the miserable sanitary conditions in a brothel. Here and there, faint voices of resistance are heard. These voices are suppressed mercilessly. For example, after two days' starvation, when Kusum gives Thika Mashi, a woman who runs errands for the inmates of the brothel, one taka that she stole from a customer to buy her *Muri,* Kalu starts beating her because she is still his slave and can have no independent income. She is a 'chhukri' here. A chukri as a sex-worker is virtually bonded to her madam or her dalal, who pays an advance to the agent or to the sex-worker's relatives for her services (Kotiswaran, 2012, p. 142). Kusum raises her voice and declares that she is also a human being who gets hungry. Not only the goons and madam of the brothel but also the customers torture the girls there. A wealthy sadist customer

of Shanti once pressed a burning cigarette on her skin, not out of anger but out of lust. She still bears the scar. The girls in the brothel are at the receiving end of all the inhuman tortures. Girls who hail from different religious and social backgrounds often fight among themselves and murder is not even an unlikely outcome. They can fight over a *dalpuri* or a fistful of rice. In their competition to win customers, they can be murderous too. Such is the grim reality in a brothel.

Letters of Blood introduces the readers to the terrible reality of women trafficking in Bangladesh. Some girls are bought and sold even for a meagre amount of ten taka. Sometimes poor parents sell their daughters to the goons like Hiru Sardar in *Letters of Blood.* In other instances, girls land in a brothel cheated by their lovers who after satisfying their lust, sell them. Kidnappers sometimes kidnap the girls to sell them in brothels. Girls or women sometimes even join the trade voluntarily to support their family. Nalini Jameela (2005) says that she joined the trade after her husband's death to support her children (p. 23). Often illiterate and poor women have no other alternative to this. The novel shows how politicians and the law enforcers have their shares in the trade. Brothels are dark spots in civilised societies but the visitors are sometimes the so-called civilised ones who perpetuate the trade. In the novel, Piru is the representation of being victimised by the extreme lust of predatory male dominant society. She is only eleven and is sold for only twenty five taka. She has to bear the brutalities of men and her childhood is destroyed. Rizia Rahman has done an extraordinary job here in depicting the contradictions of a so-called civilised society.

Motherhood, otherwise, so relished in the society is a menace in a brothel. Phulmoti's life in the brothel becomes quite miserable after her giving birth to a baby girl. She loses her customers and fails to manage food both for herself and her infant daughter. To avoid pregnancy, girls buy Codopyrin tablets from Mannan's shop. This tablet makes their life miserable as it gives them intolerable headaches. Sometimes it is so intolerable that girls go mad or even hang themselves. Kazi Shaheb, the owner of the rooms in the brothel, shows no mercy to Phulmoti. He threatens her to vacate the room if she cannot pay the rent. Kazi Shaheb who is apparently a religious man now, was a regular visitor of the brothel before. Here he is a representative of predatory patriarchy. He loves his daughters but sells others' daughters to ensure extra income. Rizia Rahman's mastery in creating the character of Kazi is really commendable.

Women often come to the trade because of "negative circumstances" (Tahmina & Moral, 2004, p. 3). Moti, an inmate of Golapipotti, lands there after being raped in a Hindu-Muslim riot. All other members of her family were killed. Bokul, a character in the novel, was raped and tortured by Pakistanis and their local collaborators during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. After independence, the society does not accept her and so she has come to Golapipotti. *Letters of Blood* shows another facet of reality about plight of Hindu widows in Bangladesh. Mashi whose real name was Saraswati comes from a Brahmin household. She was married off at nine and became a widow the next year. Once "puberty suddenly [has] overflowed the banks of her body", her elder sister's husband makes physical relation with her (Rahman, 2018, p.

42). This arouses "a new desire" in her and she elopes with a lower-caste man who ultimately abandons her (Rahman, 2018, p. 42). The novel shows how Hindu marriage law fails to protect her and as a protest she never takes a Hindu customer.

In *Letters of Blood,* Yasmin is the most shocking but realistic creation. She is a rape victim of the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. Kamal, a freedom fighter and a friend of Yasmin's brother, took shelter in Yasmin's house. The domestic help Ali informed the Pakistanis about the hideout of Kamal. Pakistani invading force killed her parents, sisters and brothers and abducted her to torture for months in their camps. Kamal, somehow escaped. After the independence of Bangladesh, the rape victims were declared *Birangana* which means 'war-heroine'. But the society did not accept many of the victims. In Yasmin's words, they actually became "barangana" (Rahman, 2018, p. 106). The women who were raped by Pakistani soldiers and their local collaborators during the nine months of the Liberation War "encountered grave discrimination in post-war Bangladesh, as did their children" (Schendel, 2009, p. 173). Yasmin's paternal and maternal uncles refuse to keep any relation with her but her paternal uncle arranges her marriage with a greedy man who after selling her paternal property and sharing the money with her uncle starts showing his true colours to her. The man was already married when he married Yasmin. Now he forces Yasmin to sleep with other businessmen and officials so that he can get contracts from them. Finally, she leaves the man and goes to the brothel since she was reluctant to yield her body for the benefit of others. The real shock comes to her when she meets Kamal at the brothel. Kamal's turning into a corrupt beneficiary of independent Bangladesh becomes unbearable to Yasmin. To save Kamal, Yasmin's whole family had to pay a price. Her life has become a living hell. She hits Kamal in a fury. That is a sort of new beginning of her protest against injustice to her. Delwar, a young social activist, visits her in the brothel and kindles the revolutionary spirit in Yasmin. When Hiru brings a girl named Golapi to the brothel and tries to rape her along with some of his friends, Yasmin resists them and is killed in turn by Hiru. Thus, her voice has been silenced.

Among the disenfranchised people, the sex-workers are probably the worst victims of oppression. With the ever increasing poverty in East Pakistan and later Bangladesh, the number of sex-workers grew. Women land in brothels due to different reasons. Sometimes they come to the brothels voluntarily when they are forsaken by their near ones like their families or their husbands or lovers. Some of them are sold in the brothels after their abduction and rape. Famine and river erosion also cause tremendous disasters in the lives of women. Some of them even support their families in their villages under false impression that they work in the garments factory or they work as domestic help, etc. Some of them even elope with their customers but once their customers are done with them, they have to return to their former abode, the brothel. "Often women join the trade on their own, driven by poverty, lack of livelihood opportunities and social pressures or negative circumstances" (Tahmina & Moral, 2004, p. 3). The society does not accept them though they contribute to the economy. They are very vulnerable to diseases too. Sexually transmitted diseases claim their life. If they are sick, they can hardly go to the doctors. Sometimes goons kill them and loot their property

but the police take no actions. The police are actually "one of the main links in the chain of power" that runs the brothels (Tahmina & Moral, 2004, p. 53). Such is the terrible reality of sex-workers in Bangladesh.

While *Letters of Blood* portray the lived experiences of women in a brothel in independent Bangladesh, *Bedanabala*, introduces the readers to subhuman status of sex-workers in colonial Bengal. Apart from being engaging novels, *Letters of Blood* and *Bedanabala* have potentials to become historical documents as well as functional narratives in sociology. What makes these two novels special is that they familiarize the readers with the struggles of sex-workers without exhausting them with academic jargons and details. They can even be useful in developing an understanding of the psychological tensions of sex-workers. So, fictional narratives like *Bedanabala* and *Letters of Blood* can help to create a more humanistic space and attitude for some of the most wretched people in our society, the sex-workers.

References

Debi, M. (2005). *Bedanabala: Her life, her times* (S. Banerjee, Trans.). Calcutta: Seagull Books.

Jameela, N. (2011). *The autobiography of a sex worker* (J. Devika, Trans.). Chennai: Westland Books.

Kotiswaran, P. (2012). *Dangerous sex, invisible labor: Sex work and the law in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Rahman, R. (2018). *Letters of blood: A novel* (A. Sinha, Trans.). New York: Seagull Books.

Schendel, W. V. (2010). *A history of Bangladesh*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tahmina, Q. A., & Moral, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Sex-workers in Bangladesh, livelihood: at what price?* Dhaka: Society for Environment and Human Development.

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

The Exploration of Human Alter Ego in Animals: An Evaluation of Ted Hughes's Animal Poems

Md. Abdur Rashid
University of Science and Technology Chittagong

Kazi Shahidul Islam
Bangladesh Army International University of Science & Technology (BAIUST)

Abstract

Ted Hughes, inarguably one of the greatest poets of the 20th century, occupies an unparalleled position in contemporary English poetry chiefly because of hispoetics of animal imagery that has so far been approached from different perspectives. This paper focuses on Hughes's representative poems and puts forth the theory that his *arts poetica* actually develops from two simultaneous feelings, firstly his conviction in pristine animal energy, and secondly, his disillusionment about the humanization of man through the suppression of his primeval energy. These diametrical feelings make Hughes speak in favour of the suppressed elements of the psyche which alone promise resilience in the face of uncaring reality. Hughes thinks the civilizing ideologies actually result in the subversion of the primal imperviousness of the alter ego which is spontaneously manifested in non-human beings. A corollary of this paper is that Hughes's signature poems encompassing 'The Hawk in the Rain', 'The Jaguar', 'Hawk Roosting', 'Pike', 'Snowdrop, 'Second Glance at a Jaguar' etc. and the Crow Poems make more sense when studied with reference to human alter ego represented through the poet's conscious delineation of non-human instincts.

Keywords: Ted Hughes, animal imagery, primal instincts, alter ego

In the Hollywood film *Hulk* (2003) and its sequel *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), Hulk, the male protagonist functions as the alter ego of Bruce Banner, a socially withdrawn and precocious

atomic physicist who physically transforms into a living behemoth under some negative emotional stress. This alter ego imperceptibly inhabiting in Banner's personality appears as the personification of rage and pure stamina which ordinary people around him watch in fright and cannot but cringe as Banner the vulnerable human figure switches to Hulk the indomitable monster. It is as if the monstrosity is hidden as the alter ego of Banner and can be called to action under circumstances. Both the films seem to suggest that the vulnerability of humans can be balanced with something non-human. Actually, the idea of superheroes in film industries across the world dominates public imagination to the extent that monstrosity has acquired metaphorical dimensions of all that is good and evil. As a whole, animals have always been the human subject to solve existential dilemma. Once the subject has been chosen, the unbridled desires explode to surface, and many things that are usually hidden find themselves rushed into the open (Sharma and Sharma, 2015). Ted Hughes's representative animal poems (or poems illustrating animal instincts) like 'The Thought-Fox', 'The Hawk in the Rain', 'The Jaguar', 'Hawk Roosting', 'Tiger-Psalm', 'Pike', 'Snowdrop, 'And the Falcon Came','Second Glance at a Jaguar' 'Thrushes', etc. and the Crow Poems anthologized in his successive poetry collections celebrate the dark forces and vivacity of nature and animal world.These might be the "couple of dozen poems" that, Anthony Thwaite (2003) projects in his review of Hughes's *Collected Poems* (2003), " will last a long time" because of their "not enough smell of the human—too much messing-about with myths and magic". Through these poems, Hughes explores an alter ego impervious to the contrary rules and manifested by animals and birds and this alter ego, as Hughes thinks, is essentially an aspect of human nature that remains suppressed in conformity with external reality. Disappointed by man's disposition to conceal the primal attributes and more by his epiphany of human vulnerability to natural forces, Hughes turned to non-human life forms for the unrestrained expressions of inner power, for the independent alter ego immanent in the Jungian unconscious that he seems to have always craved for in his early years. This realization follows an unprecedented psychosomatic impact, which, he admits in a letter to his sister Olwyn Hughes, has madehis existence "confined & stunted". In this letter from the late summer of 1962, Hughes frankly regrets the inextricable dichotomy of his self: "What I am is completely a consequence of certain ideas which I arrived at quite rationally & imposed like laws" (Hughes 2007, p. 204). To him, both religious belief and rationality in different ways are destructive to man's unity with nature (Madhukumar, 2011). This distancing from the natural world causes a rift between the conscious apparent and the unconscious intrinsic.

In the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious, man cannot thrust aside what comes from the external reality. Thus his dualistic intervention results in a rather vulnerable state which denies resilience and survival. In other words, the sense of despair about the consequences of external intervention with the spontaneous self has made Hughes aware of the unbridled spirit of animals that exhibit the best exemplars of vitality, resilience and survival. Exempt from institutional rules, Hughes' animals are as they are, roving with regalia. But human life in the era of civilization is under the sway of codes and conducts that fundamentally require suppression of the primal self, resulting in a division between his natural instincts and cultural ego.

In view of this realization about limitations and weaknesses imposed on man by civilization, Hughes's self-consciousness seems to be like that of Jake Sully inthe film *Avatar* (2009). A paraplegic former marine, Jake is seen watching intently a sprightly fight, as the movie opens, between two tigers that probably makes him more aware of his physical handicap. Eventually he overcomes his disability, though not in his human form, as he eventually agrees to take on an avatar to appear among the Na'vi, 10-foot tall, blue-skinned, sapient humanoids who live in harmony with nature and worship a mother goddess called Eywa. The alter ego Jake gains in his avatar of the Na'vi figure – a human mind in an alien body activated – gives him the only chance to overcome his lameness. Vis-à-vis, Hughes' simultaneous awareness of human weaknesses and his witnesses of animals flourishing in their original spirits converge at a certain point where the first person "I" can be taken for the poet himself. Hughes himself too considers of his poems as some sorts of animals. In his edited work *Poetry in the Making* (1967), he says that poems have

> …their own life, like animals, by which I mean that they seem quite separate from any person, even from their author, and nothing can be added to them or taken away without maiming and perhaps even killing them. And they have certain wisdom. They know something special.... Something perhaps which we are very curious to learn may be my concern has been to capture not animals particularly and not poems, but simply things which have a vivid life of their own, outside mine (p. 15).

Thus, the confined self of the poet seeks its avatar in poems which are analogous to animals so that only an animal or a poem boasts an indivisible existence and the poet's self is regrettably stripped of his more genuine alter ego by his civilizing ideas. Therefore, we find Hughes discontented with the kind of humanness generally dignified by the suppression of inner forces for outer refinement and embracement of restrictions, and eventually turns to the exemplars of the genuine strength of life – the animals. He believes the more suppressed an evil, the more devilish it becomes. Thus while animals revel in their pristine energy instinctively, man suppresses it and makes a devil of it. When man's alter ego surfaces at the cue, it becomes far more destructive. In 'Tiger-Psalm', Hughes shows that the tiger limits itself to biological desiderata whereas the modern killing machine is geared to the barbaric act of killing in undetermined numbers:

> The tiger
> Kills frugally, after close inspection of the map.
> The machine-guns shake their heads,
> They go no chattering statistics.
> The tiger kills by thunderbolt:
> God of his own salvation.
> The machine-guns
> Proclaim the Absolute, according to morse,
> In a code of bangs and holes that makes men frown. ('Tiger-Psalm': 8-16)

There is a contrast between killing instincts of the human being who mows down lives in great numbers with his machine-guns and that of the tiger that zeros in on its biological need for killing. While proclivity to kill as an alter ego remains repressed in the human unconscious but erupts with the direst consequences, killing is a conscious, limited act of necessity for the beast.

Remarkably enough, Hughes' inclination towards animals and their instincts is manifested in his earlier poems where he celebrates the unyielding nature of animals. He thinks the alter ego embodying vitality and imperviousness lies in the deep recess of the personal unconscious located at the fringe of consciousness, and the preeminence of this facet culminates in the creation of expressions. His credence that the precedence of his unconscious would "compensate with an increased activity" is manifested in 'The Thought-Fox' which is considered to be his *arspoetica*entwining "the *act* of writing with the *action* of the animal written about" (Webb, 2013, p. 35). He sits in the midnight 'beside the clock's loneliness' with a blank page and conjures up the fox 'deeper within darkness' culminating in an animal-poetry synergy:

> Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox
> It enters the dark hole of the head.
> The window is starless still; the clock ticks,
> The page is printed. ('The Thought-Fox': 21-24)

As the poem progresses, the fox emerges gradually from obscurity to conspicuousness from the dark unconscious mind of the poet and gets a more concrete shape, in a printed form so that it eventually pervades the eidetic structure of Hughes' consciousness, manifesting the poet's own alter ego in parenthetical distinctness, which he admits candidly: "…e*very time*I read the*poem*the*fox*comes*up*again*out of the darkness*andstepsintomyhead. AndI suppose*that long after I am gone, as long as a copy of the poem exists, every time anyone reads it the fox will get up somewhere out*inthe*darkness and come walking towards them (qtd. in Lawless, 2009, Pp. 11-12).* The ubiquitous accompaniment of the fox with each reading of the poem after its inceptive descent from the darkness into the conscious, into the language, facilitates for the poet the analogical apprehension of 'the other' – the alter ego – as Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, discovers it in light of live experience:

> My alter ego is all of those accidental empirical qualities that I bracket off in order to uncover the eidetic structure of my consciousness. In addition, my alter ego is all of those possibilities that I imagine for myself that allow me to delineate my sphere of ownness. I am who I am by virtue of my relation with my own ego. It is through a fundamental split in my ego that I am. It is through a process of disowning the alter ego that I intuit my ownness. In order to apperceive another, I merely reproduce this experience of disowning to redefine myself, my ownness, in relation to my alter ego. The alter ego is not only "demonstrated precisely within the experiencing intentionality of my ego" in the sense that it is constituted through a relationship with my ego, but also in the sense that it is experienced in the intuition of my ego itself. (qtd. in Oliver, 1998, p. 138)

The alter ego immanent in Hughes' personal unconscious is equidistant between the exterior or spatial world and the interior or psychic objective world (Ellenberger, 1970) and is confirmed both by his intentionality in perceiving the animals and, at the same time, by his awareness of the sophisticated ego that he as a social being has to maintain in the external reality. Apparently, he is a citizen of the civilized world, but deep in his heart he fosters the desire to be adamant and resilient like the animals that he comes across. The contrasted realizations are especially noted in 'The Hawk in the Rain', where the speaker feels his weaknesses in the face of nature's rage in comparison with the sustainability of the hawk:

> I drown in the drumming ploughland, I drag up
> Heel after heel from the swallowing of the earth's mouth,
> From clay that clutches my each step to the ankle
> With the habit of the dogged grave, but the hawk
> Effortlessly at height hangs his still eye.
> His wings hold all creation in a weightless quiet,
> Steady as a hallucination in the streaming air.('The Hawk in the Rain': 1-7)

In this poem, "I" suggests a kind of individual consciousness about the speaker's discovery of the effervescent self in andreminds him of his effete self as he sets his expressions "I drown" against "the hawk hangs" in time of such life-threatening natural phenomena as man-devouring wet earth from excessive precipitation and thrashing storms. The theme of this poem is the contrast between human weakness and animal's vivacity. At the same environmental context while the poet is walking laboriously on the ground, a hawk perched at higher and higher ignoring the heavy rainfall and storm. It is essentially contrasting that during storm a man fights against the mud on earth, feeling afraid lest he would be swallowed by the ground. The implication is that during danger man seeks shelter but animals like hawk shows courage to overcome and face it. In case of the speaker in 'The Hawk in the Rain', we can feel his emotions - a combination of envy, reverence and awe to his own circumstances in relation to that of the hawk, if we get at his point of view as a "sea drowner" and his description of the hawk as both a hanger of a polestar of endurance and will power and having "wings (that) hold all creation in a weightless quiet. The speaker definitely yearns for the freedom, power and peace that the hawk seemingly possesses. Walder (1985) asserts that through all the poems called animal poems, Hughes celebrates the pristine energy of his animals, birds or fishes to create a reference to "human suffering, creativity and survival". Walder continues: "If Hughes explores 'extreme' emotions in his poetry, he does so under the pressure of a vision which is constantly aware of the massive ebb and flow of natural forces underlying all life" (p.91).

In 'Hawk Roosting', the poet possesses the shape and mentality of a resting hawk and declares his control over the world with perfect satisfaction. Sitting on the top of a tree he expresses:

> I took the whole of Creation
> Produce my foot, my feather:
> Now I hold Creation in my foot
> Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly-
> I kill where I please because it is all mine.
> There is no sophistry in my body;
> My manners are tearing off heads-('Hawk Roosting': Lines 10-16)

He directly flies to his prey, pierces with his beak and claws and kills his prey. Besides the hawk assumes that he is the center of all creations, means all have been created to satisfy his hunger. The hawk also confesses that he has none of men's 'falsifying dream', no self-deception or doubt like men. Rawson (1965) regards 'Hawk Roosting' as a glorification of totalitarianism and fascism. His hawk in "Hawk Roosting" is taken as a symbol of fascism. However, in an interview with Faas (1971), Hughes attributes Nature complex in its mechanism to the whole situation of hawk versus human. Hughes continues:

> I intended some Creator like Jehova in Job but more feminine, when Christianity kicked the devil out of Job what they actually kicked out was Nature . . . and Nature became the devil. He does not sound like Isis, mother of gods, which he is. He sounds like Hitler's familiar spirit. There is a line in the poem almost verbatim from Job (Faas, 1971, p. 8).

Therefore, the hawk is a spokesman for nature and he is vastly superior to men who are victims of self-deception and dissociation. Similarly, in the poem 'And the Falcon Came', the falcon boasts of "gunmetal feathers" that "would not falter." The regality of the falcon masters seems to be capable of "dividing the mountain, of hurling the world away behind him," "of grasping complete the crux of rays," and also of "plucking out the ghost/And feeding it to his eye-flame." The falcon radiates strength and determination to reform reality as per its convenience:

> Of stripping down the loose, hot flutter of earth
> To its component parts
> For the reconstitution of Falcon. ('And the Falcon Came': 15-17)

In his eulogy of the animal spirit, Hughes is constantly aware of man's weaknesses in natural circumstances. He regrets that man's pursuit of rationality has the power that cannot be contained or exhibited as a human being becomes compatible with non-human beings that intrinsically enjoy freedom of action in the fullest measure. This power and resilience Hughes conceived in the separate world of animals whose unrestrained behavioral traits actually embody human alter egos lie repressed in the unconscious in conformity with civilizing theories, which eventually leads to depraved conditions and hence the concealment of original characteristics under the veneer of sophistication.

Such man-animal contrast is seen in 'Pike'as well, where Hughes shows how human is different from the pike, a malevolent species of fish, act—while we are silent and with hair frozen on our heads, the fish lie 'too immense to stir'. In the poem 'Pike', there were three pikes in a glass jar and the strongest one of those three had eaten the other two, which were physically weaker and smaller than it. On another occasion, the speaker found one pike mercilessly killing another. In this poem the speaker describes pike with its brutal and vicious nature. By nature, a pike tries to establish itself superior to another which is deeply rooted by birth in every creature. And such survival and supremacy of animal world is supported by Darwinian determinism that one's strength determines another's fate; only the stronger can survive. Bentley (1998) asserts that in the poem 'Pike', the pike elaborates a similar intuition to the jaguar, but with more subtly and irony (p.16). Here brutal human alter egos are tantamount to the killers from the egg, with a malevolent aged grin characteristic of 'submarine delicacy and horror'. Equally impressed by the beauty of pike, Hughes evinces how in one simple, often overlooked animal exist two profundities of existence, the good and the bad, analogically implying that this duality or double standard nature can be camouflaged in human persona too. While trying to keep pikes as pets behind glass, to no avail, the poet discovered the cannibalistic lifestyle and gruesome aggressiveness in the wild fish.

Likewise, in 'The Jaguar', Hughes reads the untamed instincts of the jaguar locked in a cage at a zoo. The poet is in awe of the jaguar's briskness and rage perennially exhibited in defiance of confinement. While the apes are seen yawning out of fatigue or boredom; the parrots are busy showing off their colorful features to draw the attention of the visitors who might throw a nut towards them; and the boa-constrictor, a ferocious serpent is found motionless, the Jaguar, in its own merit, asserts his indomitable existence and presence 'hurrying enraged' in his case. Even the tiger and the lion of the zoo look tired and lethargic and perhaps they have lost faith in their inborn power. But the jaguar is full of optimism and tenacity to break free of his physical captivity and exhibits his bestial furies to the crowd that stands and stares. The jaguar is careless of his confinement and he denies the existence of any case around him. Actually, Hughes' s animal poems with 'The Jaguar'in question "are more open to the charge of naïve anthropomorphism precisely because their tendency to melodramatic, all-too-human, insistence on the inhuman; a point Costello goes on to acknowledge in commenting on the ultimately ideal, or Platonic, significance of Hughes' jaguar" (Bell, 2006, p. 178).

In another animal poem, 'Thrushes', the birds' (small to medium-sized ground living birds that feed on insects) legs are elusive but the poet discovers their 'dark deadly eye', swift movement and single-minded purpose in action. When they see their prey, they indulge in no indecisiveness, no laziness and no postponing and think of nothing except the target prey. The poet compares their efficiency of preying with that of sharks not inclined towards fame or appreciation. Their swiftness and action contrast with man's habit of planning, thinking and patience, means they are indeed different from an average man who spends years before working on an action. Here Hughes's obsession is clear for the exploration of swiftness, energy and efficiency as alter egos of human. Furthermore, Hughes posits the inner world as the

receptacle of dispositions, the source of motion and vitality – a world that humans suppress as if it did not exist. Hughes' point is that to suppress the beastly vigor means to become subject to lurking detrimental forces.

There is a shared nature between the human and animal world, and such discovery becomes more conspicuous with the view of poet himself regarding his poetry, "I think of poems as a sort of animals", (Hughes, 1967, p. 15). This concept is mirrored by BBC poetry (2013) where it is said that Hughes poetry attempts to more sense of human world forced by primitive and animal forces. Though animals are denizens of their own world generally characterized by what is not human, they were of tremendous importance to Hughes from the beginning, living representatives of another world, 'the true world' (Sagar, 1983, Pp. 2-13). Hughes took up poetry as the expression of whatever humanly characteristics he figured out in non-human beings. Hughes' inclination to non-human beings representing the suppressed elements in the human unconscious signifies his interspecies awareness speculating attributive similarities between the species.

However, Hughes does not point out the genesis of similarities of basic instincts of humans and non-humans; rather he appreciates animal's obdurate, resilient, and resistive faces that, he believes, can be developed in the human personality too. He refers to the pristine energy that promises resilience if let unbridled against external adversities and threats. This energy is underpinned by the animal instincts lying in the inner world of humans but invariably finding paradigmatic expressions in the behaviors of animals.

In his academic novella *The Lives of Animals*, Coetzee (1999) introduced his focalized character, Elizabeth Costello, as committed to the freedom of animals, who professes exploiting Descartes' dictum "Cogito ergo sum": "To be alive is to be a living soul. An animal—and we are all animals—is an embodied soul" (p. 33). She further points out that Hughes shows us how to bring the living body into being within ourselves (p. 53). When we read the jaguar poem, when we recollect it afterwards in tranquility, we are for a brief while the jaguar. He ripples within us, he takes over our body, and he is with us.

As Hughes undertook his exploration into "the tensions and connections between our inner nature and the external nature, in both of which he "believed that we must find a way to be at home" (Gifford, 2009, p. 7), he found that the basic human alter egos could be unveiled by analogizing the instincts of non-human living beings like a hawk, a jaguar and a fish with those of man. But as Hughes reveres stubborn survival against the odds (Morrison, 2011), he cannot accept the idea that man should check his genuine vitality for the sake of conformity to external rules of nature denying what comprises the real self. Because of the ignorance or suppression of pristine stamina, man has been rendered vulnerable to hardships and weaknesses that come to shape his existence as a passive being. Matheikal (2007) illustrates Hughes saying:

> That modern man has lost faith in the old rituals and dogma but has not found any alternative which can contain the violent energy. Hence, he suppresses this energy into the deep resources of the unconscious by different means such as rationalization and philosophisation. The more suppressed an evil, the more devilish it becomes. Thus, while animals revel in their pristine energy instinctively, man suppresses it and makes a devil of it. (p. 138)

The savage and homicidal self-exposed in Hughes' animal poems is what lies in the unconscious that sometimes invokes in man intolerance and aggression towards others.

Hughes' adoration for the obdurate human alter ego found in animals is undermined by criticism of his delineation of the images of violence. Hughes seems to make it clear that animals do not harbor bellicosity out of deliberate malice as humans do. Even like humans, the animals have never learnt to suppress their unyielding, aggressive inner self. Ingrained in their nature is the will to challenge adversities, to wander in the horizon of freedom, and to respond to their Thanatos—the force that negates all such attempts to establish boundaries separating individual from self from Atman (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 104). Hughes' point is that the suppressed human alter egos are spontaneously manipulated by animals like the jaguar and the hawk—all endowed with Thanatos, which we all carry within us (Sorrell, 2009, p. 104) but which we cannot utilize for our own protection. Therefore, Hughes ultimately search salvation for human through the spirit of non-humanistic creatures and uses animals as metaphor.

References

Arad, A., and Feige, K. (Producers), Lee, A. (Director). (2003). *Hulk* (film), USA: Marvel Studios

Arad, A., and Feige, K. (Producers). (2008). Leterrier, L. (Director). *The Incredible Hulk* (film). USA: Marvel Studios

Bell, M. (2006). What Is It Like to Be a Nonracist? Costello and Coetzee on the Lives of Animals and Men.In J. Poyner (ed.), *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual,* Ohio University Press, Ohio,

Bentley, P. (1998). *The Poetry of Ted Hughes: Language, Illusion & Beyond,* Abington, UK, & New York, USA: Routledge,

Cameron, J., Landau, J. & Wilson, C. (Producers). (2009). Cameron, J. (Director). *Avatar* (film). USA: Lightstorm Entertainment

Coetzee, J. M. (1999). *The Lives of Animals.* New Jersey & West Sussex: Princeton University Press

Ellenberger, F. H. (1970). *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, New York: Basic Books

Faas, E. (1971). *Interview with Ted Hughes, 'Ted Hughes* and *Crow',* London Magazine 10:10

Gifford, T. (2009).*Ted Hughes* .Abington, UK, & New York, USA: Routledge

Hughes, T. (ed.). (1967). *Poetry in the Making: An Anthology of Poems and Programs from Listening and Writing*, London: Faber and Faber

Hughes, T. (2003).*Collected Poems,* ed. Paul Keegan, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,

Hughes, T. (2007).*Letters,* ed. Christopher Reid. GR Street, London: Faber and Faber

Lawless, J. (2009).*Clearing the Tangled Wood: Poetry as a Way of Seeing the World. Bethesda,* Dublin & Palo Alto: Academica Press

Matheikal, T. (2007).*English Poetry from John Donne to Ted Hughes,* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd.

Madhukumar, V. (2011). 'Ted Hughes's Poetry —The Problem of the Evil of Self-Consciousness', *Language in India,* Vol. 11:3. (Pp. 391-400)

Morrison, B. (2011). Ways With Words: Ted Hughes catches the animal within. *The Telegraph*, 09 Jul 2011. (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/ways-with-words/8623527/Ways-With-Words-Ted-Hughes-catches-the-animal-within.html)

Oliver, K. (1998). The Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity. In Tymieniecka, A. T. (ed.) *Phenomenology of Life and the Human Creative Condition,* Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers

Rawson, C. J. (1965). 'Ted Hughes: A Reappraisal', *Essays in Criticism*, Volume 15, (Pp. 82-84)

Sharma, S. and Sharma, V. (2015). Symbolic Significance of Hughes' Animals: Psychological Interpretations and Overtones, *European Academic Research*, Vol. III, Issue 6, (Pp. 7074-7088)

Sagar, K. (ed.). (1983). *Hughes and His Landscape,* in: *The Achievement of Ted Hughes,* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Sorrell, S. (2009). *Depression as a Spiritual Journey.* OBE, UK: O Books (an imprint of John Hunt Publishing Ltd.), p. 104.

Thwaite, A. (2003). How huge was Ted Hughes? Ted Hughes: Collected Poems ed by Paul, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3605362/How-huge-was-Ted-Hughes-Ted- Hughes-Collected-Poems-ed-by-Paul-Keegan.html

Walder, D. (1985). *Ted Hughes*, London: Methuen

Webb, L. (2013). Mythology, Mortality and Memorization: Animal and Human Endurance in Hughes' Poetry. In M. Wormald, Neil R. & T. Gifford (eds.), *Ted Hughes: From Cambridge to Collected*, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Pp. 33-47).

Zimmerman, M. E. (1994). *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity,* California & London: University of California Press

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

Edna's "Moments of Being" and "Wild Zone" of Female Sexuality: A Gynocritical Study of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

Jannatul Ferdoush
ASA University Bangladesh

Abstract

This paper studies Kate Chopin's reinterpretation of female sexuality and personal autonomy in *The Awakening* through the lens of Elaine Showalter's Gynocriticism. It argues that Edna's struggle with the traditional idea of female sexual abstention, self-sacrifice, and silence symbolizes her insatiable desire to redefine female identity. The articulation of her overt sexuality in the novella offers a new gateway of understanding a 'female self'. Edna's physical autonomy awakens her to a subversive, compelling, dynamic and liberating "wild" female self within. Edna in her journey into the untamed zone of sexuality through "moments of being" catches a glimpse of the forbidden trajectory of self-knowledge. She yearns to reach her selfhood through these utterly individual moments of awareness, intense power, beauty and personal significance. The unfolding of her female interiority reveals a strong connection between wildness of female eros and creativity. Chopin identifies this so called evil, unrestraint sexuality as an elixir of woman empowerment. Edna's wandering into her sexual wilderness embodies a new female archetype who writes her own story of resistance and power through her body. Edna's gradual alienation from androcentric idea of chastity, marriage, motherhood, her celebration of female body, and the final rejection of 'happy-ever-after reality' evoke a volcanic eruption of a new femininity in the female literary tradition.

Keywords: Gynocriticism, wild zone, moments of being, sexual emancipation, woman empowerment

Kate Chopin's novel *The Awakening* is seen as the landmark work of early feminism. It is one of the earliest American novels that focus on women's issues without condescension. In this novel, Chopin records psychosexual diversity of a female mind who struggles to free her own mind, body and soul from the confines of male domination and yearns for establishing a subjective identity. The novel centers upon Edna, a woman who exceeds her obligatory female roles in search of her 'true self' and 'genuine desire'. Though she is introduced in the beginning of the novel as a happy housewife with two boys and a rich, ideal husband, she finds no contentment in her traditional role of a dutiful wife, a loving mother, a gracious hostess or a dependable friend. This internal unrest coupled with her experiences of one summer in Grand Isle, surged with her interactions with a few catalysts drives her onto a vague, forbidden journey of discovering her true self. Her sensuous quest creates a new identity of a woman who is neither a wife nor a mother. Her struggle with the traditional idea of female sexual abstention, self-sacrifice, and silence symbolizes her insatiable desire to redefine female identity. The articulation of Edna's overt sexuality awakens her to a subversive, compelling, dynamic and liberating "wild" female self within. Edna breaks her silence and creates her own story of resistance and power through her body. Edna in her journey into the untamed zone of her sexuality through "moments of being" catches a glimpse of "women's truth"; the truth that refuses to assert her self-identity only through pre-determined role of sex negating the 'essential feminity'. The individual moments of intense power, beauty and personal significance that she experiences with awareness and personal intensity unveils a deeper insight about the untamed zone of female self. She understands her personal worth and hidden connection between herself and the universe. Edna's awareness to psychosexual diversity in *The Awakening* reveals a connection between female sexuality and personal autonomy. Her sexual autonomy leavens her imaginative creative self; thus reveals the connection between the wildness of female eros; and the liberation of female mind and imaginative creativity. Edna's erotic quest and the affirmation of artistic self in the novel establish sexual liberty as a source of personal empowerment and therefore Chopin asserts dynamic female sexuality as an invaluable experience for a woman. Subsequently, Edna's psychosexual expedition towards her gradually developing "new consciousness" unveils the wild zone of female experiences, values and grievances.

According to Showalter, women's writings must articulate "what they have really known, felt, and suffered" to remain no longer unrepresented or misrepresented in literature (Showalter, 1981). So, in her essay "Toward a Feminist Poetics", Showalter (1979) coined the term Gynocriticism to suggest that women should construct a female framework to analyze or create their own writing in response to androcentric criticism. In this framework, woman as a reader, author and character come together in what Showalter (2000) sees as a shared "female subculture". She propounds that Gynocriticism identifies and "celebrates a new consciousness" in female writers who try to define an authentic self, turning to "emale consciousness" and female literary tradition which they have already held within. This approach, according

to Showalter is courageous and sincere; it keeps closely to what women feel. This women-centered criticism recognizes the energy and life-force latent in female characters which make them heroic, passionate and subversive. It represents "a literature of their own" by aiming at the recovery and re-evaluation of the works of women writers as a form of expression of women's experiences. It shows female tradition as a "positive source of strength and solidarity" for women which can create its own symbols out of woman's own experience. In brief, Gynocriticism is a concept of creativity, literary history or literary interpretation based entirely on female experience where we find literary representation of women, by women and for women (Showalter, 1981). Following Showalter's Gynocritical approach this paper attempts to study Chopin's *The Awakening* as a woman's writing unveiling women's truth by articulating female feeling and desire, by creating a wild zone of her experience, by redefining gender and sexuality; and above all by exploring the aesthetic of self-conscious interiority of female mind from a female perspective.

In her cultural model of Gynocriticism, Showalter identifies such a unique female experience in female literary tradition (Showalter, 1981)**.** Based on Ardener's diagram, Showalter develops the idea of female "wild zone" as a theoretical foundation of women's difference in that model. According to her, wild zone or "Female space" refers to a place where men are forbidden to enter, it's a "no-man's-land". This "dark continent" of women's life focuses on those aspects which are intangible for men and can never be experienced by them. It offers such a unique female experience which makes the silent to speak, invisible to become visible and allows a life for the symbolic female consciousness. This is the place where the female wild self can thrive: where woman can leave behind their muted voices and shout their own realities (Showalter, 2000, p.201). Thus the phrase "female wild zone" blazes images of wild female self which "goes its own way, neither domesticated nor controlled." As Mary Daly says, "wild" is the name of the self in woman, of the enspiriting Sister Self, and Helene Cixous speaks of the wild self as "the rhythm that laughs you" and the "force that will not be cut off but will knock the wind out of the codes" (1986, p.308). In Showalter's words, it is a place for the revolutionary women's writing in 'white ink.' It is the hiding place where "Cixous's laughing Medusa" lives; it is a place where, through a journey to it female writers can write out of the "cramped confines of patriarchal space". As we see in *The Awakening*, Edna's wild zone becomes "the place for the revolutionary women's language, the language of everything that is repressed" (Showalter, 2000, p. 201). She discovers that powerful mode of expression through her "moments of being". Her "moments of being" ignites her desire to reach the maturity of self. Edna's "moments of being" dismantles patriarchal repression, erodes its structure enough for women to be able to fully imagine their old "wild" beings and symbols (Toth, 2014).

For Woolf, "'moments of being' are moments in which an individual experiences a sense of reality, in contrast to the states of 'non-being' that dominate most of an individual's conscious life, in which they are separated from reality by a protective covering (1985).In her essay "A Sketch of the Past", Virginia Woolf reflects that a great part of life is lived unconsciously "embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool" (1985, p.72). Women in their constant

effort to be something they are not, they almost forget their individual worth. But voluntarily or involuntarily when they get the chance to delve deep into their identity outside social boundaries, they sometimes confront some revelatory moments followed by a passionate and intense feeling of independence. For Woolf (1985) these are the only moments of "ecstasy" in which one really lives and finds one's greatest satisfaction (p.98). Woolf (1985) refers such intense revelatory moments as "moments of being" (p.73) and contrasts it with "the cotton wool of non-being that defines most of our living" (1985, p. 70). In *The Awakening*, Edna is awakened to her sexuality as well as to the sense of being through her intense 'moments of being'. The sensation, the satisfaction, the despair, the sadness and the happiness that she lived in those moments "produce a distinct awareness of the self, usually vis-à-vis life and the surrounding world" (Palls, 2012, p. 64). In the midst of the bustling social world of Grand Isle, Edna reaches that "heightened moments of self-consciousness" (Deveaux, 1994, p.234) through her sense of erotic pleasure. In the very beginning of the novella, Edna has a vague sensation about her own desire. Her true feeling seems to be repressed by and hidden in her "obfuscating cotton wool of daily experience" (Woolf, 1985, p.72). Her regular life that is her 'non-being' state drives her to indulge in sensual groping and blundering until her revelatory moments kindles her sexual drive. She first confronts her soul's desire in the company of Robert followed by the thrilling moment of baptismal swim and emboldened by the charm of music in that magical night of Grand isle. The "moments of silence" that she shared with Robert in that night introduced her to "the first-felt throbbings of [her] desire". Likewise, the sense of freedom she experiences in those powerful moments of that night coming in touch with the sea are like flashes of awareness, which reveals a pattern hidden behind the "cotton wool" of her daily life. She gets a taste of freedom and the power she has within herself when Edna finally learns how to swim. In those moments she gets "not only aware of herself but she also catches a glimpse of her connection to a larger pattern hidden behind the opaque surface of daily life" (Urquhart, 1998).Thus Chopin illustrates Edna's moments of reflection:

A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before. (Chopin, 2006, p.34). In that solitude and vastness of sea, Chopin makes Edna to undergo "moments of being" which redeems her soul from the quotidian life of insignificance and guides her through the journey of self-discovery and sensual exploration of her female space. Since Olson (2003) posits, moments of being "magnify an awareness of the self, a coming into being of the individual, and an opening up of interior states of knowing". Edna recalls that "memory of importance" as the source of her strength and power throughout the novel. What evokes the "moment of being" here is the feeling of breaking from conventions and binding duties. While being alone in the sea, in that boundless "space and solitude", Edna is able to get as close as possible to herself, to the essence of her being. Edna's overwhelming erotic encounter with sea unveils the power of erotic in her life and gradually leads her towards the maturity of self. Sandra M. Gilbert suggests in her essay, "Edna's intimate connection with the sea is part of Chopin's intent to depict in her a modern Venus who would vindicate and celebrate the power

of female sexuality" (1983). In those moments of ecstasy, she not only gets a meaningful vision of the world itself, but her feelings of rapture also grant her intensified knowledge about her state of being in the world. She begins "to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her" (Chopin, 2006, p.16). She realizes her real worth as an individual and identifies her inner being as the source of immense power and strength.

In *The Awakening*, Chopin vindicates and celebrates the power of autonomous sexuality in liberating female self through Edna's sensual quest. Kate Chopin belongs to a time when women did not have any "sexual voice". Centuries of patriarchal domination forces women to live a life incongruent to her internal desires. Hence Luce Irigaray argues, "since Plato, women have been defined and sexualized according to a male model, as reflective of man's desires and as substitutes onto which male sexual functioning is displaced" (1985). Women are believed not to possess any sexual desires of their own. For eons patriarchy defines female sexuality in terms of "marriage and motherhood" only. Female sexuality is solely meant to serve their husband as a wife and the community as the source of propagation. Chopin reexamines and rejects this myth of "woman's anemic sexuality" in her writings and valorizes Edna's vigorous and diverse sexuality as "an assertion of the lifeforce of women" (Lorde, 2006, p.55). She demonstrates "sexuality as a powerful force that brings consciousness to body, mind and soul." Consequently, Edna's growing sensuality appears as the source of her "incandescence". It generates that creative energy which Edna finds powerful and illuminating. This erotic as a force "inspires joy, instills confidence, and demands satisfaction in [her]life pursuits (Lorde, 2006, p.55). It awakens new sensations that allow her to realize who she truly is. Sexuality guides her to recognize her innermost power so long latent in desire and thus to connect sexual articulation with the assertion of female self and liberation of female mind. Naomi Wolf (2013) lucidly explains in her book "Vagina":

Female sexual pleasure, rightly understood, is not just about sexuality, or just about pleasure. It serves, also, as a medium of female self-knowledge and hopefulness; female creativity and courage; female focus and initiative; female bliss and transcendence; and as medium of a sensibility that feels very much like freedom. (as cited in Popova, 2013)

After being awakened to her bodily wisdom in the Grand Isle, Edna further reaches to a deeper understanding of her own body, mind and soul through her suggested intercourse with Arobin. The more he gets close to her, the more she is drawn to her awakening sensuousness. In Chopin's words "It was the first kiss of her life to which her nature had really responded. It was a flaming torch that kindled desire" (1986, p.104). She experiences the true intensity of life in that physical communion. As the author said, "Above all, there was understanding. She felt as if a mist had been lifted from her eyes, enabling her to look upon and comprehend the significance of life, that monster made up of beauty and brutality" (p.104). Though Edna's body responds spontaneously to Arobin's touch, rest of her being remains indifferent. She realizes "Alcee Arobin was absolutely nothing to her" (p. 97) because she feels "it was not the

kiss of love which had inflamed her, because it was not love which had held this cup of life to her lips." (p.104). She perceives it is something else that drives her soul's desire. In her erotic search she is craving to contemplate that and unraveling the social knots to find "the nuggets of truth". Thus Lorde's (2006) finding shows, "the erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling" (p. 53).

Edna's most intense moments and interactions with the self and the other are represented not only through her heterosexuality but through her potential lesbian identity too. Chopin's stout resistance against patriarchal enforced heterosexuality upon woman is suggested through Edna, a"metaphorical lesbian"as in Bonnie Zimmerman's words-a provocative controlling concept to describe a character who is not "really" a lesbian but could be" (as cited in LeBlanc, 1999). As we see in the beginning of the story, Edna is awakened to her bodily wisdom by the touch of Adele, her "sensuous Madonna" first rather than any man. Chopin thus recounts Edna's feelings:

> She had put her head down on Madame Ratignolle's shoulder. She was flushed and felt intoxicated with the sound of her own voice and the unaccustomed taste of candor. It muddled her like wine, or like a first breath of freedom. (Chopin, 2006, p. 23)

Edna's artistic self also finds in Adele "a faultless Madonna" (2006, p.11) who appears as a tempting subject for her painting. Even the sea as "a metaphorical female lover" moves her towards the force of the erotic and drives her desire for self-knowledge "wielding substantial power over Edna as a catalyst for her psychological, emotional, erotic, and spiritual awakening" (http://people.loyno.edu). Showalter asserts too on women-identified symbolism of the sea by addressing it as a "feminine organic element" that corresponds to the "female body [...] prone to wetness, blood, milk, tears, and amniotic fluid." Sea's irresistible eroticism is evident in this refrain that beckons Edna throughout her journey:

> The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation. The voice of the sea speaks to the soul. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace." (Chopin, 2006, p. 14)

Edna's wondering into the personal realm of desire eventually leads her to the real self. The moments Edna discovers her sexuality as a source of her knowledge and power, she finds the way to voice her thoughts and desire. Sexuality becomes the language of her body and soul. Defying patriarchal notion of keeping "female passion under rein", she learns to value her distinct sexual voice. It gives rise to a sense of discrete self in her to articulate her unique female experience. Since Irigaray suggests a continuity between the multiplicity of female desire and the possibilities of women's language – 'in what she says, too, at least when she dares, woman is constantly touching herself' (1985, p.29). Edna realizes her sexuality is not meant to submit to other's power and choice only, rather a powerful mode of asserting her personal autonomy. She

realizes repression of sexual energy imposed by the old patriarchal order, traumatizes female body &mind. The moment Edna feels the power of the erotic she starts her journey towards subjectivity. She decides "to step outside the confines of her marriage, where sexuality should be unreserved, in order to experience true freedom in the expression of her sexuality". Lorde asserts, the erotic allows us to engage with "our deepest and nonrational knowledge" (p.53) to live a meaningful and fulfilled life suffused with satisfaction (2006).

After recognizing that immense power latent in her body and soul, Edna shows her first act of resistance in her rejection to respond to her husband's call. She determines not to submit herself to her husband's authority anymore. Chopin (2006) thus unfolds Edna's subversion, "She perceived that her will had blazed up, stubborn and resistant. She could not at that moment have done resistance other than denied and resisted" (p. 38). Since then "She began to do as she liked and to feel as she liked. When Mr. Pontellier became rude, Edna grew insolent. She had resolved never to take another step backward." (2006, p. 70). Henceforth, Edna is increasingly guided by a body that, as we are told, leads her to "blindly follow whatever impulse moved her, as if she had and placed herself in alien hands for direction, and freed her soul of responsibility" (Chopin, 2006, p. 79). She decides to be honest to her self and live life authentically. So, Chopin confirms her determination, "whatever came, she had resolved never again to belong to another than herself (p.100). Her awakened female body cast aside her earlier submissive self and revolts against all kinds of social or religious constraints. As we see during the church service on the island "a feeling of oppression and drowsiness" (Chopin, 2006, p.79) overcame her; so she quits the church and fell asleep. Listening to the wisdom of the body, she begins to sleep on her own time which exhibits her control and free choice.

The moment Edna aspires to live in alignment with her erotic authenticity, she rises as an empowered woman. She develops confidence and sexual self-esteem too. Hence Lorde (2006) describes:

> The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honor and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves. (p.88)

She comprehends that her autonomous self is integrated to her sexual self. So, she no longer wants to be defined by patriarchal eroticization of her body. She gives an effort to transform the role of her submissive desires into the driving force of her life. So, she communicates her desires without any blame or shame. Subsequently, Edna declares "I have got into a habit of expressing myself. It doesn't matter to me, and you may think me unwomanly if you like" (Chopin, 2006, p.132). As soon as she is orientated to her sexuality, she rejects to hide that identity for the sake of just feeling comfortable and safe in her life. She realizes the futility of living a life of hypocrisy and inauthenticity. In her own words, "it is better to wake up after all, even to suffer, rather than to remain a dupe to illusions all one's life." (Chopin, 2006, p. 138)

Chopin, a rebel woman herself, depicts a rebel woman for her readers, a woman who sees nothing "but an appalling and hopeless ennui" (2006, p. 54) in domestic harmony and so turns to her own creativity and passions. Edna's search for erotic gives her a sense of power to overcome patriarchal culture and its expectations regarding women's role. Her role as a discontented wife and mother is an open assault to the contemporary society that recognizes women's social identification with marriage and motherhood only. Her sensuous experience makes her aware of her desires to be creative, independent and thereby asserts the new woman belief of envisioning sexual emancipation as a platform for personal empowerment. She prioritizes impulse over propriety and creates a new vision of female power. Christ (1980) rightly says, "Edna, in rejecting conventions of marriage and motherhood, seeks an expressive space to access her own creativity and discover her own sense of power, which has been thus far erased by male primacy" (p.33). After recognizing her own desires, she resists against all those values that govern her role in society by making her own choice of living. Edna's dislike of the pre-determined role of her sex and irresistible desires to stray from the norm and to become her own person provokes her to find an alternative role of a self-reliant person as an artist. Lorde (2006) thus propounds: "[r]ecognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the same weary drama" (p.59).

In *The Awakening*, Chopin illustrates the connection between female eros and imaginative creativity which leads woman towards a more fulfilling and self-actualized lives and brings a social change. Like other feminist critics Chopin believes too "what represses women's bodies also represses women's mind and creativity, it would have to celebrate the female body." The moment Edna owns her sexuality as her inner fire, it brings passion into all areas of her life including her creative faculty. Erogenous zone of her sexuality influences her power of imagination. She experiences her deep creative feeling after encountering her erotic zone.

Being driven by that sexual energy Edna aspires to establish an alternative social identity of an artist over her so-called female identity. Sensuality offers her a sense of "greater freedom, vitality and creativity". Her overwhelming erotic encounter with sea, entices her creative mind to illustrate what "she can neither articulate, actualize, or abandon" before. Edna's creative energy is ignited not only by the erotic challenge of the sea, but also kindled and tended by the erotic influence of Mademoiselle Reisz's music and powerful words. After returning from the Grand isle, Edna engages herself more in painting with "great energy and interest". Her paintings become that powerful language for her which she needs to voice her long dormant desire.

As an artist, Edna finds an alternative social identity to express her desire and define herself anew as an autonomous, empowered woman in a public sphere. Edna as an artist denies that 'mother-woman' identity of Adele that considered "procreation as the sole legitimate, satisfactory creative experience for women; mental, artistic, and intellectual creativity was instead the stuff of men" (Friedman, 1987). It is "through artistic expression, [Edna] comes to see [herself] as a subject and expand [her] self-understanding while coping with legacies of domination that threaten to

silence and render [her] invisible" (Schaefer, 2017, p.12). The emancipatory force of art helps Edna to transform her silence into expression as it "allows women to access the power of the erotic and thereby destabilize systems of oppression" (Lorde, 2006). This even motivates her to remain indifferent to her husband's admonishment that she "not let the family go to the devil" while she paints. She then feels the need to have an individual space both literally and metaphorically. Like Virginia Woolf, Chopin recognizes too that women cannot gain freedom to create the world from their own experience until they are freed from emotional and financial dependence on men and from the constant interruptions of household duties and children (Christ, 1980, p. 33). Since Woolf asks in *A Room of One's Own,* how can a woman devote herself to her creative passions, if she cannot count on some personal space for autonomous, free thought and expression? If she is invariably relegated to a role that imprisons her in the home, or rather, only in some rooms of the home— the kitchen, the bedroom, the nursery—immersed in taking care of her loved ones and building the physical and emotional bonds that connect human beings and family generations (1998)? Edna's emerging selfhood compels her to move to the 'pigeon house' which is fully independent from the influence and control of male domination. Her self-dignity no longer allows her to depend on her husband anymore. Edna's need for discreet personhood demands a house completely of her own and thus she replies to Adele, "The house, the money that provides for it, are not mine. Isn't that enough reason [to leave this house]?" (Chopin, 2006, p.99). So, her little house becomes the symbol of her maturity, self-dignity, growing mental, sexual and financial independence. In the solitude of that private space, her art "grows in force and individuality" uniting her creativity and sexuality. She now paints through her "knowing body" and conflates her body with her deeply felt female consciousness through her art. She follows her ways of life in that little house of her own not as Mrs. Pontellier but as Edna, an independent artist who discovers art as the source of her autonomous self.

Edna's mental, physical and financial autonomy gives birth to a woman of self-actualization who could not be understood, managed, mastered and ruled by patriarchy anymore. In her quest for the power of erotic, Edna finally understands the insignificance of her male love interests to give her that incomprehensible feeling of self-fulfillment. In fact, eventually she realizes this impotent patriarchy can never give her what she is craving for: "'To-day it is Arobin; to-morrow it will be someone else. It makes no difference to me, it doesn't matter about Leonce Pontellier. She even realized that the day would come when [Robert], too, and the thought of him would melt out of her existence, leaving her alone" (Chopin, 2006, p.108). She gradually learns to trust her feelings, emotions and her sense of power and eventually takes control of her desire, body and life. This is evident from her dignified proclamation to Robert:

> I am no longer of Mr. Pontellier's possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say, 'Here, Robert, take her and be happy; she is yours,' I should laugh at you both. (Chopin, 2006, p.134)

So, she finally conflates her empowered self with the powerful force of nature. Edna's ultimate surrender to the sensual call of the sea reveals the strength of her sexuality. Her autonomous

sexuality governs her to embrace the wilderness of sea as an epitome of vast, wild zone of female experience and to reject the limited space provided by patriarchy. As she learns to value the richness of conscious life, she decides to liberate her true self from corporeal confinements symbolized by her outer garments. Thus, eventually she resists disempowerment by making her choice of living and non-living.

The trajectory of her individuality and vibrant, wild and dynamic female interiority highlights the power of female sexuality that empowers women. Her sexual maturity develops her as a complex but matured woman who learns, grows and changes to challenge female stereotypes, false ideas and cultural myths that hinder, impair, squash or dim woman's magnificent sexual self. Through her sexual freedom she reaches that maturity to recognize the insignificance of her lovers, husband, friends and children to give her utter sense of contentment as a woman. Her continuous discontentment has been masterfully revealed by her relation with Robert, Mrs. Ratignolle, Mademoiselle Reisz, Arobin. Her awakening to her own thoughts, feelings, needs, and womanhood, increasingly alienates her from earlier acquiescence to the expectations of society and eventually enables her to assert her individuality against an orthodox society unorthodoxically. Edna's uneven, sonorous journey to challenge conventions and to make decisions about her own life reveals her urge for a new definition of femininity. Edna's determination to be a self-reliant person accentuates her belief to carry the power to make her own choice and be solely responsible for her own destiny. Out of her female experience, Edna finally acquires her own autonomous being which she determines not to sacrifice at any cost. Her immense desire to liberate herself from the socio-cultural imprisonment and to achieve greater freedom as a human being finally turns Edna into a real artist, who painted a courageous picture of a woman who "dares and defies" (Chopin, 2006, p.61).

References

Chopin, K. (2006). *The Awakening*. Dhaka: writers.ink.

Christ, C. P. (1986*). Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Cixous, H., Cohen, K., & Cohen, P. (1986). The Laugh of the Medusa.*Signs,*1(4),308. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173239

Deveaux, M. (1994). Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault. *Feminist Studies,* 20(2), 223- 247. Doi: 10.2307/3178151

Friedman, S. (1998). *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7t6x1

Gilbert, S. (1983). The Second Coming of Aphrodite: Kate Chopin's Fantasy of Desire. *The Kenyan Review*, 5(3), 42-66. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4335384

Irigaray, L. (1985). *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.

LeBlanc, E. (1996). The Metaphorical Lesbian: Edna Pontellier in The Awakening. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 15(2), 289-307. Doi: 10.2307/464138

Lorde, A. (2007). "The Uses of the Erotic": *Sister Outsider- Essays and Speeches*. San Francisco: The Crossing Press.

Olson, L. (2003). Virginia Woolf's "Cotton Wool of Daily Life". *Journal of Modern Literature*, 26(2), 42-65. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831894

Palls, T. (2012). The Miracle of the Ordinary: Literary Epiphany in Virginia Woolf and Clarice Lispector. *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 21(1), 63-78. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3513078

Popova, M. (2013). *The Psychology of Stress, Orgasm and Creativity*. Retrieved from http://www. Brainpickings.org/203/09/23naomi-wolf-vagina/

Schaefer, M.L. (2017). *Herstory: Female Artists' Resistance in The Awakening, Corregidora, and The Dew Breaker: A thesis forthe degree Master of Arts in the Department of English.* Indiana University.

Showalter, E. (1979). "Towards a Feminist poetics." In Mary, J. (Ed.) *Women's Writing and Writing about Women*. London: Groom Helm.

Showalter, E. (1981a). *A Literature of Their Own*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Showalter, E. (1981b). Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(2), 179-205. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343159

Toth, N. (2014). Disturbing Epiphany: Rereading Virginia Woolf's 'Moments of Being'. DOI: 10.4000/ebc.1182

Woolf, V. (1998).*A Room of One's Own*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

Woolf, (1985). "A Sketch of the Past": *Moments of Being – a Collection of Autobiographical Writing*. In Jeanne. S(Ed.). New York: A Harvest Book,

Urquhart, N. L. (1998). Moments of Being in Virginia Woolf's Fiction. Retrieved from https://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/matrix/urquhart.htm

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

Dionysus Meets the Caribbean: A Study of London Notting Hill Carnival in the Light of Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*

Anika Saba
BRAC University

Abstract

Samuel Selvon's iconic novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) captures the struggles of black Caribbean immigrants in the eponymous megacity. The setting of his novel is around the neighborhood of Notting Hill which has become synonymous with the Notting Hill Carnival that takes place in London every summer. This extravaganza, though has financial benefits for its participants, is an opportunity of social inclusion for the immigrants and subversion of British authority. This paper will trace the historical background of the London Notting Hill Carnival and the role of its main organizers, the Caribbean immigrants, in the light of Selvon's novel which is based on fictional representations of this marginalized group. In doing so, the paper will refer to Richard Lehan's argument of how the marginalized embody the Dionysian spirit in urban spaces, and Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical explanation of the age-old conflict between rationality and sensuality symbolized by the Apollonian and Dionysian myths in Western tradition. The purpose of this paper is to show how the black Caribbean immigrants of Selvon's work embody the spirit of Dionysius in this modern-day Bacchanalia which takes place on the streets of London, and in extension, make an argument for the contribution of all marginalized immigrants in the repressed but vital spirit of Dionysus in the city.

Keywords: Black Caribbean immigrants, London Notting Hill Carnival, Dionysus, marginalized and city

Introduction

In April 2018, UK Prime Minister Theresa May apologized to twelve Caribbean nations for the government's actions towards descendants of what is famously known as Windrush Generation.This immediately reminded me of Samuel Selvon's iconic novel *The Lonely Londoners*. Published in 1956, Selvon's work is based on the lives of West Indian immigrants who came to London after Britain passed its Nationality Act in 1948. Due to labor shortages at the end of the Second World War, Britain adopted this open-door policy to invite immigrants from Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. On 22 June 1948, the ship MV Empire Windrush docked in Tilbury, Essex with 500 Jamaicans giving this mass migration of West Indians its notorious name. In Selvon's novel and historically, these black immigrants lived in deplorable conditions in areas such as Bayswater and Brixton which came to be identified with increasingly black population and culture. Selvon's characters mostly live in the Water (short for Bayswater) surrounded by the Gate (Notting Hill Gate) in the east and the Arch (Marble Arch) in the west. Historically too, many Caribbean immigrants have been known to mark this territory with their cultural identity and heritage. One aspect of that heritage is their social gatherings or festivals among which Notting Hill Carnival has become most dominant form of cosmopolitan expression in Britainover the last fifty years. As Bakhtin's famous essay informs us of the nature of carnivals, we see the breakdown or even reversal of social order in the Notting Hill Carnival where marginalized immigrants take over London's streets for two-to-three days. Richard Lehan in his book *The City in Literature* ascribes this rebelliousness to Dionysian spirit, a primitive force or energy that has been declining in cities due to modernization. However, he asserts that this spirit has been revived by followers of Dionysus in the form of "many disguises" among which are also masked participants of carnivals and masquerades (1998, p. 20).

Despite the Greek origin and Western concept of Dionysus as a symbol of sensuality (over rationality) and the resulting disorder, it can be associated with non-Western, in this case, Caribbean modes of highly colorful and energized cultural norms. Though Lehan mentions the marginalized, he does not speak of the repressed immigrants as such, and this I find a racially-biased lacking in his otherwise comprehensive work. What he has ignored, either purposefully or unwittingly, I would like to address in this paper because I believe that the marginalized immigrants are the Dionysian force making up the larger population and threatening social orders in the bigger metropolitans such as London, Paris or New York. As a case study, I will trace the origin, development and impact of London Notting Hill Carnival in British culture with reference to Samuel Selvon's novel *The Lonely Londoners* and I will show, using Nietzschean philosophy, three ways in which the Greek Dionysian can be found in the Caribbean carnival. To study Caribbean culture using Western framework might appear imposing and unnecessary but the purpose here is not to redeem the former but criticize the latter and, thereby, locate

some place where the two can co-exist, and that for me is the Dionysian energy to be found in carnivals, and in extension, among the marginalized in cities.

Stories and Settings: *The Lonely Londoners* and Notting Hill Carnival

Born in Trinidad, Samuel Selvon is often called the father of black writing in Britain. His ground-breaking novel *The Lonely Londoners* vividly captures the harsh realities of immigrant life in the eponymous metropolis. The novel is about Moses and his group of *lonely* friends who have arrived from the Caribbean because they hear fascinating stories of the "Mother Country" whose streets are allegedly "paved with gold" (Selvon, 2006, p.2). However, reality is completely different as we see through the struggles of Moses and others who get the worst jobs and live miserably in the cruel weather of London. In order to capture the real experience of these Caribbean immigrants, Selvon chooses to write the entire novel in creolized English over Standard English. This shift in linguistic form is the unique aspect of Selvon's work. With this, he tries to put "Caribbean consciousness in a British context" and by extension in an international platform (Nasta, 2006, p. x). Not only this but some of the longer portions in the narrative reflect traces of the famous Trinidadian *calypso,* a style of Afro-Caribbean music that originated in Trinidad and Tobago during the early mid nineteenth century and eventually spread to the rest of Caribbean. It was part of the stick fighting tradition during the canboulay (burnt-cane) festival in colonial Trinidad and since the fighting was a showcasing of great strength and courage, Ashley Dawson deduces that the word calypso is derived from kaiso that is analogous to "bravo" in the West African Hausa language (2007, p.32). This calypso music, therefore, being an integral part of Caribbean immigrants is naturally found in the London Notting Hill Carnival which has been initiated and still dominantly participated by the real-life lonely Londoners.

London Notting Hill Carnival (LNHC), dating back to mid-1960s, is now an annual event that brightens British summer every August. Taylor and Kneafsey classify LNHC as one of the urban cultural heritage festivals which contribute to the socio-economic development of towns and cities. Festivals such as LNHC make urban spaces more livable by creating moments of rupture in the mechanical life and, at the same time, proving useful sources of income for city-dwellers. Ferdinand and Williams stress on how festivals "increase leisure options for locals, attract new investment to an area, revitalize existing infrastructure and, in some cases, completely remodel a city's landscape" (2018, p.33). Despite the changes that the Notting Hill area has undergone over the years, the carnival has grown to become "synonymous with the Notting Hill area and also the city of London, which derives significant benefits from the hundreds ofthousands of visitors flocking to the event every year" (Ferdinand and Williams, 2018, p. 35). These benefits include huge amounts of revenuesfor organizers and thousands of jobs for performers. A Strategic Review produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2004 gives a detailed explanation of these figures:

> The economic impact study, commissioned by the London Development Agency on behalf of theMayor's Carnival Review Group found that in 2002, the Notting Hill Carnival generated approximately£93 million and supported the equivalent of 3,000 full-time jobs – clear evidence that what takes placeevery August Bank Holiday weekend on the streets of Notting Hill is a multi-million pound incomegenerating event. (12)

Therefore, in terms of numbers, London's Notting Hill Carnival is only second to Brazil's Rio Carnival. All these figures related to money and investment may lead one to think of the commercialization of these festivals and doubt their potential for social inclusion. Ferdinand and Williams elaborately write on the dangers of such tourism-driven festivals that often include extravagant sales of food, drinks and souvenirs and, "such associations can result in ambivalence among communities, needing the income that tourists and other commercial stakeholdersbring into a festival, if they wish to preserve cultural authenticity" (2018, p.34). However, these numbers do not lessen the social impact of festivals such as the LNHC, argues Taylor and Kneafsey, rather they are "regarded as catalysts in the promotion of community cohesion" (2016, p.182). This cohesion has many features among which sense of belongingness is vital and that is achieved in several ways through these festivals. The above touristic factors, though may seem mercenary from the outside, give local people employment, security and identity and reduce bias, intolerance and fear which in turn help with social integration and, often, resistance.

While today many might take it only as a recreational activity, especially non-Caribbeans, this carnival has an enduring history of resistance since the racial disturbances of 1958. Ashely Dawson sheds light on that history saying, "The carnival celebration began as a response to one of the first significant postwar public expression of racist hostility toward the presence of Britain's non-white citizens" (2007, p.78). Interestingly, the first person to organize a Caribbean carnival in Britain was a woman, Claudia Jones, a Trinidad-born journalist and activist. This is recalling of Tanty in Selvon's novel. Tanty, who is the old lady from Jamaica and one of Tolroy's relatives, soon becomes the leader in her neighborhood of Harrow Road. Selvon writes, "She become a familiar figure to everybody and, even the English people calling she Tanty. It was Tanty who cause the shop-keeper to give people credit" (Selvon, 2006, p. 65). This shows how black women are often attributed with good leadership and management skills. Thus, Claudia Jones wanted to "unify the heretofore isolated immigrants from diverse islands such as Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad, creating a popular culture front through which to resist the rise of fascism in the 'motherland'" (Dawson, 2007, p. 79). In other words, she tried to bring together the real lonely Londoners on a common platform where they could proudly present and share their national identities and, at the same time, challenge the racially-biased structures of British authority.[10] The organization of present day Notting Hill Carnival, however, is attributed by many to the pioneering vision and dedication of RhauneLaslett, an East Ender and migrant herself:

[10] Also, see the official page of LNHC at www.thelondonnottinghillcarnival.com

> In 1964, Laslett, a social worker, hada vision of people in Notting Hill coming together and celebrating in the streets. Shefelt that even though there were various migrants living in the congested area, therewas little communication or interaction between them. Her dream of a unifyingconcept was realized with marchers and steel bands taking to the streets under thebanner of the Notting Hill Fayre and Pageant in joyous revelry. (Taylor and Kneafsey, 2016, p.186).

In the novel, it is Harris's music that brings Moses and the group together for some recreation on the weekends. Though his soirées are inside halls and not on the streets like the LNHC, they have the steel band that is emblematic of Caribbean music (see below). Of Harris, Selvon writes, "He had a steel band to play music, a bar for the boys to drink, and he know already that bags of people coming to the fete from the number of tickets that he sell" (2006, p.104). So, these musical occasions, partly organized by the West Indian Harris, are quite extravagant with lots of people, music, dancing and drinking –almost like a carnival. The word "carnival" is also used by the author Selvon when he describes how one of the boys Five dances very flamboyantly with "carnival slackness" amidst the elegant white people and it makes Harris embarrassed (2006, p. 108). Because these gatherings of Harris are indoor and dominated by whites, he has scope to feel concerned about the age-old racial complexity. However, in the LNHC, this hierarchy is reversed with the blacks dominating the streets of London and the whites dancing to their tunes in their freestyles. The LNHC, being mostly one big Caribbean extravaganza, has some essential features and that is why it is more meaningful for the black immigrants than some regular musical event.

After Rhuane Laslett, different organizing committees took responsibility of the event but they all continued to honor the three main cultural elements –the steel band competition, the costumed parades and the static sound system for street parties. The key feature of the steel band is the steel pan that is struck with sticks, a drum-like musical instrument again originating in Trinidad and Tobago. They are accompanied by mas' camps where masks and costumes are prepared. Taylor and Kneafsey elaborates how

> the word 'mas' is a derivative of masquerade, which in European tradition implies wearing a facemask. However, theCaribbean genre emphasizes how the person playing mas animates the character they are portraying... [and] synthesize an emotional interplay between performers, the inner self and the revelers, who line the streets. (2016, p.184)

So, in this carnival, masks are more than just façade. They carry deeper sociological and psychological meaning much like the music of the festival. Sound systems were first included in 1975 and these were often an assortment of homemade speakers, loud amplifiers and a DJ who raps and controls the music. While steel bands and mas' camps were Trinidadian, sound systems were more Jamaican and, therefore, their presence "turned the festival into a pan-Caribbean affair" (Dawson, 2007, p.85). However, British people were not aware of these

changes as they could not differentiate among the many Caribbean nations and their respective cultures. Early in his novel, *The Lonely Londoners*, Selvon touches on this subject of how "the English people believe that everybody who come from the West Indies come from Jamaica" thus Moses is asked by a reporter about the conditions in Jamaica though he is from Trinidad (2006, p.7).

Going back to the carnival, these sound systems gradually started playing beats of reggae commonly associated with the ideologies of Rastafarianism that the likes of Bob Marley practiced. Along with these beats, Jamaican DJs popularized their remix or dub style by "breaking up, distorting, and adding pounding bass to the original versions of popular songs" and, thereby, introducing "a performative mode that meshed well with the critique of state power subaltern black communities in both Jamaica and Britain were articulating at the time" (Dawson, 2007, p. 86). Not only aesthetically but spatially too, the carnival was extending its reach and challenging the authorities such as the police forces who fail to protect black immigrants from racist hostilities and tend to condemn them for criminal activities. Thus, Ashley Dawson writes:

> There is nothing, as the speaker proclaims, that these [police] forces can do to stop the carnival performers from parading along their planned route, a route that traces –at least for a couple of days –the geography of collective black solidarity… If the British state increasingly sought to contain black communities spatially through aggressive policing practices that curtailed their geographical mobility and criminalized certain forms of dress, hairstyle, and even ways of walking, the carnival allowed these communities to reoccupy their streets and neighborhoods. (2007, p.83-84)

We see instances of such "criminalized" attitudes in Selvon's novel. When Bart goes to the house of his white girlfriend, the girl's father throws him out of the house "because he don't want no curly-hair children in the family" (Selvon, 2006, p.51). Another time, when Galahad is standing at Piccadilly station, a white child points at him because he is black and the child's mother feels uneasy by Galahad's apparently foreign and unacceptable black presence. Also, another night while he was in the lavatory "two white fellars come in and say how these black bastards have the lavatory dirty, and they didn't know that he was there" (Selvon, 2006, p. 77). As a result, Galahad feels too alienated and humiliated in London city. He becomes so mentally disturbed that he starts talking to his hands and, personifying the color Black, goes on blaming them for all his troubles. Though the scene is portrayed in a light-hearted manner keeping with the tone of the novel, it is the most heart-rending and critically-studied point in the piece. The willful split of himself shows the traumatic nature of Galahad's daily experiences and their psychological impact. Because Selvon's novel is a tragi-comedy, we do not see any violent example of racism but Galahad almost gets caught by the police when he snatches one of the pigeons from the park and an old white woman sees him doing the unthinkable according to her standards. Selvon parodies how the British people will feed birds in the parks and care more for them than impoverished marginalized people in their country. Thus, in

a third person narrative, Selvon writes, "Them rich people who does live in Belgravia and Knightsbridge and up in Hampstead and them other plush places, they would never believe what it like in a grim place like Harrow Road or Notting Hill" (2006, p. 60). These same places of poverty and discrimination are turned into places of power and subversion by black immigrants in the London Notting Hill Carnival.

Origins and Myths: Greek Dionysus and Caribbean Carnival

Now, the origin of the word carnival is Latin *carnemleavre* which translates to put away meat in English. This meaning has religious connotations referring to the celebration of life and its pleasures before Lent, a time of prayer and penance among Christians. The period of Lent also includes abstinence from bodily or sensual gratifications such as alcohol, food and sex. As a result, in carnivals there is often seen an indulgence in carnal desires accompanied by a sense of festivity and merriment which is achieved by music and dancing. Overall, the atmosphere is one of intoxicating euphoria and energy that is often characterized with Bacchanalia, the drunken celebration and worship of Bachhus (the Roman name of Dionysus). Richard Lehan goes back to the play of Euripides called *The Bachhae* to trace one among the hundreds of myths based on this highly revered and often refereed god of wine and fertility in Western tradition. The word *bachhae* meaning "women possessed by Bacchus" indicates a group of female followers cum worshippers of Bachhus (Lehan, 1998, p.18). Selvon's novel does not feature a carnival but it is abundant in "carnal desires" of the black boys who lust for white girls. There are several episodes and references of the boys trying to impress some girls. In summer, however, the situation is reversed with the girls becoming more eager for attention and so, Selvon writes, "…summer night oh sometimes the girls wishing it would get dark quickly and you have them parading all down the Bayswater Road from the Arch to the Gate…" (2006, p. 95). The location is exactly that of LNHC and the word "parading" is suggestive of procession and celebration. These girls, who are not given induvial names and identities but act as collective force of energy, mirror the female followers of Dionysus.

In literature, Dionysus is commonly known for his contribution to the development of theatre. Greek plays, as we know, were written for religious celebration and worship of Dionysus, and therefore, they included a Dionysian chorus which became instrumental in tragedy, derived from *tragoidia* meaning goat-song. In the myths and rituals of Dionysus, he is always associated with the natural world and in extension to the primordial state of human beings who is fundamentally regarded here as a sensually potent organism in contrast to a rationally free one. As cities expanded, human beings lost touch with nature – the earth, animals and rivers –due to increasing industrialization and mechanization. Dionysus, being responsible for the balance between human and animal world, was worshipped for the revival of primitive energy and organic connection to nature; and, this adulation was taken up by the marginalized in cities since they are victims of urban capitalization. It was manifested in different artistic expressions of which some are the music, painting, dancing that we see in carnivals.

Friedrich Nietzsche, in his famous book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), goes into the depth of controversial dichotomy between the Apollonian and Dionysian myths of Western tradition. However, Nietzsche is limiting in his philosophy because he quite rudely separates the Dionysian Greeks from others whom he calls Dionysian Barbarians. He argues that these Barbarians are often engaged in "excess of sexual indiscipline" and despite the news of their hedonism reaching the Greeks from "every sea –and land –route" the Greeks remain pure and untouched (1999, p.20). The connotations of racial slur make Nietzsche's work an interesting case for post-colonial criticism too but that is beyond the scope of this paper. Though he does not mention any group, we can assume that here, by Barbarians, he refers to non-Europeans, that is, chiefly Asians and Africans. So, while it may seem shocking to attribute those same African descendants with the Greek Dionysian of Nietzsche, it can also be thought as a way of challenging and deconstructing his work. Therefore, continuing with Nietzsche's views of the Dionysian, this paper will see how it more aptly fits the black Caribbean immigrants than white European natives in place like London.

Though both Apollo and Dionysus feature in his work, Nietzsche mainly focuses on the latter and tries to answer the question, "What is the Dionysian?" Admitting the difficulty of finding this answer, Nietzsche writes that to understand the Dionysian we must realize "the Greeks' relationship to pain, the degree of their sensitivity" and "whether the Greeks' ever more powerful demand for beauty (*Schönheit*), for festivals, entertainments, new cults, really grew from a lack, from deprivation, from melancholy, from pain" (1999, p.7). If we take this explanation of Nietzsche and imagine pain as an origin of Dionysian myth, then this easily sits with my view of the Caribbean immigrants embodying the Dionysian in their cultural expressions. Their moment of pain, quite clearly, dates to forced migration from the African continent and slavery in the Caribbean plantations. Even today, they are living in deprivation and struggling in the margins of urban spaces such as London. In Selvon's novel, for example, we find a long description of the squalor in which Tolroy and his family lives. The houses in that particular area are described as "old and grey and weatherbeaten" and they do not have hot water or separate baths; so, the locals have to buy "big galvanise basin" or "go to the public bath" (Selvon, 2006, p.59). These poor conditions make the immigrants feel more desolate and the one thing that helps them survive is the company of each other. That is why, even though most of the boys borrow money from Moses and eat his food, he lets them come and stay at his place all the time. Similarly, in the case of their gatherings and entertainments, they are more than temporary breaks of fun and play instead they are, taking cue from Nietzsche, Dionysian expressions of deep sorrow related to their lost homelands. This is the first reason, I think, that the Caribbean immigrants embody the Dionysian.

Praising the bond between man and nature in the Dionysian, Nietzsche continues his philosophy saying, "Freely the earth offers up her gifts, and the beasts of prey from mountain and desert approach in peace" (1999, p.18). This relation to nature is often expressed through a sense of nostalgia in all diasporic cultural forms, and carnivals are no exception. The masks and costumes that we see in Notting Hill Carnival are artistic manifestations of birds and

animals, mostly foundin the Caribbean. The people of the Caribbean have been known to live in proximity and harmony with nature as they depend on natural elements for survival and nourishment. For example, they are mostly agrarian communities where the native people are engaged in farming and fishing. Once uprooted and detached from their natural surroundings, Caribbean immigrants feel suffocated in the cramped rooms of cities. This fact is shown in Selvon's novel by the continuous reference to London's cold and gloomy weather in comparison to the bright and sunny Caribbean islands that Moses and his friends miss terribly. That is why, summer brings happiness all around and "…that time of the year something strange happen to everybody they all smiling and as if they living for the first time…" (Selvon, 2006, p. 97-98). The boys wear light clothes, go to the parks, find girls and become carefree like back in their homes. Though Moses plans to go back to Trinidad every year, he changes his mind when summer arrives in London. The city has consumed him, and he has become a *Londoner.* Selvon illustrates this point in an evocative passage:

> What it is that a city have, that any place in the world have, that you get so much to like it you wouldn't leave it for anywhere else? …Why it is, that although they grumble about it all the time, curse the people, curse the government…in the end, everyone cagey about saying outright that if the chance come they will go back to them green islands in the sun? (2006, p.134)

Here, the "green island in the sun" are the Caribbean homelands of the black immigrants. In contrast to them, London is crowded and polluted. Life in the city is miserable because today's European cities are far from the utopian vision of Nietzsche's Dionysian Greek. These modern cities are built based on the Enlightenment theory of progress and rationality. This rationality is associated with Apollo, the other Greek god associated with music and poetry but also medicine and rationality. Western civilization tending towards industrialization and urbanization seem to follow the rational side in human beings corresponding to the Apollonian myth. On the other hand, non-Western cultures with their primitive lifestyles are thought to prefer the sensual in humans thus embodying the Dionysian. This is my second argument of how the Dionysian can be found in the Caribbean culture.

Finally, "as an advocate of life [his] instinct invented for itself a fundamentally opposed doctrine and counter-evaluation of life, a purely artistic one, an *anti-Christian* one. What was it to be called?" writes Nietzsche and says that he decided upon calling it Dionysus. Now, this makes it contradictory to associate carnivals with Dionysus because he seems to be hold in complete opposition to religious doctrines and yet we alwaysrelate carnivals with Bacchanalia as already mentioned above. This contradiction gives a sense of subversion in the very essence of carnivals. That is, even though they originally began as religious festivals they challenge those same institutions to keep them in check. The subversive function of carnivals is most famously and elaborately explained by the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin who thinks that carnival is "temporary refusal of the official world… it offer[s] the utopian promise of a better life, one of equality, abundance and freedom" (Storey, 2001, p.109). This can be directly applied to the

attitude of Caribbean immigrants in London Notting Hill Carnival since they too hope for a better future –a future that will bring them "equality, abundance and freedom" –and they express their hopes and dreams through the exuberance in the carnival.This equality is already seen to be achieved in London Notting Hill Carnival as black Caribbean immigrants bring the white British, and other Europeans, to the same streets and make them sing and dance along with them. Similarly, the abundance is seen in the panoramic size of the whole event and the freedom in its lawlessness as participants do not feel afraid, instead, in most cases, they are protected by police forces. Even though temporarily, the divisions of class, race and power are abandoned or forgotten and, this subversion, as Bakhtin says and as witnessed, lies in the heart of all carnivals including the LNHC. This forms the third and final part of my argument.

Conclusion

London Notting Hill Carnival is no longer "the ritual of an exiled Caribbean community and more a celebration of the hybrid cultural forms created by black Britons" (Dawson, 2007, p.79). Not only blacks, but other marginalized groups in Britain also became part of this gala event over time. In the foreword of his review of the Notting Hill Carnival, Ken Livingstone, former Mayor of London, praised the carnival's success in bringing together people of diverse backgroundand "promoting a fusion of cultures, people and customs" (GLA, 2004, p. 6). The mayor's comment stemmed out of the fact that from the turn of the century "black carnival goers were visibly in the minority" and "though the event has had ahistory of predominantly attracting people of African Caribbean origin, this is no longer, strictly, the case" (Taylor and Keafsey, 2016, p.189). For example, the highly-populated South-Asian communities of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also feel familiarity with this carnivalistic mode of political statement due to their shared experiences of injustice by the white Brits. The Caribbean and South-Asian cultures share analogous cultural forms and expressions when it comes to music, dancing, dressing, etc. Like their Caribbean friends, South-Asians also enjoy loud music which include more drum beatsthan stringed music and wear colorful dresses with body paintings. South-Asians also organize their own carnival-type gatherings called *melas* which, like carnivals, are mostly fairs accompanying religious festivals. This is where the Dionysian again comes to mind. Lastly, not only in England, but also other European countries such as the Netherlands, where the Rotterdam Summer Festival takes place, witness these carnivals or *melas* initiated and popularized by immigrants (Alferink, 2012). Therefore, the argument here given on the black Caribbean immigrants of London Notting Hill Carnival can prove relevant to most immigrants, who are the marginalized, in the increasing urban spaces of the world.

References

Alferink, M. (2012). Post-colonial migrant festivals in the Netherlands.In UlbeBosma (Ed.), *Post-colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands* (pp.99-116). Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt45kfpq.7.

Authority, G. L. (2004). *Notting Hill Carnival: A strategic review*. London: Greater London Authority.

Dawson, A. (2007). *Mongrel nation: Diasporic culture and the making of postcolonial Britain.* Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv3znzng.7.

Ferdinand, N., & Williams, N. L. (2018). The making of the London Notting Hill Carnival festivalscape: Politics and power and the Notting Hill Carnival. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 27,* 33-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2018.04.004.

Lehan, R. (1998). *The city in literature: An intellectual and cultural history.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Nasta, S. (2006). Introduction. In Samuel Selvon, *The lonely Londoners* (pp. v- xvii). London: Penguin.

Nietzsche, F. (1999). *The birth of tragedy*. (R. Speirs, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published in 1872).

Selvon, S. (2006). *The lonely Londoners*. London: Penguin. (Original work published in 1956).

Storey, J. (2001). *Cultural theory and popular culture.* Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.

Taylor, E. &Kneafsey, M. (2016). The place of urban cultural heritage festivals: The case of London's Notting HillCarnival. In K. J. Borowiecki, N. Forbes & A. Fresa (Eds.), *Cultural heritage in a changing* world (pp.181-196). doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-29544-2.

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

'Still I Am Not Tragic': Indigenous Australian Women's Sovereignty in Marie Munkara's *Every Secret Thing* and *A Most Peculiar Act*

Fatema Johera Ahmed
Monash University

Abstract

In this paper, I examine the representation of the Indigenous women characters in two novels by Indigenous Australian writer Marie Munkara, namely *Every Secret Thing* (2009) and *A Most Peculiar Act* (2014). Munkara's novels are set in the early phase of the colonisation of Australia and trace the takeover of Indigenous lands and lives by the Catholic Church and bureaucrats employed by the office of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. I argue that colonial constructions of white femininity disempowered both settler and Indigenous women. Despite being doubly colonised because of their race and gender, Munkara's female characters maintain their sovereignty by engaging in decolonising practices. Indigenous women's resistant subjectivity works in tandem with their connection to their lands to expose white ways of knowing as not the universals they are taken to be. They reveal that acquiring the coloniser's language and imitating white cultural practices do not take away from their Indigeneity. Rather these are signs of Indigenous people's dynamism and syncretism; they are means by which Indigenous women survive colonisation, maintain their sovereignty, and even creatively counter the colonial imposition.

Keywords: Marie Munkara, sovereignty, gender, settler colonialism, Indigenous Australia

Indigenous Australian women's writing challenges stereotypes of Aboriginality in white discourses and creates the space for resilience and survivance. Jo-Ann Episkenew writes that Indigenous writing serves "two transformative functions – healing Indigenous people and advancing social justice in settler society – both components in the process of decolonization" (2009, p. 15). In this article, I examine Marie Munkara's representation of how Indigenous women maintain their sovereignty in the face of their everyday reality of colonisation in her novels *Every Secret Thing* (2009a) and *A Most Peculiar Act* (2014a). As epistemic subjects, a positionality denied to non-western people, Indigenous women's resistant subjectivity and connection to their lands expose white ways of knowing as not the universals they are taken to be. I argue that colonial constructions of white femininity disenfranchised both white and Indigenous women. I demonstrate that by continuing to operate from within their Indigenous epistemology and ontology, Munkara's Indigenous characters show that acquiring the coloniser's language and imitating white cultural practices do not take away from their Indigeneity. Rather these, together with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, are means by which Indigenous women survive colonisation, maintain their agency and right to self-determination, and creatively counter the colonial imposition. The two novels by Munkara I study in this article show that prior to the British invasion in 1788 of what is now referred to as Australia, Indigenous women enjoyed an autonomous role and that this is the standpoint from which they continue to operate in the contact zone.

Historically, Indigenous women were the primary providers of food. Their place in the community was comparable to, and equal with, Indigenous men (Payne, 1992, p. 65). They had their own ceremonies and sacred sites; they were consulted on issues pertaining to the community and enforced laws broken by other women (Behrendt, 1993, p. 28). The theft of Indigenous lands took place concurrently with the denigration of Indigenous people by the European invaders. The relative absence of white women in the outback meant Indigenous female bodies were coded as inherently "rapable" and "radically unchaste" (Puren, 1995, p. 24). Terms like 'black velvet', 'gin', and 'lubra' were used to refer to Indigenous women that white men had sexual liaisons with (McGrath, 1984, p. 233). Together, these terms along with "the influences of a patriarchal and imperialistic culture" (Armstrong, 1996, p. ix) constructed Indigenous women as sexually rampant beings (Lake, 1993, p. 382), denied their subjectivity (Rooks, 2012, p. 50), and contributed to the overall deterioration of their status and power (Huhndorf and Suzack, 2010, p. 3).

Questions of consent were ignored, or became, at best, ambiguous, as some Indigenous women, or their husbands acting on their behalf, entered into sexual agreements with white men during the early phase of the colonial contact (McGrath, 1984, p. 236). Indigenous women were essentially regarded as prostitutes, a view that absolved the colonisers of responsibility or guilt as long as they paid a small fee or with a supply of food like tea, sugar, and flour (p. 236). Indeed, the colonialists held that "her treatment as a concubine... [was] far more humane than that which the Aboriginal wife received from her husband" (Threlkeld, 1974, p. 49). Conflict over Indigenous women between Indigenous and white men additionally meant that interracial

sexual relations became a major cause for misunderstandings and frontier violence (Behrendt, 2000, p. 354). Given the unequal nature of the colonial encounter, Indigenous women were also often the first to learn the invaders' language and ways, and were then able to broker understanding between their communities and the intruders (McGrath, 1984, p. 248). In instances where Indigenous women 'consented' to interracial sexual relations – as depicted in Indigenous literature, like Kim Scott's *Benang* (1999), Jeanine Leane's *Purple Threads* (2011), Ali Cobby Ackerman's *Ruby Moonlight* (2012), and Dylan Coleman's *Mazin' Grace* (2012), and the two novels by Munkara studied in this article – white patriarchy and the processes of colonisation impacted the relationship negatively.

The sexualisation of Indigenous women during the early phase of the colonial encounter continues to make them vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence in the contemporary world (Huhndorf and Suzack, 2010, p. 5). Larissa Behrendt explains that colonial notions about Indigenous women meant that white judges in the present day have "been quick to accept claims of devalued Aboriginal women's sexuality that has lowered the standards applied when determining whether consent had been given by Aboriginal women to sexual encounters" (2005, p. 249). Rather than addressing these issues, white middle-class feminists tend to simplistically attribute the oppression of Indigenous women to their men. By subsuming Indigenous women and their politics as a sub-set of the category 'woman', mainstream feminism elides the fact that white women have been just as responsible for the dispossession of Indigenous women as white men (Behrendt, 1993, p. 31).

Indigenous storytelling offers a counter to the "colonial myth", that is, the "story of imagined White superiority" (Episkenew, 2009, p. 3). Munkara's female characters demonstrate gender-specific strategies of agency that talk up to the colonialists while seeking to create and sustain spaces of humour that resist the positioning of Aboriginality outside of the category of the human. Her first novel, *Every Secret Thing* (2009a*)* depicts the early phase of the colonial encounter between Indigenous people and the Catholic Church as the latter, referred to in the narrative as the mission mob, tries to colonise Indigenous people's lives and lands under the pretext of salvaging their 'heathen' souls. Indigenous people are referred to as the bush mob in the narrative. The missionisation process operated according to the rationale that "[i]f a people do not recognise the name Jesus Christ ... then it is the duty of the Christian to take their land and bring them into the light" (Pascoe, 2018). The missionaries in *Every Secret Thing* adhere to this logic in their disregard for Indigenous people's say in the matter as they wrest control over the education and care of Indigenous children and duly convert them to Christianity. The colonisers' renaming of their Indigenous wards with 'proper' Christian names stems from their anxiety that "[n]ative names create a sense of presence, a tease that undermines the simulations of absence and cultural dominance" (Vizenor, 2009, p. 5) that settler colonialism is based on.

The 'philanthropic' mission even appears to have some success as some of the children take an interest in Christianity and express the desire to take the cloth. But this is far from the case as the children use this opportunity to retaliate against the mission mob's infringement of their

lives by assimilating and reworking the Catholic theology. One of the Indigenous girls at the mission school, Sara, devotes her time at the mission school equally between ecclesiastical studies and exploring her sexuality with multiple Indigenous partners. Having discovered a "canonical loophole" (Munkara, 2009, p. 10), she decides to relieve herself and Father Macredie of the anguish both feel during each confessional session and the harsh penance he subsequently imposes on her. Sara does this by bypassing the Catholic confessional altogether and going straight to God for forgiveness. From her first-hand observation of the missionaries and study of the scriptures, she enlightens the other bush children that "[y]ou could murder or rape and pillage, do what you liked, but if you sucked up to his Godliness's arse and showed even a modicum of repentance your slate would be wiped clean" (p. 9). Unlike the Catholic Church's mortification with the flesh, Sara reasons that neither sexual nor spiritual activities detract from the other. The balance she strikes contrasts with the male missionaries, who denigrate and (s)exploit Indigenous men, women, and children, but continue to schizophrenically regard themselves as culturally, intellectually, and spiritually superior to their wards. In this way, Sara maintains sovereignty of the mind even if she may not have sovereignty over her affairs.

While Sara's rebels in private, other Indigenous children openly challenge the missionaries. Baptised and renamed 'Mary Magdalene' by the mission mob, Wuninga gives birth to what the latter note to be the first 'pale-skinned' baby. The missionaries are confounded at this point. The nuns' constant surveillance, together with Wuninga's strict residence in the girls' dormitory, which prevents her interaction even with her own family, should have meant that no men, Indigenous or white, had access to her. The mission mob surmise that the new-born 'half-caste' is the product of one of the male missionaries' indiscretion and threaten Wuninga with fire and brimstone to divulge her sexual partner's identity. Since Indigenous people's autonomy and sovereignty are granted some semblance of recognition only when they take the form of the coloniser's political tools and expressions, Wuninga counters the mission mob's belligerence by using their scriptures against them (Ahmed, 2018, p. 74). Her knowledge of the Bible and ingenuity come to her rescue as Wuninga makes known to them that her pregnancy is a miracle, similar to that of Mother Mary's virgin birth of Jesus Christ. What this means is that any doubts about Wuninga's explanation would similarly question the veracity of the Immaculate Conception that the Christian faith so delicately hinges on. At this juncture, the western brand of rationality and emphasis on positivist knowledge would appear to discredit the authority of the Bible, containing not just Wuninga but even Biblical women to the Eurocentric angel/whore dichotomy.

Wuninga's explanation, on the other hand, is wholly congruent with the Indigenous world of reference for it acknowledges that the world is populated by both human and nonhuman life forms as well as spirits (Moreton-Robinson, 1998, p. 280). Indeed, "spirituality is a physical fact because it is experienced as part of one's life" (p. 280) so that Wuninga's "virgin birth for [God's] only begotten daughter" (Munkara, 2009, p. 37) is entirely plausible in the Indigenous worldview. Anne Brewster explains that "such knowledge is incommensurate with a rational belief system and as such it is tacit resistance to western ways of thinking" (1996, p. 9). Unable

to discredit Wuninga's claim, the missionaries writhe in their helplessness as they discover that they no longer have hegemony over the interpretation of the Holy Word and cannot prevent Indigenous people from drawing on Biblical stories to make sense of their everyday experiences (Ahmed, 2018, p. 75); nor can they wield it as an authority over the former 'pagans' who have now become their spiritual equals.

The narrator reveals that Wuninga's sexual partner was a Macassan trepang harvester and that the missionaries refused to consider this possibility because of their "colonising, conquering mentality" (Behrendt, 2000, p. 353), which neurotically drove them to legitimise their own foundational stories pertaining to their 'discovery' of, and 'belonging' to, Australia. Their "possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xi) require that they instate themselves as the first settlers and erase other non-Indigenous presence, including the six centuries of contact between Maccassan trepang harvesters and Indigenous people. The colonialist mentality, which has the missionaries clamouring that "No, the Maccassans have never been there… apart from the bush mob we were the first" (Munkara, 2009, p. 38), would rather there be suspicion and discord within the clergy than consider other more plausible reasons for the child's existence.

Indigenous people's lack of concern about who fathered Wuninga's child, in contrast, showcases cultural gaps between the two communities concerning women's sexual autonomy. Despite the missionaries' attempt to instil in Indigenous people a mortification of the flesh, Indigenous people find the missionaries' inquisitiveness distasteful apart from constituting an invasion of Wuninga's privacy. Given their collective identity, one elderly Indigenous female onlooker's private misgiving that "[n]ext thing they'd be asking who she slept with" (Munkara, 2009, p. 36) rightly anticipates that the missionaries' prying into Wuninga's activities is not a one-off incident. The bush mob are perceptive that there was "one set of rules for the mission mob and one set for the bush mob" (p. 19). It becomes apparent to them that the missionaries' 'benevolence' was targeted towards making Indigenous people their eternal subjects, not their spiritual 'equals.' Hence, the Church's authority is at stake when it is unable to punish Wuninga's transgressive sexuality as a warning to other Indigenous women. Indigenous people's indifference to the arrival of the new-born is arguably also owing to their recognition of the centrality of Wuninga's reproductive capacities to the overall survival of their community. Indeed, Indigenous women's "lives carry the meaning of the great human cycle of life, death, and rebirth, an ongoing process that Christianity forces into a linear paradigm of individual sin, guilt, death, and redemption" (Kidwell, 1994, p. 149).

Meanwhile, the male missionaries' mistreatment of women, Indigenous or otherwise, exposes their misogyny as embedded within the "institutional pyromania" (Munkara, 2009a, p. 49) that has a long history of silencing 'troublesome' women. The Church's systematic de-sexing of women who join its ranks, for instance, is based on the Brothers' staunch belief that one "couldn't really call the nuns women" (p. 42). Though they had joined the 'humanitarian' mission, the Sisters are, or consequently become, bereft of their capacity for empathy and

compassion. Not only are they not affectionate toward the Indigenous children they are put in charge of, *Every Secret Thing* portrays them as deficit in their vows of compassion. As with the narrative's exploration of the Brothers' hypocrisy and mean-spiritedness, the Sisters are depicted as far from godly in being motivated by malice and their desire for mastery in their interaction with the bush children, just as they are, in turn, dominated by their male colleagues. An illustration of this is Sister Annunciata's regular mistreatment of twelve-year old Taringa, baptised as 'Ignatius'. She attributes his resistance to her authority, in the rare instance when she is able to detect it, to "chronic interbreeding" (p. 5), because she believes that he has every reason to be grateful to her for 'civilising' him and saving him from a 'heathen' life in the bush.

The missionaries' power relations with Indigenous people can be said to have generated from colonial love; that is, "an imperialist, dualist logic, [that] dangerously fetishizes the beloved object and participates in the oppression and subjugation of difference" (Ureña, 2017, p. 86). This expression of love is predicated on conquest and ownership; it requires that the colonised other submit to being "accepted by another as their possession," which is "the willingness to turn oneself into such a possession and accept the other person as a gift" (Gräbner, 2014, p. 53). That colonial love was not limited to the religious sphere alone is apparent from Munkara's second novel, *A Most Peculiar Act*, which depicts interactions between Indigenous people and European bureaucrats employed by the Chief Protector of Aborigines to overlook the 'well-being' of Indigenous people. This narrative is set in the time leading up to the Japanese bombing of Darwin during the Second World War. Similar to the female missionaries in *Every Secret Thing*, Munkaradepicts the dehumanising impact of colonisation on settler women in the secular sphere in *A Most Peculiar Act*. It was the responsibility of the male patrol officers, working under the direction of the Chief Protector of Aborigines, to compel Indigenous people to become 'civilised' and assimilate western culture "instead of clinging to their primitive ways like stubborn children" (p. 14). Likewise, white women were expected to fulfil their domestic and reproductive responsibilities by establishing 'civilised' Christian homes in the settler state.

A white woman who grew up in the colony, Drew Hepplewaite's attempts to penetrate the public sphere in *A Most Peculiar Act* are reminiscent of settler women's demands for "the feminisation of 'native' administrations" (Holland, 2001, p. 27). One such demand was the appointment of white women as the Chief Protector of Aborigines during the 1920s and 1930s (p. 27). Drew succeeds in becoming the first woman patrol officer to be employed by the Chief Protector of Aborigines albeit by misrepresenting herself. She secures her job not because the settler state accommodates her aspirations, but by taking advantage of her ambiguous name to pretend to be a man. She achieves this by falsifying a 'manly' resume that none of the extant male patrol officers can match up to. The presence of Indigenous women in the frontier, who were regarded as sexually promiscuous and, therefore, more in need of surveillance and control (Haggis, 1990, p. 107), can be said to have contributed to the relaxation of the Eurocentric angel/whore binary in Drew's case. Incidentally, Drew is able to remain in her post when her ruse is discovered because the Chief Protector does not want to admit that he had made a mistake by appointing her.

In working to 'uplift' Indigenous women as per her job description, Drew's expression of colonial love refuses to recognise the agency of Indigenous people and prevents the formation of alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. She contributes instead to the consolidation of whiteness in the settler state while shedding the very 'femininity' she is valued for. Her racial affiliation bestows her with colonial authority in spite of her gender-based marginalisation. As a white settler woman, who is simultaneously colonised and colonising, the negative effects of her employment are more widespread than that caused by the male patrol officers. The 'improvements' she proposes to the racist policies as part of her 'white woman's burden' further cements Indigenous people's disenfranchisement. They parody the rhetoric settler women spewed about being better situated by virtue of their femininity, especially their motherhood, to make a case for their participation in the public domain and supervision of Indigenous women's affairs (Jacobs, 2009, p. 87). Drew's actions disprove Eurocentric notions that white women needed to be protected from 'hypersexualised' Indigenous men in the frontier. Drew is stopped only when her male colleagues, who had hitherto neglected their duties, intervene in her plans with the aim of discrediting her because they feel threatened by her success.

With "right-wing red-necked racist" (Munkara, 2014, p. 50) philosophies, Drew nevertheless remains hell-bent on maintaining a racially segregated society, making matters worse for Indigenous people and further deteriorating relations between the settler state and Indigenous people. For example, her decision that Indigenous people must be taught to use pit toilets and stop "crapping everywhere like animals" (p. 58) has no basis in reality. In one scene, she is surprised at the absence of any odour at the Indigenous camp after watching an Indigenous child urinate in the open. Drew responds with characteristic lack of intellectual curiosity by blatantly proceeding with her original plans rather than seeking to understand why her racist formulations have been unmet. In so doing, she side-lines her own empirical experiences to maintain her preconceived notions about Indigenous people's 'inferiority'. Drew's feminist-like emergence from the margins and incapacity to converse with Indigenous women displays the process Jackie Huggins labels "intellectual colonisation" (1998, p. 29). By this Huggins refers to the conversion of settler women's ideological predispositions into the universal female view by purporting to speak for Indigenous women and overlooking how this behaviour renders Indigenous women invisible (p. 25-36, 58-70).

In the end, Drew avoids being discharged from her duties for her aggression towards the male patrol officers by initiating an illicit affair with the married but much-unfaithful Administrator. For all her bravado she is only able to keep her office by securing the protection of a man higher in rank than the Chief Protector, who see this as an opportunity to remove her from her post. This suggests that the position of power she occupies is tokenistic at best, and that the power play between white men and women in a patriarchal society is essentially of a sexual nature. Theorising about the colonial construction of Indigenous women, Jean Barman writes

that "Aboriginal women's agency was sexualized. In the extreme case their every act became perceived as a sexual act and, because of the unceasing portrayal of their sexuality as wild and out of control, as an act of provocation" (1997/1998, p. 264). *A Most Peculiar Act* demonstrates that this description more aptly applies to Drew and reveals how its handling of white women was a precursor for western patriarchal practices vis-à-vis Indigenous women.

In contrast, Tarrti, an old Indigenous matriarch in *Every Secret Thing*, continues to command respect among the bush mob in spite of what could qualify as her 'mistake' for allowing the missionaries to build their Church on land she is custodian of. The narrator discloses that as a woman with agency Tarrti engineered this event to spite Jerrekepai, an Indigenous patriarch, because the latter had passed her up in favour of a more docile woman from the community in their youth. That is, Jerrekepai's opposition to the missionaries when they first appeared meant that Tarrti took it upon herself to permit their presence because she was "automatically and virulently opposed" (Munkara, 2009, p. 18) to anything he thought or wanted. In spite of the disastrous consequences of her actions, Tarrti's warnings about an impending cyclone put the bush mob's speculations that had been going on for weeks to rest. This kind of authority is typically imagined as male in the coloniser's culture. Tarrti's knowledge of the land becomes critical to the bush mob's survival when the cyclone eventually strikes. Having mocked her weather forecast as the "ramblings … of a silly and unsophisticated old woman" (p. 56), the mission mob barely survive the calamity hiding in an overflowing toilet. Meanwhile, the church, the building one would presume to be the most sanctified for the mission mob's God is housed there, is blown away by the cyclone, an incident that underscores their un-belonging to, and unlawful occupation of, Indigenous land.

Equally insightful is the Indigenous narrator's commentary in *Every Secret Thing* that Indigenous people never thought to ask the invaders to leave even as they, Tarrti included, are increasingly disenfranchised by the clergy's misdemeanours. This implies that Tarrti's transnationalism and engagement as a cultural broker with the missionaries may have been in keeping with the bush mob's cultural protocols for dealings with visitors. Tarrti's decision to warn the mission mob in this context stems from Indigenous cultural protocols of reciprocity and relationality. The non-hierarchical basis of Indigenous people's duty of care posits a challenge to the racial hierarchy through which the colonisers claim their superiority. Limiting Tarrti's action to that of colonial complicity, on the other hand, denies the wholeness of her experiences. However, such national origin stories continue to be circulated by the settler state as they depict Indigenous people as passive being, or equally worse, as being desirous of the invasion.

It is when the clergy decides to solve the 'problem' of the 'half-caste' children they (pro)created with Indigenous women that the first cracks appear in the bush mob's defence against the invaders in *Every Secret Thing*. Jeanette Armstrong's observation that the attack on the intimate spaces of the Indigenous family happened by denigrating women's role (1996, p. x) sheds light on this process. The valorisation of Indigenous women's responsibilities within their community is vastly different from the western feminist's activism for rights (Udel, 2001,

p. 43). Clara Sue Kidwell explains that "[a]lthough feminists might deny this equation of anatomy and destiny, the fact is that the female reproductive function is a crucial factor in determining a woman's social role in tribal societies" (1994, p. 149). This is all the more so when the disappearance of Indigenous people is necessary for the Australian settler state to assert its legitimacy. The transference of 'half-caste' children to another mission, deceptively named the Garden of Eden, then in *Every Secret Thing* is, by the same act, the discarding of their Indigenous mothers and the denial of their right to motherhood.

When Marigold, one of the 'half-caste' children who was forcibly removed by the clergy in order to be interpellated with a white subjectivity, returns to her community after two decades of traumatic experiences in white households, her biological mother's apparent indifference to her presence comes as a shock to both Marigold and the reader. Based on Munkara's own experience as a member of the 'Stolen Generations' with her mother, Marigold's story in *Every Secret Thing* is an inversion of the 'happily ever after' that mainstream narratives associate with family reunions. Munkara departs from this trajectory to focus on the challenges associated with the trauma of Marigold's and her mother Judy's severance. After living as a domestic in white households with no memory of her early years with her Indigenous family, the physically, sexually, and psychologically abused Marigold is appalled by the poverty and squalor she finds Judy living in. Following a lifetime of being meddled with by the Church and state's racist policies, Judy becomes even more defensive as she perceives that her daughter, who has been indoctrinated to consider Aboriginality as savagery, is wary of her living conditions.

Having once been denied her right to mother, Judy maintains her sovereignty over her emotions by keeping Marigold at arm's length while simultaneously teaching her, as is traditionally expected of an Indigenous mother, the ways of the community. The narrator explains that "[t]he pain of losing [Marigold] had solidified and turned into a mountain of indifference" (Munkara, 2009, p. 170). Munkara refrains from translating this trauma in *Every Secret Thing* to prevent the assimilation of these stories by mainstream readers as typical Australian "battler stories" (Schaffer, 2002, p. 5), She conveys its unspeakable nature by not offering Marigold and Judy any scope to heal together. Their inability to communicate in the narrative resists the trope of suffering mothers and vulnerable children that is understood to be transcultural in its reach and used to mediate the traumatic legacy of child removal and assimilation in Australia (Kennedy, 2008, p. 162). Through her anticolonial response to the 'Stolen Generations' narratives, Munkara exposes the limits of empathy by disallowing readers any scope to identify with Marigold or Judy, whereby readers avoid examining their own complicity as beneficiaries of colonisation (Ahmed, 2018, p. 98-99). As an outsider to her own community, Marigold is thus dumbfounded when Judy self-flagellates, as per Indigenous cultural response to grief, in response to the mission mob's decision to confiscate a pet pig that is a nuisance to the entire community. Unable to deal with what she interprets as abandonment, Marigold leaves her mother a second time in the end. The absence of a resolution leads one to conclude that "[p]erhaps some traumatic experiences can only be acknowledged and survived" but not shared (Kennedy, 2008, p. 167).

As with institutionalisation, sterilisation, and the formulation of policies that advocated the biological absorption of Indigenous women through their marriage to lower-class white men into the invader society, domestic servitude in white households was another space where Indigenous women were contained to assist in the disappearance of Indigenous people (Haskin, 2007, p. 125). It was held that domestic service with the white mistress as the knowing subject, in addition to Indigenous women's removal from their culture and country, would train them to become disciplined subjects (Moreton-Robinson, 1998, p. 281). The impersonal nature of the power relations between the sixteen-year-old Indigenous girl Sugar and her white mistress, Penelope, requires Sugar to play a secondary role as a servant to support Penelope's 'superior' position as a settler wife in *A Most Peculiar Act*. Here too the supposedly utopian relationship of the kindly mistress and her loyal servant is estranged by colonial characterisations of Indigenous people as bringing disharmony to spaces of white order and domesticity. Ironically, Penelope's oppressive attitudes and behaviour reveal that it is not Indigenous people but she and her fellow white socialites who are agents of disorder within both settler and Indigenous communities.

Penelope's dependence on Sugar negates her attempts to master her underling in the space of inter subjectivity. An instance of this is Penelope's conviction that Sugar is a carrier of contagious diseases. In order to continue benefitting from her Indigenous domestics' labour, Penelope's misgivings are assuaged by having Sugar wear gloves at all times, whereby she cedes her demands for hygiene and cleanliness to Sugar. However, her incapacity to invigilate Sugar in the kitchen from her self-containment in the 'civilised' space of the parlour renders Penelope more vulnerable than she thinks she is. Sugar and the other Indigenous servants rely on their awareness of Victorian society's policing of social hierarchies to shift the power relations. The rigid demarcation of space that separates white women from their domestics is utilised by Sugar to 'contaminate' the wine she courteously offers to Penelope's white guests by drinking directly from every bottle first. Sugar relies on the invaders' sociality and readiness to accept the offer to (re)fill their glasses to secretly overturn the dreaded physical contact. She resists the dual processes of individuation and dehumanisation she is subjected to by drawing on her own "experiences and knowledge of another standard of being human" (Moreton-Robinson, 1998, p. 281).

In the end, Sugar's exposure to white virtues and cultural norms coupled with her experience of racialised intersubjectivity in white cultural domains do not overwrite the values and behavioural codes she was taught by her Indigenous family and community. Since an "Aboriginal woman's relationality is… never based upon the tolerance of others but the experience of the self as part of others" (Moreton-Robinson, 1998, p. 279), Sugar warns the white socialites, who form the crème de la crème of the imperial order, at Penelope's party about the impending Japanese aerial bombing of Darwin. At this critical juncture, when European hegemony is challenged by a new aggressor, Sugar's calm and knowledge of the land embody her sovereignty as she leads the hysterical white partygoers to the safety of the caves. This scene conveys the "incommensurate difference between the situatedness of the Indigenous people… and those who have come here" (Moreton-Robinson, 2010, p. 30).

Sugar's rescue of the white imperialists delinks the thwarting of the Japanese attack on Darwin from Eurocentric narratives about the defence of white sovereignty to the actions undertaken by Indigenous people to defend their lands. As the concluding scene of *A Most Peculiar Act*, the bombing of Darwin during the Second World Warforegrounds Indigenous people's subjugated knowledge that they do not want to be invaded a second time over: they had "lost too much already to turn traitor and face going through it a second time. Better to just stick with the devil that you already knew" (Munkara, 2014, p. 168-9). Though she saves them, the partygoers remain ever oblivious to Sugar's feelings and agency. They disregard her presence as they speculate that Indigenous people will join the Japanese to overthrow white hegemony. The restoration of the colonial hierarchy between Sugar and the colonialists inside the cave as they await the Japanese invasion point to the pervasiveness of the colonial mentality as well as the roadblocks that stand in the way of achieving true reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia so long as settlers cling to their white privilege (Ahmed, 2018, p. 84).

Munkara's female Indigenous characters in both the novels examined in this article contend with different but complementary methods of assimilation, which were implemented by the missionaries and bureaucrats to destroy Indigenous cultural and social domains, and, thereby, undermine Indigenous communities. In spite of these challenges, there is no doubt that Munkara's female Indigenous characters are active agents and exercise self-determination in their interaction with the colonisers. While Indigenous women traditionally enjoyed privileges within their community in *Every Secret Thing*, this changed significantly with the colonial encounter. In spite of this the Indigenous female characters demonstrate that they "never totally lost ourselves within the other's reality" (Dodson, 1994, p. 9). The Indigenous women characters are adept at negotiating with and surviving in different white cultural spheres. Sara, Wuninga, Tarrti, Judy, Marigold, and Sugar all exhibit the "warriorship of Aboriginal women's lives" (Bunda, 2018, p. 4) by maintaining their sovereignty and identity despite also assimilating the coloniser's culture to different degrees. Though this is, in the mainstream, often equated with a loss of 'authentic' Indigeneity, the narrative's exploration of the women's subjectivity makes evident that they have "enacted a sovereignty of endurance" (p. 5) by operating from their Indigenous standpoint. Further, Indigenous women endured and survived colonisation because "there was an intimate understanding of the sovereign self – one that acted with dignity, in resistance if required, with kindness, in remembering our identities, with intellect and strategy for change" (p. 5). Hence, the stories in *Every Secret Thing* and *A Most Peculiar Act* do not conform to gendered colonial narratives but Indigenous ones in explicating how Indigenous women overcame the "dispossession of ourselves from ourselves" (p. 5).

In instances where Indigenous women have been emotionally and psychologically damaged by colonisation, they continue, as sovereign women, to mobilise against the colonising processes in effect within their communities and homes. The fragmentary and episodic nature of Munkara's novels also contribute to the process of reclaiming epistemic equity. Due to the omniscient storyteller's use of the third-person to access both Indigenous and non-Indigenous

characters' perspectives, readers are able to delineate an alternative history of a community's collective cultural and political resistance to the invasion. The narrator additionally states that certain stories are recounted multiple times and produced much mirth within the Indigenous community; this suggests that these stories teach current and future generations to negotiate colonisation (Ahmed, 2018, p. 96). Munkara, therefore, undertakes to rewrite narratives of conquest by reclaiming Indigenous women's activism and showcasing how they even defeat the coloniser on multiple occasions using their ingenuity and imagination though the latter remains unaware of this. In conclusion, Indigenous women survive ruptures to their intimate spaces and challenge colonial memory by asserting their sovereignty: their "[d]ifferent ethics, behaviour and values repudiate the moral and intellectual hegemony that effects such domination and oppression" (Moreton-Robinson, 1998, p. 285).

References

Ackerman, A. C. (2012). *Ruby Moonlight: A Novel of the Impact of Colonisation in Mid-North South Australia Around 1880*. Broome: Magabala Books.

Ahmed, F. J. (2018). *Deadly Humour in a Womba World: A Study of Indigenous Australian Humorous Literature*. M.A. Thesis. Monash University.

Armstrong, J. (1996). "Invocation: The Real Power of Aboriginal Women." In C. Miller, P. Chuchryk, M. S. Marule, B. Manyfingers, and C. Deering. *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength* (pp. ix-xii). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Behrendt, L. (2000). "Consent in a (Neo)Colonial Society: Aboriginal Women as Sexual and Legal 'Other'." *Australian Feminist Studies*, *15* (33), 353-367.

Behrendt, L. (1993). "Aboriginal Woman and the White Lies of the Feminist Movement: Implications for Aboriginal Women in Rights Discourse." *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, *1*, 27-44.

Brewster, A. (1996). *Reading Aboriginal Women's Autobiography*. Melbourne: Sydney University Press and Oxford University Press.

Bunda, T. (2018)."Seeing the Aboriginal Sovereign Warrior Woman." *The Lifted Brow*, *40*, 4-5.

Coleman, D. *Mazin' Grace*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Dodson, M. (1994). "The Wentworth Lecture: The End in the Beginning: Re(de)finding Aboriginality." *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1, 2-13.

Episkenew, Jo-Ann. *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing*. University of Manitoba Press, 2009.

Gräbner, C. (2014). "'But How to Speak of Such Things?': Decolonial Love, the Coloniality of Gender, and Political Struggle in Francisco Goldman's *The Long Night of White*

Chickens (1992) and Jennifer Harbury's *Bridge of Courage* (1994) and *Searching for Everardo* (1997)." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, *20* (1), 51-74.

Haggis, J. (1990)."Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender: Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism."*Women's Studies International Forum*, *13* (1/2), 105-115.

Haskin, V. (2007). Domestic Service and Frontier Feminism: The Call for a Women Visitor to 'Half-Caste' Girls and Women in Domestic Service, Adelaide, 1925-1928." *Frontiers*, *28* (1/2), 124-286.

Holland, A. (2001). "The Campaign for Women Protectors: Gender, Race and Frontier Between the Wars." *Australian Feminist Studies*, *16* (34), 17-42.

Huggins, J. (1998). *Sister Girl: The Writings of Aboriginal Activist and Historian*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Huhndorf, S. M., and Suzack, C. (2010). "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues." In C. Suzack, S. M. Huhndorf, J. Perreault, and J. Barman (Eds.), *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture* (pp. 1-17). Vancouver; Toronto: University of British Columbia Press.

Jacobs, M. D. (2009). *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Kennedy, R. (2008). "Vulnerable Children, Disposable Mothers: Holocaust and Stolen Generations Memoirs of Childhood." *Life Writing*, *5* (2), 161-184.

Kidwell, C. S. (1994). "What Would Pocahontas Think Now? Women and Cultural Persistence."*Callaloo*, *17* (1), 149-159.

Lake, M. (1993). "Colonised and Colonising: The White Australian Feminist Subject." *Women's History Review*, *2*(3), 377-386.

Leane, J. (2011). *Purple Threads*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

McGrath, A. (1984). "'Black Velvet': Aboriginal Woman and their Relations with White Men in the Northern Territory, 1919-40." In K. Daniels (Ed.), *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History*. 233-297. Sydney: Fontana/ Collins.

Moreton-Robinson, A. (2015). *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.

Moreton-Robinson, A. (2010). "I Still Call Australia Home: Indigenous Belonging and Place in a White Postcolonizing Society." In S. Ahmed, C. Castada, A. Fortier, and M. Sheller (Eds.), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*. Berg Publisher, 23-40.

Moreton-Robinson. (1998). "When the Object Speaks, A Postcolonial Encounter: Anthropological Representations and Aboriginal Women's Self-Presentation." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *19* (3): 275-289.

Munkara, M. (2014).*A Most Peculiar Act*. Broome: Magabala Books.

Munkara, M. (2009). *Every Secret Thing*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Pascoe, Bruce. (2018). "Australia: Temper and Bias." *Meanjin Quarterly*, https://meanjin.com.au/essays/11312/

Payne, S. (1992). "Aboriginal Women and the Law." in Chris Cuneed (Ed.), *Aboriginal Perspectives on Criminal Justice* (pp. 65-74). Sydney: Sydney University Law School.

Puren, N. (1995). "Hymeneal Acts: Interrogating the Hegemony of Rape and Romance." *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, *5*, 15-26.

Rooks, A. K. "Sexual Violation and the 'Amoral' Woman in Aboriginal Verse." *Antipodes*, *26* (1), 49-54.

Schaffer, K. (2002). "Stolen Generation Narratives in Local and Global Contexts." *Antipodes*, *16* (1), 5-10.

Scott, K. (1999). *Benang: From the Heart*. South Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Threlkeld, L. E. (1974). In N. Gunson (Ed.). *Australian Reminiscences & Papers of L.E. Threlkeld: Missionary to the Aborigines, 1824-1859*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Udel, L. J. (2001). "Revision and Resistance: The Politics of Native Women's Motherwork." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *22* (2), 43-62.

Ureña, C. (2017). "Loving from Below: Of (De)colonial Love and Other Demons." *Hypatia*, *32* (1), 86-102.

Vizenor, G. (2009). *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*. University of Nebraska

VOL 8, 2018
East West Journal of Humanities

Is blended learning the future of higher education?: Stakeholders' Perspectives from Bangladesh

Muhammed Shahriar Haque
East West University

Umme Hani M. Joher
East West University

Abstract

Government higher education is extremely cheap in Bangladesh, in comparison to private education. To cover the cost of private higher education, graduate students of private universities who work and study at the same time, face an uphill struggle in finding the right balance. In dire circumstances, they are forced to make a critical life changing choice— either to completely become immersed in work, or leave and pursue fulltime higher studies. In such a situation, blended learning can apparently be the answer, as this will enable graduate students to work and study at the same time. However, as hardly any research has been carried out in this field in Bangladesh up until 2018, it seems too naive to jump to conclusions. This paper specifically looks at the implication of blended learning from the perspectives of stakeholders like students pursuing graduate studies, academics, employers, and housewives. Data was gathered from 10 private universities, six corporate sectors, and dropout housewives, and analysedby employing two theories (Social-constructivism and Dual coding) and multi-modal model of blended learning (enriched virtual model and flipped classroom). Findings proved to be interesting. The implementation of online classes on the one hand may help learners to balance the work and study equilibrium, as well as decrease dropouts from higher education, on the other hand would be quite costly due to virtual infrastructural development and teacher training.

Keywords: Blended learning, digital Bangladesh, private universities, social constructivism theory, dual coding theory, flipped classroom, enriched virtual model

Rationale

Dhaka is the most expensive city in Bangladesh, and the most expensive in South Asia[11]. When university applicants fail to get chance to study in state run universities, they may opt for private universities. In comparison to public universities, the cost of private higher education in Bangladesh is very high, and not everyone can afford it (see Helal, 2012; Kumar, Sharmin, Dey, 2012; Rabbani and Chowdhury, 2014; Mazumder, 2014). In 2015, private university tuitions ranged "from around BDT 40,000 to 80,000 per semester/trimester for a student on an average, depending on the number of credits"[12].Coupled with the high maintenance of living expenses, in addition to the tuition fees of private universities, it becomes difficult for parents to balance the budget. Hence graduate students enrolled in private universities in Bangladesh, particularly Dhaka, tend to work and study at the same time. However, at times work pressure, monthly expenditure including tuition fees, political strikes (e.g. hartals), traffic congestions, makes it difficult to balance academic and professional commitments (see Islam, 2014). Under such circumstances, can blended learning provide an alternative solution? If so, is blended learning the future of higher education in a developing country like Bangladesh?

Blended learning is like an umbrella term, and may be defined in various ways. One of the definitions suggest that blended learning is an amalgamation of both face-to-face and online learning, incorporating both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments (Watterston, 2012, p.5). With reference to this definition, it should be kept in mind that even though blended learning has been used in developed countries for quite some time, in Bangladesh up until the end of 2018, the time when this research was conducted, no institution of higher education in this country had formally employed this approach to teaching and learning. Therefore, this paper has two objectives: to look at the implication of blended learning from the perspectives of stakeholders like students, teachers, employers; to explore whether private universities are capable of providing technology-enhanced tertiary education through blended learning. In the context of this study, stakeholders will comprise fulltime/part-time(working)/dropout housewives graduate students, school and corporate/ professional organization (banks, mobile operators, merchandisers and consultancy firms, NGOs) employers, as well as private university teachers.

[11] https://www.daily-bangladesh.com/english/Dhaka-most-expensive-city-in-South-AsiaEIU/3221
https://www.thedailystar.net/dhaka-most-expensive-city-in-south-asia-for-expats-survey-33782

[12] https://www.thedailystar.net/shout/how-much-does-your-education-cost-98533

Significance of Blended Learning in Bangladesh

The present government, which has been in power for the last 10 years, is committed to achieving Digital Bangladesh by 2021. By Digital Bangladesh, government actually meant to achieve social, cultural and economic liberty with the maximum use of ICT and in many sectors the result has shown positive outcomes (Habib, and Baizid, 2010, p.393). However, in terms of education sector the digitization process has not been so comprehensive thus far. According to Ghahari and Golestan (2013, p. 6), the only use of technology cannot bring the ultimate success; they feel that incorporating technology with traditional face-to-face teaching gives the opportunity to bring distant learners closer by giving them better learning environment. In a developing country like Bangladesh, volatile political situations tend to cause classes to be unofficially and/or unpredictably suspended for certain periods of time, which hinders the quality of education (see Hossain, 2013). Under such circumstances, even though learners become enthused with the online learning process, they, according to Kobayashi and Little (2011, p.105), accept the fact that combining online and face-to-face learning processes is much more beneficial for them. Though learners in general get better learning outcomes through active learning with the proper guidelines from the face-to-face instruction (Saliba, Rankine, and Cortez, 2013, p.5), the ones with less motivation and focus tend to find blended learning to be more advantageous for providing greater opportunities than merely online or face-to-face teaching-learning situation. This tends to pave the way towards learner-autonomy. Tayebinik and Puteh (in Alaidarous and Madini, 2016, p. 69), opine blended learning cannot only overcome higher educational challenges, but also mitigate the obstacles encountered by face-to-face and online/virtual learning.

In general, both teachers and students of Bangladesh have started shifting gear by teaching and learning from the traditional education system to technology-based teaching and learning (Hossain, 2013, p. 148). Furthermore, to implement 'Vision 2021' and make 'Digital Bangladesh' a reality, every sector including academia and corporate world are emphasizing more on cloud computing. Cloud computing, according to some scholars (Hayes, 2008; Creeger, 2009; Armbrust *et al.*, 2010 in Kaur, 2017, p. 147), provide flexible communication infrastructure in a convenient schedule. Therefore, 'Vision 2021' and 'Digital Bangladesh' seem to be paving the way towards blended leaning. By allowing university academics to explore blended learning, other stakeholders like employers of schools and corporate organizations (banks, mobile operators, merchandisers, consultancy firms, and NGOs, who employ student-works, could also benefit by combining virtual along with face-to-face teaching-learning platform. Keeping in mind, the Bangladeshi government and university stakeholders need to take positive initiatives regarding blended learning approach to higher education (see Monem and Baniamin, 2010).

Literature Review

Though low adult literacy rate, inadequate higher and professional education and training opportunities, lack of informal and non-formal educational opportunities lead to the low knowledge-based economy of Bangladesh (Hossain and Saddik, 2016, p.–1), according to Mahmuda (2016), technology in teaching has changed the scenario of the education system of this nation by increasing communication, creating classroom communities, making textbooks interactive and by making learning more web-based. This section takes a brief look at literature pertaining to the topic of investigation in the form of blended learning in Bangladeshi private higher education.

Use of Technology in Bangladeshi Private Higher Education

Although studies show that the use of educational technology can increase quality of learning, it is not adequately applied in Bangladeshi universities (Islam and Salma, 2016, p. 100). However, Haque (2016) draws attention to the fact that there is a clear emerging digital culture in Bangladeshi higher education, particularly in private universities. It is one of the election promises of the present Bangladeshi government to achieve 'Digital Bangladesh' through its Vision 2021 manifesto by the year 2021, when the country turns 50. To make that into a reality would mean a 'science-based Bangladesh comprising innovations, inventions, connectivity' (Bayes, 2009). Haque and Akhter (2014) emphasize that despite the challenges there are numerous potentials of using Computer Assisted Language Teaching (CALT) in Higher Education, while Haque (2012) highlights the prospects of web 2.0 (i.e. social media) in this country. Mahmuda (2016) points out that not only have Bangladeshi students become comfortable with 'blog, twitter, Facebook and many other online platforms', but also that multimedia projector, mobile phone, Moodle, podcast, e-book, web-quest and social networking websites are some of the technologies and applications that are already being used in Bangladeshi education. To realize 'Digital Bangladesh', Rahaman and Akter (2017, p. 2) emphasize that ICT is even being used in primary and secondary levels of education in rural areas of Bangladesh, particularly the Sylhet division. Even though Bangladesh Open University (BOU) is the only public university which spreads knowledge throughout distance education, other public and private universities are using various technologies in their 'brick-and-mortar campus' (Karim, 2014, p. 38).

Stakeholders

Any new invention in an education sector does affect the stakeholders related to that institution. According to Mitchell et al. (in Benn, Abratt, and O'Leary, 2016, p. 1), stakeholders include 'persons', neighbourhoods', 'institutions', 'groups', 'organisations', 'society', and the 'environment', while Freeman and Reed (in Benn, Abratt, and O'Leary, 2016, p.1) specify that the stakeholders are those who can affect the intentions made by the. Moreover, the primary stakeholders for any institution are "shareholders and investors, employees, customers, and suppliers", as without their active and continuous participation an institution cannot

run (Clarkson, 1995, p. 106). Clarkson also mentioned "the public stakeholder group: the governments and communities that provide infrastructures and markets, whose laws and regulations must be obeyed, and to whom taxes and other obligations may be due" as the primary stakeholders of an institution. However, the secondary stakeholders have very little to no influence on the objective of the institution. In terms of educational institutions employing the blended learning model, stakeholders group comprises of students, instructors, educational institutions, content providers (instructor themselves or outside sources), technology providers (product providers for effective learning), accreditation bodies (government or education council), and employers (Wagner, Hassanein, and Head, 2014). Apart from students and teachers/instructors, stakeholders can also comprise parents and administrators of educational institutions (Whiteside, 2016).In the context of this paper, stakeholders include students, teachers, dropout housewives, employers of schools, NGOs and corporate organizations.

Blended Learning

Blended learning has numerous definitions based on the need of a particular community, society, or education system. The diverseness of earlier definations of blended learning give fodder to critics like Oliver and Trigwell (2005) who say that there is a lack of consistency regarding this form of learning. Irrespective of the differences of opinions regarding the definition of blended learning, it is the teacher or instructor who tends to aid face-to-face and/or online communication facilitation. In this respect, Bryan and Volchenkova (2016, p. 28) explain that despite the differences of opinions among scholars and/or researchers, they all "agree that blended learning is an integrated learning experience that is controlled and guided by the instructor whether in the form of face-to-face communication or his virtual presence".

Chew, Jones and Turner (2008), who base their definition on Maslow's Vygotsky's educational theory in hybrid learning and education environment(s) feel that blended is an amalgamation of 'two fields of concern', particularly 'education and educational technology'. Likewise, Watterston (2012, p. 5) specifies that "blended learning combines teaching and learning methods from both face-to-face to mobile and online learning and includes elements from both synchronous and asynchronous online learning options". Since there is hardly any research in terms of blended learning (combination of face-to-face and virtual online video-recorded class) in Bangladeshi educational systems, we can look at the Indian educational infrastructure, which is similar to that of our country. Lalima and Dangwal (2017, p. 129) who talk about the scope of blended learning in Indian education context explain that it is an "innovative concept that embraces the advantages of both traditional teaching in the classroom and ICT supported learning including both offline learning and online learning". Furthermore, there seems to be a dearth of knowledge regarding blended learning with respect to English language teaching, learning and training. Bryan and Volchenkova (2016) talk about one of the initiatives of South Ural State University (SUSU), which in 2015 became involved with Project 5-100 initiated by the Ministry of Education of Russian Federation;

SUSU explored how blended learning through educational technologies can provide English language training to undergraduate students.

Caner (2016, p. 21) says that different environments are needed for blended learning, and explains that this approach of learning blends "face-to-face instruction with distributed learning environments that highlight the use of Internet-based technologies, which is characterized by a reduction in the number of face-to-face sessions". According to Young (in Caner, 2016, p. 21), blended learning is an effective system to provide better learning for the higher education students who do not have the advantage of getting into the 'on-ground learning environment'. The present research is based on this concept of blended learning that combines face-to-face classes along with synchronous online teaching/leaning, and looks at the practical implications of this approach to learning in Bangladeshi private universities from the stakeholders' perspectives.

Blended Learning Models

There are various models of blended learning. Model(s) may be adopted and/or adapted depending on the infrastructure of the educational institution, learners' background(s), learners' level(s), teachers'/instructors' training, schema, attitude, and so on. According to Christensens (in Staker and Horn, 2012, p.5), blended learning programmes are conducted based on one of the four models: Rotation Model, Flex Model, À la carte Model (formally Self-Blend Model) and Enriched Virtual Model (see Figure1). The Rotational Model is further sub-categorized into Station-Rotation Model, Lab-Rotational Model, Flipped-Classroom Model, and Individual-Rotational Model.

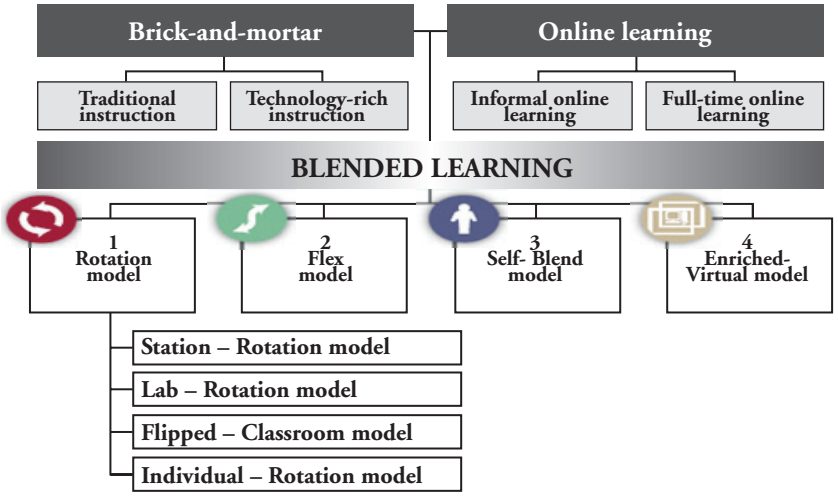

Figure 1: Models of Blended Learning
(Source: Staker and Horn, 2012, p.5)

In addition to the above models, Picciano (in Aguilar, 2012, p.170) discusses about 'The Multimodal Model' which takes into consideration the multiple intelligence of learners in the same classroom, and that blended learning should incorporate multiple approaches rather than one-size-fits-all approach to cater to the needs of wide number of students.

This study particularly employed Flipped Classroom Model and Enriched virtual model of blended learning (see Staker, and Horn, 2012, p. 5). According to Staker and Horn (2012), in the Flipped classroom model (See Figure: 2 below), students rotate between a regular teacher-guided on campus environment and an online command of content delivery from any remote place outside the classroom. Similarly, Urfa (2018) mentions that in flipped classroom, traditional contents are shifted to online platforms for learners to access; he cites a study, and emphasizes that the usage of Flipped Classroom Model has increased drastically in 2017 compared to 2011. Furthermore, the interactive time in flipped classroom model as explained by Bergmann, Overmyer & Wilie (2011), is done during face-to-face classroom, and it is the learners' sole responsibility to look over the classes uploaded online and make notes for any conundrum (Ozdamli, and Asiksoy, 2016, p. 100). Again, to create maximum use of conceptual knowledge in the practical life of the tertiary level students, and to satisfy their required lecture classes efficiently, flipped classroom model is considerable (Garza, 2014, p. 11). However, in the Flipped Classroom Model, the time of face-to-face traditional class is not compromised, which is not the case in the Enriched Virtual Model (See Figure: 3 below). Unlike Flipped classroom, students rarely visit the 'brick-and-mortar campus', hardly once in a week.

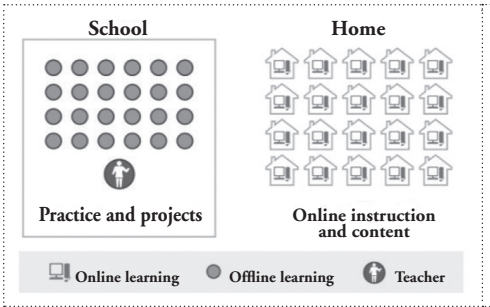

Figure 2: Flipped Classroom Model
(Source: Staker, and Horn, 2012, p. 10)

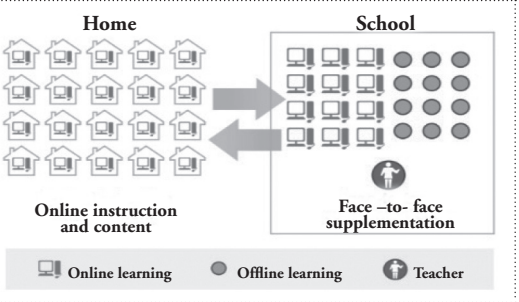

Figure 3: Enriched Virtual Model
(Source: Staker, and Horn, 2012, p. 15)

Connecting Blended Learning with Social Constructivism and Dual Coding Theory

According to Vygotsky (in Suhendi and Purwarno, 2018, p. 91), social interaction(s) ofpeople, within their zone of proximal development, seem to enhancetheir cognitive function(s). Learners tend to generate knowledge about a concept by interacting with each other and sharing their views. In other words, social interaction is of paramount importance for learning, particularly language learning. English language instructors need to adapt to the changes of 21st century.

The greatest gift of the new millennium is advancement of technology, which should be incorporated into the education system. Institutions of higher learning need to incorporate educational technology in the teaching-learning process. Subsequently, it is important for these institutions to move away from yesteryear's traditional teaching-learning style(s) and adopt innovative and pragmatic emerging methodologies that rely on technology, like blended learning. Blended learning would allow learners to maintain their social relations with other people through technology in spite of being at home or any other place outside the brick-and-mortar classroom. In other words, blended learning would enable instructors to stimulate students' learning process and ensure optimumlearning opportunities through blended learning procedure(s) (Kalpana, 2014, p. 24).

Dual coding theory refers to two channels of communication that process information in the human brain: through the verbal channel and the non-verbal, that is, visual channel (Clark and Paivio (1991). The two channels for processing information can be very significant in terms of language learning. From the perspective of educational psychology, Clark and Paivio (1991) explain how the dual coding theory can be employed as a general framework. They (Clark and Paivio, 1991, p. 151) suggest that the verbal system contains 'modality-specific codes' and non-verbal system retains 'modality-specific images' as shown in Figure 4. Language acquisition procedure works in a similar manner, that is, human beings tend to link the new 'logogenic' expression(s) they learn with the existing imagery they have in their mind to create the dual code schema (Moreno, 2017, p. 23). This process can be connected to blended learning, because blended learning like dual coding theoryoperates by means to two forms of communication channels: verbal and visual (i.e. visual and/or audio-visual). Hence, the findings of this paper have been explained in terms of Vygotsky's (in Suhendi and Purwarno, 2018) concept of social constructivism, and Clark and Paivio's (1991) dual coding theory.

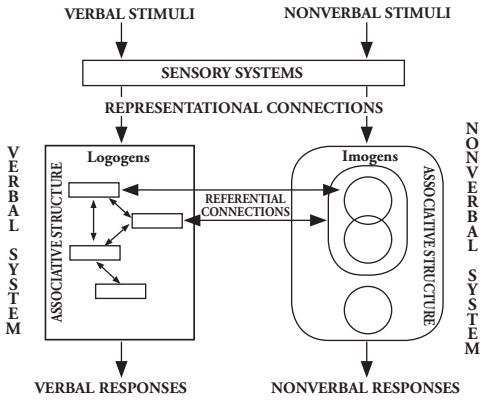

Figure 4: Visual Representation of Dual Coding Theory
(Source: Clark and Paivio, 1991, p. 152)

Methodology

This study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It explores the practical implications of blended learning in English departments of private universities of Bangladesh in terms of stakeholders' perspective(s), as well as whether private universities have the necessary infrastructure of offering technology-enhanced education.

Since random sampling provides the best chance to obtain a representative sample (Onwuegbuzie, and Leech, 2007, p. 242), this form of sampling was used to select 10 private universities from Dhaka metropolitan by means of the Fish Bowl Technique. Ten English Language Teaching (ELT) instructors who teach graduate classes in the Department of English were selectedwere also selected by means of random sampling from those 10 universities in order to be interviewed. However, due to the nature of the data, other samples were collected based on the convenience sampling: for instance, graduate students for focus group interviews, employers from schools and corporate organizations, university dropout housewives. Focus group interviews were conducted with 100 graduate students from the English department of 10 private universities; they were divided into 17 focus groups, each comprising 6-7 students. Eighteen employers from schools and corporate organizations (banks, mobile operators, merchandisers and consultancy firms, NGOs) were selected for interviews. Furthermore, three university dropout housewives, who completed their undergraduate studies from English department, were selected.

Theoretical Framework

A typical blended learning framework may have 'two or more' models (Kose, 2010). Flipped classroom and enriched virtual model (see Staker, and Horn, 2012) seemed appropriate in this study, which look at stakeholders' opinion(s) of blended learning that was based on a combination of face-to-face and online teaching-learning approach. Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (in Suhendi and Purwarno, 2018) is also relevant for this research. This theory shows how students and teachers as well as employers generate their knowledge about a concept by interacting with each other and sharing their views in order to learn. Likewise, in Blended learning environment, where learners are given opportunities to watchfootage/clips of their classes, interact/stay connect virtually, and have discussion(s) with their instructorsand/ or their peers through synchronous and asynchronous communication. Consequently, learnersare connected with their peers (classmates/course mates) and instructors 24/7. Hence, stakeholders (university academics, administrators, graduate working and non-workingstudents of from the English departments of private universities employers of corporate organizations (banks, mobile operators, merchandisers and consultancy firms); NGOs, schools, and University dropout housevives are constantly generating their knoeledge through regular interaction(s). Furthermore, Clark and Paivio's (1991) dual coding theory is significant for analysing both face-to-face as well as online teaching-learning situations, because both require verbal and non-verbal (visual/image) forms of communication. It should be kept in mind that in terms of blended learning in institutions of higher learning, all

stakeholdersare interdependent; which means that any positive outcome for one leads to positive outcome (explicit and/or implicit) for others.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study have been discussed in terms of the various stakeholders (teachers, students anddropout housewives from English departments of private universities, as well as employers from schools, NGOs and corporate organizations like banks, mobile operators, merchandisers and consultancy firms), in order to bridge the relation with the objectives of this study.

The primary objective of this study was to explore the practical implications of blended learning in with respect to stakeholders' opinions. Teachers are the important stakeholders of academia. A total of 10 teachers from 10 private universities, who teach postgraduate courses in English departments, were interviewed. While asking about the possibilities of blending both face-to-face and online class, all of the teachers (100%) accepted the usefulness of the blended learning. They agreed that their students use technology to search for information from the internet, download scholarly articles by using JSTOR, read online newspapers, watch YouTube videos, podcasts and advertisements. Toassist working students with their studies, few teachers (10%) regularly upload various materials like PDF files, PowerPoint slides, or any sort of material used in the class in Google drive or send them to the students individually after every class. Furthermore, discussion boards in Moodle, Facebook group, or Google Classrooms are used by few teachers (20%) for generating discussions; and based on these discussions, students are asked to make PPT slides and submit assignments. At the same time, half of teachers (50%) were concerned about plagiarism, due to the copy-paste culture. However, the majority of the teachers (60%) suggested the ratio of online and face-to-face classes should be 1:4, some (20%) said 1:1, and others (20%) opined 4:21.

Graduate students are another important stakeholder of private higher education. A total of 100 English department graduate students (working and non-working) from 10 private universities were interviewed. Among the 100 students, 25 were part time, as they were working, whereas the rest, that is, 75 were full time students. The studentswere divided into 17 groups, each group comprising 6 to 7 students. The first few questions werefocused on whether and why they work beside their studies, and the challenges they face, as well as initiatives they take to overcome those challenges. Among the 25 working students, more than half were working in schools (56%), some in banks (16%), very few in NGOs (12%), and hardly some in consultancy firms (8%), ad firms (4%) and in universities (4%) as graduate teaching assistants (GTA). However, majority of the students from all 17 groups agreed that it is important to do a job while pursuing studies because it gives opportunity to gain experience by the time they complete their graduate programme. The working students added that doing a job gives them sense of independence as they sponsor their own studies, and help tosolve the economic problem of their families. Even though, a good number of working and full-time

students from all 17 groups expressed that it is tough to balance work and study, they mentioned the importance of doing both. On the contrary, some students from all the groups explained that, initially theoretical knowledge provided by university is necessary before stepping into the practical life; so, for them doing job is not important as their families are sponsoring their studies. Some of the working students mentioned that their classes and exams clash with their office hours, including important meetings and seminars. Next few questions were related to students' perceptions of blending face-to-face and online classes,and whether training would be helpful for their better learning. Most of the students opined that blended learning would be effective, and would give working students and housewives a chance to overcome their challenges. Most of groups (12 from 17) suggested that the ratio of online and face-to-face classes should be 3:7, some (4) 1:3 and one group 1:1. Furthermore, the majority of the (15 groups) agreed that training was needed to competently use online learning technology, whereas two groups mentioned that this was not necessary, as they were somewhat tech-savvy.

Graduate English department students work in different sectors like English medium schools, corporate organizations and NGOs. The interview questions for these sectors were mainly focused on the troubles or challenges faced by the employers while working with the students of higher education. The study reveals that the employees (i.e. working graduate students) find it difficult to balance their new careers and graduate studies at the same time. They tend to concentrate more on their academic studies, which results in unfinished official work or interferes with the quality of their work. Furthermore, student workers tend to miss a substantial number of meetings and they tend to leave early to attend classes in their respective institutions. These are only a few of the problems identified among many others. The Human Resource personnel of English medium schools, corporate organizations and NGOs welcomed the new concept of blended learning, and wants it to be implemented immediately as it would be of great help for both the student-workers and the organizations where they are working.

In total, there were three English department dropout housewives who were interviewed. All of them said that they have to take care of all the daily domestic necessities like looking after babies, buying groceries, household cleaning, washing clothes, cooking—just to name a few. All these chores leave very little time, scope or room to pursue higher education or indulge in hope of a career of one's own, because the domestic culture and/or atmosphere of a housewife is where she is supposed to be nothing more than be a caregiver and/or caretaker. Under such circumstances, blended learning could offer housewives, a ray of hope of continuing their education with the hope of forging a professional identity. The findings of this study suggest that it is this view that all the housewives expressed. They slightly differed regarding the ratio of online and face-to-face teaching; two housewives said 2:3, and one mentioned 1:1.

The second objective of this study was to investigate if the private universities of Bangladesh are equipped enough to provide technology enhanced tertiary education through blended learning. The data for this objective was particularly derived from the private university

English department teachers, however, we also need to know whether the students are also logistically equipped or not. In terms of teachers' perception regarding blended learning, some (40%) said that the online part will put extrapressure on them; furthermore, if they are video-taped during face-to-face classes, this will also put pressure on them as their mode of delivering lectures will be impacted due to being monitored by camera or cameras in the class. On the contrary, few (10%) opined that if the teacher is confident and/or honest about his/her teaching abilities, being videotaped should not be a problem. Some (20%) of the teachers were concerned that videotaping all the lectures would be expensive, as it wouldrequire highly sophisticated infrastructure and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support. The teachers also expressed that allowing students to access class lectures would deprive them from engaging in meaningful discussions. Contrary to this view, some (30%) of them showed their excitement saying that the students could communicate with them (i.e. teachers) through Facebook, email, or meet them during their office hours to discuss anything from the recorded classes. However, all the teachers recognizedthe significance of face-to-face classroom interaction. In terms of students, though majority of them had laptops and smartphones, some used IPad for educational purposes. Few of the students expressed concern, as they were uncomfortable when it comes to using technology. Hence, one segment of the academic stakeholder (i.e. students) are yet to become efficient with technology-enhanced learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

The result of the study suggests that blended learning (i.e. blend of face-to-face and online teaching and learning) would be preferred, as it would be convenient for English graduate students of private universities of Bangladesh. Teachers also agreed that a blended learning approach to higher education might be accommodating to stakeholders like graduate students and potential employers. The HR personnel and admin officers of English medium schools, corporate offices and NGOs, where English department graduates work, said that fresh graduates are updated with the latest academic methods, approaches and techniques, and tend to have innovative ways of teaching. Moreover, they believe that employees who work and study at the same time bring fresh ideas to their respective workplaces and have the desire to work hard; they also seek less remuneration as they have not graduated yet. Thus, they expressed that if the student workers are given a congenial atmosphere where they can balance work and study, this would be a win-win situation for all the stakeholders. Moreover, dropout housewives from the English departments also mentioned that blended learning approach to university education would pave the way for them to continue their higher education and take care of their families at the same time. Hence, findings from the study suggests that there are practical implications of incorporating blended learning in graduate programmes of private universities which have been expressed by all the stakeholders. However, it should be mentioned that though private universities tend to have the infrastructure to offer blended learning, the cost of implementing this approach to teaching and learning would be expensive. The extra expense would have to be borne by the learners.

The findings also seem to be in line with previous studies (Mahmuda, 2016; Haque, & Akhter, 2014) regarding incorporation of technology in higher education in private universities of Bangladesh, as they already have the basic ICT infrastructure in place (Haque, 2016). The views of the HR and admin personnel welcoming blended learning to minimize the stress of working and studying their young employees is reflected in Lalima and Dangwal (2017), who tend to talk about the benefits of stakeholders in the Indian situation. It should be kept in mind that Bangladeshi workplace and private higher education system is somewhat similar to that of India.

Blended learning tends to offer a more efficient and flexible learning process for both teachers and graduate students of Bangladesh, particularly those pursuing education in the English departments of private universities. The study implies that if implemented effectively, blended learning can afford better opportunities for working students to balance their professional and academic life by reducing some of the challenges that they encounter while pursuing graduate studies in Bangladeshi private universities. Blended learning can also be beneficial to employers, and dropout housewives. Such assumptions lead us to believe that technology is an indispensable part of the 21st century higher education and the workplace, which this country recognizes, and it is working towards achieving Digital Bangladesh-Vision 2021.

References

Aguilar, J. A. M. (2012). Blended Learning and the Language Teacher: A Literature Review. *Colomb. Appl. Linguist. Journal*, *14*(2), 163 – 180.

Alaidarous, K., and Madini, A.A. (2016). Exploring EFL Students' Perception in Blended Learning Environment in Saudi Technical Education Context. *International Journal of Education Investigations, 3* (6), 69-81

Bayes, A. (2009, February 02). Education and Vision 2021.The Daily Start. Accessed on 06/03/2019 Retrieved from https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-73910

Benn, S., Abratt, R., and O'Leary, B. (2016). Defining and identifying stakeholders: Views from management and stakeholders.*S.Afr.J.Bus.Manage,* 47(2), 1-11.

Bryan A., Volchenkova K.N. (2016). Blended Learning: Definition, Models, Implications for Higher Education. *Bulletin of the South Ural State University.Ser.Education.Educational Sciences*. 8 (2), 24–30. DOI: 10.14529/ped160204

Caner, M. (2016). The Definition of Blended Learning in Higher Education.19-29.

Chew E., Jones N., Turner D. (2008). *Critical Review of the Blended Learning Models Based on Maslow's and Vygotsky's Educational Theory' in Hybrid Learning and Education*. Berlin, Springer Verlag Publ., 40–53. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-540-85170-7_4

Clark, J. M., and Paivio, A. (1991). Dual Coding Theory and Education. *Educational Psychology Review,* 3(3), 149-209.

Clarkson, M. 1995. 'A stakeholder framework for analyzing and evaluating corporate social performance', *Academy of Management Review,* 20(1): 92-117.

Garza, S. A. (2014). The flipped classroom teaching model and its use for information literacy instruction. *Communications in Information Literacy,* 8(1), 7-22.

Ghahari, S., and Golestan, A. A. (2014). The Effect of Blended Learning vs. Classroom Learning Techniques on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 1(3), 1-9.

Haque, M. S. (2012). Teaching-Learning in the 21st Century: Potentials of Web 2.0 in Bangladesh. *Conference proceedings: International Conference on Quality Teaching and Learning (ICQTL)*. Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia: Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT).

Haque, M. S. and Akhter, M. (2014). Challenges and Possibilities of Computer Assisted Language Teaching in Higher Education: Bangladesh in Focus. In *Harvest: Jahangirnagar Studies in Language and Literature, 29*, 129-149.

Helal, M. A. A. (2012) Expensive private higher education inBangladesh: who can afford? *Asian Journal of Business and Economics*, 2 (2.2), 1-19.

Hossain, M. B. (2013). Limitations of Blended Learning in Bangladesh: A measurement for a Decade. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4 (25), 148-151.

Hossain, M. S., and Saddik, A. E. (2016). Delivery Technologies Used for Distance Education in Bangladesh Open University. 2-5.

Islam, M. R. (2014). Higher Education in Bangladesh: Diversity, Quality and Accessibility. *First National Education Conference on Whither Policy Reform in Education: Lessons and Challenges*, 1-14.

Islam, K. M. A., and Salma, U. (2016). The Role of Private Universities in Higher Education of Bangladesh: An Empirical Investigation. *International Journal of Finance and Banking Research,* 2(4), 121-128.

Kalpana, T. (2014). A Constructivist Perspective in Teaching and Learning: A Conceptual Framework. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences,* 3(1).27-29.

Karim, Z. M. (2014). IT/ICT plan for higher education of Bangladesh: A significant investigation on present goes policy and upcoming policy recommendation. *Banglavision Research Journal*, 14(1), 34-40.

Kaur, I. (2017). Deployment of Cloud in Blended Learning Environment to Enhance Academic Quality: An Indian Perspective. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research,* 6(3),146-154.

Kobayashi, K., and Little, A. (2011). Learner Perception on the Usefulness of a Blended Learning EFL Program. *The Jalt Call Journal*, 7(1), 103-117

Kose, U. (2010). A blended learning model supported with Web 2.0 technologies. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 2, 2794–2802.

Kumar, B., Sharmin, I., and Dey, D. (2012). A comparative study of the cost of higher education in private and public universities in Bangladesh. East West Journal of Business studies, 3, 47-67.

Lalima, D., & Dangwal, K. L. (2017). Blended Learning: An Innovative Approach. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 5(1), 129-136. DOI:10.13189/ujer.2017.050116

Mahmuda, M. (2016). Teaching and Learning Through Technology in Bangladesh Higher Education. *International Journal of Scientific and Education Research*, 7(4), 257-262.

Mazumder, Q. H. (2014). Analysis of Quality in Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh and USA.*International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 3 (2), 99-108.

Monem, M., and Baniamin, H. M. (2010). Higher Education in Bangladesh: Status, Issue and Prospects. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences,* 30(2), 293-305.

Moreno, A. O. (2017). Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning.Unpublished Thesis Paper.1-112.

Oliver M., Trigwell K. (2005). Can Blended Learning Be Redeemed? E-Learning, 2(1), 17–26. DOI: 10.2304/elea.2005.2.1.17

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., and Leech, N. L. (2007). Sampling Designs in Qualitative Research: asking the Sampling Process More Public. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 238-254.

Ozdamli, F. &Asiksoy, G. (2016). Flipped classroom approach.*World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues*. 8(2), 98-105

Rabbani, G. and Chowdhury, S. (2014). Quality of Higher Education in Bangladesh: Governance Framework and Quality Issues. *Beykent University Journal of Social Sciences*, 7 (1), 78-91.

Rahaman, M. M., and Akter, N. (2017). ICT Used in Education Sector Considering Primary and Secondary Level Schools in Rural Areas: A Study of Sylhet Division in Bangladesh. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management,* 19(4), 1-6.

Saliba, G., Rankine, L., and Cortez, H. (2013). *Fundamentals of Blended Learning*. Australia: University of Western Sydney Publication

Staker, H., and Horn, M. B. (2012). Classifying K-12 Blended Learning. *iNACOL.* Accessed on: 09/12/2017. Retrieved from: https://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Classifying-K-12-blended-learning.pdf

Suhendi, A., and Purwarno, P. (2018). Constructivist Learning Theory: The Contribution to Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. The 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature. *KnE Social Sciences & Humanities*, pages 87–95. DOI 10.18502/kss.v3i4.1921

Urfa, M. (2018). Flipped Classroom Model and Practical Suggestions.*Journal of Educational Technology & Online Learning,* 1(1), 47-59

Wagner, N., Hassanein, K., and Head, M. (2014). E-Learning in Higher Education: A Stakeholders' Analysis. *ResearchGate*, 1-21. DOI: 10.1109/ITI.2006.1708497 · Source: IEEE Xplore

Watterston, J, (2012). *Blended Learning: A Synthesis of Research Findings in Victorian Education 2006-2011*. Melbourne: Ultranet and Digital Learning Branch.

Whiteside, A. L. (2016). More Confident Going into College: Lessons Learned from Multiple Stakeholders in a New Blended Learning Initiative. *Online Learning*, 20(4), 136-156.

Notes on Contributors

Dr. Abhishek Sarkar is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. His areas of specialization are the literatures and cultures of earl Modern England and colonial Bengal. His articles have been published in *The Byron Journal*, *South Asian Review*, *Literature Compass, Multicultural Shakespeare and Actes des Congrès de la Société Française Shakespeare.*

Nasih Ul Wadud Alam (Paolo) is working as a lecturer, department of English, Chittagong Independent University (CIU). Besides teaching, he is a regular contributor to *The Daily Sun,* an English daily from Bangladesh.

Tanzina Afrin completed MA in English programme from East West University, Bangladesh. She was a former Graduate Teaching Assistant of East West University. She has one publication.

Dravida Anjuman Huda is working as a lecturer in English at American International University – Bangladesh (AIUB). The author has presented several papers nationally and internationally and has a published paper on soldiers' trauma in WWII literature. Her areas of interest are Postcolonial Literature; Diaspora, Transnationalism and Migration in South Asian Literature, and Translation Studies.

Md. Maruf Ul Alam is working as an assistant professor at the Department of English, University of Chittagong. Before joining this university in 2013, he worked in Noakhali Science and Technology University as an assistant professor at the department of English. Currentlyhe is a PhD student at the School of Literary Studies, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India. His research interests include postcolonial literatures in English, subaltern studies, and Shakespeare.

Kazi Shahidul Islam completed his graduation from the *University of Chittagong* with BA (Hons) and MA in English. Since April 03, 2019. He has been teaching English literature in the Department of English at Bangladesh Army International University of Science & Technology based in Cumilla Cantonment. He started his teaching career on January 10, 2012, Lecturer in English language and literature in the Department of English at BGC Trust University Bangladesh. His research interest mainly encompasses Contemporary Literature in English, Bangladeshi English Literature, and Translation Studies.

Md. Abdur Rashid completed his BA (Hons) and MA in English from Department of English, Chittagong University and later on completed his 2nd Masters in ELT from *Institute of Modern Languages*, *Chittagong University.* He is a Ph.D. fellow, *Department of English*, *Jahangirnagor University* since the session 2017-2018. Six of his research papers have been publish in national and international journals. His research area covers ELT, Victorian literature and modern poetry.

Jannatul Ferdoush is a Senior Lecturer of English at ASA University Bangladesh. She completed her Bachelors in English and Masters in English Literature from the University of Dhaka. She has publications in the area of Feminist writings, ELT and Stylistics. She was awarded gold medal for her research presentation in 3rd World Conference on Women's Studies 2017 held in Colombo, Srilanka.

Anika Saba is a Lecturer in the Department of English and Humanities, BRAC University. She completed M.A. in English at Queen Mary University of London in 2016, and joined BRAC University in 2017. She has published a book chapter and several articles in national and international journals.

Fatema Johera Ahmed completed her M.A. (Research) from Monash University, Australia. Her thesis examined the role of humour in Indigenous Australian literature.

Muhammed Shahriar Haque, Ph.D., has published numerous scholarly articles and co-edited three books: *Prostitution: Women, Society, State and Law* (1997, Dhaka), *Constructing Identities in the Malaysian Media* (2008, Kuala Lumpur), and *English Studies and the Marketplace* (2018, Dhaka). Furthermore, he is the editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *East West Journal of Humanities* (EWJH), and producer and assistant director of the documentary film *Life after Grey* (2015).

Umme Hani M. Joher is a Graduate Teaching Assistant of the Department of English, East West University. She has presented papers at numerous international conferences. Her research interests include information technology and language teaching/learning, teacher education and continuous professional development (CPD).

Call For Papers Policy

East West Journal of Humanities (EWJH) (ISSN 2074-6628) is a fully refereed journal published by East West University Center for Research and Training (EWUCRT), East West University, Bangladesh, one of the leading private universities of the country. EWJH invites submissions for its upcoming issue. As the official publication of a university that offers courses in the humanities and social sciences, it invites original submissions (4000-8000 words) in areas such as English language and literature, other literatures, linguistics, applied linguists/English language teaching, the history of ideas, philosophy, culture and society, film and media, as well as information studies. We also intend to publish scholarly papers on issues relating to class, gender, and race. Additionally, we will be happy to consider book reviews (500-800 words). We look forward to publishing academic articles that are theoretical in nature as well as papers that employ textual analysis.

Each article would be evaluated through a three-step procedure: initially it will be checked with Turnitin, a plagiarism detection software, followed by internal review committee to see whether technical specifications are met, and finally it will be sent to reviewer(s). Authors will get two weeks to address comments, before their papers are returned to reviewer(s) for crosschecking. Since the author's name is not revealed to reviewer(s), a submission should not have the writer's name anywhere in the manuscript. Authors should clearly write his/her name, designation(s), affiliation, addresses, telephone number(s), e-mail addresses and fax number(s) on the cover page. The article should also include an abstract (within 200 words), four to five key words, and a very brief biographical statement (within 50 words) of the author. Manuscripts must meet professional standards, and should be computer-composed and double-spaced in Times New Roman 12 point font on A4 paper; table, diagrams, and illustrations (if any) must be camera ready. All submissions must conform to the requirements of academic publication of the American Psychological Association 6th edition (the APA Style Guide). It is important for manuscripts to cite updated and recent sources. Manuscripts submitted for review must not have been published previously or simultaneously submitted elsewhere. The Editor reserves the right to make editorial changes in any manuscript accepted for publication to enhance clarity and/or style.

Submissions, prepared specifically according to the format described above, should be submitted to the Editor, East West Journal of Humanities, EWUCRT by email to ewjh@ewubd.edu within the specified date mention in the next Call for Papers.

Professor Muhammed Shahriar Haque, Ph.D.
Editor, East West Journal of Humanities (EWJH)
East west University Center for Research and Training (EWUCRT)
East West University

Regular Publications of EWUCRT

East West University Center for Research and Training (EWUCRT) brings out the following publications on a regular basis:

1. **East West Journal of Humanities (EWJH)**
   Website: www.ewubd.edu/east-west-journal-humanities-ewjh
2. **East West Journal of Business and Social Studies (EWJBSS)**
   Website: www.ewubd.edu/east-west-journal-business-and-social-studies
3. **Abstracts of Published Papers**
   Website: www.ewubd.edu/crt-abstract
4. **Working Paper & Research Report**
   Website: www.ewubd.edu/working-paper-research-report

East West University Center for Research and Training

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY

Plot No-A/2, Main Road, Jahurul Islam City,
Aftabnagar, Dhaka 1212

Phone : 09666775577, Ext. 387
Emails : ewucrt@ewubd.edu, ewjh@ewubd.edu
Website : www.ewubd.edu, www.ewubd.edu/crt-center-research-and-training