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FOREWORD

Nadia El K holy

Cairo Studies in English is pleased to announce the launch of its new format as an online open access, peer-reviewed and refereed interdisciplinary journal of humanities and the arts published by the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, Egypt. The first issue of this academic journal appeared in 1955 under the name The Annual Bulletin of English Studies as an annual Bulletin of literary criticism. The next issue appeared four years later in 1959 and then it was irregular for several years till it re-appeared in 1990. The last paper-only edition was published in 2016, from now onwards CSE will appear in digital form as well.

The main objective of Cairo Studies in English is to provide an intellectual platform for scholars on the national, regional and international levels and to promote interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, the arts and the social sciences and to become a leading academic journal worldwide.

This volume of Cairo Studies in English is entitled “Language, Literature and the Arts” and it presents a wide array of interdisciplinary papers covering topics like; cultural representation and the arts, the language of music, the word and the image, the language of ideology, and society and the arts. Several papers examined the impact of transforming a literary text into a performance with a new form of presentation like singing or acting or reciting. Riham Debian’s paper on Boshret Kheir "بشرة خير" (Good Tidings) investigates the hit song’s context of production and consumption/reception to spotlight the interrelation between the political and the cultural fields. A different point of view about the drawback of the spoken word is discussed by Yasser Aman in “Stage or Page? A Dub Performer or A Dub Poet? A Study of Linton Kwesi Johnson’s Political Activism in “Five Nights of Bleeding” and “Di Great Insohreckshan” where he questions which is more effective in conveying Johnson’s political message: the performed song or the scribed poem? And he concludes that the scribed form has a stronger, more longstanding impact on imparting the message than stage performance because it relies on the musicality of the words created by sounds and aural images easily grasped even by an international readership alien to the heritage of dub music.

Adding to the previous aspects about language and performance is the power of the visual image. In “The Dramatic Structure of Niyi Osundare’s Waiting Laughters” Amani Wagih shows how these poems “Waiting Laughters”
succeeded in creating dramatic scenes of resistance through the selective use of images. Similarly, Sameh Hasan’s paper “Painting in Poetry” conducts a stylistic analysis of five ekphrastic poems all inspired by *Hunters in the Snow*, a 1565 painting by Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel, and highlights the similarities and differences between them.

This issue also introduces new interdisciplinary research in the field of linguistic studies with papers that deal with a variety of topics ranging from “An integrative multimodal analysis of the examiner-examinee interaction in the IELTS Speaking examination” by Hanaa Youssef Shaarawy to examining ways in which young Egyptian adults construct their identities on Facebook statuses, in Ingy Emara’s “Gender Identity Construction in Facebook Statuses of Egyptian Young Adults” the results of the study show that Facebook male users post more about facts, entertainment and individual experiences, while female users post more about feelings and social relationships. Another perspective on gender issues is Nariman Eid’s “Mad Women Who Run in the House: The Malestream Politics of Representation” which analyses advertisements shown on Egyptian television channels to shed light on the image of women representation.

Language and ideology is another theme that has been dealt with in this issue from different angles. Sama Dawood Salman proves in her paper “Ideologically-induced Understatement in English/Arabic News Translation: A Critical Discourse Analysis- Socionarrative Approach” how translation cannot be separated from ideology, and where translators must make constant decisions on the most appropriate translation strategies to conform to the ideology of their agencies and target culture. Another study “The Language of Ideology: the Going to the Beyond – Ideology in Doha aAsy's *104 Cairo* by Nermin Gomaa examines the extent to which Bhabha's suggested ideology of 'a beyond area' where the self-rids itself of all social, cultural, historical pretentions and reconsiders its existential meaning and characteristics in a way other than that of the past is quite relevant and significant in Assy's *104 Cairo*.

Using language as a tool for defining one’s identity is dealt with in Amr Elsherif’s paper “Split Consciousness and the Poetics of Inauthenticity: Reading Anatole Broyard’s *Kafka Was the Rage*” which offers a portrait of Anatole Broyard as a split identity and proves that the memoir, although based on real life events, is more like a work of fiction manifesting one stratum of the author’s consciousness and hiding another. “Language as a Means of Power: A Comparative Study of Harold Pinter’s *No Man’s Land* and Alfred Farag’s *ʕalj Ganah ʔl-Tabrizj Wa Tabšhu Quffah*” by Usamah Raslan is an attempt to examine how the British Nobel- laureate dramatist, Harold Pinter (1930-2008), and the Egyptian versatile writer, Alfred Farag (1929-2005), depict a power struggle between two dramatic characters obsessed by a conflict of wills. The
paper concentrates on how both playwrights draw extensively on a theatrical language that dramatizes the power struggle between characters as well as the linguistic tactics employed by them to sustain their desire for power. Appropriating the English language to make it bear the burden of the Indian experience is examined by Maha Sallam in “Betrayal, Division, and the Ideology of Revolution in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others*”. Finally, “Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese*: Identity and Post-Colonial Discourse” by Rasha Abd El Rehim promotes the idea of being American in an Asian way; without necessarily conforming to particular standards since America is a pluralistic society after all.

Lastly, I would like to say that this first on-line edition of *Cairo Studies in English* would not have been possible without the support of the Department of English and the Faculty of Arts. The editors of this issue, Professors Hoda Gindi, Nadia El Kholy, Ola Hafez and the very dedicated Professor Hala Kamal have worked hard to produce this online issue in its digital form ensuring that its quality is worthy of becoming an e-journal.
The Dramatic Structure of
Niyi Osundare's Waiting Laughters

Amani Wagih*

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Waiting Laughters is the Nigerian poet Niyi Osundare's second volume of poetry that won the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa in 1991. The collection is regarded as a poetic response to the corruption and dictatorship gripping contemporary African society, especially in Nigeria. The title of the volume Waiting Laughters indicates the role of laughter as a weapon of resistance that the African society is waiting for, considering it an epitome of freedom. Osundare manipulates laughter to criticize the elites' oppressive practices upon Nigerians. James Philips explains the importance of laughter as a tool deployed by the oppressed to overcome oppression. By laughing at the tactics of the oppressor, the oppressed are endowed with enough force to resist and to get rid of their fear.

Laughter can be a powerful support for a people trying to resist and survive what oppresses them. Laughter can be related to critique of oppression – mocking, exaggerating, or making fun of the ideology and practices of oppression and the oppressor. Laughter generated in this way can also provide a small example of risk and freedom in speaking truth to power in dangerous times and in dismantling a bit of the fear that often acts as an instrument of control. (Philips 187)

Moreover, James Scott, E.P. Thompson and Pierre Bourdieu, in their social studies of the role of laughter as a tool of resistance, contend that laughter can be a powerful form of protest; it is one of the “weapons of the weak” according to James Scott (Goldstein 7). The oppressors or elites can display their power through political and economic control, whereas the oppressed can resist through laughter; a path that Niyi Osundare follows in his collection Waiting Laughters. Throughout this collection of poems Osundare presents different scenes that depict the oppressed and pinpoint laughter as a serious issue and thus create “a link of intimacy with the audiences” (Muhlesien 242), urging them to resist for a better future. In other words, resistance implied in laughter is a kind of resistance presented in a “positive and optimistic sense” (Philips 192).
Nigerian poets can be classified into three categories: the pre-independence poets, who were mainly concerned with romanticizing native tradition to face colonial hegemony, and therefore they presented a cultural message; the post-independence poets, who were more interested in asserting national identity and the role of art in urging people to change, and therefore their message was a social one; and the military period poets, who witnessed military oppression and therefore their messages were mainly political. Osundare belongs to the second generation of Nigerian poets; he falls in the second category, the post-independence period. However, he creates the link between the three categories. Osundare stressed native traditions, clinging to the authentic African culture, aiming to resist the corrupt social and political entities in the Nigerian society.

Osundare believes that “Art has the power to touch. Art affects. And anything that affects, changes people, changes communities” (Osundare 55). Therefore, he relies on various techniques in his works with the aim of urging his people to reform their society. Like many other African writers, Osundare considers himself “the conscience of the society”; accordingly, he satirizes “the corruption of modern governments” (Ojaide 44), as in the collection under study.

This collection of poetry is divided into four sections; Osundare subtitles each section in a way that serves a function of the dramatic structure. In other words, the four sections function as acts in traditional dramatic structure; they are divided into the dramatic exposition, conflict, climax and resolution. The recurrent use of the two words “waiting” and “laughter” sets the theme of the collection from the beginning and holds the four sections together. It is a universal motif denoting that despite the dreary conditions of living, hope in a better tomorrow still exists: “The twin issue of waiting and laughter as the major aspects in the collection Waiting Laughters provide a thematic focus on hope in the midst of despair” (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 2).

Moreover, the collection is subtitled “a long song in many voices,” thus setting dialogue as an integral element throughout the collection: the personas vary between elements of nature, animals, or even the poet himself. And Osundare deploys various techniques including tableaux, visual and auditory images, graphic presentations and repetitions to convey his message. Waiting Laughters can be categorized as an example of visual poetry. Eduardo Mitre explains the techniques that characterize visual poetry, and Osundare used many of them:

the visual poet explores and exploits all the possibilities of language treated as a material substance: the connotative use of its graphic signs, its distribution in space, the fragmentation of words, and the introduction of other nonlinguistic elements such as drawing and the imprint of certain
The Dramatic Structure

objects leading to the creation of a combinatorial art... the poet is transformed into a calligrapher, an artist, in brief a builder. (qtd. in Bohn 24)

Since Osundare aims to produce poems for performance, he relies heavily on visual details portrayed in tableaux. Therefore, he deploys graphic signs, fragmented words and structures, and visual scenes because he believes that “in deciphering the written message, the reader proceeds according to both verbal and visual cues, which are structured in such a way that they complement each other”; thus transforming “the poem into a picture” (Bohn 15).

Exposition

The first section subtitled “Some laughters are very significant” serves as an exposition in which Osundare sets the scene for his collection. As in a dramatic exposition, Osundare provides background information by introducing a series of memories that reminds the audience of the rich past. The repetition of the refrain “Tonalities. Redolent tonalities” (WL 2) stresses the poet's intention to recall past memories where his people were enjoying laughter: when their simple stories carried by the storms were transferred from one place to another; when their “fancies” led to happiness; when their cheeks were “giggling” and their “ribs” were moving up and down celebrating their mirth. At that time in the past, the elements of nature corresponded to man's happiness: the winds were laughing, and the palms were dropping nuts. Despite the celebration provided in the first scene, Osundare introduces a shift that anticipates a drastic change of mood: “I pluck these words from the lips of the wind... I pluck these murmurs” (WL 2); the reduction of “words” to, simply, “murmurs” prepares the audience to a kind of metamorphosis from happiness to misery: in which the wind abandons its laughter in the desert; “sands” take over grass, and “pebbles” strangle “pasture” (WL 4). To reinforce the change into sadness Osundare provides a number of binary opposites. He confirms that “Truth” is always constant despite different attempts of the corrupt political systems to destroy it “in a society where Truth is subverted under various circumstances... Truth will always be vindicated” (Taiwo 4): truth is always there in the “valley” and the “mountain”, the “boulder” and the “river”, the “flame” and the “ash”, the “desert” and the “rain” (WL 3)... etc.

Then Osundare starts to draw dramatic tableaux using the motif of “waiting.” Though the following episodes portray scenes of corruption, Osundare does not abandon his growing sense of optimism, his belief in his people's will to revolt against injustice. Though people are waiting and time is passing with difficulty carrying reminiscences of past memories, hope in restoring laughter still exists.
The poet engages the audience in a series of appeals to learn patience from elements in nature “like the rain, the sand and the baobab tree for decisive action” (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 107):

Teach us the patience of the sand
which rocks the cradle of the river…

Teach us the patience of the rain
which eats the rock in toothless silence

Teach us the patience of the baobab
which tames the rage of orphaning storms…

Teach us, teach us, teach us…. (WL 7)

The natural environment is in direct relationship with man from which he should learn the power of resistance. Though the natural elements are weak, they surpass their mighty opponents: the sand shakes the river; the rain dissolves the hard rock; and the short African tree “baobab” controls the destructive storms. However, people are still waiting for hope in salvation, for the mirth of: “the heifer” inside his mother's womb waiting to be born; “the fists” waiting to find “their aim”; “the grass” waiting for “the dew”; “the beard for its chin, the knee for its cap/the night for its day, the prayer for its amen” and “the tadpole” to be a frog (WL 10, 14, 17). Osundare concludes with the hope to restore justice when “the tyrant” is portrayed waiting for “his noose” (WL 14). The above visual images provide a sense of waiting for completion; even the despot after being hanged justice will be accomplished. Thus, Osundare imparts to his audience a hope in a better tomorrow.

Another visual scene is presented in which Osundare describes the visa office in Nigeria where many people aspiring to achieve their dreams across the Atlantic are waiting to apply for their visas. In this scene, he criticizes the attitude of the Nigerian officers towards the people. According to Osundare it is an office of fear and sorrow, an “awe-office” (WL 11) that is ironically set in sharp contrast to the aspirations of the applicants; the narrow place is crowded with people asking questions, worried and doubting whether they will have their visa; the walls are high; it seems that the office itself adopts the haughty attitude of its officers. While the visa officer is described in his arrogant appearance shutting the window coldly in front of the people's requests, they answer passively by yawning, looking at their watches and waiting:
The visaman, rightly suited,  
his hair correct, his parting severe,  
takes two furtive looks at the crowded hall  
then shuts the window with a cold,  
imperial hiss; (WL 11)

The crowd's answer is a yawn,  
and a few blank trips to a tired watch. (WL 12)

The physical appearance of the officer reveals his interest in his outward appearance more than performing his job that is directly related to people, and this is considered part of the corruption of the government in Nigeria. He is dressed in formal attire that perfectly fits; pays much attention to his hair style; looks at the crowds stealthily and then produces this hissing sharp sound of a superior while closing down the window. The Nigerians feeling inferior, their only reaction to his disdain is to continue waiting for a long time to the extent that their watches become weary from waiting. Though their visas would allow them to emigrate, their dreams would turn into nightmares because the Atlantic is “a wilderness of barbed walls/brooking no windows, its doors of deafening steel” (WL 12). Osundare warns his fellow citizens that their passports are means to “pass ports” (WL 12), but by crossing the Atlantic they will be living in the prison of the “imperial” power that once colonized their land and is still controlling their future. The dehumanizing attitude of the colonial and neo-colonial powers is reinforced by the repetition of the indifference of the Atlantic in this stanza:

Passports are pass ports  
Knock still ye who may;  
the Atlantic springs a door of deafening steel (WL 12, 13)

In another episode, Osundare elaborates his criticism of despotism by giving two examples. The first one is the Bastille, the symbol of oppression and tyranny, where the stones were screaming and the streets were in turmoil because of injustice. However, when the “royal” ruler was beheaded by a “humble axe”, his head fell down in dust because “the crown is only a cap!” (WL 22). The second example is derived from the local Ikere mythology:

Orogododo Orogododo  
Orogododo Orogododo
Oba ba ti beyi
O mo d Orogododo o o o o

The king's brave legs are bone and flesh
Bone and flesh, bone and flesh
The king's brave legs are bone and flesh
The castle is a house of mortar and stone
Mortar and stone, mortar and stone
A chair is wood which becomes a throne
And Croesus builds a castle of strident stone.
Oh teach us the patience of the Rain
which eats the rock in toothless silence (WL 23)

In Ikere mythology “Orogododo” is “a remote place of banishment for dishonourable rulers” (WL 22), and the king who dances “with a dizzy swing” (WL 22) because of his tyranny is punished by going to “Orogododo”. Osundare stresses the fact that power is transient; therefore, the king’s “brave” legs that were misused are made of “bone and flesh” that will perish one day; his castle is made of “mortar and stone” that can be destroyed; and his throne is a chair made of wood. To reinforce the same idea of transience, Osundare provides an example from history: Croesus, the wealthy king of Lydia (Asia Minor) who built his castle of hard stones and it became obsolete. Then he repeats the same lines used earlier, to call upon his people to learn from the strength of the “Rain”; however, the use of capital letter in this line personifies the rain in its power to dissolve the hard rock silently. In other words, a simple element as rain can demolish the mighty castles of great sovereigns as Croesus, and similarly, Nigerians can overcome the tyranny of their rulers.

Osundare concludes the first section of the collection by providing a number of tableaux that reflect visual scenes of expected joy because of the ability to resist tyranny. The first tableau presents weak creatures overcoming much more powerful ones: ants dragging “fat cockroaches”, “a hatching fruit” finding its way among rough leaves, small “termites” trying to eat hard wood (WL 24)… etc. In the second tableau Osundare uses the persona to express the inevitability of joy after resistance:

My song is space
beyond wails, beyond walls
beyond insular hieroglyphs
which crave the crest
of printed waves. (WL 25)
The persona's song exceeds the limits of space; it overcomes pain. Though the song appears weak, it insists on resisting oppression and in turn the persona will enjoy life: “the song going beyond walls indicates an unwillingness to be restricted by mundane impediments” (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 109). In the third tableau Osundare joins the two motifs of waiting and laughter for the first time stating the effects of this combination: the waiting for “laughters” will inevitably cast off “silence” and invigorate the “rocking teeth… syncopated seas… the cheek… the jaws… the brows retreating eyes… [and] seeing lips” (WL 27).

**Conflict**

The second section entitled “The freedom of any society varies proportionately with the volume of its laughter” summarizes Osundare's socio-political perspective. It serves as the conflict in traditional drama; the struggle between opposing forces (the ruled and the ruler) is manifested in different episodes describing the present. The section starts with the repetition of a previously used stanza:

Wait
And the hours limp along,
with bandages
of fractured moments (WL 29)

But the addition of the following refrain adds to the heaviness of waiting:

*Time
ambles
in
diverse
paces
with
diverse
persons* (WL 29-30)

The graphic presentation of the above verses, dividing the act of waiting into “wait---ing” and the personification of time as moving slowly by different people
in different steps add to the monotonous pace of waiting. Though time itself is walking slowly, the act of waiting is not for happy moments anymore; people are waiting for expected sorrow and sufferings as the visual scenes to follow indicate: the criminal is waiting to be hanged, the “home-sick traveler” waiting for “tardy trains”, the deer waiting for the gun, (WL 29)… etc. In other words, since bondage prevails and freedom is forbidden because of the tyranny of the despot sufferings take over happiness.

In the following tableau Osundare satirizes the dreary condition of the railways because of corruption and mismanagement. As Egya Sule explains in “Art and Outrage: A Critical Survey of Recent Nigerian Poetry in English” that Nigerian poets always expose the plight of Nigerian leadership, and in turn the government:

Nigerian writers, especially the poets – have continued to expend their literary energies on the perennial problems of leadership in Nigeria. Irrespective of the period, Nigerian poetry is preoccupied with one theme, the megatheme, i.e., the leadership failure that the country has been grappling with since independence. (54)

Here, the criss-cross pattern of the railways, the play of words “criss” and “crisis” in addition to the “sleeping steel” and the split into “sleep” and “ing” (WL 32) reinforce the corruption that the Nigerian community suffers from as well as the monotonous atmosphere of waiting. Osundare concludes the scene by a rhetorical question that stresses the lack of interest in any change: “No matter how fast/ the millipede may run/will it not always find the earth ahead/Waiting?” (WL 33). The same blandness is emphasized by more graphical presentations in another visual tableau in which words composing the sentence are fragmented:
And minutes
Drag their
feet so
in-finitely
in grey
boots of
leaden hours
each wink
a wail… (WL 36)

Now it is not only hours limping, but even “minutes” are moving slowly in heavy hours, and every “wink” brings more suffering. The heaviness in reading the above verse corresponds with the act of monotonous waiting. Besides, the use of grey and dark grey matches the spiritless atmosphere overwhelming the present in Nigeria.

Osundare explicitly states the bitter truth that “the whole Niger area is still in serfdom inspired by alien accents” (Taiwo 5) and is still waiting for more oppression and sufferings instead of resisting.

The innocence of the Niger
Waiting, waiting
fourhundredseasons
for the proof of the prow…
waiting
for the dispossessing twang of alien accents
waiting
for scrolls of serfdom, hieroglyphs of calculated treacheries
waiting
without a face without a name without a-
waiting
for the Atlantic which drains the mountains with practiced venom…
waiting
for the bubbles of Bussa…
waiting
the Nile knows, the Limpopo lingers,
the Kilimanjaro preserves the lore in icy memory
waiting…
Ask Sharpville
ask Langa
ask Soweto

Where green graves cluster like question marks (WL 37-8)

The cramming of words in the above verse indicates that this act of waiting will eventually eradicate the African identity; the inability of the words to be read as one comprehensive word emphasizes the lack of an identity: face or name “without a face without a name.” According to Osundare, this is the purpose of the imperial powers; therefore, he refers to the major African rivers as all of them suffered from the destructive influence of “alien accents.” He wonders are the African nations waiting for revolutionary figures like Bussa (who led the rebellion against the British Empire) to set them free; for how long are they going to wait. For how long will the hen wait and lay eggs and she knows that her chicks will be devoured by wolves? Then he invites his audience to act, to remember past massacres instead of waiting: to ask Sharpville, Langa and Soweto about the young people who were murdered because they called for freedom and justice.

The imperial powers and their supporters are not the only ones responsible for the deterioration of the African/Nigerian identity; Africans/Nigerians themselves are also to be blamed since they have abandoned clinging to their pre-colonial heritage. Some of them are described as “History's stammerer” (WL 41); they destroy their African heritage including their identity. Osundare urges them to “memorize the vowels of the father's name and create positive history” (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 108) for the welfare of their African societies. Then he concludes the second section by the same line of time passing slowly because people are indifferent: “Time amble in diverse paces…” (WL 41).

**Climax**

In the third section “Lofty sorrows cast shadows of lengthy laughters” Osundare merges the present and the future to reach the climax of his work: intense sorrows destroy laughter, so for how long will the oppressed endure repression? He starts the section by stressing the growing sense of boredom because of waiting: “Waiting/ all ways waiting” (WL 45). The double meaning provided by “all ways” indicates people's submission to dictatorship. They are 'always' waiting in every field and by “all ways” while successive dictatorial regimes are practicing repression. Therefore, Osundare employs a new series of
appalling visual tableaux to criticize despotism in an attempt to urge the oppressed to act.

A king there is
in this purple epoch of my unhappy land;
his first name is Hunger,
his proud father is Death
Which guards the bones at every door (WL 45)

The first tableau describes the present condition of the Nigerian society where “Hunger” rules as a king, and his father “Death” waits at every doorstep. In the second tableau Osundare associates dictators with vultures and crows who feed on the bodies of hungry people “and have grown fat at such feasts” (Taiwo 7). The markets “wear their stalls like creaking ribs” (WL 45) because of hunger, and the “squares are sour” (WL 45) because of the absence of friendly gatherings. In the third tableau Osundare recalls the dream of the Pharaoh during the period of Joseph, the messenger of God and the son of Jacob, but in Osundare’s version the “Fat Cows” devour the “Lean Cows” alluding to the rulers and the ruled respectively. In a fourth tableau, Osundare provides a series of oppressive tactics: “ordinances” fall heavily “like iron showers”; “decrees” move proudly in every street; “hangmen hug the noose like a delicate baby” while the oppressed thank “Death” for taking their lives. The fifth tableau gives an account of the public officials “towncriers” (WL 46) who praise the repressive acts of the rulers; they are “corrupt public officials [who] loot the national treasury dry while the spokesmen of these regimes have enriched themselves by specializing in fabricating empty propaganda for the government” (Taiwo 3). The poet releases an outburst seeking help in Yoruba words “Ibo si o!” (WL 46). He invokes the past, the ancestors’ heritage, to save his people. Osundare gets himself involved, being a Nigerian citizen, by using the pronoun “My”; “My land” (WL 47) hoping that pre-colonial heritage can save neo-colonized Nigerian society.

In a sixth tableau Osundare continues presenting a number of corrupt officials to urge his people to resist corruption: the fat clergyman waiting for his share; the “white-wigged judge” for his turkey; the severe looking lecturer for his chair and the policeman for his bribe (WL 48). And here a question can be inferred: what are Nigerians waiting for to resist? Why are they “Waiting/still waiting”? (WL 49). Are they waiting for more oppression, for more hunger and death? “African leaders are so power-drunk, that their preoccupation lies in formulating proscriptive decrees or edicts” (Taiwo 49); their oppressive rules are carried on by “vulgar guns” signed “in blood” and “unleashed in the crimson spine/of
trembling streets” (WL 49). “These are the seasons of barking guns” (WL 49), but still why are people waiting? The elements of nature correspond to man’s condition and act against their nature: the lion “bans the flock”, the cloud “bans the rain”, the valley “bans the river”, the sky “bans the sun”, and the sea “bans its salt” (WL 49).

In an attempt to urge his people to revolt, Osundare deploys aphoristic short poems in which he coins traditional folktales from his own perspective. In other words, he uses the tales as allusions to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled in the form of dramatic dialogues. He introduces the tales by holding a comparison between the “hyena” and the “despot”: as the former is waiting to celebrate “the anniversary of its pounce”, the “African despot” is waiting to celebrate the “seventieth year of his rule” and Africans are equally waiting (WL 55).

The first tale describes the hyena who asks a group of lambs complaining “about my eating habits” to choose a spokesman to “come freely to my den” and present their point of view. The tale is “a metaphor of the oppressor and the oppressed in most societies” (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 110), but Osundare “captures this aspect of the autocratic despot in the aphorism of the hyena” (Taiwo 8).

The second tale is a witty dialogue between a hungry snake and a wise toad. The tale starts by the indigenous Yoruba words: “Okerebu kerebu/Kerebu kerebu” (WL 63) which means “wonder of wonders” as the end of the story proves that the ingenuity of weak is a tool to conquer the more powerful. The hungry snake has not eaten for a week and wants to eat the toad that maneuvers: “Suppose I turn into a mountain?/Asks the toad”, but the snake does not give up “I will level you in the valley/Of my belly” (WL 63); the toad threatens to turn into a river, “You will flow easily through/The channels of my mouth” answers the snake (WL 63); what about becoming one “Of your favourable children?” asks the toad, then “I will eat you/With all the motherly love” replies the snake (WL 63). When the toad fails to dissuade the snake, it “turns into a rock” that the snake swallows “With delicious dispatch” (WL 63). But “Ah! aramonda” “the wonder of wonders” the snake’s stomach fails to function: “The mouth has swallowed something/Too hard for the mill of the stomach” (WL 64). Osundare through this tale sends a message to his audience that the greed of tyrants and exploiters is never restrained even by rationale, “only courageous acts can defeat implacable foes” (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 110).

The third and fourth aphoristic poems satirize the foolish behavior in the relation between the ruler and the ruled. In the third tale, the “baby antelope” asks her wise mother: “Tell me, mother/How does one count the teeth/Of a laughing line?” (WL 72), which is a sign of foolishness of the ruled. Similarly in
the fourth tale, the wisdom of “Mosafejo” juxtaposes his foolish behavior of giving his only daughter “in marriage to six suitors” (WL 75); thus the conceited ruler who claims wisdom is a fool.

Osundare concludes section three by a variation of a previous stanza; now: “The stammerer will one day call his/ Fa-fa-father-ther's na-na-na-me” (WL 74). In other words, hope in the prosperity of the Nigerian nation still exists when it readopts its neglected Yoruba tradition. The fragmented structure of 'father' and 'name' highlights the present status of negligence of pre-colonial heritage, but at the same time placing the word “father” amid fragmentation emphasizes the possibility of a reunion with the riches of the past. The same tone of hope recurs towards the end of this section to prepare the audience to the coming section: “The water is going/ Going going going/The water is going” (WL 68); “I wait for life/And that is why my heels are strong” (WL 68); now the act of waiting is not for sufferings anymore because the persona is waiting for life that will endow him with enough strength to resist oppression.

Resolution

In the final section of the collection entitled “Correct your laughter” Osundare provides the resolution to the conflict previously stated and developed to a climax in sections two and three respectively. Though the persona is still waiting, the purpose changes:

Waiting
still
waiting
for the laughing rainbow on the brow of the mist
when sea meets sky on canvas of colour-ful suns. (WL 81)

Osundare continues developing his tone of hope throughout this section thus providing the final resolution. The two motifs “waiting” and “laughters” are rejoined in different variations. Moreover, Osundare deploys a variety of colors (rainbow) instead of the shades of grey previously used in section two: the Red “of the watermelon”, the “Brown” of freshly baked bread, the “Yellow” “chasing” the “Green” of the mangoes, and the “Blue” of the sea “of princely dolphins” (WL 78); having the colors written in capital letters stresses their dominance, that is to say, the prevalence of joy and in turn of laughter.

In this section Osundare also used graphic presentations, but the content is not indicated by the structure, as employed previously; it is not the monotonous waiting because the purpose is clear and can be attained.
Longer than the yawn of the moon in a sky so brown with heels of fleeting fancies (WL 84)

However, the far-fetched dreams are not the end because hope exists in “a diamond tear” waiting in the “eye of the cloud”

dropping dropping dropping later in hails of greening showers (WL 84-85)

The expected rain will bring life back to: “tendrils” dancing out of “joy” and the “drums” will be waiting to celebrate the “rainbow harvest” ((WL 85). As “visual poetry combines two types of sensorial experience, sight and sound, that are presented as complementary” (Mitchell 5), the vividness of colors, the visual
The Dramatic Structure

image of dancing plants and the auditory image of the sounds of the drums create an atmosphere of celebrations and hope in better future.

The future is referred to after a few stanzas accompanied by the poet's insistence upon resistance. He acknowledges the fact that “joy-killers reach for the neck/ of our laughter” trying to drag us back to our misery while enjoy listening to our cries of suffering (WL 86), but who cares; one day they will “find ready grave/in the labyrinth of their venom” and our laughter will “surely come back/to the paradise of our lips” (WL 87). African nations will be waiting like “Masekela ’s eternal song” the song of the rain, the song of prosperity and celebration, the song of “laughing showers” (WL 93): “the rain is also used as a symbol for its fertilizing, cleansing and re-generative qualities. The rain is a fertilizing agent and its intercourse with earth results in expected prosperity (Luga 86). Osundare gives the example of Masekela, the South African music composer, singer and trumpeter because he is an anti-apartheid artist who advocates resistance, and the trumpet is a musical instrument associated with popular music.

Osundare poses a rhetorical question concerning laughter: “What happens to LAUGHTER which waits too long/in the compost of anguished seasons? What…..?” (WL 94). The answer is laughter prevails; in other words, sorrow must give way to laughter because through laughter, resistance emerges. Osundare provides a circular structure to his collection by repetitions of supplications and lines. He starts and ends his poems by appeals: after asking his audience to learn patience at the beginning, now he asks God to endow his people with the strength, courage and wisdom of fragile natural elements that overcome the mightier ones without the destructive effect. Osundare being a member of the African community includes himself in the supplications: “A cardinal point for understanding the African view of humankind is the belief that I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti 1969, 108-9). In other words, he is part and parcel of his society and in turn uses the pronoun “us”:

Grant us

the fortitude of the lamb which lames a lion
without inheriting its claws

the daring of the egg which hardens its temple
in a golgotha of breaking shells… (WL 95)

Osundare ends his poem by repeating the first line in section one: “I pluck these words from the lips of the wind” (WL 2) that changes into “I pluck these
words from the laughter of the wind” (WL 96); now the lips are laughing. And “The season calls for the lyric of other laughter” that are “About to burst” (WL 96-7). In other words, laughter will bring more laughter but on one condition that Africans join hands and resist repression, when “A million fists, up/In the glaring face of complacent skies” (WL 97).

Waiting Laughters presents a unique form of poetry. The collection is divided into an introductory phase, a conflict leading to complications or climax and then a final resolution. Though the pattern seems linear, Osundare adds a cyclic structure to hold the sections of the collection together. Moreover, the employment of dramatic dialogue enriches the poems and helps in conveying the poet's message. Osundare succeeds in combining the techniques of poetry and drama to create the poetry of performance. In other words, he merges “visual and verbal elements [that] not only appeals to the reader's intellect but arrests his or her gaze” (Bohn 15).

Works Cited


19


Split Consciousness and the Poetics of Inauthenticity: Reading Anatole Broyard’s *Kafka Was the Rage*

**Amr Elsherif***

“and that was what I wanted, to be revised. I saw myself as a first draft.”

(Broyard 1997: 48)

Anatole Broyard’s life story makes for a good suspense film or mystery novel: a black man who passes for white, severs all relations with his family, marries in order to avoid military service but is drafted anyway, leaves his first dark-skinned wife and child after finishing his army service, lives a bohemian life with artists in Greenwich Village, becomes a successful writer, critic and editor of *The New York Times Book Review*, marries a blonde of Norwegian-American ancestry, becomes, as described by the literary scholar and Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, “one of literary America’s foremost gatekeepers” and an “arbiter of American writing”, and refuses to disclose his secret to his children till near his death (Gates 180,199). It was only two months before his death that the secret was revealed and his children came to find out through their mother that their father was black (Bliss Broyard 3). Broyard had to pass in order to avoid the restrictions placed on African-Americans by the Jim Crow laws and the One-drop rule in the forties.

**Broyard’s Vision of Art, Life and Politics**

In the fifties, Broyard was asked by The Atlantic Monthly Press to write an autobiographical novel and was offered a handsome amount of money for it. Everybody waited eagerly for the novel that was never written. It is remarkable that the kind of autobiography Broyard chose to write, near the end of his life, was a memoir not a complete autobiography. He chose to frame what would be told and cut out what would be left unsaid. *Kafka Was the Rage* is a “Greenwich Village Memoir;” it starts at a certain point before which earlier history is excluded or selectively included. The memoir is divided into two parts, “Sheri” and “After Sheri”; the first of which is centered on the title character while each chapter of the second is dedicated to one or more of Broyard’s acquaintances. Due to the fact that he provides no intimate and uninhibited description of his

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own consciousness, any account of it has to be gleaned from the noetic acts correlative of the noemata of the intended phenomena; i.e. from how he saw people and events (Brainard 135). The main act of consciousness in writing a memoir—noesis—is remembering. Nevertheless, as Broyard’s style clearly shows, he was not only remembering people and events but was also writing in a highly figurative style. He was also forming and constructing—another noesis. Due to eliminating any reference to his colored background in the memoir, it becomes clear that Broyard’s consciousness was not only remembering but also suppressing. Although this may go beyond the limits of pure description, it may be safely presumed, as will be discussed later, that he was constructing to cover up what was suppressed. The exquisite style in which the memoir is written creates a layer of figurative language which envelops what is remembered—the noema—in an auratic veil that hypnotizes the reader and sets the narrated objects of remembrance apart from the consciousness which perceived them in the first place. In other words, the noetic acts of forming and stylizing are overtaking those of perceiving and remembering. Unlike Marcel Proust’s À la Recherche du Temps Perdu, Kafka Was the Rage does not seek to reveal the identity of the narrating consciousness through the remembered objects, but rather concentrates on the people and objects for their own sake. This does not mean, though, that the style and figuration are there as a mere veil; they stand in their own right for the beauty they create. Due to the thick layer of figurative language, the memoir stands on its own as an autonomous literary work of art separate from the actual lived experience it is supposed to relate. Broyard was writing an anti-subjective kind of autobiography, a history of people and objects not of the self. Hence, to glean how the remembering consciousness saw the noema and understand the corresponding noetic acts is to read the text against the grain.

Broyard depicts an image of Greenwich Village in the forties as a harmonious mixture of life and art; a place where people came to “be with art, to live near it” (Broyard 1997: 141). People’s lives were suffused with art; high cheek bones were prized above anything else a girl could have due to the influence of Cubism. Broyard says: “I slept with modern painting” (57). The memoir starts with a description of Sheri Donatti—a pseudonym for Sheri Martinelli (1918–1996), the painter and poet with whom Broyard lived.

Sheri was her own avant-garde. She had erased and redrawn herself, redesigned the way she walked, talked, moved, even the way she thought and felt.

She was a painter and she looked more like a work of art than a pretty woman. She had a high, domelike forehead, the long silky brown hair of women in portraits…. Her gestures and motions were a slow dance, a
parody of classical poses. They were very deliberate, performed at half speed, as if she had to remember each time, to remind herself, how human beings behaved…. She was a preview of things to come, an invention that was not quite perfected, but that would turn out to be important, a forerunner or a harbinger, *like* the shattering of the object in Cubism or atonality in music. When I came to know her better, I thought of her *as* a new disease. (3-4) [Italics mine]\(^1\)

Sheri is not only an artist; she is herself a work of art. In the Greenwich Village utopia, art was no longer exiled; Plato’s age-old banishment of art seems to have come to end and the latter has finally become part of life as Broyard suggests.

Nevertheless, an investigation of how the phenomenon of art appeared to Broyard’s consciousness would not render the image so seamless or show art and life to be such a harmonious mixture. Broyard did not regard Sheri as a normal person like most people but as a different and distinguished individual; she is separate from both her own past and life around her. She erased the person she was and recreated herself in everything she did as a living work of art. She became as separate from life and as artistically formed and meticulously calculated as an autonomous high modernist work of art. It is noteworthy that the art techniques Broyard mentions, the shattering of the object in Cubism and atonality in music, were the peaks of modernism in the forties, the most important characteristic of which is autonomy in both senses of separation from life and revolt against the past. It is also remarkable that art is the constant figure of speech used to refer to Sheri all through the memoir— one would be tempted to say metaphor but this is largely inaccurate as will be clear later—and that Broyard conceived of art as essentially autonomous. Art may influence life; distinguished individuals may bear some resemblance to a work of art but this does not cancel out the distinction between them. Both Sheri and art appeared to Broyard’s consciousness separate from life and the past. She appeared to him like a closed sphere. He yearned to achieve intimacy with her but never managed to:

She was an abstract painter and I couldn’t follow her there. She left me outside, *like* a dog that you tie to a parking meter when you go into a store. I had no talent for abstraction, didn’t see the need for it, or the beauty of it. *Like* liberal politics, it eliminated so many things I liked.

Yet, if I could understand her paintings, I thought, our sex would be better. We would exist in the same picture plane, pose for each other’s portraits, mingle our forms and colors, make compositions. We would be *like* two
people walking through a gallery or a museum, exclaiming over the same things.

I began to read about abstract painting…. I had come to think that modern art was an initiation into that life, *like* the hazing before you get into a fraternity. (12)

Not only is abstract painting autonomous but, through its abstraction, it also takes away from art all the details that relate it to life. It exists in an isolated sphere which must be passed through as a transitional period of hazing before one can join the distinguished world of artists. In its abstractness, it appeared to Broyard to resemble liberal politics which, in ignoring many of the particularities and even prejudices of culture, would also be separate from life. Broyard may not have understood abstract art or even liked it yet he saw it as serious art, something that must be learnt in order to belong to the circle of artists and intellectuals living in Greenwich Village – the center of hip life in the forties.

Broyard reflects on his life in the Village through comparing it to literature. He opened a secondhand bookstore in the Village:

> It was the talkers who gave me the most trouble. *Like* the people who sold me books, the talkers wanted to sell me their lives, their fictions about themselves, their philosophies….  

> While I pretended to listen, I asked myself which were more real – theirs, or the stories on the shelves. “The familiar man makes the hero artificial,” Wallace Stevens said…. As they talked on, I thought of all the junk I had carried out of the shop…. These people were bringing it all back. (33)

The distinction between art and life, as it appeared to Broyard’s consciousness, is not only a matter of degree and concentration of emotions. While both real people and books may tell stories, those told by people do not seem real enough; they seem artificial. To tell a good story, realistic or otherwise, technique and expertise are required. Art, as Broyard perceived it, depends on technicality – a cornerstone of modernism. Talking about Meyar Schapiro’s art class, Broyard expounds his understanding of modern art:

> I remember Schapiro telling us that before Cézanne, there had always been a place in a landscape painting where the viewer could walk into the picture. There was an entrance; you could go there, *like* walking into a park. But this was not true of Cézanne’s landscapes, which were cut off
absolutely, abstracted from their context. You could not walk into them – you could enter them only through art, by leaping. (59)

Before modernist painting, a landscape and life were perceived as a continuum; there was usually a path which the viewer could trace with his eyes and which walked him into the painting; art was part of life. With modernism, they became separate. Art proper appeared to Broyard to be separate from life. Whatever resemblances it may bear to life have to be redrawn and recreated for art to become art. Whether he liked abstract painting or not, Broyard wanted to understand it in order to belong. “Modern painting was one more exclusion, one more mystery from which I was shut out…. But when it came to modern art, I was afraid that maybe the others were right, that I would never be hip or sophisticated, would never belong” (57). Modern art was seen as a pass to the chic world of connoisseurs. It is the center which marks the circumference and sets the distinguished inside apart from the ordinary outside. In order for Broyard to be separate from ordinary society and his humble background, to gain distinction, art appeared absolutely necessary. “The life we had depended on modern art. Without that, all we had was a dirty apartment” (57). Art is added to life to endow them with a sense of distinction. Art and life were not unified in the sense they were before modernity, the rationalization of art, the appearance of aesthetics and the bifurcation of reason into the three separate domains of truth, morality and beauty. Art remains a separate sphere admissible only to the distinguished few who can understand it and this is why it imparts a sense of distinction. In order to belong to the company of Sheri – who separated herself from life and recreated herself like a work of art - the hip artists and sophisticated critics in Greenwich Village, Broyard had to erase his past, go through a transitional phase and recreate or redraw himself.

Unlike the autonomous art of high modernism, Jazz appeared to Broyard in a totally different way. Whereas he did not like abstract art but found it necessary to understand, he liked Jazz yet did not perceive it as a real form of art. Apart from the split between his feelings and intellect or aesthetic judgment and the irony -both of which will be discussed later- Broyard, comparing Jazz to modernist art, saw that the former lacked the essence of art: “Was it like Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, a fracturing of music, like the splitting of the atom?… It seemed to me that Jazz was just folk art. It might be terrific folk art, but it was still only local and temporary” (70). For Broyard, Jazz smacked of life, of folks; it was not separate or autonomous and did not have universal value. He found an analogy for it in a story told by Gregory Bateson who lived with a primitive tribe in New Guinea for some time and used to hear a man beating the drums every day at dawn:
Bateson learned that this man had suffered a grievance that he could not get settled. The tribe had rejected his plea for redress and so he got up every morning and rehearsed his complaint to the village. He tried to wake them, to disturb their rest, invade their dreams. Thinking about Jazz, I remembered this man and I thought that Jazz musicians were something like that. (71)

Jazz bore the grievances of African-Americans. It was a form of complaint, an expression of the suffering and injustice sustained in life. It was not separate enough from life and “relied too much on improvisation to be a full-fledged art form” (70). In addition to autonomy, Broyard saw real art as highly investing in its technicality which, unlike improvisation, is the element that recreates all the elements that go into the making of art into something new and self-sufficient.

Communist politics, like Sheri, abstract painting and liberal politics seemed separate from life. “When I was at Brooklyn College, everyone urged me to join the Communist Party, but I refused because I thought it was an uninteresting quarrel with the real. Modern art, though, was a quarrel that appealed to me more” (12). Broyard saw that communism, like liberalism, distanced people from “the ordinary” to which he, seeing himself as an “insider,” belonged. Yet, Broyard did not reject abstract art as he did with liberal and communist politics. While all of them seemed separate from life, the latter two appeared to be alienating. Modern art, on the other hand, was seen as a pass to Sheri and the elite world of artists. Sheri herself was seen as a successful project of recreating the self, much like a work of art that transfigures its components into a new ontological mode.

Broyard describes The New School, which was full of German professors who fled from Hitler, as “the ‘University in exile.’” It was also separate from American life “as if it were a concentration camp” (15). Like all the previous objects of remembrance, the university too was separate from the context in which it existed. Nevertheless, Broyard—who saw himself as an “insider,” as part of the context of the ordinary American life to which the intellectuals he knew did not belong—ironically perceived himself and the people in Greenwich Village as also separate from the past and isolated from the ordinary. Like Sheri, they had to recreate themselves and fashion a new life distanced from the ordinary.

When I left Brooklyn to live in the village, I felt as if I had acquired a new set of relatives, like a surprising number of uncles I had never seen before... who had shunned family and been shunned in turn .... There was a flaw in their past, some kind of unhealthiness, even a hint of insanity....

They were all the family that I had now, all the family that I wanted. With them, I could trade in my embarrassingly ordinary history for a
choice of fictions. I could lead a hypothetical life, unencumbered by memory, loyalties, or resentments. The first impulse of adolescence is to wish to be an orphan or an amnesiac. Nobody in the village had a family. We were all sprung from our own brows, spontaneously generated the way flies were once thought to have originated. (28-9)

The movement from Brooklyn to Greenwich Village, like growth from childhood to adolescence, did not appear to Broyard as a process of development but as a rupture. Everyone in the Village appeared separate from any family or history. He recreated a new life in which family was replaced by books.

In all these phenomena, the noematic pole of Broyard’s intentional acts of consciousness was the separateness of these phenomena from their histories and contexts. On the noetic side, separate phenomena that appeared alienating like liberal and communist politics were regarded negatively and rejected. Those that appeared to involve reinvention or transfiguration like Sheri, The New School, modern art and Greenwich Village itself appeared positive. The phenomena that did not appear separate enough, those that smacked of life like jazz, were relegated to a lower position.

The movement to Greenwich Village and the replacement of family by books were acts of recreating the self. “We didn’t simply read books; we became them. We took them into ourselves and made them into our histories” (30). Moving to live with Sheri seemed also like a process of recreating oneself. “Living with Sheri was a process of continual adjustment. It was like living in a foreign city: You learn the language, the currency, the style of the people” (40). Having to go through such a process of erasing and redrawing oneself is ironic for someone who saw himself as an “insider” and regarded it as a distinction.

While Broyard wanted to belong to the distinguished sphere of artists, authors, critics and intellectuals, he saw himself separate from them by his intimate understanding of the real. Unlike them, he conceived of himself as someone who never lost touch with life and actuality. “I wanted to be an intellectual, too, to see life from a great height, yet I didn’t want to give up my sense of connection, my intimacy with things. When I read a book, I always kept one eye on the world, like someone watching the clock” (111). Broyard saw himself distinguished by his immediacy to life – the quality that others lost due to their separateness.

**Broyard’s Split Consciousness**

One of the most revealing chapters in the memoir relates the story of Saul Silverman, a young Jewish intellectual who came to know that he was terminally ill and was going to die shortly. Silverman was so rational and contemplative
that when he referred “in a convoluted, Jamesian way to a female companion,” she appeared to Broyard more like a “theory of femininity, a sketch for a character” (96). Silverman was one of those thinkers who were separated from life by abstractions, by their intellect and by their consciousness of being different. “He was looking around at the park as if he was taking notes, summing it up, trying to arrive at a definition of the ideal park. He was comparing this one to other parks he had only read about” (100). Silverman, _inter alia_, was not capable of immediate contact with life because he was constantly thinking in the abstract. He was even alienated from his body; he regarded it as a vehicle or a machine, a mere receptacle for his consciousness or soul which is separate from it; he saw it as an other. “I’ve hardly used this body. It’s the shoddy manufacture of the times – I’m practically new and obsolete already” (105).

His behavior and reactions were not spontaneous but were determined by his sense of distinction and difference. When Broyard came to know that Silverman had Leukemia, he was so angry and wanted to vent out his feelings but the latter stopped him. “We’re not ordinary people, you and I – I don’t see why we should feel obliged to become ordinary now” (103-104). Unlike Silverman, Broyard did not see himself so alienated -even from himself- or lacking immediacy.

He had invited me to stand outside the event with him, as a fellow critic – but I couldn’t do it. I wasn’t that intellectual. His situation brought out all the homeliness in me, the sloppiness. My feelings had no style. To Saul, my sympathy would have seemed almost bestial, the disorderly impulse of a more primitive civilization. He has always been lofty and distant. (107)

Unlike Silverman and other intellectuals, including Delmore Schwartz and Clement Greenberg, who lost touch with actuality because they were so “blinded by reading” and abstractions, Broyard saw himself not as an anti-intellectual but as someone who was in touch with the world and intimate with things, someone who did not lose immediacy; he did not lose touch with actuality, with people and, most importantly, with himself and his feelings. Broyard was the one who lived in the thick of American life, took his intellectual friends out, and introduced them to Spanish Harlem, night life, Latin dance and dancers.

Nevertheless, when Broyard’s critical writings are read alongside his memoir, they do not confirm the same immediacy and intimacy he claims. In his 1950 article “Portrait of the Inauthentic Negro,” Broyard extended Jean-Paul Sartre’s analysis of the influence exercised by discriminating society on the psychology of the Jew to offer his description of the character of what he calls the “inauthentic negro” – the one who accepts the other’s view of himself, whose self-understanding is mediated by the other. The inauthentic Jew or African-
American is forced to remodel himself into certain character profiles which Broyard, following Sartre, calls “avenues of flight” that do not have “any necessary relation to his true self” (Broyard 1950: 57). Broyard describes the inauthentic character as follows:

Worst of all, the inauthentic Negro is not only estranged from whites—he is also estranged from his own group and from himself. Since his companions are a mirror in which he sees himself as ugly, he must reject them; and since his own self is mainly a tension between an accusation and a denial, he can hardly find it, much less live in it. In extreme cases, he may be said to live wholly by conditioning from outside... In place of useful action, he has worked up an act. (63)\(^4\)

This description, which applies to Broyard himself, shows that his identity is conditioned by the discriminating society. Being forced to deny his identity in order to fit into society, Broyard’s consciousness lost its authentic character and came to adopt an inauthentic guise. His self-consciousness is mediated by what he is not, by the other, by the outside. Because of this mediation, the outside constituted the inside and Broyard’s identity consisted in a fissure; he saw himself as an other. He developed a second nature, an attitude of constant watchfulness which continuously held his true self in check and denied it. His identity, actions and reactions were mediated by what he reacted against. Broyard’s relation to people, things and, most importantly, his own self is no less mediated than Saul Silverman’s and the other intellectuals’ from whom he sought to distinguish himself. If Silverman and the other intellectuals did not have immediate understanding of the world because their visions were mediated by their abstract conceptual intellects, Broyard’s relation to the world was mediated by his consciousness of himself as an other, by his inauthenticity or self-denial. Broyard also is a man without immediacy. His inauthentic self-divided consciousness determined the nature of his relation to himself and to other people and manifested itself in his poetic style.

While complete self-immediacy is an impossible ideal, with Broyard this is taken to the extreme. There is a gap separating two levels of consciousness. He regarded himself as one would regard someone else he envies – or perhaps pities. “I was like an immigrant who goes from a poor country to a rich one and can’t quite believe in his new prosperity. I distrusted my happiness” (Broyard 1997: 46). He flaunted one part of himself and suppressed another which he had to keep in check all the time. During his years at The New School, he wanted to be psychoanalyzed. Talking to Dr Ernst Schachtel, he said: “As far as I can see, I said, I have no reason to be disappointed. Yet, something doesn’t feel right. I don’t
feel that my happiness is mine. It’s like I’m happy outside of myself” (50). Broyard saw his happiness as belonging to the image he projected not to the consciousness lurking behind this image. He was a man who saw himself living and acting and was tormented by this separation from himself.

What I brought to Dr Schachtel was not a condition or a situation but a poetics. I wanted to discuss my life with him not as a patient talking to an analyst but as if we were two literary critics discussing a novel. Of course, that’s what all patients want, but the irony was that with me it might have worked. It might have been the shortest, or the only, way through my defenses, because I had a literature rather than a personality, a set of fictions about myself (52).

Ironically, he wanted to discuss himself with Dr Schachtel in the same manner Saul Silverman suggested: as two critics separate from what they discuss. Broyard saw himself as a fictional character; he created an image separate from himself. Like Sheri, Broyard erased and redrew himself as a work of art. He saw himself as a rough draft that needs to be revised (48). Yet, he was also the critic doing the revision. Only that erasure was not complete; he remained self-divided. While all people have images, ideas and understandings of themselves and can never achieve full immediacy to themselves or complete self-consciousness, Broyard’s consciousness itself was split into a perceiving and a perceived consciousness or image. It was normal for such a wretched consciousness tormented by its separation from itself to wish for another state in which the split existence would come to end. “I want to be transfigured, I said” (51). He wanted the work of art which he was creating -his invented identity- to be consummated and all the relevance to history and life to be severed for the new ontological status to be achieved.

Like Silverman who felt that his body is a mere vehicle and Delmore Schwartz who described his body as “the heavy bear who goes with me” -the intellectuals from whom Broyard felt different- he was also alienated from his body (Delmore Schwarz quoted in Broyard 131). He felt the fissure between his body and soul and was aware of how it prevented him from achieving intimacy with many girls he knew:

Their souls lay beside us in the bed, watching, sorrowing. Perhaps I needed their souls -there is no other explanation for their inconvenient presence- but I didn’t know what to do with them, any more than I knew what to do with my own. (146)
Speaking of his illness and of the general and impersonal medical procedures used by his doctor to characterize his disease in *Intoxicated by my Illness*, he wrote: “Since technology deprives me of the intimacy of my illness, makes it not mine but something that belongs to science, I wish my doctor could somehow personalize it for me. It would be more satisfying to me, it would allow me to feel that I owned my illness” (Broyard 1993: 47). Broyard lacked immediacy first and foremost with himself. In this alienated state, his relation to life was as mediated as his intellectual friends’ were; and perhaps more so.

As a manifestation of his lack of immediacy, Broyard could not be spontaneous with other people. His consciousness of separation from himself mediated his perception of all phenomena. He had to watch himself living, acting and reacting. Therefore, he was not in immediate contact with people, things and events. Like Silverman, he could not be spontaneous; not even with his own family. Talking about their conversations, Shirley Broyard, his dark-skinned sister, remembers that spontaneity was avoided:

“They always had to be focused on something, like a movie, because you couldn't afford to be very intimate. There had to be something that would get in the way of the intimacy.” And when she phoned him during his illness it was the same way. “He never gave that up,” she says, sounding more wistful than reproachful “He never learned how to be comfortable with me.” (Gates 213)

Daphne Merkin, one of his close friends, spoke about a “tendency to want to establish a sort of safety through bourgeoisness” (Gates 195). Michael Miller, his psychiatrist and friend for thirty years, confirms that their “unusual intimacy was circumscribed by a subject that they never discussed” (Gates 195). His wife said that he put limits even to her and that when she tried to cross them, he would “bring down this ‘gate’” (Gates 193). In the memoir, Broyard takes responsibility for alienating others and ascribes it to his desire for transfiguration. He acknowledges the alienating effects of constantly watching himself and orchestrating the process of metamorphosis. Speaking of some girls with whom he had fleeting relations, he writes:

If I had known how to reassure these girls, or if I had remained with any of them long enough, they might have relaxed and become natural with me and I with them. But I was driven with restlessness. I was still looking for transfiguration, as I had said to Dr. Schachtel – it was transfiguration or nothing. (Broyard 1997: 146)
Whether this could be viewed as denying room for trust as Mariana Oshana is inclined to see it or as protecting his identity and personal space, in both cases this is a psychological interpretation of the deeper ontological condition described here (Oshana 65).

Broyard confirms that he belonged to ordinary American life in a way that others did not and that he enjoyed a degree of immediacy denied to the other artists and intellectuals with whom he lived. In the “Prefatory Remarks” to the memoir, Broyard writes:

While some of my contemporaries made a great show of political commitment, it seems to me that their politicizing of experience abstracted them from the ordinary, from the texture of things. They saw only a Platonic idea of American life. To use one of their favorite words, they were alienated. I was not. In fact, one of my problems was that I was alienated from alienation, an insider among outsiders. The young intellectuals I knew had virtually read and criticized themselves out of any feeling of nationality. (Broyard 1997: viii)

Broyard was not attracted to political affiliations not because he belonged to the ordinary American life but because he wanted to belong to it, to be an insider. While these intellectuals wanted to change what they found unsatisfying about it, Broyard idealized it as it is and preferred to change himself to fit into it. Being forced to deny part of himself to fit in, he created the fissure which shaped his split inauthentic consciousness.

In his pursuit of belonging, Broyard did not want to belong to the “embarrassingly ordinary” (29). In an article he published in his *Times* column, he wrote:

My mother and father were too folksy for me, too colorful.... Eventually, I ran away to Greenwich Village, where no one had been born of a mother and father, where the people I met had sprung from their own brows, or from the pages of a bad novel.... Orphans of the avant-garde, we outdistanced our history and our humanity. (Broyard quoted in Gates 186)

Broyard wanted to distance himself from that part of his personality and belong to the elite company of art, artists and Sheri, to live in Greenwich Village and study at The New School. All these objects appeared to Broyard’s consciousness separate from life. In order to belong to any of them, he had to go through a phase of change and recreate himself like a work of art. This is why phenomena which appeared to him separate from life and involving a process of metamorphosis or
transfiguration were accorded a positive value. This is ironic, nevertheless, for someone who regarded himself as an insider and held it as a distinction. The split of Broyard’s consciousness into perceiving and perceived layers led to his lack of immediacy with himself and with phenomena around him. With people, it led to what was felt as lack of intimacy; with other phenomena, it led to the ironic relativization of value remarkable throughout the memoir.

**Broyard’s Figurative Imagination**

When Broyard read passages of his memoir to Ellen Schwamm, she described them as “stilted and distant” as if he was hiding something. Broyard admitted that he was hiding the fact that he was black (Schwamm qtd in Gates 202). Following Gates, Brett Ashley Kaplan argues that Broyard’s denial of his identity stunted his talent and that “it was precisely his inability to address the question of his passing that prevented him from writing” (129). While this was true for most of his life, near the end it exercised a different effect. It determined the form of the memoir and the nature of his poetic style. In writing his memoir, Broyard’s mind was consciously doing the Freudian dream work of suppressing and displacing what his waking consciousness would not accept and forming what it could see. If Broyard saw part of himself as a fictional character, he was finally materializing this fiction in an actual work of art. The result is a memoir that may be lacking in intimacy but is by no means lacking in style and makes up for what is missing in the former by the exuberance of the latter. The memoir is a modernist literary work of art marked for its style and unexpectedly autonomous from its author.

Gates notes that Broyard’s life is full of ironies and that over the years he learned to use them. His style also displays a plethora of ironies, both verbal and existential. Seeing himself as an insider and rejecting the politics that separated him from life yet being forced to deny part of his personality and recreate himself to be accepted into this life -thereby unconsciously condemning society while consciously endorsing it- was only one of many ironies in Broyard’s life. Irony is not a mere strategy that he resorted to whenever he needed. If the abundance of ironies is not fortuitous, it needs to be grounded in his consciousness. In order to be who he is, Broyard had to separate himself from what he was. For a man who erased his personal history and redrew himself as a work of art, the past is real yet denied. His present character -“literature” to use his word- which is the only reality he has now is, nevertheless, fictional, untrue. This existential mode creates an ironic condition in which reality is denied and unreality is confirmed. All the present positions, relations, friendships and career are based on the untrue white identity he created. Speaking of books as his new family members, Broyard writes: “They were more real than anything I had ever known, real as
only imagined things can be, real as dreams that seem so unbearably actual because they are cleansed of all irrelevances” (Broyard 1997: 29). The verbal ironies and the ironic situations with which the memoir abounds are manifestations of this basic ontological condition.

Broyard was separated from objects of experience by his realization that they do not belong to him but to his fictional self. Due to his split consciousness, everything appeared to him to have a dual value. When things have different values, they cannot be seen to have an intrinsic value in themselves. Their value depends on how they appear and what they mean to the perceiving self-divided consciousness. Therefore, everything Sheri said could sound “both” true and false (5); life could appear less true than literature (33); going to the psychiatrist would develop new repressions rather than free Broyard of the old ones (49). Modern art is deemed necessary and important even if not liked (57), while Jazz may be liked but not aesthetically appreciated (70). Broyard confirms that ethnicity appeared normal and acceptable to all people yet he did not acknowledge his own (95). The neurotic would be regarded, from a psychoanalytic point of view, healthier than the normal person – an idea which he found flattering because he, like all students at The New School, regarded himself as neurotic (17). Yet, neurosis could be regarded as a healthy sign of protest only if society is oppressive or discriminatory. While in his memoir Broyard does not show any sign of condemning society as either, his passing is such a condemnation. Although he was alienated and oppressed, Broyard rejected liberal politics as alienating and communism -which was regarded by some as a sign of revolt- as an uninteresting quarrel with the real (viii, 12). As a result of his separation from phenomena and his lack of immediate experience of what things are, they became ironic for him. Broyard’s inauthenticity -his self-divided consciousness in which the perceiving fictional identity he created hides the original self and constantly keeps it in check- manifests itself in the existential and verbal ironies of the memoir.

Irony may be the most salient feature of an inauthentic consciousness ascribing different values to the same phenomena due to its self-division. Yet inauthenticity manifests itself in Broyard’s poetics in other ways as well. The need to narrate life without revealing identity requires an aesthetic distance that can be gained only via a certain manipulation of figurative language. The striking feature of Broyard’s style is not irony but his overwhelming use of similes. The style of the memoir shows an abundance of figurations that renders it more like a prose poem than an autobiographical piece of writing. Compared to any other figure of speech, similes are incomparably preponderant. Sometimes the figures seem unmotivated and tend to create similarities rather than discover or describe them. Everything in the memoir is like something else. While the figures are
enjoyable for their novelty and the sense of high culture that informs them, this is not a reason to abandon them as mere ornamentation used for their decorative function.

The concern with art, literature and culture and the derivation of figures from this domain is the factor that unifies the memoir and prevents it from falling into a mere remembrance of a series of unrelated events. While many rhetoricians tend to regard metaphor as an elliptical simile and equate the two figures, from a nonreductive point of view they are not only stylistically different but stem from different visions and perform distinct processes. Metaphor stresses the belonging of the tenor - or the target domain - to the category of the vehicle – or the source domain; simile, on the other hand, stresses the likeness yet keeps them separate. “It is sometimes said that while a simile invites the addressee to make a comparison between two unlike things, a metaphor requires the addressee to conceive of one thing as actually being another (unlike) kind of thing” (Carston 357).

Broyard’s split consciousness, in addition of course to his training in the new critical tradition, did not allow him to see art as a direct reflection or even unmediated expression of life. His figures do not grow out of realizing similarities in life, then capture and express them in a metaphorical form. This determines the nature of his figures to be similes not metaphors. While metaphors do not necessarily stem from a unified vision as the organic growth of experience in the way romantic thinkers conceived of, they still express the unity of the source and target domains. Broyard’s consciousness did not conceive of such unity in the first place. As has been illustrated, Broyard viewed art - the source domain - as essentially autonomous and separate from life – the target domain. Therefore, to derive almost all his figures, similes and analogies from the domain of art is to distance life from its narration. This is precisely what his similes do; they distance the reader from the remembered life and the hidden identity. Life is ordinary and art is a process of transfiguration that can elevate the individual above ordinariness (Broyard 1997: 51). Without art, all he had was just a dirty apartment. Speaking of the dishes in the kitchen sink and of how they were hardly ever used, Broyard says that they were “like a sculpture or a painting of dishes by Magritte” (81). Replacing family with books and authors, he writes: “When I left Brooklyn to live in the Village, I felt as if I had acquired a new set of relatives, like a surprising number of uncles I had never met before…. These uncles were, of course, my favorite authors” (28). Art must elevate, transfigure and exalt life but it is not an organic part of it. The distance between the source domain from which the figures are derived and the target domain, which parallels Broyard’s lack of immediacy with life, makes any figuration of the unity of art and life through metaphors hard to conceive.
Broyard’s consciousness understands the two domains as essentially different yet attempts to find analogies that would elevate life or transfigure it to a higher level.

Speaking of his attempt to come closer to Sheri through learning about art, he writes: “We would be like two people walking through a gallery or a museum” (12). The “like” of all his similes is not fortuitous. It creates the analogy while betraying and testifying to the distance. Similes create a layer of artistic figuration that draws the reader into the literary and artistic figurative level. Sometimes the distance is stressed even more when Broyard uses “as if” to create his figures like when he describes The New School “as if it were” a concentration camp (15), books “as if they were” relatives or uncles (28), and these uncles as having an aura of scandal “as if they had run away with someone’s wife or daughter” (29). The word “as if” suggests some aspect of similarity while denying it at the same time creating, thereby, an ironic effect. The irony destroys any nearness that may be suggested by the similarity and keeps the literal and figurative levels apart. The common denominator of simile and verbal irony here is the distance between the two parts of the trope which is carried to the extreme of making the signifier refer to a signified sense standing opposed to it in the case of irony.

Similes and analogies drawn from the domain of art are consistently used to elevate life to the level of art in a way that renders people and events glow with a heroic artistic aura – stressing thereby the distance between the representation and what is represented. Dick Gilman, one of Broyard’s acquaintances who was infatuated with literature and used to identify with the authors he liked while he read them, came to take Sheri away from Broyard. The latter realized that Gilman was in his D.H. Lawrence phase; Sheri became Frieda and Broyard became Ernest Weekley. With the idea of incongruity gaining importance in literary criticism at that time, Gilman described Broyard and Sheri as an incongruous couple (20). Nemecio Zarante, a painter who repeated Gilman’s attempt, saw the problem as one of asymmetry. He looked “like a priest of the Inquisition”; his features were carved “as an El Greco portrait of a cardinal or pope”; Sheri was seen “as a quattrocento Madonna” and Broyard “felt like a man being persecuted.” Broyard in his bookshop imagined himself “like Saint Jerome in his study” (23). Rather than foregrounding the remembered events, Broyard reconstructs them in symmetrical figurative narratives in which the domain where the similes come from determines the figures and characters which he, Sheri and the intruder assume. The figuratively constructed narratives cover up the narrated life.

The development of the relation between Broyard and Sheri is also depicted in figures derived from the domain of art. Referring to his sex life with Sheri in
the beginning of their affair, Broyard sees himself as a “piston” and Sheri as “Paul Klee’s Twittering Machine” (11). She was more developed and turned his monotony into something rich with variations. Later on, he uses one of his favorite images to refer to their relation. “When I connected myself to her, we were like the chance meeting, on an operating table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella” (61). It is remarkable that the tenor and the vehicle of Lautréamont’s metaphor do not depict a coherent image and retain a gaping distance. With Sheri, Broyard always felt separate, lonely and solitary (63-65). Finally, due to their inability to achieve intimacy, they fell apart. Rather than discussing the reason why he could not be intimate with Sheri, their separation is represented in a figurative way as a dispute over an abstract painting of Broyard that she made – Anatole’s Ontological Conspiracy – which he took away when he left. Sheri informed the police of a precious painting stolen and accused him. In the police station, the police detective forced him to choose between being prosecuted and leaving the painting which seemed to him meaningless. Broyard was finally forced to leave it. In this struggle between art and life, the latter won. Yet, the struggle itself is presented in artistic terms setting it apart from the life it covers. The separation between remembered life and its figurative narration or, rather, the figurative structuring of the narration of real life events, results from Broyard’s attempt to conceal his identity while telling his story. While the highly ornamental style was characteristic of the high modernism of Greenwich Village writers, with Broyard it was an attempt to escape from personality and cover it up while representing it.

The whole memoir can be read as the chronicle of this struggle between life and art, between artists and intellectuals who were separate from life and Broyard who regarded himself as an insider who never lost touch with life but was, temporarily, flying in the autonomous realm of art. Broyard’s self-conscious stylization of the memoir as a prose poem rather than an intimate narration of life, divided self-consciousness, self-denial, desire to recreate himself through entering the autonomous sphere of art and artists and, most importantly, living all his life under the guise of the character he created in the Village, nevertheless, contradict with his attempt to paint a portrait of his life there as a temporary flight, and of himself as an insider intimate with ordinary life and offer a different one.

Broyard’s figures of speech tear themselves off from life and flaunt themselves in a way that makes them stand autonomous vis-à-vis the real life events they relate to. They create a figurative layer which makes the memoir harmonious through the source domain from which the similes are derived and, ironically, render the memoir an autonomous work of art in its own right. Broyard did not write the memoir as a remembrance of his past life or revelation.
of his identity but as his vision, or rather revision, of himself as he wanted to see it. He wrote the fiction of the transfigured self that he wanted Dr Schachtel to help him create, the self elevated through art to an exalted level of existence.\textsuperscript{7}

Broyard revised himself from a draft into a polished work of art. Yet, the traces of the process of revision are still visible in the contradictions and ironies of the split consciousness. While on one level he was remembering, on another he was suppressing and constructing. While he saw himself as immediate, he was constantly watchful of himself and separate from it and others by this heightened degree of self-consciousness. For Broyard, “[t]o be acutely conscious … [was definitely] a disease” (Dostoevsky 7). Not only did Broyard’s dual consciousness make him lose immediacy with life, other people and himself but it also rendered the value of any object dependent on what it meant to the perceiving strata of consciousness. Consequently, objects lost any intrinsic value. Broyard’s loss of immediacy not only relativized and ironized his vision of objects but also made any vision of unity with life impossible which, in turn, excluded a metaphorical vision based on the unity of self and life. The attempt to elevate life to an artistic level without intuiting any unity left him with no other means but similes which enveloped life in an artistic veil meant to cover the layer beneath it and enchant the readers with its own aura.

Broyard’s flight into the realm of art was not as temporary as he may have thought or wanted the reader to believe. Like Sheri, Broyard was a work of art and remained so. Like all the intellectuals from whom he sought to distinguish himself, he was also separate from life. In the ironies of his memoir, those of his own personality can be read and in the contradictions of the latter, those of American society can be clearly seen.

\textbf{Endnotes}

\textsuperscript{1} Broyard uses the word “avant-garde” throughout the memoir in the familiar sense to refer to a high modernist work of art or an artist interested in or whose works display an advanced state of modernist aesthetics. He does not use it in the more technical sense of attack on the autonomy of modernist art. It is also worthwhile to mention early on that throughout the memoir Sheri continues to be compared to works of art. It should also be mentioned that the words “like,” “as” and “as if” will be italicized throughout the article.

\textsuperscript{2} While the relation between modernist art and elitism is well known, a good succinct explanation can be found in José Ortega Y Gasset’s \textit{The Dehumanization of Art}. Modern art, on the other hand, will always have the masses against it. It is essentially unpopular; moreover, it is antipopular. It is not that the majority does not like the art of the young.
and the minority likes it, but the majority, the masses, do not understand it. When a man dislikes a work of art, but understands it, he feels superior to it; and there is no reason for indignation. But when his dislike is due to a failing to understand, he feels vaguely humiliated and this rankling sense of inferiority must be counterbalanced by indignant self-assertion. Through its mere presence, the art of the young compels the average citizen to realize that he is just this – the average citizen (5-6). Modernist art is elitist by nature. Most, if not all, of the artworks that Broyard mentions in the memoir are modernist.

3 It is important here to refer to Derrida’s commentary on Hegel’s understanding of Jewish consciousness as separate from the body. In Glas, Derrida writes:

   So he cannot enjoy (this). Since everything is obtained through the favor of a transcendent and separate God, what the Jew enjoys is under the seal of expropriation. What I enjoy does not belong to me. My life and my body are not mine…. Since the human body belongs to God, it had to be kept clean… but like a disguise…, like the livery of a servant. (50)

Broyard’s unacknowledged sense of separation from his body is similar to that of Saul Silverman and the other intellectuals in whom he realized the same phenomenon yet sought to set himself apart.

4 In Blacks and Jews in Literary Conversation, Emily Miller Budick criticizes Broyard’s description in this article as laying the blame on the victim rather than the discriminating society. Interestingly, Broyard offers a description of the African American who denies his identity that applies to himself. In the Memoir, he does not offer any criticism of society as discriminatory. It is also remarkable that some of the topics Broyard chose to write on, like his “Portrait of the Inauthentic Negro” and “Portrait of the Hipster” deal with people who display the phenomenon of split consciousness. In Creole Renegades, Bénédicte Boisséron uses Homi Bhabha’s concept to offer a vision of Creole identity as a hybrid.

5 The issue here is not which figure comes first but the difference between metaphor and simile. Even from a cognitive perspective which sees that conceptual metaphors precede similes, the two figures are distinct.

   Conceptual metaphors give form to a target domain by projecting structure from a source: in fact, some very abstract targets, like time and causation, may be structured almost entirely metaphorically. Similes, on the other hand, match structures construed as simultaneously present in both domains: similes do not add structure to a target, but highlight what’s already there. (Israel 132)

In her compelling critique of reductive simile theories of metaphor, Lynne Tirrell confirms the difference. “[T]here is a big difference between saying “A is a B” and saying that “A is like a B”. The former entails A’s inclusion in the set of B things, while the latter does not…. Since the semantic commitments of the two claims differ, the addition of the 'like' is not trivial” (341).

6 In the “Postscript” to Kafka, Alexandra Broyard quotes her husband in a letter to the publisher: “In a way, I had been an expatriate in the Village, living in a style that was essentially foreign to me. I was flying, like a Freudian dream of flying, and the book
ends with my attempt to come back down to earth” (148). Here again, he confirms that life in the Village was separate from the normal American life to which he belonged. Nevertheless, he does not acknowledge that he continued to live for the rest of his life under the guise of the character he invented in the Village.

In *Standby*, Sandy Broyard, Anatole’s wife, writes that in writing his memoir he was dealing with the “unresolved issues of his own childhood” and that writing was a “reinvention of himself ” (205) confirming thereby the conclusion reached here.

**Works Cited**


An Integrative Multimodal Analysis of the Examiner-Examinee Interaction in the IELTS Speaking Examination

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Introduction
Any oral communication is characterized by an interplay among verbal and non-verbal means of interaction. These different modes could be “embodied” (i.e. language, gesture, gaze, head movement, posture, proxemics) or “disembodied” (e.g. layout that includes furniture, print) (Norris, 2004). Among the different oral interactions is the examiner-examinee exchange that is common in contexts that require a score for a job, admission in a university, summative assessment or even travel for academic or immigration purposes. This study aims at investigating the examiner-examinee interaction from a multimodal perspective with special reference to the IELTS Speaking examination. IELTS Speaking is one of four modules that is to be completed alongside with Writing, Reading and Listening by anyone who wants to be admitted in some private universities in Egypt or to be qualified for travelling abroad for study or immigration purposes. The test comprises three parts. According to the different IELTS recognizable sites, Part One is labelled “interview”, Part Two is called “a long-turn” and Part Three is given the term “discussion”. The focus of Part One is to communicate on familiar topics; Part Two tests the ability of the test-taker to talk on a given topic for two minutes; and Part Three examines the ability of the candidate to discuss, justify and analyze issues related to Part Two topic. (For more information on IELTS, see “IELTS”, n.d.).

Literature review
Multimodality has been the interest of many researchers. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) on the one hand and O’Toole (1995) on the other discussed two major approaches for multimodality: the former applied theoretic generalizations to different texts, and the latter paid attention to specific texts and derived generalizations out of these texts to modify the theory (as cited in O’Halloran & Smith, 2012). Multimodality has been used to analyze digital texts by many researchers (e.g. Alfonso & Giralt, 2013; Jewitt, 2013a; Jewitt, 2013b; O’Halloran, Tan, Smith & Podlasov, 2011; O’Halloran, Marissa, Podlasov &

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Tan, 2013). Multimodality has also been the framework used by much research in the field of education (e.g. Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010; Jewitt, 2003; Jewitt, 2007; Jewitt, 2008; Rowe, 2012). Zollo (2013) integrated multimodality with critical discourse analysis when investigating the Council of Europe’s (COE) persuasive communication campaigns.

The IELTS Speaking examination has also been subject to a plethora of research. Some studies discussed the marking of the exam (e.g. Brown, 2003; Nakatsuhara, Inoue & Taylor, 2017; Seedhouse, Harris, Naeb & Üstünel, 2014). Others compared the examinee and examiner performance features through two different modes of delivery: face to face and video-conferencing (e.g. Nakatsuhara, Inoue, Berry & Galaczi, 2016). Researchers also examined the relationship between Listening proficiency and Speaking performance (e.g. Nakatsuhara, 2009). Nevertheless, no research on IELTS has tackled the examiner-examinee interaction, the focus of the present study.

**Theoretical background and framework**

Challenging the concept that language is the superordinate means of communication, Norris (2004) offered a framework of multimodal interaction analysis where she integrated multimodality (taking into consideration such semiotic features like gestures, print and layout), “interactional sociolinguistics” that focuses on real time interaction, and “mediated discourse” whose emphasis is on the mediated action (p. 10).

Norris (2004) chose “action” to be the “unit of analysis”, and she differentiated between “higher-level” actions and “lower-level” actions. Higher-level actions are marked by a beginning and an end and they are made up of multiple chains of lower-level actions (the smallest unit of analysis). An example given by Norris to illustrate this concept is a meeting among three friends. The meeting is a higher-level action that has a beginning and an end, and it is made up of multiple chains of gestures, postural shifts, gaze shifts and intonation units. Higher-level actions can also encompass other higher-level actions. In the same example of the meeting among three, there could be a conversation between two of the members (Norris, 2004, pp. 13-14).

Norris (2004) categorized modes into two different types: embodied modes and disembodied modes that she also called “frozen actions”. She defined embodied modes as the modes individuals use to express their feelings, thoughts and perceptions. These modes could be spoken language, gestures or even a print mode (i.e. written texts). On the other hand, disembodied modes are material objects developed by someone prior to an interaction. These objects might include a magazine on a table, furniture or pictures on the wall. For these objects to be present, chains of lower-level actions are performed. For a magazine to be
present, someone must have bought it and placed it on the table. Perceiving a chain of lower-level actions for the presence of the magazine, furniture or any other material object, necessitates the presence of higher-level disembodied actions that are labelled “frozen actions” (p. 14). Norris added that one mode can function as an embodied mode or as a disembodied mode depending on context. For example, the print mode can function as an embodied mode if the individual uses it to express his feelings, thoughts or perceptions, or it can function as a disembodied mode when s/he reacts to the print performed by others (pp. 41-44). Within this framework, Norris discussed several communicative modes: “spoken language”, “proxemics”, “posture”, “gesture”, “head movement”, “gaze”, “music”, “print” and “layout”, and she affirmed their interdependence on one another. (Norris, 2004, pp. 15-57).

Closely associated with the above framework is the concept of “modal density”. Norris (2004, 2011) discussed modal density in terms of “modal intensity” and “modal complexity”. Modal intensity has to do with the weight and importance of a mode which depends on the context of interaction. Within a given context, if a mode changes the higher-level action radically if it is discontinued, this mode has high intensity; if a mode changes the higher-level action slightly if it is discontinued, this mode has a mid-intensity; and if the mode does not change the higher-level action if it is discontinued, this mode is of low intensity. On the other hand, modal complexity has to do with the multiplicity of different modes and it is achieved when there is an interplay among several communicative modes. (For a detailed discussion and examples of modal density, see Norris, 2004, pp. 79-91 and Norris, 2011, pp. 93-110).

In order to understand the relativity of modal density in interaction, Norris (2004, 2011) introduced the notions of “attention” and “foreground-background continuum”. Adopting Van Leeuwen’s (1996) notion of dividing any heard sounds into three groups and then “hierarchizing” these groups, treating some as more important than others (as cited in Norris, 2011), Norris (2011), divided higher-level actions (including disembodied/frozen actions) that are achieved through the employment of different communicative modes into groups, hierarchized them according to which higher-level action is attended/reacted to and which higher-level action is present, but “disattended” and treated as something listeners should not react to. Norris (2004) emphasized that

The higher-level action that a participant highly attends to and/or highly reacts to, and/or highly acts upon, is in the foreground of their attention/awareness …
The higher-level action that a participant attends to in some degree and/or reacts to in some degree, and/or acts upon in some degree, is in the mid-ground of their attention/awareness … The higher-level action that a participant is only decreasingly aware of, disattends, and/or does not react to, and/or does not act upon, is in the background of their attention/awareness. (p. 97, italics in original)∗

All that has been presented in the above theoretical background constitute the framework upon which the present study is based.

**Research questions**

The purpose of this study, as mentioned above, is to investigate the different modes of communication used in the examiner-examinee interaction in the three parts of the IELTS Speaking examination. The following research questions aid in this investigation:

1. What are the different modes of communication utilized in each part of the IELTS Speaking examination?
2. How do these modes unite to construct higher-level actions that suit the conventional features of each part of the examination?
3. What is the relationship between higher-level actions on the one hand and modal density with the foreground-background continuum of attention on the other?

To answer these questions, a qualitative analysis is carried out.

**Method**

**Materials**

The IELTS Speaking examination constitutes the data for the present study. All the IELTS Speaking examinations available on www.youtube.com from recognized IELTS sites (e.g. www.ielts.org and Cambridge English Language Assessment) were watched and twenty random samples representing the three parts of the exam were selected. I used the videos available on the internet, since I had no access to live IELTS to make my own recordings. The method of transcribing data was adopted from Norris (2004). Images were incorporated in the transcription to enrich the analysis by giving it details that cannot be captured by just transcribing spoken language. Albeit Norris labelled the video captures “Plates” (with a capital P), they are termed “figures” in the present study so as

∗ (For a detailed discussion of the foreground-background continuum, see Norris, 2004, pp. 95-111 and Norris, 2011, pp. 47-50).
not to confuse them with other meanings of “plates”. All other terminology present in the analysis: “higher-level” actions, “lower-level” actions, “embodied” and “disembodied” modes, “frozen actions”, “modal density” and “foreground-background continuum of attention” are adopted from Norris. (See theoretical background above).

**Data Transcription, Analysis and Discussion**

Before transcribing and analyzing the data, it is important to note that the whole IELTS Speaking examination is a higher-level action that has an opening and a closing. Within this higher-level action, there are three other higher-level actions instantiated in the three parts of the exam. Each part has a beginning and an end. In what follows, each of the examination parts is transcribed, analyzed and discussed to arrive at the multimodal interaction features that characterize this particular part.

Since the main aim of this study is to analyze the examiner-examinee interaction that characterizes the IELTS Speaking examination in general and not to analyze one individual examination, only the formulaic language of the examiner and the examinee is transcribed below, since the topics the examiner chooses from vary, and the answers of examinees vary. Figures presented in the analysis were selected to represent the shared modes found in all the IELTS Speaking tests. They are not idiosyncratic features of a specific interaction in a specific test, therefore spoken language transcribed is also deemed representative of spoken language found in all the IELTS Speaking tests not the language of a specific examiner, a specific examinee or a specific test. Analyzing the language of specific participants in an IELTS Speaking examination does not lie within the scope of the present study, since the study is not dealing with the different linguistic features that aid in getting high scores in the examination. In order not to confuse the transcription of the spoken language with the analysis, the mode of “spoken language” is transcribed in italics.

**Part One (4-5 minutes): “Interview”**

After analyzing all the data of the present study, it was found that all the “interviews” of Part One have a formulaic template that is made up of four sections. The first section is a morning or an afternoon greeting by the examiner and the examinee with an introduction of oneself to break the ice, the second section is a set of questions on either the place where the candidate lives or what s/he does in life, the third section is on a general topic, and the fourth section is on another general topic. The third and fourth sections are made up of a list of familiar topics from which examiners choose.
Section 1 template: greetings and introducing oneself.

Examiner: Good afternoon. My name is Michael Austin. Can you tell me your full name please?
Examinee: [Answers vary]
Examiner: Where you are from?
Examinee: [Answers vary]
Examiner: Can I see your identification please?
Examinee: Yes, sure. [hands on the ID]
Examiner [Checking that the person in the ID is the same as the person sitting]: Thank you. That’s fine. [Returns the ID]

An afternoon greeting from the examiner and the examinee marks the launch of the whole examination, the commencement of Part One and the beginning of section one at the same time. The examiner, then, introduces himself and asks for the examinee’s full name, nationality and ID. The examiner ended section one and marked the beginning of section two by saying “Now in this first part” and denotes that he is going to ask the examinee some questions about himself/herself “I’d like to ask you some questions about yourself”.

This section is a higher-level action, since it has a beginning and an end, and it is made of chains of lower-level actions. These chain are composed of different modes: “spoken language” discerned in a series of adjacency pairs between the examiner and the examinee articulated in friendly tones from the examiner’s part, “gestures” recognized in the examinee handing on the ID and the examiner giving it back, “print” mode (Figure 1a) “gaze shifts”, and “head movements” (Figure 1b) illustrated by the examiner when checking the identity of the examinee against the papers on the table, “proxemics” which is the distance between the examiner and the examinee, as they are sitting across each other revealing the formality of the relationship (Figure 2) and the “layout” mode illustrated in the physical environment of the examination: a table, two chairs across each other, papers in front of the examiner, a tape recorder (placed in a circle to the left of the examiner in the middle of the table), a timer that calculates
the time of each part of the examination (placed in a circle in front of the examiner to her right) and the examinee identification card placed in front of her (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Proxemics and layout

It is worth noting that the “proxemics” and the “layout” modes characterize the authenticity of the three parts of the examination. Different ‘proxemics” and/or different “layout” would create a different atmosphere that does not belong to IELTS in any sense. In other words, these two modes are core elements in the IELTS Speaking examination setting. It is also worth noting that the mode of “spoken language” in all the data of the study is characterized by a friendly tone articulated slowly in a clear voice with conventional intonation units that accompany any interaction: falling intonation at the end of sentences and rising intonation when asking questions, pauses after meaningful units together with a medium steady pitch. These conventional features of the mode of “spoken language” are concomitant with the IELTS Speaking examination where international non-native English candidates from all over the world sit for this examination. The Speaking proficiency level is not known to the examiners. So, all the instructions, questions and prompts are standardized to address all levels, which secures the validity and reliability of the test.

**Section 2 template: Candidate’s way of living or place of living.**

**Examiner:** Now, in this first part, I’d like to ask you some questions about yourself. Let’s talk about what you do. Do you work or are you a student?

**Examinee:** I am a student.

**Examiner:** What subject are you studying?

**Examinee:** [Answers vary].

**Examiner:** Why did you choose this subject?

**Examinee:** [Answers vary]

**Examiner:** What do you hope to do when you finish your studies?

**Examinee:** [Answers vary]
This section is also a higher-level action whose beginning is marked by “Now, in this first part” and it comes to an end when the examiner uses one of the topic shifts: “Let’s talk about ...”, “Let’s go on to talk about ...”, “Tell me about ...” or “Now, let’s talk about ...”. This higher-level action is made up of multiple chains of lower-level actions presented in different modes: “spoken language” by means of a chain of adjacency pairs between the examiner and the examinee followed sometimes by “why/why not?” to prompt the examinee to elaborate on her talk, “gaze shifts” from reading the questions (Figure 3a) to looking at the examinee together with an upward sagittal “head movement” (Figure 3b) to follow with the examinee and show attention and interest or in nodding to show interaction and to encourage the examinee to go on talking, “print” mode that is also utilized by the examiner as an essential mode in the interaction and the modes of “proxemics” and “layout” that are constant throughout the whole examination.

**Section 3 template: a general topic.**

*Examiner: Now, let’s talk about weekends. What do you usually do at the weekend?*

*Examinee: [Answers vary]*

*Examiner: What do you think you do next weekend? Why?*

*Examinee: [Answers vary]*

*Examiner: Do you enjoy weekends now more than you did when you were a child?*

*Examinee: [Answers vary]*

*Examiner: How important it is for you to relax at the end of the week?*

*Examinee: [Answers vary]*
In section three, the examiner has a list of optional general topics to choose from. This section constitutes a third higher-level action in Part One. Its beginning is marked by one of the topic shifts presented in section two, and its end is also marked by one of the topic shifts. This topic shift is either the same as that of its beginning or different, but it is nothing other than the topic shifts presented above. Similarly, as section two, this section is made of chains of lower-level actions discerned in the modes of “spoken language”, “gaze shifts”, “print” mode, “head movements”, “proxemics” and “layout”. Figure 4a shows the “print” and “gaze” modes while reading the questions and Figure 4b illustrates the “gaze” mode accompanied by a sagittal “head movement” and a smile while looking at the examinee to denote friendliness and interest in what the examinee is saying.

Section 4 template: a general topic
Examiner: Let’s talk about music. What sort of music do you usually enjoy listening to?
Examinee: [Answers vary].
Examiner: Has the kind of music you like changed over the years?
Examinee: [Answers vary]
Examiner: Do you prefer listening to live music or recorded music? Why?
Examinee: [Answers vary]
Examiner: Do you think listening to music helps you study?
Examinee: [Answers vary]
This section is the fourth higher-level action in Part One. Its beginning is marked by one of the topic shifts exactly as section three, but its end is marked by the beginning of Part Two of the whole examination. Other than that, it is a carbon copy of section three in the usage of the same modes that constitute chains of lower-level actions as apparent in the “gaze” and lowering the “head” while reading the question in Figure 5a and moving it up with a sagittal movement while looking at the examiner in Figure 5b.

All that has been presented delineates that Part One is made of four higher-level actions, and that each action comprises chains of lower-level actions instantiated in “spoken language”, “gaze shifts”, “print”, “head movements”, “proxemics” and “layout” together with “gestures” that are utilized only in section one. To the examiner, all the modes including the mode of “print” and the mode of “layout” are embodied modes, since they are either deployed to determine the topics that are to be communicated (“spoken language”, “gaze shifts”, “print”, “head movements”, “proxemics”) or they play a vital role in the interaction as setting the time, tape recording the examination, and arranging chairs show formality (the mode of “layout”). Thus, all modes are integrated into higher level actions to communicate formulaic messages, which results in having all these higher-level actions placed on the foreground of the examiner’s attention. On the other hand, only higher-level actions that include “spoken language” are placed in the foreground of the examinee’s attention. The modes of “print” and “layout” are frozen actions to the examinee, since s/e does not attend to them, and they are placed in her background attention. The examinee is only responsible for aligning her language to international speaking standards. She is not responsible for tape recording the examination or for taking care of the time. These tasks are the examiner’s along with assessing the examinee’s talk.

Consequently, some of the modes used in Part One show higher modal density than others. To the examiner, “spoken language” and “print” are of paramount importance, and the higher-level action will be drastically affected if
they are discontinued, and that is why they are never discontinued in any of the videos selected for the analysis. Thence, high modal density is achieved by the examiner through the intensity of “spoken language” and “print”, which complies with the international identity of the IELTS examination. Rigorous spoken language that is read from a script guarantees the test validity and reliability all over the world irrespective of the place of its administration; otherwise the test will lose its standardization and recognition throughout the whole world. On the other hand, “spoken language” is the sole essential mode for the examinee in this Part, and if it is discontinued, the higher-level action will be drastically affected. So, high modal density is achieved by the examinee through the intensity of “spoken language”, which is normal, since the main purpose of the examination is to test the Speaking proficiency of the candidate. Concerning the other modes used, “gestures” affect the higher-level action of section one only, since if the examinee refuses to hand on his/her ID, s/he will be in trouble as s/he has to prove his/her identity. So, gestures have high modal density only in section one. “Gaze shifts” and “head movements” aid in presenting the performance in a friendly courteous encouraging natural manner, but they do not affect the content in any way. Therefore, these modes are of mid modal density. They do not perform low modal density, since their absence will create tough, unfriendly atmosphere which might affect the performance of the examinee.

All that has been presented above responds to the three research questions raised in this study concerning Part One, and it shows the formulaic interaction between the examiner and the examinee in Part One of the IELTS Speaking examination.

**Part Two (3-4 minutes): “A long talk”**.

After analyzing all the data of the present study, it was found that Part Two is also presented in a formulaic rigid pattern. All the examiner’s modes of communication are standardized. In this part, the examiner has a number of prescribed topics from which s/he chooses. S/He gives the examinee “a topic card” that includes question prompts to a book the examinee has read, a place s/he has visited, a film s/he has watched, a person s/he will never forget, a gift s/he has recently presented or any topic that allows the examinee to talk about something that has happened in his/her life. The examinee is given one minute to prepare his/her talk, and then s/he talks for one to two minutes. (For more information about Part Two, see “IELTS Liz,” 2017). Part Two is made up of six sections with six formulaic templates. Section one is a non-verbal shift between Part One and Part Two, section two is a verbal shift from Part One to Part Two, section three is the introduction of the topic cue, section four is the
one minute given to the examinee to prepare notes, section five is the two
minutes talk by the examinee and section six is the end of Part Two.

**Section one: the non-verbal shift from Part One to Part Two.** The shift from
Part One to Part Two is achieved through a strict interplay among the mode of
print, the mode of head movement, the mode of gesture and the mode of gaze
with a friendly smile on the face that delivers support and comfort as shown in
Figure 6.

![Figure 6](image)

Figure 6. The shift from part 1 to part 2 through turning the page and gazing at it

The examiner uses the papers in front of her (the print mode) and her fingers
(the gesture mode) (Figure 6a) to turn the page (Figure 6b) with a deictic head
movement (the head movement) and gaze at the new page to change the focus
from Part One to Part Two (Figure 6c). All modes used in Figure 6 are embodied
modes, since they merely mark the beginning of Part Two, and these modes in
collaboration construct a higher-level action that begins in Figure 6a and ends in
Figure 6c. This higher-level action lies in the foreground of the examiner’s
attention, but in the background of the examinee’s, since the examinee does not
react or respond to it as apparent in all the videos selected for analysis. The
examinee attends to non-verbal communicative modes if they are accompanied
by the mode of “spoken language” as shown below, which is ordinary in an
international Speaking test.

**Section two: the verbal shift from Part One to Part Two.** To align to the
norms of international Speaking examinations, the shift between Parts One and
Two is signaled verbally using the mode of “spoken language” together with the
mode of “head movement”, the mode of “gaze” and the mode of “print” as
apparent in Figure 7.

*Examiner:* Now I’m going to give you a topic, and I’d like you to talk about it
for one to two minutes. Before you talk, you will have one minute to think
about what you are going to say and you can make some notes if you wish.
Do you understand?
Examinee: Yes.

Figure 7. The modes of spoken language, print, head movement and gaze at the beginning of Part Two

The examiner combines the modes of spoken language, print, head movement and gaze at the beginning of Part Two when he uses recurrent up and down sagittal head beats with lateral slants first to read and say what is written on the papers in front of him (Figure 7a) and then to look at the examinee (Figure 7b), and he uses the modes of spoken language with the mode of gaze when asking the examinee “Do you understand?” This examiner, as apparent in Figure 7, is clasping his hands; however, this gesture can be deemed irrelevant and idiosyncratic as it varies from one examiner to another.

All the modes in Figure 7 are embodied modes that form the second higher-level action in Part Two. This higher-level action starts with the examiner saying, “Now I’m going to give you a topic” and ends with the examinee answering “Yes”. It is placed in the foreground attention of the examiner and the examinee, since the latter must respond to the instructions. Moreover, modal density is achieved in this section through the intensity of the modes of “spoken language” and “print” from the examiner’s part and through the intensity of the mode “spoken language” only from the examinee’s part. The modes of “head movement” and “gaze” only aid the interaction by showing interest, encouragement and follow up.

Section three: introduction of the topic card. The examiner, then, integrates formulaic language with formulaic modes to present the topic which the examinee is to talk about (Figure 8).

Examiner: Here is some paper and a pencil for making notes, and here is your topic. Please don’t write anything on the booklet. I’d like you to describe a well-known person you like or admire.
In Figure 8, the examiner has not only used the mode of “spoken language”. He has also integrated other modes of communication to complement “spoken language”. These modes are the mode of “gesture”, “gaze”, “posture” “layout” and “print”. The examiner leans slightly backwards (posture mode) (Figure 8a) unfolds his fists (gesture preparation stage), looks (the gaze mode) right at the pencil on the desk (the layout mode) (Figure 8b), holds it (gesture stroke stage) and starts the instructions (the beginning of the spoken language mode) (Figure 8c). While holding the pencil, the examiner opens his thumb and index finger (gesture preparation stage) (Figure 8d) to hold the paper (gesture stroke stage) (Figure 8e) and leans forward (the mode of posture) to put the paper and pencil (the mode of print) in front of the examinee (Figure 8f). After putting the pencil and paper in front of the examinee, he uses his right hand, takes the booklet (gesture preparation and print), which includes the topic cue (Figure 8g, 8h), and lays it down (the stroke of the gesture) in front of the examinee with a forward lean (posture mode) (Figure 8i). Figures 8c to 8i are accompanied by “Here is some paper and a pencil for making notes, and here is your topic. Please don’t write anything on the booklet.” After that, the examiner reads (the mode of gaze)
the topic he chooses for the examinee “I’d like you to describe a well-known person you like or admire”.

All lower-level actions represented in the different modes deployed in this section unite to construct the third higher-level action in Part Two that starts with “Here” and ends with mentioning the topic about which the examinee will talk. This higher-level action is placed in the foreground attention of both interlocutors, since it introduces the topic that assesses the Speaking proficiency of the examinee. Modal density is achieved in this section through complexity by integrating the modes of spoken language, print, gaze, gesture, posture and layout, and it is also achieved through the intensity of all these modes.

Section four: one-minute note-preparation. The candidate is given one minute to write notes on what she is going to describe (Figure 9).

Figure 9. embodied print and embodied layout

The one minute given to the examinee to write notes represents the fourth “higher-level” action within Part Two, since it is marked by a beginning and an end. The beginning commences with the start of the one minute and terminates with the end of it when the examiner says, “All right.” (See below). During this minute, the modes of print (booklet) and the mode of layout (the pencil, paper, desk and chair) are utilized by the examinee (Figure 9). These two modes are embodied, since the examinee is using them to write down her thoughts, perceptions and feelings. For the first time in the examination, this one-minute higher-level action that does not include any spoken language is placed in the foreground attention of the examinee. Moreover, modal density is achieved through the intensity of the modes of print and layout because if these two modes are absent, this higher-level action will be radically affected, which complies with the international norms of the IELTS Speaking examination that require this one-minute preparation period.

Section five: Two-minutes talk by the examinee. In this section, the examinee is given two minutes to talk about the prompt written on the card.
Examiner: All right. Remember you have one to two minutes for this. So, don’t worry if I stop you. I’ll tell you when the time is up. Can you start speaking now please?
Examinee: [Talks for one to two minutes].
Examiner: Thank you. Would you like to meet this person?
Examinee: Yes.

After the one-minute preparation ends (section four), the examinee, in this section, utilizes what she has written on paper to help her in the talk. By doing so, the examinee is using the mode of spoken language, the print mode to recall her thoughts and the gaze mode to read what has been written (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Spoken language, print and gaze

(It has been noticed in two of the videos selected for analysis that if the examinee talks for less than two minutes, the examiner helps by saying, “Can you tell me more about that?” accompanying her mode of “spoken language” by the modes of “gaze” and “gesture” as shown in Figure 11)

Figure 11. The mode of spoken language, gaze and gesture

As seen in Figure 11, the examiner uses the mode of gesture while saying “Can you tell me more about that?” She raises her hand from the still position (Figure 11a) directing it to the topic cue in front of the examinee (preparation) (Figure 11b), and in the third image, she looks (gaze mode) and points at the question she wants the examinee to elaborate on (stroke) with a forward body posture to
aid the deictic gesture with the index finger (Figure 11c). Then, there is usually a retraction to the rest position (although the retraction is not apparent in this segment).

Examinee: [Answers vary].
Examiner: Thank you.

It has also been noticed in the videos selected for the analysis that the examiner may follow-up the examinee’s talk with a question or two if the time allocate for Part Two has not ended up.

This two-minute talk is the fifth higher-level action in Part Two since it has a beginning marked by the examiner saying, “All right.” and an end that is also marked by the examiner when he says, “Can I take the booklet and the paper and pencil back please?” (See below). In this higher-level action, the modes of spoken language, print and gaze are intertwined by the examinee to respond to the prompt. All these modes are embodied modes that express the examinee’s thoughts and perceptions. Modal density is achieved through the intensity of the three modes, and the higher-level action is placed in the foreground attention of the examiner and the examinee.

Section six: the end of Part Two. The examiner, then, ends Part two by saying, Examiner: Thank you. Can I take the booklet and the paper and pencil back please?

Figure 12. Gesture, gaze, spoken language and print
In Figure 12, the examiner uses the mode of gesture, gaze and spoken language to take back the print from the examinee. She starts by saying “Can I take the booklet and the paper and pencil back please?” and raising her hand from the rest position, moving it forward (Figure 12a) and downward (gesture preparation) (Figure 12b) to take the booklet (gesture stroke) (Figures 12c-12d). She, then, takes the booklet and puts it aside next to the papers found in front of her (gesture post stroke) (Figures 12e-12f), and repeats the same procedures to take the paper and pencil. She moves her hand forward and downward (gesture preparation) (Figure 12g); then, she holds the paper and pencil (gesture stroke) (Figure 12h) and she puts them aside (gesture post stroke) (Figure 12i). While doing so, she keeps looking (the mode of gaze) at the booklet, paper and pencil (print) to make sure she is having them all.

All the modes in Figure 12 are embodied modes that construct the sixth higher-level action in Part two. It has a beginning and an end. It starts with the examiner saying, “Can I take the booklet and the paper and pencil back please?” and ends with Figure 12i when the examiner puts the paper and pencil aside. This higher-level action is made of chains of lower-level actions instantiated in one utterance (spoken language) and a series of gestures, gaze and deployment of print. Modal density is created in this higher-level action through complexity illustrated in the multiplicity of the modes created and through intensity demonstrated in the importance of each mode. The high modal density of this higher-level action places it in the foreground of the examiner’s attention. If any of the modes is discontinued, Part two is not concluded and the whole examination stops.

The examiner taking the booklet and the paper and pencil back is not an idiosyncratic feature of the examiner presented in Figure 12. It is an observed behavior among all the examiners present in the videos selected for analysis, and it is achieved through “spoken language”, “gesture”, “gaze” and “print” in all the videos of the analysis. Thus, it is a ritualized action in concordance with the international standards of the IELTS examination. Everything is provided to the candidate at the beginning of the examination and taken from him/her at the end. The examinee should not take the booklet or the paper s/he wrote notes on with him/her outside the examination room for the sake of the privacy of the test. Moreover, the same booklet and pencil are re-used by other candidates, and that is why the examiner asks the examinee not to write anything on the booklet at the start of Part two “Please don’t write anything on the booklet.” (See above). The examiner, on the other hand, makes sure that everything is returned as one of his/her responsibilities in administering the examination.

All that has been presented in Part Two shows that this part is made of six higher-level actions that are created from unified chains of lower-level actions.
These lower-level actions are instantiated in different embodied modes of spoken language, print, layout, gesture, posture, gaze and head movement. All these higher-level actions are placed in the foreground attention of the examiner, and they are either placed in the foreground or the background attention of the examinee according to the moment of interaction. Modal density is achieved through the complexity and amalgamation of the different modes, and it is achieved through the intensity of the modes of spoken language, print, layout, gestures and postures. All this responds to the three research questions upon which the study is based and foreshadows the formulaic nature of the interaction that has to be so rigid to warrant the validity and reliability of the IELTS Speaking examination across the whole world.

**Part Three (4-5 minutes): “Discussion”**

The examiner taking the booklet, paper and pencil back in Part Two marks the end of Part two and the start of Part Three. Part Three starts with a formulaic sentence:

Examiner: *We have been talking about [the topic of Part Two] hobbies, and I’d like to discuss with you one or two more general questions related to this.*

[The examiner reads very little and discusses the topic with the examinee]

![Figure 13 The modes of gaze, head movement and print](image)

Part Three is an extension to Part Two. The same topic the examinee talks about in Part Two is elaborated on in Part Three through a discussion between the examiner and the examinee. Part Three is a higher-level action that starts with “We have been talking about hobbies” and ends with “That is the end of the Speaking test”. The modes of “gaze”, “head movement” and “print” accompany the mode of “spoken language” as apparent in Figure 13. The examiner reads from the papers in front of her (Figure 13a), and then she moves her head up while looking at the examinee (Figure 13b). Part Three appears to be of a semi-formulaic nature unlike Parts One and Two. To clarify, in Parts One and Two, questions asked to the examinee and instructions given by the examiner all have the same wordings in all the examinations that constitute the
data of the current study. Part Three, on the other hand, follows a rigid framework but different wordings that change among examiners even when tackling the same topic. For example, when the topic to be discussed is “Hobbies”, one examiner, after saying the formulaic sentence mentioned above, says, “Let’s think about current and future hobbies. What are the most popular types of hobbies in your country?”; another examiner says, “Let’s think about hobbies now and hobbies in the future? What do most people like to do in your country?”. So, both examiners discuss hobbies at present and in the future and ask the candidate to talk about the well-known hobbies in his/her country, but they use different wordings, unlike Parts One and Two where the language is identical among all examiners. This may be due to two factors: the incremental level of difficulty of the examination and the speaking proficiency level of the candidate.

Regarding the incremental level of difficulty, the examinee responds to a couple of questions on a familiar topic in Part One. This response is in one or two utterances just to convey the message, but the response lasts for two minutes long in Part Two on a prepared topic showing an increase in the level of speaking proficiency. In Part Three, the examinee is not given any time for preparation, like Part Two, and s/he has to discuss and analyze abstract issues by responding to the examiner’s questions fluently, which shows a higher level of speaking proficiency.

Concerning the speaking proficiency level of the examinee, it is a well-known fact that any non-native English speaker from any part of the world can sit for the IELTS Speaking examination. This non-native speaker may be of a low or a high speaking proficiency level. Examiners phrase the questions accordingly; i.e. if the candidate’s speaking level is advanced, the examiner uses advanced language in Part Three, and if the candidate is of a beginner or intermediate level, the examiner uses a matching language to prompt the candidate to talk as much as possible while retaining the framework of the prompt, which shows the great responsibility and attention of a certified IELTS Speaking examiner. At the end of Part Three, the examiner thanks the examinee and ends the test by saying, Examiner: Thank you very much. That is the end of the Speaking test.

Part Three is a higher-level action that has a beginning and an end. It is made of chains of lower-level actions illustrated in the modes of spoken language, gaze, head movement and print to the examiner and in the mode of spoken language only to the examinee. This higher-level action is intensely placed in the foreground attention of both participants, and modal density is primarily achieved through the high intensity of spoken language, print, gaze and head movement from the examiner’s part and through spoken language from the examinee’s parts. Other modes (e.g. gestures) may occur by examiners, but they
are all idiosyncratic features that do not affect the international identity of the examination in Part Three.

All that has been presented in Part Three responds to the three research questions upon which the current study is based and reflects the rigid international characteristics of the IELTS Speaking examination.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the different communicative modes in the examiner-examinee interaction with a special focus on the IELTS Speaking examination. Three research questions were posed to investigate the different modes utilized in the interaction, to examine how these modes unite to construct higher-level actions that correspond to the conventional nature of each part of the examination, to construe the relationship between higher-level actions, modal density and the foreground-background continuum of the participants’ attention. Findings indicate that there is a rigorous systematized interplay among different modes of interaction, and although “spoken language” is not the only superordinate mode deployed in all parts of the examination, it, together with “print”, “layout” and “proxemics” verifies the identity of the IELTS Speaking examination. Modal density through complexity and intensity is highly affected by the conventional features that characterize each higher-level action. Higher-level actions are foregrounded or backgrounded in the participants’ attention depending on the purpose of these actions in the interaction.

The present study is limited to the fact that the data used are ready-made videos available on the internet and not videos recorded by the researcher. Consequently, no interviews with the same examiners or the examinees were accessible to find out about how they regarded the use of different modes, which would validate the study. No observations were practiced exploring any other elements not taken by the camera in the available internet videos.

For future research, it is recommended to hold some interviews specially with examinees to know how they regard the embodied and the disembodied modes, whether the frozen actions affect their concentration and, consequently, their scores, and to discern how they regard the whole setting of the exam. Interviews with examiners are also needed to recognize some tips, other than those available on the internet, that can help test-takers score high bands with the aid of different communicative modes.
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Metadrama and the Deconstruction of Stereotypes: David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* and *Bondage*  

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* Song: I'm an artist, Rene. You were my greatest . . . acting challenge.  
  (She laughs.) (M. Butterfly 63)

* Song: But no. Men. You're like the rest of them. It's all in the way we dress, and make up our faces and bat our eyelashes. You really have so little imagination!  
  (M. Butterfly 90)

Representations of Asians in America have always been influenced by biased stereotypical images. According to James S. Moy, "Anglo-American playwrights have portrayed the Chinese in America as collections of fetishized parts and as exotics" (48). Though there were other attempts seemingly providing positive images of the East as 'wise' in contrast with the West as 'corrupt', these attempts -Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* is a striking example- could do little more than present the East as 'exotic' and 'heathen'. With the rise of Asian-American studies in the 1960s, there appeared Asian writers, Chinese and Japanese, whose end goal was to dispel such stereotypes and present instead conscious self-representation. Notable among these is the Chinese-American playwright, David Henry Hwang (1957-), whose plays provide insightful explorations of how it feels to be Chinese or Asian in a racist society.

Regarded as "the most renowned Asian-American dramatist of the twentieth century" (Trudeau 199), Hwang distinguishes himself as a dramatist by blending Eastern and Western subjects and theatrical styles. The theme of the fluidity of identity is recurrent in almost all his plays. Hwang posits the changeability of a person's identity according to the various contacts s/he experiences. Hwang's plays include *FOB* (1980), *The Dance and the Railroad* (1981), *Family Devotions* (1981), *Sound and Beauty* (1983), *Rich Relations* (1986), *M. Butterfly* (1988), *Bondage* (1992), *Trying to Find Chinatown* (1996), and *Yellow Face* (2007), to mention but a few. These plays, particularly the several prizes-winning *M. Butterfly*, represent "far more contributions to ethnic theater;" they "provide brilliant and complex analyses of the politics of race, gender, class, and

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sexuality” (Bonnie 230). These plays mark Hwang’s development as a playwright participating in the American cultural discourse. Roughly speaking, his early plays mark his position as a self-loathing immigrant who internalizes assimilationist tendencies. Hwang then moves forward to the isolationist phase in which his focus was on the re-telling of traditional Japanese stories. With *M. Butterfly* (1988), Hwang began to move center stage achieving prominence as an ethnic playwright tackling daring issues of the racial and gender power relations. In his other and recent plays, Hwang continues his theatrical outputs culminating in his interesting work *Chinglish* (2011) negotiating ethnic tensions and identity formation.

This paper contends that in his two plays *M. Butterfly* (1988) and *Bondage* (1992), Hwang utilizes metadramatic devices to deconstruct racial and gender stereotypes about minorities in America, particularly the Asians. Hwang’s two plays are explicitly about de-naturalizing and de-essentializing the notion of the fixity of the racial and gender stereotypes. The titles of the target plays are signifiers of that theme. ‘M Butterfly’ is a reference to the Western cultural formation of the oriental woman, and, in fact, of the Orient at large. All the traditional feminine specificities of silence, obedience, weakness, vulnerability, inferiority, marginality is attached to the image of the butterfly. These identity markers are further used to define all Orientals, men and women, and the East in its relationship with the West. The title of the second play, *Bondage*, refers to, the bondage of slavery and all the associated binaries of the white and the black, the male and the female and the West and the East. The deconstruction of these binaries most probably leads to true intimacy between people and nations. These stereotypical images are negotiated in the target plays through a set of metadramatic devices moving the audience towards a realization of the vulnerability and invalidity of the biased cultural representations.

I

In *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*, Richard Hornby defines metadrama as “a drama about drama” (31), suggesting that metadramatic texts yield their meanings through a system of relations and references. Each play, Hornby explains, “relates to other plays as a system” and “[t]his system, in turn, intersects with other systems of literature, non-literary performances, other art form (both high and low), and culture generally” (17). In other words, the metadramatic play is a composite of other texts from various disciplines of knowledge. These texts interact in a way producing layers of meanings depending on the richness of their original signification. The metadramatic play is thus highly introspective and self-reflective.
Hornby classifies metadrama into five categories: 1) the play within the play; 2) ceremony within the play; 3) role-playing within the role; 4) literary and real life references; and 5) self-references (32). Although these five categories may exist separately, they could also, as is the case in Hwang’s dramas, be blended and interwoven into the dramatic fabric of the play. ‘The play within the play,’ as Hornby explains, branches into two types: the inset type and the framed type. In the inset type, the inner play is integrated into the main action and is acknowledged by characters as a performance that they may interact with and evaluate. In the framed type, the inner play is the primary; the outer play, the frame. Liang Fei argues that the play within the play technique “is reflective and expressive of the playwright’s or the audience’s outlooks about life” (100). The device is mostly used as a metaphor for reality and as a commentary on the social and the political quarrels. ‘Ceremonies within the play’ includes music, songs, trials, weddings and funerals, as few examples. These are usually utilized to discuss cultural phenomena in a theatrical manner. Ceremonies in general produce paradoxical sentiments. They may carry happiness and harmony. They also, particularly in serious drama, produce feelings of disorientation and sadness. Hornby argues that ceremonies “contain encoded signs by which their society understands both the external world around them, and the emotional world within” (51).

‘Role playing within the role’ refers to characters acting out other characters, putting on the necessary identity markers which may include masks, faces, costumes, make-up, powders, and the like. Through role playing, the author is enabled to show “not only who the character is, but also what he wants to be” (67). Role playing adds up to the alienating effect of metadrama. The theatrical nature of role playing participates remarkably in the deconstruction of boundaries. Additionally, Role playing gives much space to the spectator to formulate metaperspective views on the staged experience when that experience is contrasted with that of the actual reality. ‘The literary and real life references within the play’ is the means through which the drama intersects, directly or indirectly, either by means of allusion or direct quoting, with real events or fictional narrative, or both. Audience’s familiarity with the reference determines the degree of interaction and engagement. Citations, allegory, parody and adaptation are forms of the literary or real life references which are metadramatic.

‘Self-referencing within the play’ is characters/actors’ way to be in dialogue with the acting roles they dramatize or with the incidents of the play itself. A character may step out of the role to address the spectators smashing the fourth wall. Self-referencing is a powerful metadramatic technique as it is very engaging and stimulating the spectators “to examine consciously what lies
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behind the play” (Fei 101). Of these five metadramatic devices, the researcher will explore Hwang’s utilization of the first four: the play within the play, the literal and real life reference, the ceremonies and the role-playing within the role. The fifth one is not utilized in the plays under analysis. These devices are remarkably explicit in the theatrical fabric of the target plays and, arguably, in Hwang’s deconstructivist project. Throughout the analysis, the researcher argues that Hwang’s employment of the metadramatic devices in the target plays has both theatrical and social functions. Theoretically, metadrama with its layering of texts creates richness and density which open plays to multi-layered interpretations. Socially, metadrama, through its estrangement or alienating effect, destabilizes spectators, increases their conscious engagement with the staged experience and thereby urge them to reconsider their ideological positionality.

It is important to note that M. Butterfly, which has received several readings, is included in this study for a number of reasons. The metadramatic nature of the play, which has not been given enough attention, should prioritize the selection of the play. The play is realized as Hwang’s major contribution to the ‘culture war’ of the time, which is a major thread in the present study. The play is also a reference point according to which the theatricality, or metatheatricality, of the second target play Bondage is measured and evaluated. Bondage develops the discussion of racial profiling and moves steps ahead of M. Butterfly to call for a deconstruction of all types of stereotyping, be they racial, gender, ethnic, classist or sexist. Admittedly, the space given to Bondage in the analysis is less than that given to M. Butterfly. After all, Bondage is a one-act drama. It is less theatrical and so less provocative compared to M. Butterfly. Yet, its inclusion in the present study serves the purpose of tracing Hwang’s development of thought and theatricality while maintaining his mission of deconstructing stereotypes.

It is also worth noting that the researcher draws on the works of other scholars and researchers writing about the East-West polemic. Edward Said's Orientalism (1979), which links the construction of gendered imagery to the construction of race and the imperialist mission to colonize and dominate, informs much of the analysis. Though Said's discussion in his Orientalism does not include the far Eastern countries, namely China and Japan, his views can be applied to any colonizer-colonized discourse in which misrepresentations of the Other are triggered by conceived issues of ‘positional superiority’ and racial fixity.

II

A total theatre, M. Butterfly (Henceforth MB), delivers its meaning through a set of metadramatic devices, one is embedded into the other. Hwang utilizes the play
within the play device, in this case Puccini’s opera *Madame Butterfly* (1904), which is of the framing type. The main action of the play is controlled and developed in the light of the incidents of the opera. Inside the integrated text of Puccini’s opera, Hwang incorporates a real life reference which is an espionage trial of a French diplomat and a Chinese opera singer. Ceremonies of music, songs, dancing, and the courthouse scene of the Espionage trial invade the integrated texts. Occasionally, the main characters step out of their main roles to role-play characters from the opera and from the espionage trial.

Giacomo Puccini’s opera *Madame Butterfly* (1904) epitomizes the West/East power relations in which the West is the masculine, the more powerful, the dominant and the essential in relation to the East which is the feminine, the weaker, the dominated and the inessential. The opera dramatizes the tragic end of a fifteen-year Japanese geisha girl called Cio-Cio-San, which means 'Butterfly' in Japanese, who commits suicide over her abandonment by her American husband, Pinkerton. So attracted to Pinkerton, Butterfly rejects all Japanese suitors, abandons her ancestors and embraces her husband's Christian faith. Yet, in her wedding, Butterfly "carries with her… the knife her father used for his seppuku, or ritual suicide by disembowelment –and music foreshadows the repetition that will inevitably occur" (Kondo 8). After marriage, Pinkerton leaves for three years, marries an American woman, and sends a message to Butterfly to marry one of her Japanese relatives. Vainly waiting, Butterfly stabs herself with her father's dagger. "The opera resolves in a swelling, tragic orchestral crescendo" (Kondo 8-9). The Espionage trial, which also betrays similar gendering images about the East, dates to 1980 when the *New York Times* reported the trial of a French diplomat and a Chinese opera star who were sentenced to six-year imprisonment for spying for China. Mr. Bouriscot was accused of passing classified information to China after he fell in love with Mr. Shi whom he believed for many years to be a woman.

Hwang inscribes the mistaken sexual identity of the French diplomat and his Chinese lover into the incidents of Puccini's opera. He appropriates that formula as the backdrop of his work to both highlight and subsequently deconstruct what Dorinne K. Kondo calls "the terrain written images of the 'Orient'," most specifically "the submissive oriental woman;" as Butterfly, and "the cruel white man," as the master (6). In other words, what Hwang puts forward to deconstruct through inscribing some of the incidents of Puccini's opera and the espionage trial into the dramaturgy of his play, as it will be explained, is what Edward Said refers to in his *Orientalism* as the Western construction of the East as feminine versus the powerful masculine West. Established as an example of a Western Orientalist text, Puccini’s opera celebrates many Western-formulated stereotypes about the East. These include the emasculation of the East and its pertinent
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perception as a supine female (Butterfly) that is doomed to live, suffer and die silently and unnoticed, the romantic attachment of that 'Butterfly' to her cruel white man, the ritual death of 'Butterfly' by committing 'seppuku', and the perception of Eastern people as little things, humble, exotic and also mysterious. The opera also naturalizes the myth that the masculine West always wins over the emasculated East. In the espionage trial, Mr. Bouriscot’s discovery that he has been in love with a man not a woman suggests in similar terms the Western creation and perception of the East in traditional feminine images.

This atmosphere of gender and racial confusion is also conveyed through integrating non-literary performances into the main action. The setting of the play moves from Japan to China. Elements from the Japanese 'Kabuki' theatre are mixed with others from Chinese Opera. When Song, for instance, makes her first appearance on the stage, she is in traditional Chinese clothes dancing to the sound of Chinese music. The music then dissolves into the love Duet of Puccini's opera. In her second appearance, she dances to that same music but dressed as 'Butterfly.' This conflation of Japanese and Chinese elements is reflective of the Western Vision that all Asians are alike and that they belong to one culture.

Within this context of confusion, and in parody of Puccini’s opera, Hwang makes the characters of his drama act out the characters of Puccini's opera. In the play, Rene Gallimard is both the Mr. Bouriscot and Pinkerton; Song Liling is the Chinese opera singer Mr. Shi and the Japanese Butterfly Cio-Cio-San. The action is filtered through Gallimard's consciousness; he, in fact, assumes the role of the master of ceremonies introducing characters and action to the audience. The play's action moves freely across time and space; in present it is a Paris prison, and in recall it is Beijing from 1960 to 1970. Two dramatic movements run in parallel terms with the incidents of the opera and the espionage trial. The first dramatic movement is the allegorical relationship Between Rene Gallimard and Song Liling in which Gallimard's narrative stands for the Western attitude towards the East; that of Song, for the Eastern reaction. The second dramatic movement, which is overtly political in nature yet reflective of the false Western representations the East, and which corresponds to the implications of the opera and the espionage, is that of the American invasion of Vietnam, which was triggered by the false fantasies about the Orientals. Both narratives end up with the realization that cultural beliefs held against the Other are mistaken.

The play begins with both Song and Gallimard role-playing the gender and the racial power relations from Puccini’s opera. Making use of the stage division into upstage and downstage where the up suggests power and dominance, and the down, weakness and submission; many of the Gallimard/Song scenes, which are in total subversion of the scenes in the original opera, feature Song upstage and Gallimard downstage. Song appears upstage on the elevated ramp; she is
delineated as "a beautiful woman in traditional Chinese garb" who "dances a traditional piece from the Peking Opera" (1); Gallimard is "downstage" contemplating her. In Act Two, Scene Three, Song seeks information from Gallimard about the American intervention in Vietnam. Her privileged position as both a spy and a lover is visually indicated by placing her "upstage, watching," while Gallimard and the French ambassador are placed "downstage" discussing the subject (44). This same positioning is adopted throughout the play to reinforce Song's empowerment. The most striking example is in Act Two, Scene Six. Song informs Gallimard that she is expecting a baby from him. Gallimard's total submission to her is visually expressed by presenting him kneeling before her until the end of Scene Seven.

This positioning subverts the traditional male/female, white/non-white, and East/West cultural discourses as it suggests both Gallimard and the West's victimization by their own fantasies. Gallimard's creation of the oriental woman as a butterfly is suggested by his confinement, literally and figuratively, in a prison cell which he describes, surprisingly enough, as an "enchanted space" (2). He is also "old" and "tired" putting "a sad smile on his face" (1). The blurring of racial and gender boundaries is aurally suggested by the fusion of Western and Chinese music; the Chinese opera music "dissolves into a Western opera, the 'Love Duet' from Puccini's Madama Butterfly" (1). In their first encounter at the German ambassador's house where Song role-plays the final death scene of 'Butterfly,' Gallimard, emulating Pinkerton, is so moved by her acting skills:

Gallimard: … You were utterly convincing. It's the first time –
Song: Convincing? As a Japanese woman? The Japanese used hundreds of our people for medical experiments during the war, you know. But I gather such an irony is lost on you.
Gallimard: No! I was about to say, it's the first time I've seen the beauty of the story.
Song: It's one of your favourite fantasies, isn't it? The submissive Oriental woman and the cruel white man. (17)

The scene betrays the claim that gender and race are mere performative acts. Hwang’s employs the cross-dressing technique as part of the role play through which the actor is enabled to distance himself from the role he or she plays. This in turn helps in the "re/presentation of that role as a construct" (Aston and Savona 35). The Chinese Song, whose identity as male is known to the audience, is able through make-up and change of costume to pass as a convincing delicate Japanese woman, the "perfect woman" as Gallimard ecstatically muses (4). As a representative of Western culture misinterpretation of the Other, Gallimard fails
to distinguish Song Liling the actor playing a Japanese 'Butterfly' from Song Liling the Chinese person. Driven and deluded by a heavy heritage of racism, sexism and imperialism as manifestations of attempts to degrade the other, Gallimard "castrates Song" (Eng.151) to make him/her match his vision of the objectified Orientals. Gallimard dreams of "slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils. Who are born and raised to be the perfect women. Who take whatever punishment we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally" (91).

Gallimard, like Puccini’s hero, mistakes Song Liling for ‘Butterfly.’ Dorinne K. Kondo observes that Gallimard "assumes a transparent relationship between outer appearance and the inner truth of the self. The signs of this identity are clothing and make up, and since Song is dressed as a woman, Gallimard never doubts Song's essential 'femininity'"(15). Assuming, at times, the voice of the dramatist in his mission to dispel stereotypes, Song revolts against this image of the Oriental woman as a 'Butterfly,' and implicitly against the feminization of the East. She explicitly attributes the Westerner's love of Puccini’s opera to their unjustified racial and sexist prejudice:

Song: Consider it this way: what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage from a young Kennedy. Then when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. Now, I believe you would consider this girl to be a deranged idiot, correct? But because it's an Oriental who kills herself for a westerner – ah! – you find it beautiful. (17)

To put it differently, Song rebels against what s/he comes to call later "the international rape mentality towards the East," that mentality which perceives the East as a promiscuous woman whose "mouth says no, but her eyes say yes" (82-3).

Considered as "a cynosure for cultural debate on race and sexuality" (Shin 178), MB raises questions about the passivity and complicity of the East which, in its relationship with the dominant masculine West, reproduces "images of the delicate, the dainty, the subservient, the polite and the apologetic" (Deeney 27). In an interview with John Louis DiGaetani, Hwang points out:

The play is fairly even-handed in saying that the East also misperceives the West. The East is guilty or complicit in this dual form of cultural stereotyping. The West, having had the advantage of being the colonial
power of the two over the past couple of hundred years, has an attitude of condescension toward the East. But the East has played up to that to its short-term advantage without thinking of the long-term ill effects that reinforcing those racial stereotypes causes. (141)

In performance of this complicity, Song Liling role-plays the stereotypical feminine inferiority versus the masculine superiority of the West. Allegorically, she allows imperialist Gallimard to cross racial and gender boundaries by inviting and entertaining him at her parlor. In front of him, Song plays out the appropriate submission, modesty and docility. She passionately listens to him. She does not even find herself equal to Western women; and, to his satisfaction and male exaltation, she declares herself his 'Butterfly.' Deluded by this performative behavior of submission to a Westerner, Gallimard feeds in information about the Vietnamese who, as Orientals, "want the good things we can give them," and who "will always submit to a greater force" (46).

The nature of race and gender as mere social constructs is further communicated through creating the contrast between Gallimard's sexual relationship with Song, the 'Oriental' woman, and his other relationships with three Western women: the school girl with whom he first experienced sex, his wife Helga and the Danish girl, ironically named Renee. With Song’s playing the oriental femininity, Gallimard, as a man, takes the initiative in trespassing the limits of gender space. His penetration into her apartment is reflective of both the phallic power and the positional superiority he is to occupy as a white man. Yet, Gallimard's relationships with the school girl, his wife and Renee subvert and conflate these racial and gender boundaries.

Acting out the ideals of independence and domination claimed by the feminist movements in the 1960s, the school girl assumes the superior (traditionally masculine) position in her sexual relationship with Gallimard:

Gallimard: You told me to wait in the bushes by the cafeteria that night.

The next thing I knew, she was on me. Dress up in the air....

Marc: She loved the superior position. A girl ahead of her time.

Gallimard: I looked up. And there was this woman ... bouncing up and down on my loins. (32)

As Gallimard is astounded by the school girl’s blunttness, he is equally humiliated by the openness of the Danish Girl Renee, whose name is pronounced the same as Gallimard's first name, Rene– a further suggestion of gender confusion. The similarity between Renee and the school girl is dramatized; the two characters are played by one actress. Renee, like the school girl, is sexually
bold and uninhibited; she appears totally naked in front of Gallimard, and the audience. She is also outspoken, and "too willing, so as to seem almost too . . . masculine" (54). Renee feminizes Gallimard, shocking him into a realization of the smallness of his genitals thereby destabilizing all discourse about the relevant phallic dominance:

Renee: I guess. But, like, it just hangs there. This little . . . flap of flesh. And there's so much fuss that we make about it. Like, I think the reason we fight wars is because we wear clothes. Because no one knows – between the men, I mean – who has the bigger . . . wennie. So, if I'm a guy with a small one, I'm going to build a really big building or take over a really big piece of land or write a really long book so the other men don't know, right? (55)

The binaries of the West and the East and the relevant masculine/feminine are vehemently interrogated through the main characters’ identification with the characters of Puccini’s opera. In emulation of Pinkerton's desertion of Butterfly as a means of gaining more power over her, Gallimard's relationship with Renee, his "first extra-extramarital relationship" (54), is similarly meant to assert his manliness over Song. Gallimard fantasizes "what would she say if he were unfaithful … nothing. She would cry, alone, into those wildly soft sleeves … It was her tears and her silence that excited me, every time I visit Renee" (56). The mistaken nature of this belief is signaled by Gallimard's downfall both in his career and in his relationship with Song. His views about the submissive Vietnamese in front of the powerful Americans prove false. Many Americans were killed by the Vietnamese. In consequence, Gallimard is driven out of office and is ordered back home. Correspondingly, Gallimard's stereotypical views about the helplessness of oriental women before the white male's power collapse. Visually imparted, Song appears "up center"; she "begins to dance with the flowers . . . a drunken dance, where she breaks small pieces off the stems" (56). Song's cutting the flowers off their stems suggests her ensuing castration of Gallimard. Against Gallimard's fantasy creation of her, Song decides to transform into her true gender identity as a man.

Gallimard: You have to do what I say! I'm conjuring you up in my mind!
Song: Rene, I've never done what you've said. Why should it be different in your mind? Now split – the story moves on, and I must change. (78)

The male/female strict boundaries do dismantle as Song decides to undress to reveal her sex reality. "The construction of Song-as-female," Shimakawa
explains, "was enacted by manipulating and obscuring sight – by maintaining the hidden spaces beneath clothing – and the destruction of discrete space, consequently, is enacted when those hidden spaces are revealed to view" (351). Gallimard who is unwilling to see Song naked to maintain the man-woman defined space is now invaded, literally and figuratively, by the male Song transgressing all defined gender distinctions. Unable to break up with his fantasy creation of her as the epitome of Oriental 'Butterfly,' Gallimard transforms into Puccini's Oriental protagonist. The sight of Song's male sexual organ amounts to a visual destruction of Gallimard's sense of defined space. Song does not only deny Gallimard's authorial control over her, but also sets out to share him his male space. The stunning obscenity and shocking revelation of the scene account for Gallimard's disgusting response, "Now get out! I have a date with my Butterfly and I don't want your body polluting the room" (90). Robert Skloot reasons: "Hwang's point [is] that what we assume about gender depends on what we see, or don’t see, then what is finally obscene to Gallimard is the visual proof that those assumptions can no longer be made" (63).

The deconstruction of all racial and gender stereotypical boundaries is orchestrated in the play's final stage picture in which Song and Gallimard role-play the trial scene of the French diplomat and the Chinese opera singer. The relevant mistaken gender identity of Mr. Bouriscot and Mr. Shi intersects with that of the assumed relationship between the West and the East. As Mr. Bouriscot is victimized by his own fantasies about his oriental partner, so must be both Gallimard and, by extension, the West. Upon the unveiling of their espionage, Song and Gallimard are taken to the courthouse wherein Song ironically moves and acts in accordance with the stereotypical image of maleness; Gallimard appears "as sorry . . . as a Butterfly" (91). The signs of Song's newly acquired identity are the conventional masculine attire (the Armani suit); "the confident stance, with feet planted wide apart, arms akimbo; a deeper voice; a defiant, cocky manner as he strides back and force on stage, surveying the audience" (Kondo 24). Gallimard, on the other hand, assumes the role of the 'Butterfly.' He has his face painted with the geisha-like (Japanese) make up. He puts on Song's wig and Kimono, the traditional attire of 'Butterfly'; he also holds a knife. Theatrically speaking, the scene is total subversion of Puccini's opera in which the miserable 'Butterfly' finally commits suicide over her white lover's cruel desertion of her. It is worth noting that the scene is shrouded with The Death Scene music from Puccini's opera anticipating the death of the newly constructed 'Monsieur Butterfly'. Gallimard "sets himself center stage, in a seppuku position.... He sets the tip of the knife against his body" pronouncing his inevitable transformation, "My name is Rene Gallimard – also known as Madame Butterfly". Gallimard, in a "radically disturbing" closure, collapses to
the floor in a similar way to Butterfly's in Puccini's opera (Kondo 20). Strong lights move on the exalted Song who "smokes a cigarette; the smoke filters up through the lights. Two words leave his lips. Butterfly? Butterfly? Smoke rises as lights fade slowly to black (92-3).

The deconstructing power of the image lies in the irony that, through skilful performance, Song can simultaneously pass as the epitome of 'the Perfect woman' and also as the full representation of manhood. The image thus shatters to pieces the imperialistic claim that "an oriental can never be completely a man" (83). The performance specificities of characters in that image also suggest the re-arrangement of the gender and racial power relations. Song, the representative of the so-called objectified Orientals, "stands as a man" refusing to be placed within strict boundaries as an act of subordination (93). Enjy Ashour explains that in the light of this process of role reversal, the play underscores the argument that the orientalist discourse “is not fixed, eternal, non-negotiable; [in fact], it could be questioned, redefined and reshaped” (61). Hwang’s Bondage, a dense, relatively less theatrical, one-act play, de-naturalizes all notions about the fixity of racial and gender identities. In fact, the play could be deemed an extension of MB as it continues to explore cultural and historical clichés about races. The play also reconstructs some of the most dramatic scenes of MB as a way of enforcing their thematic implications. The confrontation scenes, for instance, between Song Liling and Rene Gallimard in MB are subtly reproduced in Bondage in which the main characters, Terri and Mark, simultaneously debate both their desire for each other, and the cultural, in this case racial, politics entangled in that desire. The metadramatic device of role playing within the role is the fundamental theatrical strategy through which the two characters get involved in a series of verbal swordfights on issues of race and ethnicity paving the way for the final consummation of their desire.

While Hwang, in MB, falls into the trap of committing the sin which he condemns by cynically and ironically making Gallimard transform into a 'Butterfly,' in Bondage, he destabilizes all prejudices calling for a "color-blind utopia" in which people may encounter one another as human beings stripped of all extrinsic biases (Sun and Fei 121). Through a set of role-playing in which the main characters act out racialized subjects, Hwang raises questions about the validity of ethnic identities concluding with the statement that all race is performative, that the skin colour is a poor signifier of one’s true identity and that only through means of love and equality can communication among people take place. Set in a sadomasochism parlor on the outskirts of Los Angeles, the play features Terri, a dominatrix who, the stage directions indicate, "paces with her whip in hand" in front of her longtime willing submissive Mark, identifiable only as a man "who is chained to the wall". Terri and Mark are clad from head
to toe; "their faces, are covered by full face masks and hoods to disguise their identities" (23). Nothing else is known about the two characters except the implication of the setting that the two characters will be involved in some sexual games role-playing the dominant and the dominated. During these games, each character role-plays different racial identities according to which his/her power position to the other partner is negotiated. One may argue that these different racial identities played by the characters demonstrate the ideology which defines the relationship between the dominant culture and the minority subject.

The role playing in the beginning of the drama is a demonstration of the performative and the artificial nature of race:

Mark: What am I today?
Mark: A Chinese man. All right. And who are you?
Terri: Me? I'm- I'm a blonde woman. Can you remember that?
Mark: I feel very vulnerable.
Terri: You should. I pick these roles for a reason, you know.(She unchains him.) We'll call you Wong. Mark Wong. And me – I’m Tifanny Walker.

(23)

By locating race in the realm of role playing, Hwang capitalizes on the fact that race "is not fixed, organic, and biological, but capable of being negotiated, redefined and impersonated, … an enactment under pressure from the dominant culture" (Park 46-7). The racial identity of a person is thus as theatrical as the costume that the actor puts on; it is like that piece of on-stage prop which generates meaning only in relation to the other elements at play.

That first scenario which Terri and Mark role-play is therefore an enactment of notions of racial fantasies and stereotypes. Terri's assignment of Chinese-ness to Mark constitutes for him an act of personal degradation and humiliation. On one level, the act is reflective of the dominant culture emasculation of Chinese men. Terri, as a Caucasian, voices that view:

Terri: I've seen you looking at me. From behind the windows of your-engineering laboratory. Behind your-horn rimmed glasses. Why don't you come right out and try to pick me up? Whisper something offensive into my ear. Or aren't you man enough? (23)

Terri's emasculation of Mark reproduces the various layers of historical and institutional power practiced by the dominant culture over the marginalized
Metadrama

subjects. The act, Samuel Park argues, evokes "the anti miscegenation laws during the early part of the 20th century, as well as a contemporary Western fear and dislike of East Asian nations such as Japan (and now India and China) in their competition in the field of technology" (50).

The act of assigning Chinese-ness to Mark, and Caucasian-ness to Terry is also a performance of the dominated-dominant relationship. Mark's desire to express his love for Terri is barred by the fact "you're a blonde. I'm – Chinese. It's not so easy to know whether it's OK for me to love you" (23). Terri does not only enforce that vision: "It's not real likely I'm gonna love you… I'm a normal girl. With regular ideas. Regular for a blonde, of course" (24), but also brings up another racial prejudice against Chinese-American, namely their bookishness and their strong familial bond. Terri elaborates:

I would never be prejudiced against an Oriental. They have such … strong family structures … hard working … they hit the books with real gusto … makes my mother green with envy. But, I guess … how excited can I get about a boy who fulfills my mother’s fantasies?" (24)

Terri's stereotypical recognition of Asian-Americans as studious and attached to their mothers is meant to feminize the race. In finding Mark strongly associated to his mother, Terri projects onto him the Oedipal complex, that is a person who is unable to maintain his masculinity and live independently away from his mother. Similarly, bookishness in the dominant culture imagination is a pop culture trope which stands for effeminacy. The Asian-American man is not manly enough to get a blonde without force and without the help of other fellow men. Terri sarcastically states, "What are you going to do now? Rape me? With your friends? … it still requires more than one of you to get the job done" (28). These stereotypical performances of Asian American maleness are to be viewed in conjunction with the long history of exclusion practiced over racialized subjects. In her Immigrant Acts, Lisa Lowe reveals that the Asian-American subject was not only legally barred from citizenship but also from masculinity itself which was only assigned to the white people (5). Terri, thus, evokes this legacy of emasculation and feminization, "limiting Mark's performative choices to only those remembered from hegemonic practices"(Park 58).

It is important here to spot the huge gap between the vision of the dominant culture and that of the Asian-American. The so-called negative stereotypes about the Asian-Americans as hard working in their studies and as committed to their families are not, for many Asian-American communities, negative aspects at all. They are, paradoxically enough, both aspirational and inspirational models which many people strive to emulate. Park argues that while the Asian-
American student who does well in his studies to get the highest marks is sarcastically tagged as 'nerdy' by the dominant culture, his ethnic community “valorizes” him by making him the object of attention and care. Park also argues that the demonizing of these qualities by the dominant culture is ingrained in the racial assumption that Asian-Americans excel in Math and science not due to any inherently genuine "love of science or quantitative reasoning," but due to their "need to move toward economically-rewarding professions" to protect themselves (56).

Terri continues her humiliation and abasement of Mark denying him any positive performance to play. Asian-Americans, Terri suggests, have no flattering role models; they are to remain the weaker partner in the sexual coitus, always dominated and never dominant. This is verbally and visually suggested in the following foreplay:

Mark: How about Bruce Lee? Would you find me sexy if I was Bruce Lee?
Terri: You mean, like, 'Hihii-ya! I wuv you.' (Pause.) Any other ideas? Or do you admit no woman could love you, Mark Wong (Mark assumes a doggy position.)
Mark: I'm defeated. I'm humiliated. I'm whipped to the bone. (29)

The implication here is that even those seemingly positive Asian American role models are rejected and ignored by the dominant culture as they are unable to introduce new, unexpected models other than those planted in the popular consciousness. Brecht's concept of the "alienation effect" can be cited here as an explanation of the continuous exclusion of racialized subjects by the dominant culture (Brecht 192). Because those racialized subjects often present familiar performances on the stage of everyday life, they consequently get rejected; this is like the audience's rejection of the stock character in the badly-written dramas.

Deconstructing all ideological notions about the stability of racial codes, Hwang, theatrically, makes the same characters of his play role-play other racial identities. This is understood, in the logic of this research, as an enforcement of Hwang's call for the rootlessness of all racial profiling. Terri and Mark play out another racial game in which Terri is an African-American woman and Mark, a Caucasian. By the logic of the dominant culture and the nature of role-playing which always evolves, Mark is moving from low to high, while Terri, from high to low. As a white person, Mark exercises a positional superiority over the inferior black-skinned Terri. Mark painfully reminds Terri of the long history of abuse and ill-treatment that the African-American woman has gone through:
Mark: … And the dilemma I know you're facing. Your own men, they take you for granted, don't they? I think you should be a little more open-minded, unless you wanna end up like the 40% of black women over 30 who're never gonna get married in their lifetimes. (Silence.) (32)

By reminding Terri of her low place within the hierarchy of desire, by tagging her "sensusous,"(32) and by shaming her for being deserted by her "African American brothers" (31) who prefer to date white women, Mark is humiliating and intimidating her to accept him as the dominant, more powerful partner. Terri lashes back evoking the white liberals' hypocrisy who claim they are attracted to black woman's intelligence while in fact they are after her "tight outfit" which is "slinky," and her "lips which are full and round – without the aid of collagen" (32). In a suggestive visual image, the game ends with Terri mounting the submissive Mark:

Terri: On your knees, Liberal! (She runs the heel of her boot over the length of his body.) You wanted to have a little fun, didn't you? With a wild dark woman whose passions drown out all her inhibitions. (She pushes him onto his back, puts the heel to his lips.) I'll give you passions. Here's your passion … suck it. Like the lily-white baby you boy you are (Mark fellates her heel). (33)

Wrapped in issues of racial profiling, the relationship between Mark, the white, and Terri, the African American, fails. The issue becomes more complicated to the extent that Mark and Terri, as Asian subjects in their third session game, can not solve the problem of personal alienation. Enacting the dilemma of what Edward Said defines as racialized subjects' internalization of the racial discourse, Mark and Terri, though now of the same race, are prejudiced against each other. As an Asian-American, that is a man of race, Mark is self-loathing, and will always be longing for a union with a white woman to assuage the pains of racial differences and to rid himself of what Ann Anlin Cheng calls "the melancholy of race." The union between two Asian-Americans, following the reasoning of Cheng, will only compound the problem of the "racial grief." Still, a relationship with a white woman is masochistic in nature; Mark is to be always reminded that he is less and that he "is missing the 'correct' genes" The chance of a successful union like that hinges on the white woman's acceptance of merging identities. Only then can Mark's "hidden grief" be healed. The fact remains that this might also fail (qtd.in Park 67).

The Asian American Terri, on the other hand, does not accept a relationship with a fellow Asian American man. Ironically, she projects onto Mark all the
stereotypical prejudices against Asian-American men. For her, they are abusive and of a low origin:

Terri: Asian men. *(Pause.)* Asian men who just assume because we shared space in a genetic pond millions of years ago that I'm suddenly their property when I walk into a room. Or an office. *(Pause.)* Now get this straight. I'm not interested in you, OK? In fact, I'm generally not attracted to Asian men…. I just don’t date them as a species. *(35)*

Just as the dominant culture emasculates Asian subjects, so does Terri: "you're looking for someone who reminds you of your mothers. Who'll smile at the lousiest jokes and spoon rice into your bowl while you just sit and grunt" *(36).* Though of the same race, Mark and Terri fail also to achieve true bondage.

By limiting the performance choices that both Mark and Terri, as persons of color, are to play, Hwang suggests that even the freedom to enact race is tied with the cultural legacy of the past. Terri does not accept the Asian Mark as he, in his attachment to his mother, will possibly remind her of her abusive father; she does not also accept the white Mark as he, in his unmanly behavior, will most probably remind her of her black father. This cultural crisis, as Terri explains, is rooted in the belief that "cultures have pasts that eventually catch up with them. For instance, white Americans were evil enough to bring Africans here in chains – now, they should pay for that legacy. Similarly, Asian men have oppressed their women for centuries. Now they're paying for their crime" *(36).* In other words, to suggest that racialized subjects are the victim of conspiracy is not only to miss the point but also to hide the truth. The problem is that these negative stereotypical performances did exist at some point in time and that due to their reenactments and reiterations by those specific persons, they turned into entrapping defining features or clichés.

Echoing Hwang's voice, and possibly that of the audience, Mark raises the rhetorical question, "Why should my love life suffer for crimes I didn't commit? I'm an American!" *(36).* The answer is theatrically given through Mark and Terri's stripping themselves of all racial masks; they move beyond the world of fantasy or pretense to encounter each other in the realm of the real, as human beings. Mark then declares:

*it feels like all labels have to be re-written, all assumptions re-examined, all associations re-defined. The rules that governed behavior in the last era are crumbling, but those of the time to come have yet to be rewritten. (44-5)
Racial categorization is thus a barrier to true communication. Giving up this categorization would mean a denial of the networks of power contained within it. When Mark and Terri free themselves from the bondage of race and gender and the power positioning involved, they find love, the true 'bondage' that should exist among human beings. Mark and Terri, the stage directions indicate, "cross the stage towards one another ... Mark touches her hair. They gaze at each other's faces, as lights fade to black" (46).

III

Through the metadramatic devices of ‘the play within the play’, ‘the literal and the real life reference,’ ‘the ceremonies with the main text’ and ‘the role-playing with the role,’ David Henry Hwang deconstructs the culturally constructed stereotypes about minority subjects in America, particularly those of Asian descent. The metadramatic devices, as the analysis has shown, create a type of aesthetics by which the audience is stimulated, through the relevant ‘estrangement effect,’ to reconsider the ideological significance of the on-stage experience. In other words. The ‘alienation effect’ produced by the metadramatic devices deprive the audience from any sense of comfortable identification with the action or the characters. The mimetic illusion on the stage is broken down, and the dislocated spectator is, consciously or unconsciously, granted a meta-perspective on his/her ideological positioning.

In Shakespeare’s Hamlet, ‘the play within the play’ theatrical strategy is meant to catch the conscience of the king. Similarly, in Hwang’s M. Butterfly and Bondage, the intricate web of the metadramatic devices, namely the play within the play, the intersection with real life event, the ceremonies of music, songs, dances and the courthouse scene, and the role-playing within the role, all interact to catch the conscience of the audience. M. Butterfly deconstructs racial and gender stereotyping through deconstructing the original orientalist message of Puccini’s opera Madama Butterfly, the mediating text, and through the reproduction of an actual event of the espionage trial of the French diplomat and his Chinese opera singer in which the mistaken gender identity of the concerned parties is the root of the problem. As in a palimpsest, the two texts are reworked and rewritten in the light of Hwang’s de-constructivist mission. The myth of the East as the feminine in its relationship with the West as the masculine is broken down as Hwang deliberately subverts the Song/Gallimard power relations. Throughout the play, Gallimard is delineated as a victim of his fantasies and of his fictional creation of the Orient and the Orientals to awaken to the fact that his lover has been a man disguised as a woman. Gallimard transforms into a Butterfly, a further indication of the arbitrariness of stereotyping. The racial and
gender differences are thus reduced to the mere sphere of theatrical performance which is affected and unnatural. Sadly, as his characters perform the smashing of the Orientalist discourse, Hwang falls into the trap of creating a new, similarly disfigured, hegemony in which the West, impersonated by Gallimard, is reconstructed in the pathetic image of the ‘Butterfly’ while the East, acted by Song, puts on a cartoonish and dragon-like mask of masculinity and power. The clash is still there.

Through role-playing within the role, Bondage moves from the clashing color-strict relationships to relationships devoid of any relevant racial or gender biases. That project is achieved through making the two masochistic characters, Terri and Mark, role-play several racial identities and get involved in a give-and-take dialogue about stereotypes and power relations. The power of role-playing is used to suggest the groundlessness of such racial traits and the denial of any fixed notion of identity which is as theatrical as the various roles played out by the one actor. The racial shifts Mark and Terri enact allow them to "expose stereotypes associated with a particular race, revealing to the audience the arbitrary nature of the supposedly innate racial traits; blondes as bimbos, Asians as geeks, and African Americans as sexual beasts exist only in the realm of pretend" (Gildmark). Furthermore, these racial identities draw participants into a series of power relations which in turn block all attempts at humanist communication and intimacy. Once these racial masks are given up, as suggested by Terri and Mark’s theatrical disrobing, love, which is the strongest race-free bondage, is to be found.

Endnotes

1 Henceforth all references to the text are from the 1989 Plume edition, incorporated hereafter parenthetically in the text.
2 In that theatre, men play women's roles as the latter were forbidden to appear on stage. Cross-dressing was used to achieve that effect.
3 In his "Author's Notes," Hwang states that the audience must believe that Gallimard was seduced by a man disguised as a woman.
4 The perception of the East in the stereotypical feminine terms of submission, obedience and modesty has been stimulated by cultural and political circumstances. Toril Moi explains that the feminist movements in the 1960s produced independent women claiming their political and social rights and rebelling against the traditional image of the domesticated female (20). In effect, the Western patriarchal society started to look for its missing idol of the perfect woman. Exotic, mysterious, knowable in the sense used by Edward Said, and still far from the feminist thinking, Asian/Oriental
women were found to be the substitutes. Another important factor which contributed to the cultural production of the East in feminine terms is that many Eastern countries, in the early decades of the twentieth century, fell under the colonization of the West. The west, in effect, started to think of itself as masculine, "big guns, big industry, big money – so the East is feminine – weak, delicate, poor" (*M. Butterfly* 83). Robert K. Martin comments: "The East becomes the measure by which one recognizes one's Westernness, just as the feminine becomes the means by which the man recognizes his masculinity" (101). This accounts for Gallimard's inability to distinguish between Song's rectum and a woman's vagina, though the relationship lasted for more than twenty years.

Henceforth all references to the text are from 1996 Dramatists Play Service Inc. edition, incorporated hereafter parenthetically in the text.

This is the title of Cheng's book in which she presents an insightful analysis of the relationship between race and psychoanalytic theory. Cheng finds out that when racialized subjects realize that they are not like the white Others around them, they start to experience feelings of "hidden grief" over the loss of that "perfect self." This very feeling leads to continuous longing for re-unity with that lost ideal for the sake of healing psychic wounds. In *Bondage*, Mark, the racialized subject, is dramatized in constant pursuit of Terri, the white woman and the incarnation of his lost ideal or perfect self.

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Gender Identity Construction in Facebook Statuses of Egyptian Young Adults

*Ingy Emara*

The past few years have witnessed a remarkable increase in computer-mediated communication (CMC), a fairly recent genre of which is online social networking. Online social networking sites allow users to engage in computer-mediated communication with a large network of friends and family. Social networking sites are defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as web-based services allowing users to construct a public profile within a specific system, share connections with other users and both view and review their list of connections and those made by other users within the system.

One of the most popular social networking sites nowadays is Facebook which has become a popular way of communicating ideas and expressing one’s views. Facebook was created by Harvard University student, Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 and was made available to everyone using the World Wide Web by the end of 2006. Ever since 2006, Facebook has become one of the fastest growing and most popular online social networks. A Facebook status allows users to post information or express certain views, and it provides opportunities to friends to comment on what is posted or simply to like and sometimes share their friends’ status updates. As such, it also serves the function of constructing one’s identity through status posts.

Identity is conveyed through language and through the way one interacts with others. It is characterized in terms of one’s personality traits, values, beliefs, roles and relationships (Huffaker & Calvert, 2006). The construction of identity also refers to the construction of self as one that involves the construction of several public selves which are presented in accordance with cultural and social constraints (Harter, 1998). As such, identity is clearly influenced by the role of an individual as a member of a particular gender. Gender identity is socially constructed through a set of behaviors and perceptions that define what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man (Lemish, 2008). However, the construction of one’s identity in face-to-face communication may differ from identity construction in online settings in several ways.

In face-to-face communication, views and emotions are expressed both linguistically through the language patterns used in verbal utterances and

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paralinguistically through non-verbal features such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation and voice pitch (Park, 2007). However, this is not the case in online communication where views and emotions can only be expressed through the use of verbal language and certain emoticons or text-based representations of feelings. Yet, even with the use of emoticons, a person’s view may be misunderstood as it has been found that people may perceive emoticons differently and that different genders may also interpret the meaning of emoticons differently (Hudson, Nicolas, Howser, Lipsett, Robinson, Pope, Hobby & Friedman, 2015). The online communicator, therefore, may be under more pressure when choosing the language patterns that would most accurately express his/her views and attitudes. This, in turn, highlights the importance of analyzing online communication in order to investigate the linguistic patterns each gender prefers to use to express different views and emotions.

The present research paper investigates ways in which young Egyptian adults construct their identities on Facebook status posts. It also examines how the online linguistic behavior of male Facebook users may be different from female ones under the premise that there are gender differences in the way men and women represent themselves in language (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990). In this regard, the paper aims to test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis claims that men post more about facts, entertainment and individual experiences, while women post more about feelings, social relationships and activities involving others, which is supported by Tannen (1990). The second hypothesis maintains that men use language showing authority and assertiveness, while women’s language shows uncertainty and tentativeness, a view that is adopted by Lakoff (1975). In order to test these two hypotheses, the following research questions are investigated:

1. What are the topics discussed in Egyptian males’ and females’ Facebook status posts?
2. What are the linguistic stance features and engagement strategies used by each gender to express particular attitudes?

The answers to the above research questions as well as the validation or refutation of the set hypotheses shed light on the linguistic patterns that Egyptian Facebook users choose to construct their gender identities on online social networks, and the social and cultural implications these linguistic patterns may have.

**Literature Review**

Due to the growing popularity of Facebook, several researchers have studied the implications of Facebook communication on aspects of identity such as self presentation (Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Kramer & Winter, 2008; Tong, Van Der
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Heide, Langwell & Walther, 2008) and socio-cultural attitudes (De Andrea, Shaw & Levine, 2009). With the rising popularity of Facebook as a social networking site, a new area of research is being conducted to study the relationship between gender and computer-mediated communication and to examine whether established trends in language and gender research can be reproduced in an online environment (Weatherall, 2008).

Gender, unlike sex, seems to be a continuous variable (Graddol & Swann, 1989). Identities are not fixed but continually reshaped by cultural performances, which implies that gender is reaffirmed and publicly displayed by performing particular acts in accordance with cultural and societal norms (Butler, 1990). It is commonly believed that culture is not gender-neutral as all cultures set up social norms for the sexes which go beyond biological differences, even though cultures may differ in the traits they assign to both men and women (Lury, 1995).

Language is one realm that is shaped by the way an individual acts as a man or a woman and that reproduces an individual’s definition of cultural identity (Burman & Parker, 1993).

Most of the literature on language gender differences concentrates on two main theories: the dominance approach and the difference approach. The dominance approach is supported by Robin Lakoff (1975) and claims that gender differences arise from male dominance and female subordination. Lakoff suggests that women’s subordinate social status is indicated by the language they use. She identified a number of linguistic features which she claims are used more often by women than by men and which expressed uncertainty and lack of confidence. These features include lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, empty adjectives, intensifiers, superpolite forms, euphemism and emphatic stress (Lakoff, 1975). The difference approach, on the other hand, is supported by Deborah Tannen (1990) and maintains that gender differences are related to cultural differences between men and women. According to Tannen (1990), women tend to use language for intimacy or ‘rapport talk’, while men tend to use it for information or ‘report talk’.

A large body of previous research agreed with the above mentioned theories as men were found to be more assertive, independent, individual, informative and unemotional, while women were more vulnerable, uncertain, emotionally expressive and concerned for the welfare of others (Bond, 2009; Eagly, 1987; Lemish, 2008; Walker, 2015). Due to social influences in face-to-face settings, men were found to be more associated with action, adventure and competition while women tended to be more concerned with the welfare of others, emotionally expressive, open, dependant and vulnerable (Lemish, 2008). This implies that women’s communication indicates a desire for solidarity and maintaining social relationships while men’s communication indicates a desire
for power and instrumental purposes such as disseminating information rather than building personal relationships (Lemish, 2008 and Bond, 2009).

One explanation for gender differences in language is the social context theory (Deaux & Major, 1987) which focuses on social rather than individual factors. For example, a contextual influence is males’ greater status in society, which makes them more likely to dominate social interactions through the use of self-assertive language, whereas females tend to behave subordinately through using more affiliative language. Another aspect of contextual influence is the activity setting, which maintains that the different activities the two genders engage in have different associated language patterns. For example, females engage in more self-disclosure tasks which require affiliative language while men engage in task-oriented activities requiring more assertive language (Deaux & Major, 1987).

In today’s world, gendered communication patterns have taken new forms with the rising popularity of the World Wide Web and online social networks. Electronic communication is becoming more popular among people of different genders and ages as it has blurred the boundaries of spoken and written communication as well as the distinction between formal and informal language (Naughton, 1999). Online language is now considered a new type of discourse that is shaped by the creativity and innovation of its users (Crystal, 2001). It has therefore become essential to study gender differences in online communication settings in order to investigate similarities and differences between online and offline gender identities.

Gender differences in face-to-face communication were found to be mirrored in online communication where women tended to communicate in more emotional interpersonal ways, while men tended to communicate in more task-oriented individual ways (Weatherall, 2008 and Parkins, 2012). Research findings suggest that women’s online behavior is more interpersonally-oriented showing interaction and relationship maintenance, while men’s online behavior is more individual and information-oriented (Parkins, 2012).

In terms of politeness strategies, male and female online linguistic behavior was found to be similar to face-to-face interactions. Savicki (1996) found that in online discussion groups, females tended to self-disclose and avoid tension while men tended to use impersonal, fact-oriented language. Moreover, women were more likely to use politeness strategies to thank, appreciate and apologize and were more likely to be upset by violations of politeness, whereas men seemed less concerned with politeness and more likely to violate expected conduct (Herring, 2000). In another study made by Arnold and Miller (1999) to analyze the language used in personal web pages, women were found to be more sociable and friendly while men portrayed themselves as confident and independent.
Recently, there has been a rising interest in gendered communication patterns on social network sites, especially Facebook, and how they may be similar or different from face-to-face communication patterns. Most research conducted in this area has found that communication on social network sites mirrors face-to-face communication to a considerable extent. For example, men tended to use social network sites to form new relationships while women tended to use social network sites to maintain existing relationships (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). While using social network sites, females tended to disclose more about social relationships with others and settings of social gatherings such as holidays and parties, whereas men tended to disclose more information relating to entertainment such as sports (Bond, 2009).

In relation to the use of emotional language, Thelwall, Wilkinson & Uppal (2009) found that female comments on Facebook contained more positive emotion words than male comments, but the two genders did not show differences in terms of negative emotion language. Also females were found to be more likely to use affiliative language to connect with others, whereas males used assertive language to show dominance and goal achievement (Thelwall et al., 2009). In another study conducted by Joiner, Dapkeviciute, Johnson, Gavin & Brosnan (2015), it was found that females showed higher levels of emotional support to Facebook status updates from friends both in private and public replies whereas males showed more emotional support in private replies than public replies. This supports the finding that the two genders are more likely to behave in stereotypical ways in front of larger groups of people (Deaux & Major, 1987).

In terms of identity construction, Facebook posts can reveal several aspects of an individual’s identity. While social networking sites allow users to engage in computer-mediated communication with a large network of friends and family, they also provide them with ways to formulate particular online identities (Lee 2008). Identity is characterized in terms of one’s personality traits, values, beliefs, roles and relationships (Huffaker & Calvert, 2006). The construction of identity is greatly shaped by cultural and social constraints (Harter, 1998), and as such, identity is clearly influenced by the role of an individual as a member of a particular gender. Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of self as a member of a particular gender and is greatly shaped by socially accepted standards of femininity and masculinity (Parkins, 2012).

Gender identity can be constructed in both online and face-to-face communication. An online identity is influenced by a sense of freedom from physical constraints as well as more ability to design one’s persona (Turkle, 1995). Bolander & Locher (2010) have shown that status Facebook updates tend to provide rather indirect information on the users’ self concepts and group
Ingy Emara

affiliations. Similarly, Eisenlauer (2013) has found that Facebook users utilize text automation properties in order to mitigate their discursive acts of self-positioning. Unlike self-authored texts which run the risk of being interpreted as rather straightforward and blunt identity performances, the use of software-generated text, such as those posted in status updates, allows Facebook users to claim various identity aspects in more indirect ways (Eisenlauer, 2013). The present paper aims to examine whether the implications of the above findings are also applicable to the construction of online gender identity.

Although there has been a rising interest in the analysis of online communication patterns, researchers believe that more studies are needed to investigate social networking communication such as Facebook in relation to gender (Thompson & Lougheed, 2012). Also, most of the studies conducted in this area are related to western communities rather than eastern and Arab communities. Therefore, this present study aims to fill in this gap by extending literature on gender differences in social network communication in the Egyptian society. The study also aims to examine how young Egyptian adults construct their gender identity on the most popular social network site, Facebook, and how far their identity construction conforms to the results of previous research and gender-related linguistic theories.

**Methodology**

The present research paper investigates ways in which young Egyptian adults construct their identities on Facebook status posts. It also examines how the online linguistic behavior of male Facebook users may be different from female ones under the premise that there are gender differences in the way men and women represent themselves in language (Lakoff 1975; Tannen 1990). The research adopts a quantitative-qualitative analysis where collected Facebook status samples are examined in terms of the frequency of occurrence of certain gender-related parameters posited by Lakoff (1975) and Tannen (1990), and the implication such parameters may have on the representation of one’s identity.

The samples analyzed in this study are 100 Facebook statuses posted in the first quarter of the year 2016 by 50 males and 50 females (one status post is chosen for each male or female user.) The subjects chosen are Egyptian Facebook users aged between 20 and 30 years as social networking is believed to be more popular among young adults (Hargittai 2008). They all belong to the upper-middle class and have a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree. They are all graduates of private universities in Egypt and most of them have good command of English. This population is chosen as it represents Facebook users who are able to express their views openly using correct English language. The posts are written in English, and the average length of each post is 37 words for male posts.
and 40 for female ones. They are about general topics, usually situations that the Facebook users experienced or comments about social issues. The posts are selected according to their length and the language they are written in; i.e. English. In most cases, the Facebook post chosen for each user is the only English text of the average length of 40 words posted on the user’s wall in the chosen period. Most of the other posts are either too short or written in Arabic or Franco-Arabic, which is the English alphabet used to communicate in Arabic over social media channels. The researcher chose statuses written in English in order to facilitate the analysis of linguistic elements in accordance with the gender-related linguistic theories of Lakoff (1975) and Tannen (1990), and to make it possible to compare the results of the present study to the results of previous studies conducted on English data.

The choice of English in writing a status shapes part of the user’s identity as a bilingual speaker. It also implies that the user expects the status to be read by friends of different nationalities, or that he/she wants it to be read by a selected audience that can understand English. The choice of a second language in this case may give Facebook users the opportunity to present themselves in a way that will be more appealing to the audience they want to communicate with. Some researchers have found that the use of a second language and the withdrawal from the first language may not only be an act of rebellion against local norms, but it may also be an attempt to socialize into recognized second language identities (Klimanova, 2013). Thus, the analysis of English posts in this study serves the function of investigating the users’ identity in a more general setting that is free from any socio-cultural linguistic boundaries that may be posed by their first language.

The subjects were chosen based on a convenience sampling method as they were drawn from a specific population of users in the researcher’s list of Facebook friends, and permission was granted to linguistically analyze the Facebook statuses they posted during the first quarter of the year 2016. The researcher chose users on her friend list and not random users that she does not know in order to be certain about the gender of each user, as some Facebook users tend to assume virtual online genders that are different from their real ones (Huffaker & Calvert, 2006). The data was collected after the users had already posted their statuses without prior knowledge that these statuses would be analyzed for research purposes so there was no chance that the data collected was purposely skewed in any way.

The present study applies a quantitative-qualitative content analysis of the selected Facebook posts. This type of analysis tackles the themes the discourse is developed around and investigates the selection of relevant linguistic elements, the frequency of occurrence of each and the relationships between the
different elements (Ruiz, 2009). The selected status posts were analyzed in terms of the frequency of occurrence as well as the relevance of the linguistic devices used to refer to the status topic and to the writer’s stance and the implications of the writer’s choice of language on identity construction.

Based on the findings of previous research studies which have been mentioned in the literature review section above, the present paper aims to test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis claims that men post more about facts, entertainment and individual experiences, while women post more about feelings, social relationships and activities involving others. The second hypothesis maintains that men use language showing authority and assertiveness, while women’s language shows tentativeness. In order to test these two hypotheses, the following research questions are investigated:

1. What are the topics discussed in Egyptian males’ and females’ Facebook status posts?
2. What are the linguistic stance features and engagement strategies used by each gender to express particular attitudes?

In order to test the above-mentioned hypotheses and address the set research questions, the linguistic analysis of the selected posts tackles three linguistic choices: choice of topic, affiliative and affective lexical choices, and stance features and engagement strategies expressing personal attitudes. A broad theoretical and empirical literature suggests that the relationship between language and gender can be characterized in terms of situated meanings which construct gender through the use of stances, styles and persona (Eckert, 2008). The content analysis of the above-mentioned linguistic choices aims to portray the linguistic patterns that Egyptian Facebook users choose to construct their gender identities on online social networks, and the social and cultural implications these linguistic patterns may have.

**Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results of the linguistic content analysis of the selected Facebook status posts in terms of choice of topic, affiliative and affective lexical choices, and stance features and engagement strategies expressing personal attitudes.

**1. Choice of Topic**

The topics discussed in the 100 selected Facebook status posts could be grouped into three main topics: social relationships and experiences, personal experiences and expressing opinion and/or giving advice. The following table shows the
number and percentage of males and females choosing each topic and the statistical significance of the difference between the two groups.

**Table 1**
Choice of topic made by males and females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic chosen</th>
<th>Number of Male posts N=50</th>
<th>Percentage of male posts</th>
<th>Number of Female posts N=50</th>
<th>Percentage of female posts</th>
<th>Significance/ (2 tailed) P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social relationships and experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>*&lt; 0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experiences (not involving others)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>*0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion/ Advice</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0.2843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The (*) refers to p-values that are highly significant where p < 0.05

The above table shows that a significantly larger number of females choose to discuss topics related to social relationships and experiences (60% of the females compared to 16% of the males with a p value less than 0.0001 suggesting that the difference is extremely statistically significant). On the other hand, a significantly larger number of males choose to discuss personal experiences not involving others (48% compared to 14% with a p value of 0.0002 suggesting an extremely statistically significant difference). The topics related to social experiences in female posts are mainly about showing gratitude to friends and family, stressing the importance of love between couples or friends and relatives, and complaining about negative social practices such as interference in people’s lives. This implies that females are more concerned with maintaining social relationships and showing intimacy to others while at the same time paying heed to social norms and pressure. On the other hand, the topics that males post about social experiences include obituaries to a dead pet or person, expressing gratitude to friends and criticizing others’ practices. None of the male posts studied discusses romantic relationships, which implies that the Egyptian male users do not like discussing their personal relationships with their female partners (e.g. spouse, fiancée or girlfriend) in public. The above findings support the first hypothesis that women are more concerned with social relationships and
show that women tend to talk more about emotional experiences and feelings towards others.

As for personal experiences, the females discuss topics such as complaining about negative experiences they have had with a certain service, sharing experiences of donating to charity organizations and sharing sad emotions about being lonely. Males, on the other hand, boast about personal choices such as drinking beer, forcing others to respect them and having freedom to do anything they like. The females’ choices of personal experiences reflect their tendency to show feelings, intimacy, and understanding, while the males’ choices reflect their tendency to show power, independence, status and conflict, which all agrees with Tannen’s model of male and female contrasts (Tannen, 1990).

In terms of giving advice, though more males give advice in their posts than females do, the difference is not statistically significant as the p value is higher than 0.05, i.e. 0.2843. However, the topics of advice differ among male and female Facebook users. The advice given by females is mainly related to how to maintain healthy relationships among friends or couples as in “Never get upset from people who always give you negative comments” and “Have a kind heart and mind; forgive and forget; live in peace and make this life a better place”, which also shows willingness to compromise. On the other hand, the advice given by males is mainly to encourage others to enjoy life by practicing sports and travelling, to forget about all political and social problems and to stick to one’s point of view as in “Stop worrying and live your life,” and “Dream big and follow your heart.” This finding agrees with Tannen’s contrast model maintaining that women tend to seek compromise while men prefer to show conflict and independence of choice (Tannen, 1990).

The above findings also address the first research question examining the topics chosen by each gender, and they reveal that females show more tendency to discuss social relationships and experiences, while males prefer to discuss topics related to personal experiences and expressing opinion that stresses independence and power. The topics frequently discussed by male users are mainly about personal experiences and activities such as sports, entertainment, alcohol, travelling and politics, while women mainly discuss activities shared with others and refer to emotional experiences, especially those involving love and happiness.

The same findings support the first hypothesis posed in this research which claims that men post more about facts, entertainment and individual experiences, while women post more about feelings, social relationships and activities involving others. Facts in men’s statuses are found in posts expressing opinion and giving advice which have a highly referential or informative function, while entertainment and individual experiences are found in posts about personal
experiences which mainly revolve around adventurous entertainment practices or individual work experiences. The females’ posts studied are mostly concerned with social relationships and experiences represented by activities involving others such as parties, celebrations and outings.

2. Affiliative and affective lexical choices

Affiliative lexical choices refer to language that affirms and joins with the other person (Foster, 2004) whereas affective lexical choices refer to language that signifies the speaker’s or writer’s feelings, moods, dispositions and attitudes (Besnier, 1990).

2.1. Affiliative lexical choices

The affiliative lexical choices analyzed in the selected status posts refer to words signifying social relations such as friend, father, mother, spouse, etc. Table 2 shows the number and percentage of males and females using each of the eight lexical terms describing social relations in the posted statuses. The number of females mentioning social relations in their statuses is 29 out of 50 (58%), while the number of males mentioning social relations is 14 out of 50 (28%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social relationship</th>
<th>Number of males N=14</th>
<th>Percentage of males N=14</th>
<th>Number of females N=29</th>
<th>Percentage of females N=29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend(s)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that females, in general, have more tendency than males to refer to social relations with others. The number of females mentioning social relations is more than double that of males; 29 (58%) of the females compared to 14 (28%) of the males mentioned social relationships in their posts. It was only in cases of reference to the father or both parents that the males
outnumbered the females. These findings support the first hypothesis maintaining that women post more about social relationships and activities involving others. Another finding that can be obtained from Table 2 is that none of the males in the sample makes any reference to female relations such as mother, sister and spouse, which implies that Egyptian men do not prefer to discuss relationships with female family members in public. This is supported by previous research which found that men in Arab countries refuse to mention female relatives such as mothers, sisters, daughters and wives as they consider this a matter of protection even though it implies marginalization of women’s role in society (Shalghin, 2017).

2.2. Affective lexical choices
The affective lexical choices examined in this study refer to words signifying feelings or emotions towards a specific person or issue. The researcher counted only the instances where the Facebook users under study referred directly to their emotions towards something or someone. There were six basic emotions mentioned in the collected samples: love, happiness, worry, sadness, hatred and anger. Examples of sentences showing the fore-mentioned emotions are: “I love when two people get back together” (love), “I’m so happy today” (happiness), “I’m worried about kids” (worry), “I feel sad that we force ourselves into the act of being hurt” (sadness), “I hate Real Madrid” (hate), and “I’m filled with anger” (anger). The number of females using words expressing their emotions is more than double that of males as 41 (82%) of the females used affective words compared to 17 (34%) of the males. The following table shows the number of males and females using affective words related to the above-mentioned six emotions in the posted statuses and the statistical significance of the difference between the two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion expressed</th>
<th>Number of males using affective words referring to each emotion.</th>
<th>Number of females using affective words referring to each emotion.</th>
<th>Significance/ (2 tailed) P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>*0.0012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>*0.0060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*0.0057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The (*) refers to p-values that are highly significant where p < 0.05
The above findings show that the difference between the two groups in expressing the emotions of love, happiness and sadness is very statistically significant (0.0012, 0.0060 and 0.0057 respectively) while the two genders do not differ significantly in expressing the emotions of worry, hatred and anger, possibly due to the small number of users making reference to the three latter emotions. Females tend to discuss their emotions more directly than males do, especially in relation to positive emotions such as love and happiness. A significantly larger number of females refer to emotion of love when talking about spouse, family or friends as in, “I love when two people get back together after a long time,” and “Thank you for the party, my dear friends. Love you all.” However, only 4 males mention words related to love, for a deceased pet or person, or for nephews that is mentioned in the males’ posts as in, “If I had children of my own, I wouldn’t love them as much as I love you both.” None of the males mentions love relations with the other gender, nor does any of them mention love for friends. This suggests that women are more concerned with emotions, maintaining healthy social relationships and complimenting others while men are more concerned with showing status and power.

Table 3 above also shows that females make a significantly larger number of references to the emotion of happiness than men do. Examples of female posts showing happiness include “My only goal in life right now is to be happy,” and “It’s not about being engaged, married or in any relationship; it’s about being secured, happy, safe, relieved and feeling good.” Examples of men’s posts showing happiness include “I’m glad [my father] that you taught me so well,” and “I’m glad to have you around, my friends.” It is worth mentioning however that all the females refer to the emotion of happiness using the word “happy” while the three males who refer to happiness in their posts use the word “glad” rather than “happy” to describe their state of mind. According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, “glad” refers to the emotion resulting from the satisfaction of a certain need and describes a temporary state of pleasure, whereas “happy” refers to the feeling of permanent pleasure or satisfaction. This implies that women tend to value long-lasting feelings of happiness and satisfaction and to express them directly more than men do.

The above findings agree with previous research which found that female comments on Facebook contain more positive emotion words than male comments (Thelwall et al., 2009). It has also been found that emotions of happiness and sadness are more characteristic of women, whereas men are believed to be more characteristically angry (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999), which is reflected in the above results showing that women express feelings of love, happiness and sadness more than men do. Table 3 above also shows that
more men than women refer to the feeling of anger in their posts, though the
difference is not statistically significant due to the small number of comments
referring to the feeling of anger. Females in the present study are also more likely
to discuss feelings of sadness while none of the males mentions any sad emotion,
which implies that men view the expression of such emotions as a sign of
weakness. The above findings also support the hypothesis that women post more
about feelings in their Facebook statuses.

3. Stance features and engagement strategies
The stance features and engagement strategies discussed here refer to how each
Facebook user referred to the self and others, how he/she used hedging devices
to show tentativeness or uncertainty and boosting devices to show emphasis, and
how each of them used adjectives and adverbs as attitude markers. Hyland
(2005) proposes a model that describes the notion of self-representation and
engagement with others based on certain stance features and engagement
strategies. He maintains that one way writers choose to represent themselves in
a text is through the use of stance strategies such as self mentions (I, we, my),
hedges (might, perhaps), boosters (definitely, so much) and attitude markers
such as adjectives and adverbs expressing their attitude toward a certain
proposition. In terms of engagement strategies, writers can engage themselves
with the readers through the use of reader pronouns (we, us) and reader-targeting
directives such as imperative statements and questions (Hyland, 2005).

The present study attempts to apply Hyland’s model to investigate stance
features and engagement strategies through the analysis of five linguistic
features: pronouns to examine the implications of reference to the self and others,
hedging devices to investigate the writer’s mitigation of sentence force, boosting
devices to investigate the writer’s sense of assertion, and both adjectives and
adverbs used to express his/her attitude towards a certain proposition.

3.1. Pronouns
The present study investigates the subjects’ use of pronouns as they highlight
factors such as proximity or distance and directness or indirectness between the
writer and reader (Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979). For example, the use
of the pronoun we may indicate intimacy and solidarity between the writer and
the reader, whereas the generalized you can sometimes refer to anyone and may
imply that the individual addressed is different from the writer. The pronouns
analyzed here are the pronouns which have been used in the selected status posts.
The following table shows the word count and lexical density (shown by
percentage) of each type of pronouns in the posts of each gender. The total
number of words in the male posts is 1835, and the total number of words in female posts is 2018.

**Table 4** Word count of pronouns in statuses of both genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Word Count in Male Posts N=1835</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Word Count in Female Posts N=2018</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person singular (I, me, my)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>6.43%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person plural (we, us, our)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person (you, your)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.65%</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person masculine singular (he, him, his)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person feminine singular (she, her)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total count of third person singular (masculine and feminine)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural (they, them, their)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.42%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above table, men are shown to use slightly more first person singular pronouns to refer to themselves, while women use slightly more first person plural pronouns, second and third person singular pronouns. This implies that men are more concerned with their self-presentation than with involving themselves with others, unlike women who seem to be more likely to engage in social relationships and show intimacy, which agrees with the first hypothesis posed by this research. The use of self reference also serves to portray certain
identity traits of each status writer. In the statuses where the male Facebook users refer to personal experiences or traits (shown in Table 1), 11 out of the 24 users (46%) mention personal traits implying power, authority and independence. For example, they use statements such as “I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul”, “It was a respect for myself indeed”, “Ask me about what I am able to do and see how genius I am”, “I want my world to be fun. No parents, no rules, no nothing, like no one can stop me”, and “I’m not a backup or an option. I’m a first choice.”

On the other hand, the females’ use of direct description of identity and personality traits is scarce as none of the 14 females who discuss personal experiences and traits gives a direct description of herself, but they rather express how they wish to be or what they aspire for. Their statuses include sentences such as “I support freedom of choice; I support women empowerment”, and “I want to be a good model, and I want to be good with words. I want to be so smart and I want to have you forever”. Even, when some of the female users mention personal achievement, they attribute such achievement to the efforts of other people or factors as in “Because of my friend, I had the courage to cut more than 25 cm of my hair to donate it to [a charity organization]” and “I believe and hope that through it all [the years I spent at university] came out a different person, hopefully a better one.” In most of the above examples of male and female statuses about personal experiences, males portray themselves as powerful, independent and rebellious whereas females portray desired identities or identities they wish they could have rather than existing identities. This finding supports the second hypothesis that men use language showing authority and assertiveness, while women’s language shows tentativeness.

In terms of the first person plural pronouns used by male and female subjects, Table 4 above shows that females use more first person plural pronouns such as “we, us and our” than males do. Yet, though males also use first person plural pronouns, they mainly use them to make general or sarcastic statements that describe general circumstances as in “We don’t need to say anything in April Fool’s Day because we are already living it” and “It’s a mistake we never learn from.” On the other hand, females’ use of first person plural pronouns usually shows their involvement with others and their appreciation of social relationships as in “We complete everything together” and “We protect each other like brother and sister.” This finding implies that females value social relationships and involvement with others more than males do.

Females also use slightly more second person pronouns such as “you” and “your” than males do; yet, it is the way each gender uses these pronouns rather than the word count that shows significant differences between males and females. Males use second person pronouns mainly to give advice to general
readers rather than to address a specific person on their list as in “Stop worrying; you won’t live forever any way,” and “Be careful of who turn their back on you easily.” Females, on the other hand, use second person pronouns mainly to address specific people as in “You guys made my day,” and “I just want to tell you how special you are to me.” This again implies females’ tendency to show more involvement with others and maintain closer social relationships.

The use of first person plural pronouns and second person pronouns serves as an engagement strategy aiming to bring the writer and reader closer to each other. The use of first person plural pronouns (we, us and our) represents a way of including the reader and involving both the writer and reader in the same experience, which suggests women’s concern with intimacy and maintaining close relationships. The employment of first person plural pronouns is often considered by discourse analysts as a positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987), which creates a sense of solidarity between the writer and the reader by establishing a common ground (Vasquez, 2014). The use of first person plural pronoun in the female posts to show politeness and maintain intimacy is supported by the finding of Arnold and Miller (1999) that women tended to be more sociable and friendly while men portrayed themselves as confident and independent. The same premise is supported by other research findings which suggest that women’s online behavior is more interpersonally-oriented showing interaction and relationship maintenance, while men’s online behavior is more individual and information-oriented (Parkins, 2012). Second person pronouns can also be used to increase involvement and engagement with the readers. Vasquez (2014) claims that the use of second person pronouns (you and your) is the most obvious and common linguistic feature associated with involvement and engagement strategies in online texts. Through their use of second person pronouns, females directly address the reader, who is usually a specific person (or specific people) on their lists, indicating concern for the reader’s welfare or satisfaction.

In terms of third person pronouns, females show more tendency to refer to the single third person pronouns “he”, “him”, “his”, “she”, and her” with lexical density of 1.38% in female posts compared to 0.49% in male posts as shown in Table 4 above. On the other hand, males show more tendency to refer to the plural pronouns “they”, “their” and “them” (with lexical density of 1.42% in male posts compared to 0.89% in female posts). This suggests that women are concerned with details and with addressing each individual with the relevant pronoun while men are more concerned with the general population. Also, the fact that the feminine third person singular pronouns (she, her) did not occur in any of the male posts is attributed to the finding made in section 2.1 above that males did not make any reference to female acquaintances.
3.2. Hedging devices
The hedging devices used in the selected Facebook statuses fall into four main categories: tentative expressions such as “it seems possible that…” and “it appears that…”, hypothetical situations such as “imagine if you had ….”, modals suggesting uncertainty such as “could,” “might,” “maybe,” and question tags like “you believe it, don’t you?” The following table shows the word count and density (shown by percentage) of each hedging device in statuses of both genders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedging devices</th>
<th>Word Count in Male Statuses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Word Count in Female Statuses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tentative expressions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modals</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.93%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothetical situations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question tags</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The females generally use more hedging devices than the males, that is, a total of 32 hedging devices in comparison to 24. The females use more tentative expressions and more reference to hypothetical situations in order to mitigate the force of their statements, which may imply a sense of uncertainty and lack of confidence according to Lakoff (1975), but it may also be a sign of cooperative speech as suggested by Cameron, McAlinden & O’Leary (1989) and Goodwin (1980) who all refuted Lakoff’s claims as contentious and lacking empirical evidence. Cameron et al. (1989) believe that women use the so-called tentative features mentioned by Lakoff to facilitate conversation and show politeness rather than uncertainty. Similarly, Goodwin (1980) maintains that women use less mitigating utterances, not because they are less certain or powerful than men, but rather because of the different structures of male and female single-sex groups. Male groups are organized as hierarchical structures where members seek power and leadership, whereas female groups are organized along different
lines where members tend to be more cooperative and maintain stronger social bonds (Goodwin, 1980). The results shown in Table 5 above support the second hypothesis that men use language showing authority and assertiveness, while women’s language shows tentativeness, but tentativeness here is viewed in the light of the findings of Cameron et al. (1989) and Goodwin (1980) suggesting that women’s mitigation of sentence force shows solidarity and politeness rather than lack of confidence.

3.3. **Boosting devices**

Boosting devices are linguistic devices that boost or intensify a speaker’s proposition. The boosting devices found in the sample posts can be divided in three types: degree modifiers such as “so”, “just”, “very” and “too”, intensifying adverbs such as “really,” “definitely,” “genuinely,” “absolutely,” “actually” and “always”, and intensifying adjectives such as “awesome,” “sure” and “amazing.” The following table shows the word count and density (shown by percentage) of each boosting device in statuses of both genders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boosting Device</th>
<th>Frequency in Male Statuses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency in Female Statuses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Modifiers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifying adverbs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifying adjectives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that females tend to use more boosters such as degree modifiers and intensifying adverbs than males to give more emphasis to their statements. Examples of females’ use of such devices include “I just want to thank you for your presence in my life. You have been always my backbone and great supporters in my life” and “I just enjoyed spending time with you. you really care and you’re a great supporter.” The males in general use less degree modifiers than females, but show more tendency to use the modifier “too” than
modifiers such as “very” and “so” as in “The number of people who unfriended me is too damn high” and “I still hear your words every time I am down or too stressed”. One explanation could be that the intensifier ‘too’ implies a negative sentiment while ‘very’ and ‘so’ imply a positive one (Frej & Nam, 2014). This finding supports previous research which found female comments on Facebook to contain more positive emotion words than male comments (Thelwall et al., 2009).

Lakoff (1975) argued that both hedging and boosting devices are considered evidence of an unconfident speaker. While hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence, boosting devices express the speaker’s assumption that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore provide extra reassurance. According to this view, the tendency of the females to use more hedging and boosting devices than males indicates women’s tentativeness. However, one cannot assume that all hedging and boosting devices show tentativeness or uncertainty as they may simply be used as positive politeness techniques to mitigate the force of statements and achieve solidarity among community members (Holmes, 2008).

3.4. Adjectives and adverbs
Evaluation of personal stance can be expressed using a variety of linguistic devices, the most common of which are evaluative adjectives and adverbs. All the adjectives and adverbs used in the sample status posts are counted and divided into positive ones such as “amazing” and “genuinely,” negative ones such as “horrible” and “unfortunately,” and neutral ones such as “endless” and “generally.” The following table shows the number of occurrences of each type of adjective and adverb in the statuses made by both genders and the lexical density of each (shown by percentage).

Table 7 Number and percentage of occurrences of adjectives and adverbs in statuses of both genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Number of occurrences in male statuses (N=1835)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of occurrences in female statuses (N=2018)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above numbers show a significantly higher tendency by females to use adjectives and adverbs to create a more evaluative discourse. The females outnumber the males in the use of adjectives and adverbs with positive sentiment (5.05% positive adjectives and 1.24% positive adverbs mentioned by females compared to 3.00% positive adjectives and 0.65% positive adverbs mentioned by males) while the males use more negative adjectives and adverbs than females do (1.04% and 1.09% compared to 0.94% and 0.05% respectively). This finding agrees with Thelwall et al. (2009) who found that female comments on Facebook contained more positive emotion words than male comments.

The above data analysis of the 100 status posts made by Egyptian young adults highlights inherent traits of male and female language choices in online settings and the implications these traits may have on the construction of gender identity. The findings of the present research address the two research questions posed at the beginning; that is, ‘What are the topics discussed in Egyptian males’ and females’ Facebook status posts?’ and “What are the linguistic stance features and engagement strategies used by each gender to express particular attitudes?”

The data analysis carried out suggests that the topics preferred by female Egyptian Facebook users are mainly those related to social relationships and experiences, while male Egyptian Facebook users prefer to discuss topics related to individual experiences and to giving advice. As for the linguistic features used by each gender to express particular attitudes in Facebook statuses, females are found to use more first person plural pronouns and second person pronouns to engage with their readers and maintain solidarity, whereas the males prefer the use of first person singular pronouns to reflect on personal experiences. Also, females are shown to use more hedging and boosting devices signaling mitigation of sentence force, as well as more evaluative adjectives and adverbs implying more concern with the emotional and affective content of language.

The above findings support the two hypotheses set at the beginning of the study according to findings of a large body of literature on gendered online communication. The results of the study validate the first hypothesis maintaining that men post more about facts, entertainment and individual experiences, while
women post more about feelings, social relationships and activities involving others. This is evident in the analysis of the topics discussed in the sample status posts. The results also validate the second hypothesis stating that women’s language is characterized by the use of features showing tentativeness; yet, these features also serve the purpose of complying with positive politeness strategies, which is one way that helps women maintain solidarity and strong social relationships.

Conclusion
The present study fills a gap in the research on gender identity in online settings, especially in regards to the Egyptian culture. The results of the study support previous research that has been done in the area of gender language differences in both online and offline communication settings in terms of the topics of interest preferred by each gender as well as the stance features and engagement strategies used by each. The data analysis of the Facebook status posts made by 50 male Egyptian FB users and 50 female Egyptian FB users reveals that male users prefer to discuss topics related to personal and individual experiences while females prefer to talk about relationships and social experiences. In terms of linguistic stance features and engagement strategies, males showed more self-centered attitudes while females showed more involvement with others and inclination towards positive politeness strategies that foster social solidarity. The data analysis also highlights how each gender constructs its online identity. Males prefer to portray themselves as powerful, assertive and independent whereas females tend to portray themselves as sensitive individuals who greatly value social connections and solidarity. Also, males’ avoidance of mentioning female relatives on Facebook reflects the influence of cultural norms on their gender identity as the Egyptian culture shows tendency to hide female relations from public life as one way of experiencing male protection and supremacy. In fact, the present research implies that an individual’s identity is continuously shaped and reshaped by the surrounding social, cultural and technological environments, which makes it inevitable to continuously study the process of identity construction across different cultures and time spans.

References


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“This is what we’re up against now. Lying, deception, manipulating the truth,” asserts Sam Shepard’s government agent in *The God of Hell* (38). Building a society based on the ideals of truth and honesty — and freedom and dignity implied in the ability to say the truth — is the cause the American government is working to achieve, as announced by this government representative in *The God of Hell* (2005). Yet, this is neither understood nor seen realized by the other characters in the play. In this study, I will attempt a reading of *The God of Hell*, focusing on the discrepancy between word and action as a dramatic representation of post-September 11 American policy. This policy will figure here as a factor leading to a kind of dystopia where the individual struggles to unravel an ambiguous existence, to express his needs, to assert his claims, and to develop a sense of his own value, of his own identity, a process which ends with the individual’s destruction.

The action of *The God of Hell* takes place on a Wisconsin dairy farm where the heifer-breeding couple, Frank and Emma, has been leading a peaceful rural life. The two characters represent the typical rustic isolated life of the Midwest with which they are entirely content: “There’s no tension here. We’re in the country here. Everything’s quiet and peaceful,” Frank says, describing their life in the opening scene (18). Emma, similarly, appreciates this tranquil life where “nothing ever happens,” which explains why she is “not afraid of anything” (22, 23). Establishing this picture of a utopian existence at the outset of the play is integral in underlining the impact of the government agent’s appearance in the couple’s life, an appearance which results in its utter disruption.

The play starts with the couple talking about an old friend of Frank’s - Graig Haynes - who had disappeared for some time, and is now taking shelter in the basement of their farm house. As the action progresses, the identity of Haynes unfolds; he is a radioactive refugee from a plutonium-producing facility. Now, he is hiding from a scientific operation of making bombs. This operation is run by the government and, apparently, he has been previously involved in it. Later, the play reveals Haynes as a plutonium carrier. His appearance in Frank’s and

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Emma’s life shatters it. Haynes is pursued by Welch, a government agent who presents himself to Frank and Emma as a salesman of “patriotic” souvenirs. In the process of arresting Haynes, Welch does not only humiliate and torture him but also causes Frank and Emma tremendous suffering, both physical and psychological. Frank is seen on stage moving in pain in a way that suggests that he has been exposed to the same kind of torture Welch used with Haynes. Frank is finally brainwashed; he is seen repeating Welch’s words, and, later, he sells his heifers - which stand in for his and Emma’s lives - and leaves with Haynes and Welch to an unknown destination.

In “Hell in the Heartland,” Una Chaudhuri refers to the same significance of the heifers in *The God of Hell*, stating that “For Frank, his animals provide a rapture of participation in an agrarian world that is fast disappearing, taking with it the stability and certitudes once signified by the homestead, the ranch, the little house on the prairie” (52). This disturbing ending comes as a sharp contrast to the play’s idyllic beginning; selling the heifers signals the end of tranquility and assurance that used to be the foremost qualities of the utopian existence which Frank and Emma stand for, giving way to a dystopic kind of life, one dominated by obscurity, uncertainty, oppression and violence.

There have been studies that examined the post-September 11 policies of the American Administration in relation to the concept of Utopia/Dystopia. For example, in his article, “The Deterritorialized Wars of Public Safety” (2004), Allen Feldman calls the United States’ campaigns against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan “wars of dystopia” (73). He describes the American policy of the time as a “political fantasy” that “promoted the ahistorical polarities of civilization/barbarism” (73). Feldman elucidates his conception, writing that the World Trade Center “was eulogized as a violated Utopian space” that was “threatened by an invisible, infiltrating menace” (73). Hence, the focus has been placed on the perception of the United States as a utopia jeopardized by external threat.

The contribution sought in the present research, conversely, is the examination of the connection between post-September 11 policies of the United States and the idea of Utopia/Dystopia from the point of view of the discord between the post-September 11 American nationalist discourse and the actual American political practices, in an attempt to reveal this discourse as laying the foundation of a dystopia in the American society, despite attempting to draw an image of this society as a utopia. This perspective shares Chad Walsh’s premise that “dystopia is most often social planning that backfires and slides into nightmare” (137). In the following analysis of Shepard’s play, the life of the American people will figure as a dystopia created—ironically—in the course of the Administration’s attempt to establish security, loyalty and solidarity, the
bases of a utopia from the government’s point of view. Frank’s final appearance on stage is an instance of the “nightmarish” existence where the individual’s freedom is crushed, and his sole function is reduced to complete obedience to and support for the state. Walsh identifies such a condition as one of the main elements of dystopia: “by weakening the sense of individual identity, [it becomes] more likely that the average man will merge his own frail identity with the social whole” (143). In “The Nature of ‘Outsider Dystopias,’” Sharon Stevenson expresses a similar view, asserting that in dystopian literature, the utopia intended by oppressive regimes results in dispossessing the human being of his freedom, of his dignity:

the evil in a dystopia is usually a faceless, all-encompassing state, bureaucracy, or belief system that annihilates or restricts some set of values the readers believe are indispensable to both their own and the characters’ ability to function as fully dignified human beings. (131)

Axel Honneth’s theory about justice provides the conceptual framework of this study, as it offers an in-depth examination of the core values at stake in the play. Honneth’s definitions of justice, a just society, ethical life and mutual recognition will be employed to present a reading of the play as a rewriting of the American nation after the September 11 attacks, as a questioning of the popular image of the United States as the land of freedom and democracy.

In The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts, Honneth develops the foundations of a social theory where he defines justice as the recognition of all members of the society, and describes it as a vital human need. This mutual recognition -as Honneth calls it- is indispensable for the achievement of the basic foundations of identity formation and ethical life, namely self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. By self-confidence, Honneth means the capacity to express one’s needs and desires without fear of being abandoned as a result. He uses the term self-respect to refer to the individual’s ability to assert and defend his claims as well as viewing oneself as entitled to the same treatment as every other person. Self-esteem, as used by Honneth, involves as sense of what distinguishes a person from others, which -by implication- must be something valuable, as it underscores the individual’s uniqueness. Honneth asserts that certain cultural conditions, namely exclusion, insult and degradation, are violations of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem, because such conditions are essentially experiences of disrespect. It is the state’s failure to meet its subjects’ moral expectations, he adds, that results in the absence of justice.
The ideals that Honneth calls for are the basis of a utopian city-state, typically characterized by “the institutions and policies [being] entirely governed by reason” as opposed to communities “divided by self-interest and greed for power and riches” (“More’s Utopia”). In this study, The God of Hell will be presented as supportive of Honneth’s political theory in the sense that it portrays a dystopic kind of existence where all the elements that contribute to a just society and an ethical life - in Honneth’s sense - are absolutely obliterated.

It will be further argued that this dystopic image of the American society resulted from the nationalist discourse employed forcefully after the September 11 attacks, which makes a brief reference to the concept of nationalism a necessary prelude to this paper. In his famous 1882 lecture “What is a Nation?,” French scholar Ernest Renan defines nationhood as a “spiritual principle” founded on “the desire to live together” (10). Renan further emphasizes the significance of the individual in the life of the nation: “a province is its inhabitants and, if anyone in this affair has the right to be consulted, it is the inhabitant” (10). Along the same lines, John Hutchinson examines the emergence of nationalism, underscoring the importance of recognizing and embracing individual differences as the basis of civil life. In “Cultural Nationalism,” Hutchinson presents an idealistic view of nationalism, a view that is closely attuned with Honneth’s theory with its emphasis on freedom, equality and tolerance. Hutchinson writes that “Nationalism encouraged the rise of a civil society, of an educated citizenry engaged in a diversified “public” sphere in which all could participate no matter what their social, economic, religious status. All nationalists appeal to the nation as … moulded by human will” (76. Italics mine).

This perception of nationalism, however, does not exist in The God of Hell; it is, in fact, subverted. The nationalist discourse we see in the play reveals a completely opposite perspective, one in which autocracy and coercion figure as the basis of the state, and, consequently, citizens are judged as either loyal patriots – if they embrace the state’s policy – or traitors – if they differ with it. It is this tyranny which Shepard refers to, talking about The God of Hell and its relation to the political milieu before the 2004 presidential elections: “What is that show-your-colors mentality about? Fear. The sides are being divided now ... So if you're on the other side of the fence, you're suddenly anti-American. It's breeding fear of being on the wrong side” (qtd. in Shewey par. 7).

The idea that the country is subjected to external threat is the government agent’s tool to force the other characters into adopting the Administration’s principles. In his preface to Bart Bonikowski’s Research on American Nationalism, Paul DiMaggio refers to this strategy in relation to the American nationalist discourse:
Periods preceding and following major wars ... were characterized by vigorous discussions of national identity and civic obligation ... The convergence of the perceived threat of terrorism after the events of September 11, 2001 with war in the Middle East ... provides fertile terrain for an increasing salient discussion of nationalism, patriotism, collective identity, and civic obligation. (3)

Indeed, in The God of Hell, the characters are coerced to believe that maintaining their country’s security is a duty they have to fulfill in only one way, namely by giving up their individuality and abiding by the doctrines propagated by the government, in the name of patriotism. The few years that followed 9/11 mark a critical point in the history of the United States of America where values such as freedom, justice, dignity, patriotism and solidarity were constantly debated. In its public discourse, the American government powerfully promoted the image of the United States as a nation that respects and nurtures these values. The government strongly endeavoured to emphasize the idea that the freedom to resist was key to maintaining rights: rights are “secured by free dissent” (Bush, Jr. “Second Inaugural Address,” par. 11). It was also asserted that freedom is crucial for the attainment of justice: “no justice without freedom” (par. 11). Differences, tolerance and the freedom of expression figured in public discourse as integral to America’s political life: “It's one of the great strengths of our democracy that we can discuss our differences openly and honestly, even at times of war” (Bush “War on Terrorism” par. 150).

Here, one can raise a question: with this highly resonating nationalist discourse, is the individual really living in the utopia portrayed by the state? In fact, the actual American political decisions and practices of the time came only to invalidate such discourse. Violations of civil liberties were typical of the American policy of the time. Other nations whose policies were not approved of by the United States were labeled by the latter as terrorists who jeopardized its security, and were, accordingly, penalized. For example, commenting on the invasion of Iraq, President Bush Jr. said “In Iraq, we saw a threat, and we realized that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize” (The First Bush-Kerry Presidential Debate. Italics mine).

Noteworthy is that these violations were by no means limited to what the administration called its enemies. These violations extended to influence the lives of the American people. A close observation of the frequent use of the first person plural pronoun in the above quote sheds light on the government’s verbal manipulation. It is trying to convey a kind of unity between the government and
the people whom it represents, forcefully leading the people into believing that this is what the whole nation actually “saw” and “realized.” Criticizing the invasion of Iraq, Chip Pitt and Bryan Long write that this war was “corroding democracy in the United States homeland” (“War, Law and American Democracy”). Indeed, Americans who did not support the “War on Terrorism” launched by the Administration were seen by the regime as enemies; they were excluded as unpatriotic citizens. In the same speech where “the freedom to disagree with each other” was praised by the American President as a feature of the American society, it was made explicit that “You [the American people] are either with us, or you are with the terrorists” (“Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People”). Commenting on this policy and on the self-righteous rhetoric of good versus evil, many critics emphasize that “the ‘war on terrorism’ is an ideology of fear and repression that creates enemies and promotes violence rather than mitigating acts of terror and strengthening security. The worldwide campaign has too often become an excuse for governments to repress opposition groups and disregard international law and civil liberties” (“War on Terrorism”). In a milieu where opposing the government’s beliefs meant treason, the freedom of thought and the voice of dissent were, consequently, silenced.

With this exclusion, despotism, violence and intolerance, the nationalist discourse of the time led to a dystopia. *The God of Hell* can be read as a dramatic critique of that experience. Indeed, Shepard presents “an imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through … totalitarian control” (“Dystopias: Definitions and Characteristics”). The situation portrayed in the play is one where the individual’s basic rights of understanding, dignity, freedom of thought and expression, as well as maintaining one’s identity are denied. The characters in the play are being tortured—both physically and mentally—by a government agent in an attempt to force them into abiding by the regime’s notions, the pretext being maintaining national security. Ironically, this very policy is itself an act of totalitarianism and terrorism.

*The God of Hell* premiered in New York in 2004. Events which occupied the political foreground at the time—the Abu Ghraib abuse and the US presidential elections—are behind the memorably powerful stage images the play presents. The electrical cord attached to Hayne’s genitals is used by Welch as a means of torture as well as humiliation, an image reminiscent of the Abu Ghraib violations. “It’s just like holding the leash of a well-behaved dog,” Welch says to Emma (Shepard 39). The American flags Welch hangs all around the house is a compelling image of America prior to the elections. Indeed, after September 11, there was rarely a house in the United States which did not have a flag hung
on the windows. The use of these stage images makes it feasible to see the play as a sharp criticism of the American Administration’s reaction to the traumatic event of September 11, i.e. a criticism of the American foreign policy.

My focus is, however, on the impact of the Administration’s practices on the American society itself, on the American people. Commenting on the effect of the war on terror and its rhetoric, Pitt and Long maintain that “This overbroad, preventive, perpetual war sustained by a climate of propagandistic fear and deception … has led to over-broad changes that seriously undermine centuries-old liberties and the rule of law in ways that will not be easy to reverse” (par. 6).

There is a compelling parallelism between what the agent says in the play and the Administration’s rhetoric at that time. For example, the agent’s “We’re suddenly stung by our duty to a higher purpose” (Shepard 33) echoes President Bush Jr.’s “advancing these ideals [freedom, democracy, human dignity, human rights] was the calling of our time” (“Second Inaugural Address,” par. 5). Welch, the government agent, further claims: “We’re provoking rebirth!” (Shepard 31).

Yet, both the government representative’s actions and the Administration’s practices reveal a complete contradiction to these claims. Like the characters in the play, we are shocked into realizing that the “higher purpose” and “the calling of our time” are reduced to totalitarian tactics. This contradiction between word and action, between the language used and the actual reality, reveals where the society Shepard portrays truly stands in relation to Honneth’s idea of the just society. This contradiction, furthermore, enhances the dystopic existence Shepard’s characters are leading; not only are they denied freedom, acceptance and respect, they are also living in a hypocritical world. Emma, Frank and Haynes are subjected to a kind of deceptive and manipulative rhetoric which they are forced to believe and which totally contradicts the reality.

In the play, when the government agent bluntly expresses the Administration’s self-image as the absolute power in the world, we see an unjust dystopic society where the ruler’s authority and power are unbounded, which implicitly suggests the total relegation of the will and needs of the individual subjects. When Haynes remarks that Welch should not be in full control of Emma’s and Frank’s house, i.e. controlling and changing the way they think, Welch answers: “We can do whatever we want … We’re in the driver’s seat … There’s no more of that nonsense of checks, and balances. All that red tape … We’re in absolute command now. We don’t have to answer to a soul” (31). And, indeed, this is what he achieves; despite suspecting Welch earlier in the play, Frank ultimately, gives in to the former’s attempts to indoctrinate him. “He’s [Welch’s] from the government … our government … That means he knows more than us. He’s smarter than us. He knows the big picture … The Enemy. He
knows who the enemy is,” Frank says to Emma who is shocked by Welch’s disruption of their life (35).

This points out Welch’s role as a carrier of one of the play’s central themes. Chaudhuri’s “Hell in the Heartland” deals with The God of Hell as a “political allegory” of contemporary America as a land where the government manipulates the people into adopting an ideology whose sole function is to promote the country’s foreign policy, a policy which aims primarily at having absolute control of the world. The outcome of this process, according to Chaudhuri, is the “remapping” of the American nation, that is altering the face of the society by obliterating its freedom of thought (54). We see Frank believing Welch’s discourse, and, thus, joining the fanatic sector of the society which blindly supports the government’s decisions. Similarly, despite his resistance at the beginning, Haynes finally gives in to Welch’s command. We infer that he is going to proceed with bomb-making. Emma is the only character who does not change, yet this does not mean that she is safe from Welch’s influence. She is seen completely devastated, watching her life completely destroyed. Welch, thus, figures as the agent of this “remapping,” encroaching upon the lives of the rest of the characters, permanently changing them (54).

In addition to intellectual coercion, Haynes and Frank are subjected to brutal physical torture at the hands of the government representative. Figuring as one of the fundamental elements in the structure of an unjust society, according to Honneth, physical oppression contributes to the picture of a dystopia where the individual’s freedom is tied and s/he becomes utterly dominated by another entity. Honneth believes that “every attempt to gain control of a person’s body against his or her will … causes a degree of humiliation,” adding that “what is specific to these kinds of physical injury … is not the purely physical pain but rather the combination of this pain with the feeling of being defencelessly at the mercy of another subject, to the point of feeling that one has been deprived of reality” (Honneth 132). This accurately applies to the experience of Frank who has become too weak and vulnerable to challenge authority and assert his own beliefs.

Emma, on the other hand, manifests more defiance. With suspicion and apprehension, she seeks an explanation to what is going on around her, through posing questions in every scene. Hence, she establishes the interrogative tone of the play. This tone intensifies the feelings of loss, uncertainty and uneasiness, feelings which do not belong in the utopia implicitly promised by Welch.

With the emergence of Welch in her life, Emma feels threatened, her emotional and intellectual space violated. The physical definition of Welch at his first appearance is powerfully reminiscent of the post-September 11 government personnel in a “dark suit with American flag pin in his lapel … crisp
white suit, red tie” (Shepard 8). In addition, Shepard introduces him on stage in a manner that brings the ideas of power, domination and dictatorship to the fore: “A man’s arm pops into view, dangling a large cookie in the shape of an American flag, with red, white, and blue frosting” (8). Even when Emma expresses her resistance, telling him she is not interested in the cookies, he keeps urging her to take them. “Hold it then. Just take ahold of it and feel its wonderful weight and texture,” he tells her (8). As Haynes puts it toward the end of the play, “We’re – what they want us to do” (40).

In addition to the “American-made cookies,” as Welch calls them, flags are used in the play as a sign of patriotism (8). Welch tries to force Emma to put up “a flag or something to that effect, some sign, some indication of loyalty and pride,” noting that without “even one small token in the home” such as a “miniature Mount Rushmore, Statue of Liberty … We could be anywhere,” to which Emma significantly replies: “We’re not anywhere” (12. Italics mine). Emma’s reply, simple and straightforward as it seems to be, is very suggestive. She expresses real loyalty and love for her country, for the life she leads on her and her husband’s farm where “there’s no tension … Everything’s quiet and peaceful” (18). To her, this love and attachment to the place where one belongs need no physical or verbal manifestation in order to prove genuine as Welch suggests. Emma’s strong attachment to her country is the kind of patriotism which Shepard believes in. Criticizing the showing off of loyalty to one’s country, Shepard says: “We’re being sold a brand-new idea of patriotism. It never occurred to me that patriotism had to be advertised. Patriotism is something you deeply felt. You didn’t have to wear it on your lapel or show it in your window or on a bumper sticker” (qtd. in Shewey par. 6).

In “In the Name of the Nation,” Brubaker criticizes the idea of flag-waving, as “associated with intolerance, xenophobia, and militarism, with exaggerated national pride and aggressive foreign policy” (118). Brubaker explores the repulsive hostile aspect of nationalism, when it develops into a policy of exclusion and othering. Brubaker further condemns what he calls the “monopoly” of the “language” and “iconography” of patriotism exercised by one party and imposed on the people: “In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, … verbal and visual emblems of nationhood and patriotism have become deeply associated with the fateful decision to frame those attacks in the language of ‘war’ rather than ‘crime’” (123). This explains his position that “unspeakable horrors … have been perpetrated in the name of the nation.” (118) A close observation of The God of Hell reveals a similar experience. The government - represented by Welch- claims to be the only representative of the truth and, consequently, imposes on the people what to believe and how to express it, using the ideal of patriotism as its tool to manipulate the people.
This dismissal of difference deprives the characters of self-esteem and the sense of superiority, according to Honneth’s theory. Honneth situates esteem in the values of a particular culture. That is, social conditions for self-esteem are determined by a prevailing sense of what is to count as a worthy contribution to the society. Frank and Emma live in a society that excludes and even condemns insurgents. Based on Honneth’s theory, such a society remarkably departs from the image of the just society as he envisions it. Thus, instead of the “rebirth” the government representative promises in the play, the characters face destruction, emotional and intellectual annihilation (Shepard 31). Welch’s attempt to make Emma express her patriotism in the one particular way he accepts is actually an attempt at “the destruction of personal identity,” the foremost feature of dystopias as Martin Kessler puts it in “Orwell and the Perfect State” (568).

Brubaker introduces a definition of patriotism, one which upholds the critical mind of the individual as the basis for true loyalty and love for one’s country. Brubaker writes:

Patriotic identification with one’s country — the feeling that this is my country, and my government — can help ground a sense of responsibility for … actions taken by the national government. A feeling of responsibility for such actions does not, of course, imply agreement with them; it may even generate powerful emotions such as shame, outrage, and anger that underlie and motivate opposition to government policies. (121. Italics mine)

With its focus on freedom, this definition makes embracing difference and recognizing the worth of the individual the basis for true patriotism. Hence, this perception of patriotism is very well-suited for Honneth’s theory where mutual recognition is an indispensable precondition for the full development of the people’s identities and for providing the basis of a just society. Its absence, however, in the world of The God of Hell contributes to the dystopic portrayal of the society depicted.

The play ends with Frank selling his heifers, Welch getting Frank’s and Emma’s house ready for a “meeting,” and Emma standing outside the house ringing the bell but unable to enter. Throughout the play, Frank, Emma and their house stand in for the simple traditional rural American life, a utopia, trying to maintain its values and resist the corruption and degradation ushered in by Welch, the representation of a totally contradictory world view. To choose this ending for his play, Shepard suggests the inability of the people to stand in the face of a destructive policy that sweeps away all the values that had always given strength to that society, namely freedom and multiplicity. The play, it can be
claimed, ends with the destruction of Emma’s and Frank’s utopia, of “the world [that] was perfect once,” as Frank puts it in the play (Shepard 39).

In *The God of Hell*, Shepard, thus, presents an alternative image of his country as a land where freedom is more verbally upheld than actually realized, and justice, dignity and freedom are therefore, unattainable. Honneth argues that it is the state’s failure to meet its subjects’ moral expectations that results in the absence of justice. These moral expectations, according to him, comprise the maintenance of freedom, identity, human dignity and human rights, concepts which are all violated in *The God of Hell*. In the light of Honneth’s idea that inclusion is the only way to meet the claims of recognition and, therefore, establish an ethical life and a just society, it can be asserted that the defeat of Shepard’s characters who fail to assert their freedom, to be accepted by society and to maintain their identity is basically a portrayal of the failure of the state itself, of a hypocritical regime that totally excludes and crushes the voice of dissent. The result of this failure is a dystopic society where the individual loses his sense worth, dignity, freedom, peace and identity. The play patently expresses its playwright’s vision: “Democracy's a very fragile thing. You have to take care of democracy. As soon as you stop being responsible to it and allow it to turn into scare tactics, it's no longer democracy, is it? It's something else. It may be an inch away from totalitarianism” (qtd. in Shewey par.7).

**Works Cited**


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Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) and Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* (2014) – henceforth to be referred to as *GST* and *LO* respectively – are award-winning novels that belong to the well-established and prestigious subgenre of the Indian Novel in English. *GST* is a winner of the Man Booker Prize and *LO* was shortlisted for the same prize. The two novels are political novels with genealogical affiliations to the All-India Progressive Writers Association (AIPWA), described by Priya Joshi as the literary and intellectual movement that has dominated the Indian literary scene since its emergence in 1933 till the present, despite the formal disintegration of the movement in 1939. The narration of the Indian nation in AIPWA-inspired novels is characterised by a coupling of leftist politics and literature, as well as the deployment of social realism. The goals of AIPWA are summed up by Ahmad Ali, a major Indian novelist and a co-founder of the Movement who defines it as,

> an intellectual revolt against the outmoded past … against acquiescence to foreign rule, enslavement to practices and beliefs, both social and religious, based on ignorance, against the problems of poverty and exploitation, and complete inanity to progress and life. (qtd in Joshi 207)

The present paper offers a reading of the two novels, and aims to illustrate how the theme of betrayal and the image of a seemingly endless chain of binary divisions are foregrounded as the representative symbols par excellence of the modern nation-state of India. The paper also proposes that, in their construction of arguably comparable versions of the post-Independence Indian nation state, both *GST* and *LO* belong to the tradition of novels described by Neelam Srivastava as being engaged in a "critique of the state … [which is] more about the failed possibilities of the Indian nation-state rather than a critique of nation formation per se" (32). The present study attempts to show that the time gap of almost a century between the AIPWA goals cited above and the writing of *GST* and *LO* has not resolved the conflict between stasis and progress that has featured

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throughout the post-Independence years. And while the Indian nation has achieved major feats politically, socially, and economically, the problems depicted in the two novels are still highly relevant in today's India.

The joy and hope of independence of India (and Pakistan), announced at midnight of August 14th, 1947, was inevitably associated with the trauma of Partition in which millions have been displaced and unspeakable violence was perpetrated. Appropriating the English language and (especially in the case of GST) "making it nearly into an Indian language" -to use the phrase of Joshi describing Salman Rushdie's groundbreaking 1980 novel Midnight's Children-GST and LO engage with narratives of the nation, highlighting the betrayals and failures, and offering their visions for future resolution. History and the narration of nation have always been, not only a persistent thematic preoccupation but the very "raison d'etre" of the Anglophone novel in India, according to Priyamvada Gopal, who argues that, "the conditions of its emergence – out of the colonial encounter, addressing itself to empire rather than a specific region – meant that the Anglophone novel returned repeatedly to a self-reflexive question: "What is India(n)?"(6). Gopal claims a special status of "prominence" and "contentiousness" for the Anglophone Indian novel both in the context of Anglophone postcolonial literature and in the context of novels written in indigenous Indian languages. Whereas writing in English language provides the novels (and their authors) with "both economic privilege and cultural capital" reflected in a "global readership" and "canonical status" in some cases, the Anglophone postcolonial novel in general and Indian novel in particular is under pressure to prove its national credentials in the language of the colonizer. The argument of the present paper contends that both GST and LO have risen bravely to this mission and engaged with the question of "What is India(n)?"

The India represented by the two novels is a composite world that bears the heavy weight of history since times immemorial, reflected in its rural landscape and urban centres, as well as in its uncharted places such as the river in GST and the forest in LO. The Indians dwelling and interacting within the textual worlds of GST and LO are the peoples of the state of Kerala in GST and the peoples of Calcutta and the surrounding countryside of the states of West Bengal, Medinipur, Orissa and Bihar in LO. Far from being homogenous, the Keralese and the Bengalis of the novels are sharply divided by class/caste, gender, and, most importantly, by religion – a major identity marker that overshadows other cultural distinctions. Betrayal and division have marked the private lives of the novels' characters as much as the political public arena of the nation.

The temporal focus of both narratives is the late sixties and early seventies – a time of political turbulence after the death of Nehru, during the reign of Indira Gandhi and immediately preceding "The Emergency" of 1975-1977, imposed by
Indira Gandhi and seen by many as a powerful symbol of the betrayals of the post-Independence era. The idea of India represented by the two novels is informed by the abortion of the nationalistic dream embraced by the modern nation's founding fathers Nehru and Gandhi, towards the construction of a secular unified nation beyond the divisive claims of religion, caste, community, or region. Arguably, both *GST* and *LO* belong to that "endless stream of 'nationsroman' … novels of the nation" which, according to Joshi, was "inaugurated … [by Salman Rushdie's] *Midnight's Children* … [A stream whose imaginary constructions] seem more elegiac over than celebratory of the nation" (260). These novels, according to Joshi, "formulate or expose what Timothy Brennan has called a 'collective myth of the nation', … not at its moment of birth when it was the glorious victor of a liberation struggle, but in its unglamorous middle age, riddled by … maladies" (261).

According to Srivastava, the Emergency marks the onset of two major political events: the breakdown of Nehruvian secular ideology adopted since Independence and later threatened by the extremist far-right Hindutva ideology, as well as "the reassessment of the meaning of Indian democracy and the achievements of the Indian state" (4) by Indian intellectuals. Highlighting the parallel development of Indian historiography and Indian Novels in English since the 1980s and 1990s, Srivastava points to the recent trends in Indian historiography, represented by the Subaltern Studies collective of historians whose original project was grounded in a Marxist perspective. The historian Ranajit Guha argues that,

> It is the study of this historic failure of the nation to come to its own, a failure due to the inadequacy of the bourgeoisie as well as of the working class to lead it into a decisive victory over colonialism and a bourgeois-democratic revolution of the classic nineteenth-century type … it is the study of this failure which constitutes the central problematic of the historiography of colonial India. (43)

The two novels begin their action in medias res, with the Ayemenem House already in ruins in *GSM* and the Bose Street House on the downward trajectory that will lead to utter disaster in *LO*. The correspondence between this theme of failure and destruction and the state of Indian national politics in the mid-sixties is evident. The successive betrayals and divisions that mark both public and private spheres are the causative agents of destruction in both cases. Interestingly, the fissures and betrayals can be traced back to the origins of the nationalistic movement: for whereas both Nehru and Gandhi shared a vision of liberation from colonial rule, and emphasized the multicultural composite nature
of India, blaming the colonial encounter for disrupting the harmony of India's multiple communities that have coexisted peacefully for millennia, the attitude of these founding fathers towards the nature of government, the role of religion, and language is markedly divergent. The common ground shared by Nehruvian and Gandhian ideology stops at the margins of the anticolonial liberation struggle, as Srivastava argues through her revision of Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* [Self-Rule]. Nehru advocated, and presumably tried to implement -in his capacity as Prime Minister- a European-based model of modernity, in which feudalism is an attribute of the middle ages that has to be eliminated, and industrialization, technology, and English education are to be embraced as the means to progress. Nehru preached secularism – not in the sense of anti-religion, but rather anti-sectarianism through the relegation of religion to the private domestic sphere rather than the public political one. Gandhi's nationalist vision on the other hand involved "a call to return to the roots of Indian civilization … a utopian, collectivist and religious political vision … a rejection of rationality and the scientific mode of knowledge … and a return to village life" (30). This emphasis on village communities and rejection of urbanization was vehemently rejected by Nehru, as Srivastava claims, since "primitive backward roots are inevitably antithetical to the desired progress" (31). Gandhi's brand of nationalism is religious, in the sense of an all-inclusive "syncretic religion" that unites all Indians regardless of religious denomination. The spiritually-oriented brand of nationalism espoused by Gandhi, as well as his advocacy of the use of Hindustani language as official language in post-independence India, has an antithetical relation to Nehruvian ideology, with its secular orientation, and its bias towards English language. This antithesis marks the onset of divisive tendencies that will afflict Indian political life throughout the twentieth century, and that find expression in the multiple metaphors of fissures/fission in the texts of the novels under study. However, Srivastava plausibly points out that whereas Nehru's political vision got a chance to be implemented during his reign as India's first prime minister after independence from 1947 till his death in 1964, Gandhi's political vision depicted in *Hind Swaraj* "had never been considered or adopted by the ruling Congress [Party] as a concrete political strategy" (32).

Other political betrayals leading to further divisions – and echoing the biggest betrayal/division of all that led to the Partition of the Indian subcontinent into the "twin" nation states of India-Pakistan, then the subsequent division of Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh – are the divisions among the ruling Congress Party and even among the opposition Communist Party. For example, the erosion of the unity of the Congress Party by the Hindu right, to whom Nehruvian secularism was nothing more than "Muslim minority appeasement"
(11), as Srivastava claims, constitutes a betrayal of the Nehruvian ideology of secularist nationalism. Moreover, "The strong rural basis of the Congress - both in terms of the wealth of some of its major landowning supporters and in terms of sheer voting numbers- has made it difficult for the Congress to effect a just redistribution of land or promote large-scale industrialization of the country" (Srivastava 8). Of special relevance to the plots of both novels under study is the historical division of Indian Communist Party into CPI (Communist Party of India) and CPI(M) – Communist Party of India (Marxist Division), then the subsequent division of the latter into a number of factions, including the Naxalites – the most militant faction of the CPI(M), who staged an armed insurrection in the 1960s in Naxalbari, a village in Bengal.

Both novels highlight the theme of "Revolution", and both use the upper case letter "R" to write the word; but whereas LO represents Revolution as the only means to challenge timeless oppression and current political corruption, GST, overshadowed as it is by the possibility of Revolution – still embraces and visualizes an ethos of love and acceptance of the self and the other as a way out of an impossible situation, albeit being a narrow, steep, risk-ridden way. In the small town of Ayemenem in which the events of GST unfold the Naxalites and their Revolution seem far away in tandem with the distance separating Kerala from Bengal. This feeling of distance prevails, despite the Workers' Marches in which factory workers, organized by corrupt self-serving Labour Unions, carry red flags and chant revolutionary slogans written in the novel's text in both the Malayalam language of Kerala and its simultaneous English translation: "Inquilab Zindabad! Thozhilali Ekta Zindabad! 'Long Live the Revolution!'" they shouted. 'Workers of the World Unite!'" (66).

On the other hand, the Calcutta of LO, the hometown of the factory-owning Ghosh family, cannot continue to ignore the impending threat of the ongoing Revolution any longer, given the geographical proximity of the village of Naxalbari just north of the borders of the state of West Bengal as highlighted by the map prefacing the text; and more relevantly, given that one of their own sons, Supratik Ghosh, who studies political science at the University of Calcutta, has already left home to join the Naxalite-inspired revolutionaries in the countryside. Moreover, the crowds of beggars that fill up the streets of Calcutta arriving at the house doors of middle-class families begging for food, having been displaced from their villages by the recurrent famines that ravish the Indian countryside are a constant reminder of failed post-Independence policies and politicians' unkept promises, and a powerful sign of the inevitability of Revolution according to Mukherjee's text. Describing the despair of Calcutta's homeless poor, Supratik writes:
Lying on their gamccha, a jute sac, a piece of tarpaulin or plastic or whatever scrap of cloth they can spare after wrapping their bodies, is a row of sleeping men curled up like fetuses … Their vests are full of holes, they wear dirty threadbare lungis that ride up while they are asleep, exposing their shame to the world, the soles of their feet are so cracked, they look like parched land in a particularly bad drought … They are not beggars, and they are certainly not the worst-off in our country – they have the clothes on their backs and the physical ability to work at least for now … But, in a few years most of them will contract a disease and die like animals. Do you know what happens to their dead? … They are slipped into the Hooghly in the dead of the night. There the corpses rot and bleach and bloat, wash-up ashore, get half-eaten by dogs and foxes, rot on land for a while, then get pulled back into the water during high tide. (32-33)

Significantly, as one of the multiple images of division in the world of LO, Supratik's worldview considers such scenes of extreme suffering, as the scene of Calcutta's homeless quoted above, within a wider image of division between the haves and the have-nots. The above quote describes "The world beyond the walls of the Great Eastern Hotel … Only ten feet separate [these homeless] from the world of extreme wealth. Inside-outside: the world forever and always divides into these two categories [my emphasis]" (32). Influenced by Marxist ideology despite his bourgeois family origins, Supratik is a meticulous observer of these daily signs of a societal fissure that destabilizes the very foundations on which India is constructed.

Corruption is a major causative agent of the suffering of masses in both novels: An episode in GST illustrates the corrupt profiteering stance of Party politicians who denounce one of their leaders, accusing him of "providing relief to the people and thereby blunting the People's Consciousness and diverting them from the Revolution" (68). The novel scathingly critiques such insensitive disregard of the fact that relief was desperately needed during the 1960s when "Kerala was reeling in the aftermath of famine and a failed monsoon. People were dying. Hunger had to be very high up on any government list of priorities" (68). The link between corruption and Revolution is underlined on the same page where we read the description of Naxalites as revolutionaries who "organized peasants into fighting cadres, seized land, expelled the owners and established People's Courts to try Class Enemies … spread across the country and struck terror in every bourgeois heart" (68). Similarly, LO abounds with multiple instances of collusion between members of Parliament, police officers, and wealthy businessmen, in a concerto of betrayal directed mainly against landless peasants and factory workers in both novels, as well as the "scheduled
Betrayal Division

tribes" displaced from their metal-ore-rich land in an act of genocide in LO, and the "Untouchables" of GST.

It is noteworthy that the middle class, with its pivotal in-between position in modern nation-states, is the main narrative focus in both novels, and is ambivalently represented as betrayer and betrayed. The Syrian Orthodox Christian Jon Ipe family of Kerala in GST and the Hindu Ghosh family of Calcutta in LO are representative of a large section of middle-class Indians. Gopal's claim that in Anglophone Indian novels, "the domestic and the familial … intersect with, transform, and are transformed by the grand narratives of nation and national history" (8) is vindicated by the plot of the two novels under study, and foregrounded, among other things, by the juxta positioning of a Ghosh family tree diagram and a map of West Bengal, India in 1967 in LO. Significantly, the declining fortunes of both families is related to the implementation of new technology to private enterprise in a country not fully prepared for modern Western technology – an endeavor that stresses the families' finances embroiling them in the labyrinthine maze of corrupt official bureaucracy and multiple-interest bank loans on the one hand and the pressures of exaggerated workers' demands incited by corrupt labour unions on the other. Ironically, the pickling and preserving nature of the grand-sounding business venture "Paradise Pickles and Preserves" of the Jon Ipes indicates the conflict between tradition and modernity in postcolonial contexts; The Paper Manufacture and Print Press and the Bengali Publishing House of the Ghoshes on the other hand evoke different, albeit equally conflicting, connotations.

The rise and fall of the Ghosh family business reflects the material conditions of Cultural production in Bengal in the decades before and after Independence. Significantly, the perennial failure of the Ghosh Publishing House, specializing in offering opportunities to emergent writers of novels and poems in Bengali language during the late 1960s and early 1970s of LO, is a reversal of the nationalist cultural revival of the early decades of the century. Reviewing the abundant body of writing about Calcutta seen through English/European gaze since medieval times, Kate Teltscher argues: "From the 1860s … the increase in political activity coincided with the growth of Calcutta into a major commercial and industrial city … As the city's economy grew, so did the colonial bureaucracy, staffed by Western-educated elite among the Bengali middle class, the bhadralok" (199). "It was the bhadralok that was largely responsible for the spread of nationalist ideas and activity in the city" (199), adds Teltscher, "This was the class which Kipling satirized in the figure of the babu who 'drops inflammatory hints / in his prints' in the poem 'A tale of Two Cities', and who makes interminable speeches in the Bengali Legislative Council in the narrative 'The City of Dreadful Night' (1888)" (200).
However, far from being depicted as politically active, the "bhadralok" of the late 1960s and early 1970s India depicted in GST and LO suffer from a state of political inertia resulting from the repeated frustrations and disappointments that unfortunately often follow the high hopes and exaggerated expectations of liberation struggles. In GST, Pappachi, the head of the Ipe family, had his prestigious title of "Imperial Entomologist" downgraded to "Joint Director" (48-9) after Independence, and his lifelong work of discovery of a new species of butterfly – known to his family as "Pappachi's Moth" was plagiarized by a colleague through corrupt nepotism. Thus, this scientist who had received a Vienna scholarship under the rule of Empire, retires with his family to the countryside after Independence, spending most of his time in his dark library with shelves of boxes of butterflies pinned into paralysis for eternity. Pappachi becomes a wife-beater, using a brass vase to beat Mammachi's head night after night, causing severe scars that remained till her death. Chacko, their Rhodes scholar son with a degree in Classical Literature, transforms from an intelligent young man with a beautiful English wife and daughter and with progressive Marxist views that make him such an enlightened "Modalali"/owner or manager of the family business, into a lazy overweight gourmand who spends his time "Reading Aloud" in his bedroom and making balsa airplanes that never take off the ground. It is a mark of the pathos and lost potential of this sensitive intelligent young man that, despite all private and public frustrations, his caring tenderness allows him to act as father surrogate to the twins of his divorced sister Ammu who is herself another victim of betrayal. Having married a Bengali Hindu young man – a love marriage that ends in divorce due to the tragic downfall of the husband (another bourgeois victim of political betrayal) into alcohol addiction, Ammu inadvertently dooms her twin son and daughter (Esthe and Rahel) to ignominious hybridity. Unaccepted by their maternal Christian Keralalese family or paternal Hindu Bengali one, the twins nevertheless have a happy childhood, thanks to their Uncle Chacko, their Mother Ammu, and a third character who is arguably the tragic hero of the novel – Velutha (the very dark-skinned man whose name means "white" in Malayalam). Ammu, who has received an English language education at missionary schools, has a lifelong ambition to make an independent living and support her children by establishing her own private school – an ambition that remains unfulfilled due to her untimely death at the age of thirty-one, sick, ostracized, and all alone in a hotel room. Tragically, it is Ammu's short love affair with Velutha that has been so cruelly punished by a society where despite all claims of progress, age-old caste-system prejudices are as deeply entrenched as ever.

Velutha is represented both physically and emotionally as a demi-god: a handsome young man with black skin, dazzling white teeth, tall muscular body,
high intelligence, compassion, and humility; he has received advanced vocational training under a German master which, coupled to his great natural artistic skills, makes him an engineer cum carpenter cum artist cum electrician. Chacko admits that Velutha "practically runs the [Jon Ipe] factory" (279). An all-inclusive capacity for love, compassion, and sharing is the core of Velutha's nature: he is the bread-winner and care-taker of his small family consisting of a blind father, a sick mother, and a paralytic brother; he is a guide, companion, and playmate to the twins, as much of a father figure to them as their uncle Chacko is, teaching them how to swim and row a boat, sharing games and stories with them, and endlessly caring for them. Nevertheless, Velutha belongs by birth to the "low" caste of the "Untouchables", which is not just a metaphoric marker of marginalized inferiority, but a literal stigma that precludes getting in touch with the body of anyone belonging to a higher caste. Velutha is betrayed by the impenetrable persistence of age-old caste prejudice that relegates the lower caste members or "Untouchables" to an eternally inferior position, by the self-serving political manipulations of Comrade Pillai, and by the establishment represented by the police who murderously kill Velutha in a scene of unspeakable violence enacted in front of the seven-year-old twins Esthe and Rahel:

Touchable Policemen … [were acting as] history's henchmen. Sent to square the books and collect the dues from those who broke its laws. Impelled by feelings … of contempt born of inchoate, unacknowledged fear … Man's subliminal urge to destroy what he could neither subdue nor deify … If they hurt Velutha more than they intended to, it was only because any kinship, any connection between themselves and him, any implication that if nothing else, at least biologically he was a fellow creature – had been severed long ago … They stepped away from him. Craftsmen assessing their work … Their Work, abandoned by God and History, by Marx, by Man, by Woman and (in the hours to come) by Children, lay folded on the floor … His skull was fractured in three places… his face pulpy, undefined…. (308 – 310)

It should be emphasized that Velutha's life was sacrificed at the altar of social prejudice for daring to love the "Touchable" Ammu, and at the altar of politics for daring to resist the establishment and to act sincerely for the welfare of the working class as one of the exceptionally rare card-holders of the Communist Party to uphold the values of general welfare rather than private interest.

The Hollywood musical drama Sound of Music (1965) is arguably deployed within the world of GST as a focal narrative event as well as a reiteration model of the theme of betrayal and of the politics of language. The twins are taken to
watch the movie three times, for the dual purpose of entertainment and pedagogy, as they are made to memorize the words of the songs as English language drills. Significantly, the movie employs English to tell the story of the Von Trapp Austrian family living under Nazi occupation – a linguistic choice justified by the power politics of the outcome of the Second World War and of the overwhelming influence of the Hollywood cinema industry. Like the novel, the movie's plot highlights private and public betrayal, and deploys non-linguistic indicators of identity such as landscape, character names, and historical references that subvert the overt linguistic choice. The multiplicity of major GST plot turning points that accompany the third and last trip to the movie theatre and that carry heavy betrayal connotations – Esthe's sexual assault by the "OrangeDrink LemonDrink Man", the Workers' March arranged by the Communist Party, and the arrival of the children's English cousin for the Christmas vacations – underline the thematic-linguistic connection between novel and movie. However, one major difference between the two art works persists: whereas the story of Austria-Germany is seen through American eyes, the novel uses its appropriated English-Malayalam to narrate the nation through Indian eyes.

Similarly, the world of LO teems with individuals and groups suffering from the after-effects of betrayal by government practices on the one hand, and by societal backward traditions on the other. Feeling betrayed by the government's economic policies, and disappointed by his sons' failure, the senile head of the Ghosh family has become a bedridden paralytic, a broken man. The Ghosh sons are afflicted by a variety of maladies that have been dormant for years only to be acutely precipitated by the impending financial ruin of the family at the beginning of the novel. These problems range from drunkenness and drug addiction, to habitual debauchery at the slum brothels of Calcutta, to wasted literary talent and aborted attempts at revitalizing the publishing industry of Bengali literature as a symptom of nostalgia to its heyday during the nationalistic struggle of the 1930s.

Betrayals and discriminations affect women characters in the world of both novels for reasons that are more related to gender rather than class, caste, wealth, or education: for example, honouring marriage sanctity is a code that applies to the Ghosh family wives in LO but not necessarily to the husbands – two of whom are depicted as regular visitors of Calcutta's brothels; GST's Baby Kochamma who has a diploma in ornamental gardening from Rochester's college in the USA, and LO's Chaya who has a master's degree in English Literature are deemed unsuitable for marriage due to religious causes in the former case and skin colour in the latter. To be unmarried is a stigma justifying being relegated by family and society to a permanent position of inferiority regardless of
education, wealth, or status, an oppression that finds outlet in feelings of low self-esteem which later metamorphose into petty jealousy, bitterness and resentment directed against everyone, and specifically against other women. Strong and intelligent women who seek to be independent, like Ammu in *GST* may be tolerated up to a certain extent, but eventually they are made to pay a harsh penalty for daring to challenge social norms and attempting to practice equal rights as their male counterparts. Widowed daughters-in-law like Purba in *LO* lead a sort of living death, treated by their in-laws as less than servants, not sharing family meals, and living in penury despite the relative wealth of their in-laws. Interestingly, such pernicious customs – that remind one of the "sati" practice in which widows were burnt alive with their husband's corpses – are a major consciousness-raising factor in the case of Supratik Ghosh, the protagonist of *LO*. His adoption of Marxist ideology and his joining the Revolution are as much a function of the tragic circumstances of Purba and her children at home as of wider socio-economic inequities.

On the other hand, Rahel in *GST* and Sabita Kumari in *LO* are vital examples of woman power that may yet be triumphant in a patriarchal society against all odds. Rahel has always been stronger than her twin brother Esthe or Esthappen; as children she has always taken the lead in play, doing homework, or interacting with adults. Significantly, she is the main narrator of the novel as she returns to the Ayemenem home after years of separation during which everyone has either died or emigrated, to find a traumatized silent Esthe. The novel can plausibly be seen as the attempt of 31-year-old Rahel – an age described recurrently as "Not old. Not young. But a viable die-able age" (3), which coincides with the age at which Ammu dies – to come to grips with the past, with its happy moments and its major traumas that could not be comprehended fully during childhood. The novel's end, as will be discussed later, leaves room for speculation regarding Rahel's (and her twin Esthe's) potential role in shaping the future of their country.

It is noteworthy that *LO*'s most powerful woman – Sabita Kumari – doesn't appear in the novel's text proper, but rather in the Second (and final) Epilogue set in September 2012, i.e. more than forty years after the death of Supratik. Significantly, Sabita is the inheritor of Supratik's legacy, and the new torch-bearer of the Revolution, having chosen the Revolution rather than the meek acceptance of the only fate that awaited her tribal people: "outside their land – daily wage-labourer in the city, maidservant in someone's home, prostitute" (502). Sabita is the daughter of dispossessed and displaced parents who have tried against overwhelming odds, to retain their belief in the official narrative of progress, struggling to offer their children an education that may guarantee them a chance for a better life. However, the betrayals catch up with them, and Revolution is Sabita's only means of revenge and survival:
When the little of her life had been reduced to nothing, the Party had held and rocked her in its iron cradle, told her that the nothing of her life could become a path, a straight, narrow, but tough one, at the end of which was a destination worth reaching. She has repeated the same words … to her comrades who are silently marching with her now to their business of the night. She has picked them with great thought and care. Underlying her choice had been one immutable principle: they must be people who are nothing too, whose lives are nothing, who have nothing. No recourse to any form of redress or justice. Revenge was their last roar. And what was justice but revenge tricked out in a gentleman's clothes, speaking English? (501)

The final lines of LO's last Epilogue shows us Sabita, leading a guerilla-war squad of a "new kind of children … children of the trees" (500), marching through the forest in the middle of the night on their way to carry out the dangerous mission of implanting explosives on the railway using a technique inherited from Supratik and his comrades. Although Supratik himself had already died forty years ago, "his gift to his future comrades survived … he lived on in his bequest" (504) – the innovative technique of implantation of explosives on railway tracks which he invented. Thus "Revolution" is still alive. LO highlights the tragic vicious circle in which these acts of violence are perpetrated by the dispossessed against the "lives of others" who are, by all standards, similarly dispossessed. The faulty logic embraced by Supratik's comrades/"children of the trees" is the result of despair of ever getting a fair chance to right their grievances against an all-powerful corrupt system that resembles the evil ogres of fairy tales. Through its vivid portrayal of the excruciating scenes of famine, institutionalized torture and rape suffered by these dispossessed at the hands of a seemingly invincible, corrupt, octopus-like regime infiltrating all vestiges of life, Supratik and his ideology are elevated to Saviour-like status. The novel's text confronts its readers with a challenging moral question: on the one hand, acts of terrorism against civilians cannot be condoned; on the other, the state of affairs prevalent in most so-called Third-World democracies where a suffering majority is persecuted and dispossessed by a corrupt ruling elite has to be remedied if the world is to be spared an apocalypse.

The midnight Partition that resulted in the birth of the nation-states of India and Pakistan is reflected in the two novels in a compound manner that reflects the inherent duplicity of the meaning of "division" as a concept. In addition to the biological meaning in which cellular division of living organisms whether humans, animals, or plants, is the only way towards growth and multiplication, towards survival of any given species in the generative sense, division also
connotes a traumatic separation that can be associated with tremendous suffering such as the violence that accompanied the birth of India and Pakistan. On the second page of GST, the image of in-utero division of the embryonic cells is evoked as we read that the twins Esthe and his sister Rahel – the protagonists/narrators of GST,

were two-egg twins … Born from separate but simultaneously fertilized eggs. … They never did look much like each other. The confusion lay on a deeper, more secret place.
In those early amorphous years when memory had only just begun … Esthappen and Rahel thought of themselves together as Me, and separately, individually, as We or Us. As though they were a rare breed of Siamese twins, physically separate, but with joint identities.
Now … years later, Rahel … thinks of Estha and Rahel as Them … Their lives have a size and a shape now … Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits have appeared. (2-3)

"Borders" and "Boundaries" in the above quotation from GST are echoed by the "Boundary Commission's decision" mentioned in LO with reference to the boundaries drawn between the emergent nations of India and Pakistan. Significantly, the fortunes of the Ghosh family of LO are entangled with the decision of this political Commission, a "decision [which] … came as a shock: the Ghoshes were to lose the mills at Charna and Meherpur to the new country, East Pakistan" (238). All the members of the Ghosh family gather to listen "to Nehru's speech on the radiogram at midnight of the 14th August, with the set turned up loud, all of them stoked up, for once in the patriotic blaze sweeping the country" (239). Extracts from Nehru's historical announcement are quoted in italics, highlighting the optimism of the moment, greatly at odds with the future disillusionment depicted by the novel: "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake ... A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step from the old to the new ... The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements..." (239). Nehru's choice of English language to deliver this historical announcement to the Indian nation is subtly underlined by the frustration of grandmother Charubala, who cries out, "Oh, I can't bear this prattling in English any longer! Why isn't anyone speaking in Bengali?"(239).

The paradox inherent in the basic fact of life in which "multiplication" of cells occurs through subsequent "divisions" -two acts which have an antithetical relationship in the discipline of Mathematics- may shed light on the obsession of LO as a text (in which several chapters are dedicated to a detailed discussion
of mathematical concepts), and of Swarnendu (Sona) -the child prodigy and mathematical genius of the Ghosh family- with Theory of numbers, especially prime numbers that cannot be divided. Sona has been leading a life of deprivation with his mother and his sister in the basement of the Ghosh family house, with strict lines of demarcation that divide their world from the Ghosh world above. Their only sin is that they are a widow and her children, and according to tradition, they cannot be treated on an equal footing with other family members. Sona's mathematical genius and the help of Supratik and two of his teachers get him a scholarship in the USA. The novel's text proper tells us no more about the fate of the silent Sona, till we read in the novel's First Epilogue an American magazine article dated in 1986 giving the news that the now thirty-year-old Sona aka "Professor Swarnendo Ghosh, a Professor of Pure Mathematics in Stanford University ... [has won] the Fields Medal, widely regarded as the 'Nobel Prize for Mathematics'" (496) which makes him the youngest mathematician ever to get the prestigious award. Citing landmarks of his biography, the magazine, having failed to get an interview with the notoriously reclusive professor, cites the opinions of his colleagues and graduate students, to the effect that he is widely respected by all, that he is "hugely inspiring ... [with] a focused, brilliant, obsessed mind" (498), and that as is the case with "most mathematicians ... [he is a] creature[s] somewhat dissociated from the real world ... the abstract matters to [him] much more than the concrete" (498). However, one is tempted to consider Professor Swarnendu's obsession as a rare amalgam of the abstraction of number theory and the concreteness of its historic applications in his homeland, India.

Lines of division may be portents of impending disaster and downfall, such as the vertical faultline extending all over the façade of the Bose Street house of the Ghoshes, seen through the eyes of Supratik on his return home after an absence of two years spent among the peasants organizing Revolution: "this house which is asymmetrical ... along the vertical plane. If one were to draw a longitudinal line dividing the building into two halves, they would not correspond to each other; the balconies would be to the left, the two windows of one of the front-facing rooms ... would be to the right" (391). The imminent ruin of the two family homes in both novels reflects the threats facing the stability of the nation as a whole. On the other hand, division may herald the spawning of a new generation of the Ipe and the Ghosh families whose lives parallel the rise and fall of national history.

These may rightly be called "Midnight's Children" following the title of Salman Rushdie's novel that is arguably the Ur-text of contemporary Indian novels in English. The genealogical ties between GST and LO on the one hand and Midnight's Children on the other are supported by the argument of the critic.
Rajeswari Sunder Raja discussing the Anglophone Indian novel and claiming the epigrammatic utterance "to write fiction in India today is to write in the shadow of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*" (Joshi 232). Saleem Sinai, the Muslim protagonist of Rushdie's novel, has a disturbed life trajectory that parallels the political turbulences of *Midnight's* Kashmir as well as the unstable lives of Chacko, Ammu, and Velutha in *GST*, and of Supratik and his brother Suranjan in *LO* – all of whom are "midnight's children" born in the 1940s, on the other. Moreover, there is an intriguing correspondence between "Rushdie's enigmatic ending in *Midnight's Children* of a 'broken creature spilling pieces of itself into the street' (Rushdie 552) "which reflects," according to Joshi, "communal unrest and increasing separatist violence" (261), and the endings of both *GST* and *LO*. The younger generation in the two novels are born in the 1960s (Rahel and Esthe in *GST*) or in the late 1950s (Sona and his sister in *LO*); thus their birth dates coincide with the turbulent time preceding the Emergency; they can be named the Emergency Children, having suffered its trauma at an early age, and the endings of the two novels are intertwined with the fates of the two generations and the fate of the nation.

*GST* has a chronological end coinciding with the narrative present of narration, and a textual end coinciding with the novel's last pages relating a scene that has taken place years ago. Given that both scenes are variations of the novel's most reiterated expression concerning the problematic nature of "Love Laws … the laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much." (33), the endings of *GST* can be read as an attempt at reconciliation and healing of Rushdie's "broken creature" metamorphosed into a plethora of "broken creature(s)" including Esthe, Rahel, Ammu, Velutha, and all the other broken creatures whether humans or nations. In addition, because of the transgressive nature of the two love scenes, with the chronological end breaking the incest taboo and the textual end breaking the caste taboo, the possibility of Revolution cannot be eliminated. Rebellion is implicit within the love paradigm offered by the novel.

The chronological ending of *GST* involves an enigmatic love scene between the twins Esthe and Rahel in their childhood home in Ayemenem, now in ruins and empty of its people except for an elderly bitter maiden great-aunt, and her equally old and bitter maiden servant. One night in Esthe's dark bedroom, Rahel tries to coax him into responding to her speech, as he had stopped speaking for years. What happened between the twins, and what the future holds for them, has to remain an unsolved mystery:

There is very little that anyone could say to clarify what happened next. Nothing that (in [grandmother] Mammachi's book) would separate Sex
from Love. Or Needs from Feelings … But what was there to say/Only that there were tears. Only that Quietness and Emptiness fitted together like stacked spoons … Only that what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief. Only that once again they broke the Love Laws. That lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much. (328)

The reference here to "Love Laws" suggests that national and private problems may be solved by a rewriting of these laws dictating interpersonal and inter-communal relations, leaving room for speculation about future possibilities for the victory of love and/or Revolution against retrograde tradition and self-serving corruption.

The final pages of *GST* take the readers back in time more than twenty years to another love scene amidst the ruins, between the two star-crossed lovers Ammu and Velutha. The impossibility of any sort of union between them under a fossilized societal caste system changes their nightly meetings at the "History House" – that novelistic chronotope that used to be the house of an Englishman and his Indian lover in Imperial times, then a neglected ruin during the twins' childhood and during the Ammu-Velutha love story, changing once more into a modernized hotel catering for Western tourists at the narrative present of the novel – is inherently a revolutionary act as challenging to the status quo as Velutha's political activism. Recognizing this impossibility, the two lovers "stuck to the Small Things. The Big Things ever lurked inside. They knew there was nowhere for them to go. They had nothing. No future" (My emphasis 338). Among the "Small Things" they laughed at during their fourteen nights of love at the History House were "ant-bites on each other's bottoms … clumsy caterpillars … overturned beetles that couldn't right themselves … [and] a minute spider who lived in a crack in the wall of the black verandah of the History House and camouflaged himself by covering his body with bits of rubbish" (338). Clinging to the safety of Small Things in a world where Big Things are too overwhelming to bear contemplation, the lovers identified with the spider, giving him a name – "**Chappu Thamburan** … Lord Rubbish" (339). However, Chappu Thamburan turned out to be luckier than Velutha: "He outlived Velutha. He fathered future generations. He died of natural causes" (339). The final words of the novel are "**Naaley. Tomorrow**" (340) – the parting promises the lovers exchange every night during their short-lived love affair. One is tempted to read these final words as an allegorical reference to a national future where the have-nots or have-nothings survive like the spider and affect a change through a composite notion that may be termed "revolutionary love".

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Maha Sallam
LO - a voluminous novel of more than five hundred pages - offers two consecutive and complementary endings; the final two chapters of the novel's text proper set in the year 1970 relate the double tragedy of the murder of Supratik after his being tortured by the police, and the related suicide of Madan-da, the elderly Ghosh family servant who has been like a father to all the Ghosh children, especially Supratik. In addition, there are two Epilogues referring to the self-exile of Professor Swarnendo Ghosh and Sabita Kumari's midnight squad discussed above; these move the narrative years ahead to 1986 and 2012 respectively. These endings require a contrapuntal reading with the novel's equally violent Prologue, as together they frame the narrative, highlighting the inevitability of a comprehensive Revolution involving different classes. The police murder of Supratik after an extended incarceration during which graphic details of police-conducted torture sessions are depicted, leaving him broken physically and psychologically in a manner that echoes Rushdie's "broken creature", and the suicide of Madan-da constitute a fitting accompaniment to the shock of the novel's Prologue. The first line reads: "A third of the way through the half-mile walk from the landlord's house to his hut, Nitai Das's feet begin to sway. Or maybe it is the head-spin again" (1). It is May 1966, and "the sun is an unforgiving fire; it burns his blood dry. It also burns away any lingering grain of hope that the monsoons will arrive in time to end this third year of drought" (1). The division between the haves and the have-nots is evoked as we read that Nitai has gone begging to no avail "all morning outside the landlord's house for one cup of rice. His three children haven't eaten for five days" (1). In the next two pages Nitai transforms the now-useless farming tools – the sickle and the insecticide – into lethal weapons, killing his wife, his three children, and then himself.

Contrapuntally, the final lines of the novel describe the heavily charged moment of time between the implantation of the explosives by Kumari and her squad and the imminent arrival of the train: "In three hours, well before dawn breaks, the Ajmer-Kolkata Express, carrying approximately 1,500 people, is going to hurtle down these tracks" (505). The high number of deaths and casualties involved in this explosion is presumably meant to cause a massive impact on the government that will shake the ground beneath the status quo and lead one step further on the road to change. True Revolutions exact a heavy price that has to be paid by everyone: middle-class educated idealist young men such as Supratik – avid reader of the romantic nationalistic poetry of Bengal's poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore's, as well as of communist utopian ideology of Marx, Mao Tse Tung, and Charu Mazumdar – play an active role as a field hand as well as guide and mentor. In addition to a leadership that works hand-in-hand with the grassroots such as Supratik, Mukherjee's vision of Revolution is an all-
inclusive one embracing peasants, workers, tribal people, and urban slum-dwellers.

Finally, the present study argues that, in their representations of versions of national narratives that highlight betrayals, divisions, and the inevitability of Revolution, GST and LO are two outstanding examples of excellence within a tradition that appropriates English language and overwork it to make it bear the burden of Indian experience. The complex interaction of politics and literature in the texts of both novels can be traced back to the influence of AIPWA, as well as to the Subaltern Studies of Indian historiographers, and to the stream of "nationsroman" initiated by Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. The fates of two families in both novels are closely intertwined with documented national events, yet ultimately, it is the aesthetic value of the two novels that subsume their historical political content and guarantee the novels an outstanding place in Indian Literature.

**Works Cited**


In our modern times, one of the most influential and omnipresent tools used in mass media is advertisements: particularly television advertisements. Advertisements have pervaded every home, urban and rural, as an integral part of a powerful visual culture that is shaping today’s concepts and modes of representation. This is why their impact and the ways in which they represent cultural phenomena are not to be overlooked. Before the exciting action movie, within the breaks of an interesting talk show or until the vegetables simmer in the chicken broth on a catchy cooking channel, advertisements do not shy away from boldly and continuously popping up. In his article, “What is Visual Culture?” Nicholas Mirzoeff asserts that the reason why visual culture has made a huge impact is that, “the human experience is now more visual and visualized more than ever before” (4). As a result, “people in industrial and post-industrial societies live in visual cultures to the extent that seems to divide the present from the past” (4). Advertisements are the messengers of such a sweeping visual culture.

This paper aims at culturally analyzing some advertisements shown on Egyptian television channels in order to shed light on the image of the woman represented in them. The advertisements chosen particularly center on the woman as a potential bride, housewife and a mother. Under the three roles, her image is positively stereotyped: or in other words is presented as a visual cultural marker for the standard social image of the bride, housewife and mother. The essentialized image of the woman paves the way to a myth that is created and propagated by means of mass media to serve the whole bigger ideological frame of the mainstream or “malestream” society (West 94). The myth rooted within the social mosaic perpetuates the fact that the woman’s body and mental faculties are belittled and come down to her function as an efficient housewife or a perfect mother. This paper attempts to show that through the analysis of a selected number of advertisements.

Before starting the analysis, it is noteworthy to shed light on the meaning of representation and the channel by which this representation takes place, namely,

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advertising. In addition to this, a link will be established between those definitions and the title of the paper to elaborate its purpose.

**Representation and Advertising**

Representation is part and parcel of the concept of culture. In Chris Barker’s *Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, the relation becomes crystal clear: “…the central strand of cultural studies can be understood as the study of culture as the signifying practices of representation set within the social and material contexts of production, circulation and reception” (45). The production, circulation and reception of culture by the masses within certain social and material backgrounds take place through the representation of various signifiers; the function of which is producing a certain meaning. This meaning is propagated and finally conveyed to the recipients. Representation is “a set of processes by which signifying practices appear to stand for or depict another object or practice in the ‘real’ world. Representation is thus an act of symbolism that mirrors an independent object world” as Barker asserts in *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies* (177). This is not to suggest directly a relation between the signer and the object it signifies but it is to say that the function of representation is to “create a representational effect of realism” (177). In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall describes representation as “the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture through the use of language, signs and images which stand for or represent things” (15). Establishing a certain cultural construction and propagating it as reality is in itself representation. Consequently, representation is to be connected to issues of power and control as it does not innocently reflect the truth. In *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, Barker asserts that “the power of representation lies in its enabling some kinds of knowledge to exist while excluding other ways of seeing” (177). As a result, there occurred the concept of the ‘politics of representation’. In this paper, it is the politics of representing women in television advertisements that is under question and the kind of image or reality that is being propagated.

Taking it from here, it is of use to define the term “advertising”. In his article, “Towards a New Paradigm in the Ethics of Women’s Advertising”, John Alan Cohan defines advertising as

a paid announcement, usually targeting a specific market group, designed to influence the purchase of goods and services. Advertising is considered to be commercial speech … the purpose of advertising is generally to inform targeted consumer groups of the availability and description of products and services, and to persuade consumers to buy them. (323)
In accordance with Cohan’s definition, in the *Cambridge Dictionary*, the term is defined as “the business of trying to persuade people to buy products or services”. In the *Economic Times*, advertising “is the means of communication with the users of a product or a service. Advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them”. In the *Business Dictionary Online*, it is the “activity or profession of producing information for promoting the sale of commercial products or services”. The keywords to be highlighted in the previous four definitions are: targeting, influence, persuade, means of communication, producing information.

In today’s Egypt, the effect of advertisements is as potent as anywhere else in the modern/post-modern world. Since today’s world has become globalized, its ideology has become a consumer ideology aiming at the previously highlighted concepts, namely, influencing specific target groups with a specific agenda. “Globalization and Americanization have become synonymous in the minds of many, including those in the Middle East and Egypt”, mentions Maha El Said in her article “Alternating Images: Simulacra of Ideology in Egyptian Advertisements” (211). This is why the culture of advertisements with all its social impacts has easily been transferred from the West to the Arab world including Egypt. This is furthermore asserted by El Said in her article: “In a postmodern world, contradicting images flourish simultaneously in a globalized world, cultural hegemony is dressed up with flavours of locality” (212). The same mechanism is applied when the myth(s) about women are propagated through the channel of television advertising.

An advertisement is a process of communication, a tool used in visually propagating an idea or a concept, sent by a particular entity with a particular agenda via a specific medium; in this context, television. It targets a particular consumer group with distinctive characteristics. The fact that it is a communication process leads to an anticipated aim, namely, influence. Advertising aims mainly at an effect of persuasion. The targeted group of consumers is persuaded to buy the product advertised. The effect takes place as a result of the information sent. The word ‘information’ renders the whole process open to questions like: Who produces this information? What kind of information is offered? What are the meanings that are produced then perpetuated in the minds of the targeted groups? Then what does the targeted group do when it interacts with other social groups? The meaning is simply and smoothly circulated, thus acts as the targeted-agenda-carrier which is part of a targeted ideology.

In the context of this paper, the ideology that is perpetuated is that of consumerism within the dominant social system of patriarchy. Women are the tools used on screen in order to convey certain messages which are presented in
a naturalized form. The advertisements are repeated in such a way so as to keep the story alive in the minds of the consumers. By time, the constructed myth – a device in the politics of women representation– is normalized and accepted to the extent that “the average consumer [including women] does not notice anything wrong with the common portrayals of women in advertising” (Cohan 329). The power of the myth lies in its being a type of speech and according to Roland Barthes, this means that “everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse” (109). The discourse in the present case is that of television advertising aiming at selling products used in the house by women, such as: laundry detergents, cheese, and ghee. The house or kitchen as a setting thus replaces the open forests or jungles that Clarissa Pinkola Estes hints at in the title of her book, *Women who run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*. The women instead run around the house, doing house chores or chase their kids. Doing otherwise will render them crazy as they deviate from the essentialized norm established by the controlling ideology. Consequently, they will be locked as “Mad Women in the Attic”, the same image Susan Gilbert and Sandra Gubar use as a title for their book, *The Mad Woman in the Attic*. The analysis of the advertisements will be done in the light of Barthes, Estes, Simone De Beauvoir’s conception of the myth of the woman, and Gilbert and Gubar’s work.

In Barthes’ “Myth Today”, the function of the myth – as a social construction – in today’s world is illustrated. Barthes introduces collective representations – in this paper’s argument that of the women used in TV advertisements– as “sign systems” and by “unmasking them”, one can “account for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature” (9). The messages that are delivered by the selected advertisements are channeled smoothly into the fabric of the society, in the “naturalness” that Barthes mentions in his article. Barthes asserts that the reason why a myth is created is this “naturalness with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality” (11). Consequently, “in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying the ideological abuse…is hidden there” (11).

In the context of this paper, the myth is that of the woman, or of women representation. In *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, Chris Barker defines representation as “a set of processes by which signifying practices appear to stand for or depict another object or practice in the ‘real’ world” (177). In Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, this “real world” is a world made by and according to the needs of the dominating gender, namely, men. De Beauvoir elaborates:
the “division” of humanity into two categories of individuals – is a static myth; it projects into a Platonic heaven a reality grasped through experience or conceptualized from experience; for fact, value, significance, notion, and empirical law, it substitutes a transcendent Idea, timeless, immutable, and necessary. This idea escapes all contention because it is situated beyond the given; it is endowed with an absolute truth (315).

Thus, this origin of the myth behind gender roles echoes the same “truth” that is socially represented and that Barthes aforementioned. Representing women in certain roles on the TV screen entraps them in particularized frames. Every frame tells a story – and asserts a truth – propagated by the male dominated culture and eventually building up a solid accepted image of the woman: the bride, the mother and the housewife.

**Marriage Criteria**

Two advertisements feature the girl as a potential bride. The first one is advertising the service of a faster internet, the 4G technology, provided by Orange. The setting is the bride’s house with all members of her family present while her suitor and his mother are visiting. Everyone is having a good time till the moment the mother-in-law asks her future daughter-in-law about the recipe of the lovely cheesecake she’s eating. The bride, Sarah, thinks for a moment of telling the truth about the cheesecake, that it is not homemade but thinks of the frightening result: her mother-in-law drives her fiancé away leaving her in her wedding dress, standing alone and crying on the pavement. Tension grows and everyone in the living room suddenly gets nervous but the voice of the narrator calms the viewers down by saying that the clever Sarah is quickly using her mobile to search for the cheesecake recipe. Meanwhile, and with the same speed, her sisters post a Facebook question about how to make a cheesecake. Her mother winks at her uncle so he can send a message to his chef friend asking him about the treasured recipe. When the recipe appears on screen, Sarah winks at her fiancé who sighs with relief. Sarah then “with utter self-confidence” as the narrator says, stands up and begins to lecture her mother-in-law about the recipe. Then the narrator says: “Wow Sarah, you look beautiful in the white dress” while the screen shows Sarah wearing the wedding dress and walking down the aisle with her very proud –now– husband.

The second advertisement featuring a potential bride is part of the Tide (a detergent) campaign in more than one Arab country. The advertisement is performed in Egyptian, Lebanese and Saudi Arabian dialects. The setting is again a house and a girl is sitting on a comfortable sofa eating ice cream and
watching a movie on her laptop. It seems she is having some time of her own. Her mother enters the room and angrily says: “How do you expect to get married without knowing how to wash the clothes?” She drags her daughter to the bathroom where the washing machine is. The girl protests referring to the movie she was enjoying: “But they were about to elope together!” The mother confidently replies: “So you want drama? I’ll give you drama” referring to the process of washing dirty clothes. “And like your grandmother used to say, the detergent is the hero, and a special debut for your mother’s magical mixture of cleansing materials, and a-a-a-action. Ta-daaaa, the happy ending” while getting out the white shirt from the washing machine. The last scene is the girl sitting with her laptop while the mother is folding the clothes. The mother brags about the clean clothes while shutting down the laptop.

The lesson learned in the two advertisements is: a girl cannot get married without knowing how to cook and/or wash the clothes. The advertisements portray the girls helpless in front of the tradition or the norm represented in the characters of their families. The mother-in-law in the first advertisement is the examiner while the girl is always the one subjected to the test or in other words, subjugated to the merciless social traditions perpetuated by a malestream system for centuries. The social identity or as Chris Barker calls it in his book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, “the discursively constructed social expectations … and obligations … ascribed to individuals” (449) given to a girl, who is supposed to get married, are based on her efficiency in cooking and washing. The prophetic advertisements speak myths; and the myth is signifying a certain cultural hegemonic system, namely, patriarchy. According to Roland Barthes, myths are created due to the fusion of a signifier and signified producing a sign. Building on that, the produced sign is itself a signifier whose signification is the myth. On a third deeper level and in a cultural context, the myth is in turn a signifier signifying that the girl cannot get married except if she cooks and washes, yielding to the sweeping hegemonic system. This system is inherent and handed down from grandmother to mother to daughter to future granddaughters and so on.

When a closer look is taken at these two advertisements, some interesting observations can be made. The 4G advertisement makes use of a current social crisis in Egypt, which is spinsterhood. According to the latest report issued by the Central Egyptian Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, a “shocking number” of 13,500,000 is the number of spinsters in Egypt (Foda: Masress). The social status that is longed for, namely, being a married lady wearing the charming wedding gown and walking down the aisle, is connected to the skill of cooking. The voice of the narrator getting very enthusiastic while announcing how beautiful Sarah is in the wedding dress intensifies this notion. Avoiding
spinsterhood is guaranteed if you can make a cheesecake. This sheds light on how advertisement conceals the truth. In this significant scene when Sarah thinks about the possibility of confessing that she does not know the recipe, she imagines herself abandoned on the pavement after she fails the test, therefore she will not achieve the target of attaining a social identity as a married woman, she will not have a life, and she will not be a complete person. So the more convenient alternative is to lie. Lying involves using the 4G technology to find the life saviour: the recipe. Cohan asserts that one of the problems with the ethics in advertising is this deliberate focus on what is good for the consumer, thus “advertising pushes its own values, artificial or false as they may be” (323). Lying to the mother-in-law becomes the right thing while telling the truth will leave the bride groomless on the pavement. Lying, step by step, becomes naturalized.

The girl in the Tide advertisement, who is having a good time relaxing on the couch, must be taken by the hand into the bathroom to learn how to wash the clothes. The myth of the criteria of getting married “stiffens,” is solidified and “makes itself look neutral and innocent” (Barthes 125). It is accepted behaviour to invade the privacy of girls to undergo the educational preparation for marriage. Naturalizing a concept or a belief helps in the purification of its signs, so you will not doubt its reality. This reality is usually the kind of reality perpetuated by the institutions of power to fit in their own politics; a reality that creates the Marxist false consciousness of the masses. Another significant scene in this advertisement is what the girl says when pulled to the bathroom. She is angry and says that the hero and heroine of the movie she was watching were about to “elope” together. The fact that romantic elopement is considered socially unaccepted behaviour is not to be overlooked. The rebellious drama the girl is watching clashes with the traditional drama inside the washing machine where Tide is the hero and grandmother is the director. The desire not to change is apparent in the mother’s dictation of what her own mother told her long ago, and what the girl now has to grasp in order to gain the marriage criteria. In a clear strict sign at the end, the laptop—which is the tool by which artistic rebellious drama is displayed— is firmly closed by the mother while she talks about the clean clothes, the symbols of a happy future. Again, the social status is determined by cultural hegemony handed down from generation to generation.

**Creativity and Skill Belong to the Kitchen**

In another advertisement, this time of ghee, under the slogan of: “The Kitchen is your Playground”, the product’s name is Ganna. “Ganna” is the Egyptian-Arabic word for “paradise or heaven”; symbolic of the paradise you can attain by your delicious cooking. The advertisement features two young neighbours
who start to knock on each other’s doors and offer desserts to one another. Every
time one of them bakes a delicious cake, the other one gets jealous and tries to
outdo her rival. The singing starts in a low voice then it heightens in crazy
crescendos of women screaming at each other using enthusiastic hand gestures
and frantic body movements. After the tender social compliments at the start, the
loud words start to be: “Show me your best!” , “Show me what you can do!” as
if in a boxing match and the cakes are the deadly blows. The final scene is set in
the future after those two women reach old age, but still they are seen teasing
and competing with one another in making desserts. The fact to be underscored
here is the context of the competition and its whereabouts. These two women are
actively competing in the kitchen, as if this is their own professional playground
or their allowed social space for showing their creative skills, exactly like the
slogan of the campaign propagates and stresses. The details in the cakes are
really creative, ranging from plain chocolate, frosting, caramel, nuts, to vanilla
cream, strawberries and cherries. The arrangement of these ingredients on top of
the cakes is wonderful and the cakes do look delicious and bright. A woman is
at her best then, in the kitchen. The mental faculty of creativity is reduced to
putting berries on top of the cake used to outdo her neighbour.

In El-Hanem ghee advertisements under the slogan of “A Completely
Different Story”, the woman as the housewife is represented by a Juliet standing
in the window talking to her Romeo in a comic parody of the famous balcony
scene of the Shakespearean romantic tragedy. Romeo is planning their legendary
suicide and Juliet is crying. Suddenly, Romeo stops exchanging the romantic
words as he smells the amazing aroma of freshly made “molokheya”. Juliet says
it is her sister, Juliana, standing in the kitchen and making it. Romeo simply
reacts: “Ok, I want molokheya”. Then Romeo leaves Juliet and falls in love with
her sister because she is the better cook. In a final angry tone, Juliet asks, “Aren’t
we going to drink the poison?”, and the blunt answer comes: “You can commit
suicide on your own, I’m waiting for dessert” and he looks with lust at Juliana.

In a sequel to this advertisement, another story is retold by El-Hanem. This
time, the male presence is the Sultan, Shahr Yar, of the legendary The One
Thousand and One Nights. The typical rounded-belly male is arching on a
comfortable couch with feathers and women slaves all around him, while
Scheherazade is sitting beside him telling her stories. Suddenly, the sultan is
hungry and one of the slaves, Zomoroda, seductively smiles and runs to fix him
food by El Hanem. The queen is angry, while Zomoroda feeds him and he is
extremely taken by the taste of the food. He then orders his black giant
executioner to behead Scheherazade because she is not the better cook. He
finally looks lustfully at Zomoroda promising her that he will tell her the rest of
the stories.
In both advertisements, the traditional connection between lust and food is a cheap yet comically presented method. The types of males included all have some sort of power. Romeo has the power of words, the Sultan has the power to rule, and the robust executioner has the physical strength. As for the – supposedly – creative women, they are those who steal the men from their rightful women, and the skill again is cooking the most delicious food. Despite the fact that advertising is indeed a “kind of entertainment, often with artistically superb photography, special effects, clever slogans, acting and music” (324) as Cohan says in his article, yet concealing the repulsive behaviours presented in those mentioned advertisements remains abhorrant. This perpetuates the effectiveness of the product and again the myth of the women’s private sphere. It is the lies of omission as Paul Suggett calls them in his article, “What if Advertising tells the Whole Truth?” Suggett asserts that one of the strategies that advertisements use is the lies of omission: “These are not outright lies. These are usually truths, but with something quite important missing in order to create a misconception…Talk about the benefits; ignore the drawbacks” (Suggett). The ethical side of not leaving a beloved for her sister or not to invade the privacy of girls is not discussed because it is more important to discuss the effect of the product and its amazing influence.

The limitation of women representation is reflected through this set of ghee advertisements. To elaborate, the first one shows the good dedicated housewife who uses all her potential to create the perfect food inside the kitchen; while the second and third ones show the playful, sly and probably evil women who cook in order to steal men from their rightful wives or lovers. This false representation is the same which Gilbert and Gubar refer to in The Mad Woman in the Attic: “It is debilitating to be any woman in a society where women are warned if they do not behave like angels they must be monsters” (53). The woman is either the good Snowhite or the evil queen. In both representations, the woman is entangled in the role of the provider, regardless of her intention. It is not only an imprisoning frame, but a reductionist and false one as well.

The myth of the public and private spheres is an old one. It gained a very established position in the nineteenth century, and was thought to have disappeared by time yet is successfully perpetuated and perfectly mythologized till the present moment. Women at the beginning of the 19th century were perceived – socially and scientifically – as the gentler gender. “Men would only retain their religious beliefs and their moral center is persuaded to do so by their pious and religious womenfolk” (McCalman 43). David Hume, one of the philosophers of the age, asserted that the pure figure of a woman had “a more delicate taste in the ornaments of life and the ordinary decencies of behaviour” (105). Despite the different waves of Feminism calling for the rights of women
and their presence in public life, still the distinction between public and private spheres went on. In the Arab world, Egypt included, the same segregated social life was no different. Women had their own spaces – either in the lavish palaces of the aristocracy, or in the simple cottages of the countryside – taking care of the domestic animals and children. The inside has become closely connected to the natural whereabouts of the female. While the fields, companies, factories and political arenas are the natural spaces for the male. Their segregated sphere culture was dictated by the Industrial Revolution and its consequences. There was the expanding “masculine public sphere of political, civic and intellectual life and of industry and commerce” which formed a counter point for the “feminine private sphere centered on family life” (McCalman 43). The myth is applied literally. Consequently, and due to a long history of colonization (Egypt, a British protectorate from 1882 till 1956) this industrialization was inevitable alongside with all its social and cultural impacts. In the present time – in the ghee advertisement – the private sphere is still highlighted. The woman’s natural place is the kitchen and if ever she grows such a creative faculty and makes use of her skills, it is in the realm of cooking with a seemingly comic but actually amoral target of luring men into her lair as a result of her irresistible food; a degrading value for both the women and the men involved.

“To err is human”: Well, Not the Mother!

When Alexander Pope wrote that line of poetry: “To err is human, to forgive divine”, he did not exclude a certain category of humans, but it seems that some advertisements exclude the mothers from the natural humane characteristic of making mistakes. Generally, most advertisements featuring mothers who cook, clean and wash – using the products on sale – do that in a flawless way. The myth of perfection is propagated here and solidified to the extent that the mother figure appears as an angel who never errs, a divine entity who is always present, always helpful, always working harder than her abilities to suit the needs of every member of the family. The idea that the mother is an angelic figure is a good one; however, the exaggeration of perfection and selflessness sets impossible expectations out of this mother. The multi-tasking mother appears in La Vache Qui Rit advertisement, typically working in the kitchen – again the natural setting – while her son is playing with his iPad, her daughter is texting on her mobile and the father is in the living room. She starts making sandwiches with a big smile, whistling and sending positive vibes to grab the attention of the family which is taken up by technology, as if this is their world, a world – a sphere – that the mother is not allowed to tread. She has her kitchen. Finally, the father comes into the kitchen just to eat.
In another cheese advertisement, the _Kiri_ advertisement narrator refers to the mother in third person saying that “she is more than a teacher, more than a chef, more than a doctor”. A process of reductionism takes place here. The three roles that the mother has to choose from or choose all of them are only to cook for, cure and teach her kids. Not only are the women limited by roles, but also at the end of the advertisement the value of the cheese is equal to that of being a mother because if she is a good mother, she will choose _Kiri_. If the mother is more than a chef, doctor and teacher, then a lot is expected from her, according to the super myth of motherhood. Simone de Beauvoir speaks of the extreme power of the myths in _The Second Sex_, especially myths constructed about women. She asserts that “the myth is a transcendent idea that escapes any act of consciousness” (317), which is rather a frightening assertion echoing what Roland Barthes said of the naturalness of a myth. If a myth escapes consciousness, this means that it is embedded in the fabric of what is not thought about. It becomes a given, a truth, an idea that goes without saying. This renders any deviation from its norm an unacceptable behaviour. Consequently, the mother cannot do anything but live up to the great expectations; thus being more and more confined within the bars of that family life which allows her nothing but those three roles – a chef, a teacher, a doctor – and which denies her stepping into a broader public life. The mother is a woman, the woman is a human, and humans do err.

**So: Where is the Wild Woman?**

The common thread that connects the women figures mentioned in the above advertisements is the fact that they cannot communicate with what Clarissa Pinkola Estes calls, the wild woman inside every female. The social roles they are always expected to play are always in the way of connecting with that wild figure. In her book, _Women who run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype_, Estes asserts that “a healthy woman is much like a wolf: robust, chock-full, strong life force … inventive, loyal, roving” (5), yet how can a wild wolf be reached within the walls of the kitchen or in front of the strict eyes of a mother-in-law waiting for the recipe of the cheesecake? “Separation from the wildish nature causes a woman’s personality to become meager, thin, ghostly, spectral” (Estes 5). The closing of the laptop which is the source of a rebellious love story in the Tide advertisement and the silencing of Scheherazade who was telling her legendary stories in El Hanem advertisement stand in contrast to what Estes says about the wild woman who must be present in every woman:
The archetype of the wild woman and all that stands behind her is the patroness to all painters, writers, sculptors, dancers, thinkers … seekers, finders, for they are all busy with the work of invention and that is the instinctive nature’s main occupation. (5)

It is clear that the “gender based social images that are transmitted through [advertisements] act as barriers” (Rajagopal and Gales 3333) to the development of such women and to their realization of what Estes urges them to find, namely, the wild woman who is the epitome of creativity, invention and life. If false consciousness refers to the systematic misrepresentation of dominant social relations in the consciousness of women as the subordinate gender in the society, then it is created through the repetition and circulation of the myths previously mentioned in the advertisements. The truth becomes created, it is not absolute nor is it objective. The truth becomes an illusion which says that happiness and the white gown belong only to the girl who can bake a lovely cheesecake with a shiny strawberry topping. The spirit of competition which reflects all the cognitive and mental skills of a woman only belongs in the kitchen. Cohan explains that “advertising is today’s counterpart…to the Sophists of ancient Greece, who … used illogical methods of persuasion and gave their students more of illusions than truth” (324). The distortion of truth is a main cultural hegemonic tool to convince the targeted groups by what the advertisements have to say. The subordination of women under the mystification of values as love, happiness and creativity is an aim; and the patriarchal ideology in control makes sure that this aim is fulfilled through the media, which is one effective Ideological State Apparatus. According to Louis Althusser, the function of such an ISA is to produce and reproduce social meanings or knowledge that is set by the state with a goal to create a certain type of individual. This individual – the woman in the present case – is asked to keep the status quo. Advertisements create a kind of a cultural pattern among the consumers, and according to Raymond Williams, “the short description for the pattern we have is magic” (335).

Advertisements make us believe those confined roles of the women in the society. “People do not typically admit that they are influenced by advertising, but they are. Advertising has been called the most influential institution of socialization in modern society” (Cohan 324-325). The popularity arises from the fact that advertisements “tell stories about our wider culture in a popular format, [but] stories that are often gendered in their structure and content” (Arend 56) as was previously analyzed. Being a part of our visual culture, advertisements cannot leave the audience without a conscious or a subconscious effect. The visual offers a sensual immediacy “that cannot be rivaled by print
media…There is an undeniable impact on first sight that a written text cannot replicate” (Mirzoeff 9). The wedding dress appears beautiful and bright on screen, so it becomes more desired than when you read about it in the paper. The sadness on the bride’s face when left alone on the pavement is shocking, so you do not want to be in her place, so you’d better go and learn how to bake a cheesecake or learn how to lie to your mother-in-law about it. The shift in focus is from the ethical to the commercial aiming at the social. It is no wonder that the etymology of the word “advertisement” is the Latin “advertere” which is: “to direct one’s attention to; give heed; literally to turn around” (Online Etymology Dictionary). In addition to the controlling system of patriarchy in the Egyptian society, there is also the ideology of consumerism. According to Maha El Said’s article, “Alternating Images: Simulacra of Ideology in Egyptian Advertisements”, advertisements are the prophets of consumerism which is the ideology of the current sweeping global postmodern world: “Advertisements, the prophets of globalization, have defined our way of living, lifestyle, and, to a great extent, our likes and dislikes, creating a global popular culture that thrives on consumption” (211). There is no quicker way to promote products than advertising. There is also no more effective way to commercialize values and ethics than advertising. Ideal domesticity became consumerist. Ideal marriage is the one with an ideal kitchen, meals and clothes. And the myth carries on. However, is there no hope for more space given to women? Is there no other style of representation than the tested bride, the housewife in the kitchen and the multi-tasking perfect mother?

**It Is Not Only About Cultural Hegemony**

That advertisements have the power to control is an undeniable fact, but it is also noteworthy to say that the perceptions of the viewers differ; and here comes their own form of power. “While advertisers attempt to convey specific meaning to control brand images and encourage sales, they cannot determine how viewers interpret messages or predict whether or not they will be successful” (Arend 55). The molding of women can no longer be the status quo. Long ago, the woman was confined in the two essentialized images of either the good girl or the evil witch. In the attempt to escape patriarchy, women have always represented themselves as either being the “angel-women or as monster women” (Gilbert and Gubar 44). But there are other alternatives than following the stereotypes presented in the mentioned advertisements.

*El Maleka Macaroni* campaign advocates a feminist approach. The song in the advertisement hails the woman, the housewife, the mother, the working mother, the neighbour and thanks her for all her efforts. In a sequel, the men start to announce that they will help her in the house chores; the children too. So the
stereotypical image of the mother sending positive vibes and cooking in the kitchen while the kids are on their mobiles and the father is waiting to be fed is not present. In his article, “The Practice of Everyday Life: From Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural Production?” Lev Manovich speaks of the distinction made by De Certeau “between strategies used by institutions and power structures and tactics used by modern subjects in their everyday lives. The tactics are the ways in which individuals negotiate strategies that were set for them” (Manovich 322). The producers of El Maleka campaign prove that these tactics come in handy against the “capitalist patriarchy [which] keeps the gendered status quo in operation” (Chanda 42). This campaign is not to refute the mystification or distortion of reality that advertising generally does but it is to assert that there is some kind of hope to give voice to the women who are confined within certain roles in the majority of the advertisements. It is a different kind of cultural representation which encompasses all the members of the family who pay tribute to the women and start to take part in the social or domestic life. Thus, it will not only be a space for women or mothers.

It is finally left to say that it is within the scope of cultural studies to shed light on both types of advertisements so as to display cultural hegemony and cultural diversity as well. This opens up new gaps to be researched, especially pertaining to a new culture of difference which is “neither simply oppositional in contesting the mainstream (or malestream) for inclusion, nor transgressive in the avant-gardist sense of shocking conventional bourgeois audiences” (West 94). The example of such an attempt is the last campaign mentioned by El Maleka. Its producers – in Cornel West’s words – are “contributors to culture who desire to align themselves with demoralized, demobilized, depoliticized, and disorganized people in order to empower and enable social action” (94), hence the function of cultural studies as a tool of analysis. The majority of the advertisements featuring “mad” women will remain an essentialized form of gendered representation reflecting the politics of the hegemonic ideology, yet there are still some tactics of resistance or at least attempts to step out of the socially dictated and normalized box of representation. Consequently, there is a way for the mad woman to step out of the attic and run with the wolves. After all, the only constant fact about culture is actually: change!

Works Cited
Acosta, Alisa. “Representation, meaning and Language”.


Mad Women


**Links to the Advertisements**

*El Hanem Ghee:*
1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5mIMPh07kU
2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0C3b4QUKN5c
3) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFJzTwyW504

*El Maleka Macaroni:*
1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP7EiQVzWq4
2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEINqhFf9Jc

*Gannah Ghee:.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6axfoIQgiQ

*Kiri:.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb6CkmkoUfQ

*La Vache Qui Rit:.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQAYzPSlIIE0

*Orange 4G Network:.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQlc0ssH6bo

*Tide:*
1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmjjCzZdxLE
2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRs0AJNpVvA
Subjugated and oppressed, women fail to feel socially integrated and seek to build subjectivities of their own that differ from already existing identities constructed through a heritage of stereotypes exaggerated by history, folklore and myths. Speculating on the negative effects of stereotypes on individuals' subjectivity, David Huddart writes: "Normally the problem with a stereotype seems to be that it fixes individuals or groups in one place, denying their own sense of identity and presuming to understand them on the basis of prior knowledge, usually knowledge that is at best defective" (25). In line with Huddart, Homi Bhabha believes that stereotypes are fake, forged representation of individuals as well as identities. He proposes that "stereotypes are figures of knowledge that appear, disappear and reappear with consistency even though almost everyone tacitly admits that they do not capture the 'truth' of the situation" (Greedharry 140). Consequently, there follows a need for a new type of knowledge and a different ideology of identity building that might be more empowering and supportive to females against the male ideology of stereotyping. In this respect, Bhabha suggests the ideology of going to 'a beyond area' of a new insight where a new subjectivity might be constructed. In light of Bhabha's concept of the 'beyond area', this research, is mainly concerned with the female's choice of a 'beyond space' in Doha Assy's 104 Cairo. The study is further concerned with Bhabha's thorough speculation on the idea of hybridity; it poses the question raised by Bhabha: "How are subjects formed in between, or in excess of, the sum of the parts of difference?" (Bhabha, Location of Culture 2).

Bhabha senses a liminal space outside the boundaries of time and space and suggests that within this space lies a potentiality for ridding oneself of the complexities and pretentious residues of culture as well as restrictions of time and place. Bhabha's concept of 'the beyond' is, thus, a call for a departure from the self to a beyond area and a going back to the self, time and space with a new spirit that inhabits the self once again. In Bhabha's theory, 'the beyond' is an imagined sphere and time wherein the individual might relieve himself/herself of all hindrances of a stable identity. Bhabha argues that:

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Being in the 'beyond' then is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell 'in the beyond' is also, as I have shown, to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense then, the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now. (Location of Culture 7)

Thus, identity building, in Bhabha's sense, is a matter of going out of oneself and one's time to 'the beyond' to watch over things with more insight before coming back in a new revised and reconstructed spirit. Bhabha's beyond is a timeless space that is related neither to the present nor to the past. However, this out-of-time flight can only acquire its meaning by a going back to the present. Bhabha reflects upon this process as he argues that:

The imaginary of spatial distance -to live somehow beyond the border of our times- throws into relief the temporal, social differences that interrupt our collusive sense of cultural contemporaneity. The present can no longer be simply envisaged as a break or a bonding with the past and the future, no longer a synchronic presence: our proximate self-presence, our public image, comes to be revealed for its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities. (Location of Culture 4)

Besides, Bhabha coined the term 'hybridity' in light of which he examines the diversity and difference of cultures and "what happens on the borderlines of cultures, to see what happens in-between cultures" (Huddart 4). He believes that the diversity of cultures is a benevolent fact though it has two inevitable problems: the fundamental culture's insistence on dominating the other culture and widespread intolerance (Rutherford 207-208). Multiculturalism revolutionizes the prevailing conditions and the character of the 'national population' that becomes the result of a bundle of differences. The differences of cultures can never be contained in a collective coexisting context and one universal concept (Rutherford 208-209). Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity' draws heavily upon the fact that all cultures are "symbol forming" and "subject-constituting" (Rutherford 210). So what is needed, in Bhabha's opinion, is a middle ground or rather a 'third space' where new perspectives and values are created as a result of "negotiation of meaning" and "representation" (Rutherford 211).

Defining hybridity, Bhabha says: "Hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. The third space displaces the histories that
constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (Rutherford 211). In his "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences", Bhabha revisits the term as he refers to the creation of a counter discourse of hybrid expressions opposing to those of colonizers in a liminal space which he calls 'a third space' (209). Bhabha argues that "the very idea of pure ethnically cleansed national identity can only be achieved through the death, literal and figurative, of the complex interweavings of history, and the culturally contingent borderlines of modern nationhood" (Location of Culture 5).

The action of Doha Assy’s novel 104 Al-Qahira (104 Cairo, 2016) takes place in Cairo, set at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s when monarchy was overthrown in Egypt and no imperial English soldiers remained there. President Nasser alone was the character of the period, who dominated the political and historical scene. As the novel begins, Assy highlights the way Insherah, the novel's female protagonist, suffers an inner conflict that reflects a self-repulsion and a desire for identifying with a power that is bound to empower her. Insherah unconsciously revolts against her identity as a daughter of a prostitute agent, drug dealer and one who has suspicious relationships with British soldiers. She identifies instead with Nasser as an Arab national hero and calls him her father. She even calls herself Insherah Nasser instead of Insherah Awidah, to be modified later on, due to her teachers' critical remarks, to Insherah Nasser Awidah. Depicting her female protagonist as a self-repulsive individual, Assy seems to alert her readers to the need for a beyond space as that propounded by Bhabha.

104 Cairo starts with a supernatural spirit represented in the words of the dead woman Insherah commenting on her own well-to-do gracious funeral ceremony. In flashback technique, she comments on her death in a manner that sets death as her area of liberty, or rather, a ‘beyond area’. In her post-death note, Insherah writes: "When you die, leaving your body, you become more liberated and more gratified. Little things that used to offend you, when you were still imprisoned in that body, stop to hurt. When you die you become liberated from man's great crisis: fear" (Assy 14). This shows that Insherah has finally discovered death as the perfect ‘beyond’ where one gains insight and builds an identity ready to be reborn, or to come back to life with a different vision and in a different outfit of intuition and awareness. This idea of rebirth is suggested in the 'virile power' that enables her to die several times. Insherah unfolds the secret of this supernatural power bestowed upon her by what she calls a night visitor who visited her for the first time when her grandmother was on her deathbed. As a little girl, she was terrified, her lips turned blue, her body was trembling, finding it quite difficult
to breath while her heart pounded in her chest. Attempting to soothe her, the visitor said in a very warm comforting manner:

You are powerful enough. Be assured that nothing evil will ever happen to you and however cruel what happens next, you will overcome it and turn it into your own benefit. Be reassured that you are powerful. I love you Insherah because you are just like me; you possess 'Virile' so you will be qualified to govern your body, people and the entire world. 'Virile' – remember the word, always repeat it; it is the source of your power in life. (Assy 106)

The night visitor's words suggest that Insherah is gifted with 'Virile' (the English word is transliterated and used in the Arabic text), a power that is supportive and reassuring in face of hardships. This supernatural power frequently moves Insherah to a beyond area of momentary death where she is magically liberated from fear. She died about four to five times, before her actual death, until she was called in the neighborhood of Darb Shaghlan "the five-live Insherah" (Assy 15).

All female characters in the novel move to a beyond space some way or another. Insherah's grandmother symbolizes the need to go to a beyond area to find oneself. This is highlighted in Assy's description of Nargess's pleasure rubbing her own body:

sitting for hours rubbing her body and her pleasure increases as she sees the black scrubbed residue leaving her body. She feels excited as she watches the skin of her body turn red. Now she understands and comprehends what the grandmother was doing. Yea, an attempt to get rid of what is old, bad and painful, a persistent attempt for a prospective delivery and a restoration of the confidence lost by circumstances. She comes out of such a bath with a feeling that she is still a fresh rosy woman. There she rids herself of all sufferings in the form of a residue. She enjoys watching it as she pushes it away in the water until it disappears. (59-60)

The scrubbing process significantly symbolizes removing the old self waiting for a new one to be born. The black scrubbed residue is the stripped off old self that is the cause of grief and sorrow. The identity that Nargess seems to gain in her beyond space is that of a physician as well as a spiritual witchdoctor. On one occasion she listens to a voice warning her never to visit a doctor lest she should

* All translations of the novel from Arabic into English are mine.
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lose her gift of healing power (Assy 77). She has her own magical inscriptions that prove to be greatly effective in healing serious cases and solving problems: diseases, sexual blocks, suitors for spinsters.

Likewise, Insherah's suggested beyond area of momentary death is one of enlightenment, wisdom and supernatural knowledge. Assy skillfully describes Insherah's recurrent move to her beyond space of repeated death in a ritualistic manner that gives the process an ideological significance. Assy writes:

She has her own special rituals she forces everybody to accept. She even makes them believe that, like the moon, she has her own tide and ebb. She hides behind those crescents three nights in the middle of the month when the moon is full. She takes a bath, puts perfume, gives up work, talks to nobody and eats nothing except for water and some little bread with salt. She spends all the nights staring at the sky, talking to the moon, sending her messages to Ibrahim. Everybody gets used to such a withdrawal, which is occasionally interrupted by fainting bouts, as she falls dead, as everybody believes, then rises; hence her fame as the-five-live Insherah. This makes everybody believe that somebody summons her, in a momentary death, to other anonymous worlds … yet definitely coming back more animated and able to adjust. (53)

Assy describes Insherah's move to the beyond as fresh and vital, as it frequently occurs. She renders a detailed account of the physical and psychic transformation Insherah experiences. Insherah abruptly undergoes a complete terrible blackout and senses a heavy stillness; she experiences muscle contraction and everything is frozen as if she falls dead in a deep hole, after which she gradually starts to see. She sees herself as though she were flying above her body and overhears a voice saying: "you are liberated from your body. You are now like an ethereal mass" (Assy 54).

The author elegantly elaborates the world of the beyond as inhabited with individuals and highlights the type of insight gained there. Insherah perceives a silver line coming out of her body, humans who are different in shape with some fins among fingers and toes. She sees others who are giants hiding in deep caves. She meets "Elsadeyat", women with different shapes and ages who have neither beauty nor luxury. She finds women who look like her mother, grandmother and her neighbor, a fact that actually suggests their move to a beyond space waiting for a prospective rebirth (Assy 54). Meditating upon the flight-to-a beyond experience, Insherah always asks herself: "Where do these worlds come from? And is there actually someone who summons me in momentary death?" (Assy 54).
Similarly, Manal's choice of a beyond space gives her insight into the true nature of man. Supported with the magical incantation Insherah prepared for her, using a female dog, to powerfully appeal to every man she meets, Manal moves to a beyond space of multiple sexual relationships with a variety of men. Manal's experience provides her with a new vision that turns her from a weak female, oppressed by her well-to-do husband and his domineering mother, to an extremely powerful female with a commanding sexual appeal. She comes back to reality with a new insight believing man not as easily led, as commonly thought, by his sexual desire. Man is rather obsessed with a desire for woman manipulation; however, he is a fighter who always craves for a hard-to-attain woman. Manal says:

Do not be like idiots believing that what moves him is his sex drive; it is the fake idea propagated by men in order not to be understood by us. It is the fake idea we believe and reduce ourselves to being dolls and puppets that they can move with threads in their hands so that we dance to them whenever they like. They are then filled with confidence that it is the way we possess them. We forget that man is a being with a fighter’s instinct. Do fighters like to spend their lives moving puppets? (Assy 164)

This is why Manal reasoned that a woman's skill is to keep herself sexually attainable to a man for one night only, or else she might lose his interest in her. She says to Insherah: "No man, however great, refuses the first night. A woman should not be unwise enough to ask for a second one. I need nothing more except that night when he comes to me with love, desire and yearning. The scene has to end with that night" (Assy 164). Unlike Manal, Insherah keeps a romantic view of man. Manal says "Your problem, Insherah, is that you romantically judge men; you deal with them in light of songs, movies, your grandma's words and your mother's advice. Come with me to bed to learn the true nature of man! When he is completely bare you can see reality!" (Assy 164).

Ghada is Assy's another female protagonist who seeks new insight into life that is only obtainable in a beyond space. She is the nearest replication of Insherah who is as benevolent as her. This might explain the reason Insherah chooses to leave her diary to Ghada. Like Insherah, Ghada is obsessed with a love of a man who deserted her. Adel's message to Ghada reflects her need of a beyond space where she might learn a lot of superior values other than the seemingly ideal ones imposed upon her. Adel says: "I am waiting for that moment when you feel yourself like a human being aware of values other than those dictated upon us, values that are truer and more instinctual, values of love and surrender to our emotions" (Assy 154).
Ghada, the Muslim girl, is deeply loved by Adel, the Christian aristocrat who is willing to give up his religion for her sake. However, she is obsessed with her love for Hatem, her former secret husband who, finding himself torn between her and his wife and children, has left her. Yet, now, she accidently knows that he proposes to marry Manal, and is willing to do his best for her. Being informed by Insherah of her secret incantation to help Manal out of her agony, Ghada asks Insherah for a similar spell that might help her bring Hatem back. She, therefore, seeks a supernatural beyond, created by Insherah, like that of Manal. However, Insherah, believes it to be a fake beyond that rather suits such opportunists like Manal and Hatem. Insherah says, "Such things we make for weak persons to save them from suicide and murder" (Assy 236). The beyond recommended by Insherah to Ghada is a realistic one; she is a near-to-perfect character who just needs a beyond space where she can truly see through herself and understand her potential powers. This beyond is a momentary psychological journey through herself to come back to reality with a self-knowledge that situates her as a highly cultured attractive benevolent woman with a variety of alternatives. Insherah says: "You have all choices; Adel Hedra adores you; he loves you and wants to marry you. He is neither deceiving you nor spending time. Manal's way is fairly easy. You are beautiful and she can help you and the desert is there with a lot of dogs" (Assy 237).

Nahid, is a self-repulsive female protagonist looking for a beyond wherein she might find herself and gain insight. Feeling sexually rejected, Nahid, in a state of psychic collapse, comes out to the servant, the cook and the driver nearly naked. She confidently behaves as if in full clothes. Her gone-astray-behavior testifies to an equal out of line choice of a beyond space that follows no social codes and reflects a hysterical state of ethical and social indifference. Nahid's choice signifies a need for a feminine sexual identity that reassures her as a female with a strong sexual appeal. Contemplating Nahid's case, Assy writes: "Nahid has become fragile, losing confidence in her femininity as well as in herself. She does not feel herself a sexually appealing female with a body desired by a man; hence, she comes out to men naked without the least feeling of shyness" (Assy 172).

To help her, Insherah suggests a supernatural imaginative beyond space wherein Nahid is loved and desired by a supernatural being. Insherah advises her to surrender to the king of demons who loves and adores her dearly and is, therefore, responsible for her being sexually repulsed by men. Believing her to be his possession, he prevents any man from having a sexual affair with her, including her husband. In such a fake beyond, Nahid starts drinking excessively until she starts hearing an illusionary voice saying: "Please love me dear, I have always loved you, I miss you and never desire a woman but you" (Assy 178). Nahid is filled with the ecstasy of being sexually desired; she spends a fancy night
with an equally fancy character; she hysterially performs a striptease and has a sexual affair with him (Assy 180).

Nahid's selected beyond is an imaginative space suggested and created by Insherah. There, Nahid meets an equally imaginative being, Shehab, who meets her sexual requirements and makes her feel a true female. Only in this beyond, she gains her identity as a full woman. There she, for the first time, practices sex freely, stripping herself of all restrictions. Her sexual practices take the form of rituals, the thing that bestows upon sex a divine therapeutic quality. Experiencing the true meaning of sex there, in her beyond area, as the type of insight she acquires, is a sort of a healing power. Nahid's beyond area of sex offers her therapeutic sexual knowledge and self-confidence that alter her view of things. This is skillfully illustrated by Assy as she compares Nahid's submissive nature before going to a beyond space to the powerful Nahid coming back from her beyond area. Assy writes: "So many times she thought of divorce yet she was fragile and defeated. She had no power to fulfill her wish. She had tolerated this pain and psychological stress for years and had never reasoned why she was weak and could not also reason why she was now powerful. What should an illusionary ritual with an illusionary man add to her?" (223). Nahid's beyond recommended by Insherah proves to be a successful space that liberates her from her need for a man, as well as from her weakness.

On a more general level, 104 Cairo is a perfect example of Bhabha's concept of hybridity or rather the 'third space' where new symbols and meanings emerge; a space that is not a place of culture difference but rather of cultural representation and reproduction. Though the novel's major argument is not about a colonizer/colonized relationship, the idea of colonialism is there. This is exemplified in Assy's reference to the colonial history of Egypt that goes back to Napoleon Bonaparte's military campaign to Egypt as well as British colonialism, and the reference to the contemporary colonization of Palestine. This suggests a reading of the novel in light of Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity' or the 'third space'. All the characters are to be dealt with as colonized individuals who are transformed and who gain new insights in what Bhabha calls a 'third space'.

The novel depicts different eras of Egypt's history when the country was a place of culture diversity and difference. It refers to Napoleon Bonaparte's military campaign to Egypt and the Armenian family of Bebrian, Aram Anoush and Hagop (Assy 23-24). However, Assy's novel portrays a state of coexistence between cultures exemplified in Insherah's intimate relationship with the Bebrians, her coming to terms with their life style, as she gets used to to their national dishes. Besides, Aram Anoush used to tell Insherah stories like 'Cinderella' and taught her some handicrafts. Similarly, Assy depicts Bebrian singing an Egyptian folk song (23). This coexistence signifies that the novel
keeps up with Bhabha's process of cultural hybridity that "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new era of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Rutherford 211). The newborn meaning is one of keeping borders among different cultures yet keeping a sort of negotiation that enables forms of culture exchange. This is made clear in Hajop's sudden death as he cannot bear the idea of leaving Egypt according to Nasser's orders. Egypt is thus depicted as a melting pot, or a third space, where all cultures melt.

Assy's intrusive insertion of Diana Spencer's funeral scene in the novel is greatly suggestive and symbolic. Historically, the relationship between England and Africa has been based on colonialism. This suggests that the reference to Princess Diana can be taken on two levels: the individual and the national. As a British princess, Diana is known for having left her actual life and moved to a beyond space of her own choice; a beyond area of a forbidden love for an Egyptian Muslim. Diana's 'beyond space' is at the same time Bhabha's 'third space' where both the colonizer and colonized gain new insights that weaken the claim of the former and empower that of the later. This love bond suggests hybridity as it offers a breach of the colonial myth propagated by colonialists setting themselves as superior to their colonized people. In her beyond area of love or rather her 'third space', Diana seems to have gained too much forbidden insight to be allowed to stay alive. Her insight has been one of the inevitability of hybridity, the falsehood of social ranking and religious pretensions, and the need to strip oneself of all cultural pretensions and enjoy just being a human being. She has also sensed the falsehood of the barriers laid by colonizers to set them as superior to colonized people. Her forbidden knowledge has simply sent her to death. Therefore, alluding to Diana's funeral, Assy seems to criticize Bhabha's call for a going to a beyond area; she obviously suggests that sometimes the insight gained in the beyond/third space is a sort of forbidden knowledge that condemns us to death. Still the fact remains that a certain area of benevolent knowledge needs to be left vague and obscure because once we intrude we are not allowed back to actual life, where the new gained insight, as propounded by Bhabha, has its true meaning.

On a more profound level, alluding to Diana's case, Assy seems to set Insherah as another Diana Spencer. As a representative of colonized Africa, Insherah is meant, by Assy, to be a mimic of Diana, a representative of British colonization. According to Bhabha, mimicry is "an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas. This exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition with difference…. In fact, this mimicry is also a form of mockery, and Bhabha’s post-colonial theory is a comic approach to colonial discourse, because it mocks and undermines the ongoing pretensions of colonialism and empire" (Huddart 39). Mimicry, as proposed by Bhabha has a double function: it reveals the
inconsistency of colonial cause and destabilizes its power as well (Bhabha, “Mimicry” 129). In this respect, Assy's idea of mimicry is meant to dismantle colonialism's superiority, the fact that alludes to Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity'. In the novel, the ideal female representative of a colonial country, England, is stripped of her power by showing the potential replication of her figure in Africa, a formerly colonized area. Insherah, the almost illiterate uncultured woman, is given more power and agency than Diana. She is depicted as manipulating the fate of all female characters in the novel and as an inspiration for Diana herself.

In "The Second Coming of Diana", Jane Caputi associates the myth of the Goddess Diana with the one created about Princess Diana Spenser (103). Caputi argues that "The turning of Princess Diana into a modern myth reflects a yearning for a return of female divinity, concomitant with an already occurring re-visioning of human possibility and the making primary of such values as compassion, tolerance, nurturance, an end to oppressive racial distinction, soul, Eros, community, and female sovereignty and becoming" (Caputi 103). In line with Caputi, speculating upon the charitable character of Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, Derek Stanovsky argues that "the images of these women saturating the media are images of compassion and care, of women whose lives were devoted to giving aid and comfort to those suffering"(149). Like Diana, Insherah's case is a mythical one that identifies her with Goddess Diana as well as Diana Spenser. Like the witchdoctor Insherah, Caputi argues,"Diana was labeled the 'Queen of the witches' and 'Goddess of the heathen.'" (107).

Insherah is ironically a messenger of love and compassion, as described by the night visitor. When asked by Insherah about his own reality, the night visitor says: "I am one spirit of Soumati's who are appointed to search for humans who possess a love of goodness, the ability to fight and a sense of giving. We are instructing spirits whose role is simply to provide them with knowledge and the method of following the cause of goodness because they are the ones who would save humanity from destruction" (Assy 181).

Contemplating the Earl of Spencer's speech in Diana's funeral, one might find enough affinity between the British princess Diana and the cosmopolitan Insherah, as described by Nahid (Assy 136). He says:" Diana was the very essence of compassion, of duty, of style, of beauty. All over the world she was a symbol of selfless humanity. All over the world, a standard bearer for the rights of the truly downtrodden.... But your greatest gift was your intuition and it was a gift you used wisely" (qtd.in Scott 9). Furthermore, after her death, Diana was identified by visual artists with Virgin Mary (Caputi 104). Like Diana, Insherah is given a divine significance by identifying her with Jesus (Assy 183). The night visitor has once claimed that Insherah possesses a supernatural influential power that is bound to help her save humanity from destruction; it is the power of
compassion. He says: "You possess a true supernatural power, a great one that is the power of compassion…. Jesus used to cure people with the power of compassion" (Assy 183). This message identifies her with Diana as well as with Jesus and bestows upon her a divine quality like that possessed by saints and pastors.

Unlike Diana's civilized and cultural methods, Insherah's are no more than magical incantations she learnt from her grandmother Nargess. The night visitor describes Insherah as a mythological character, 'the Alouba'. Towards the end of the novel, he comes to her in the form of an amazingly fairly beautiful lady who looks like her grandmother Nargess. However, she tells her that she is Insherah not Nargess, the fact that astonishes Insherah who believes herself not as pretty as the night-visitor lady. Then, suddenly the night-visitor pretty lady is transformed into a fairly aged woman with many scars on her face and a seriously bent back that almost touches her knees. Yet, her face looks shiny with a mysterious feminine look. The elderly woman's figure is then transformed again into a pretty lady. Insherah identifies herself more with the old woman rather than with the pretty lady who says:

This aged woman is the Alouba inside you; it is the insight you possess. Do you know her? Myths say that an elderly woman living in a cave used to collect bones, gather them, and when a woolf's bones were complete, she sat beside singing. The more she sings, the more bones are covered with flesh. She then sings again more loudly and beautifully until the soul comes in and the more the soul crawls into, the more her scars disappear and she becomes younger and prettier until she turns into the pretty woman you admire. (Assy 216)

The-night-visitor pretty lady claims that, like the Alouba, Insherah used to sing for suffering hurt hearts to help them recover their souls. This is why she is always seen by others as a beautiful lady. Nahid, Manal, Ghada are representatives of the suffering souls that are helped and rescued by the Diana/Insherah persona.

Throughout the course of the novel, a variety of further identities are bestowed upon Insherah by the night visitor the fact that identifies her more with Diana. Besides being an Alouba, she is a physician as well as a spiritual witchdoctor. Stripping the idea off its fictional exaggeration as well as its supernatural element, Insherah is evidently a benevolent persona who, like Dina, has her own charitable activities even in the field of medicine and nursing. The night visitor has once given her the identity of a surgeon who manages to help her nephew recover from a serious brain cancer. She dreams that she suddenly
gets up and moves the boy's head then hugs him kissing his head. She gets up in the morning filled with a belief that he recovers and all signs of cancer utterly disappear. The night visitor then comes calling her 'Doctor Insherah' and says: "God was an aid to you in helping your nephew recover and you greatly succeeded; however, it will not be the last time" (Assy 75).

The novel, then, is nothing if not the account of mimicry of a second Diana of Egyptian origin; it is rather a fantastical resurrection of Diana, in a different age and a different atmosphere, out of her beyond area, death, to suggest an imaginative altered prospective insight she might have acquired. Every description of Insherah in the novel identifies her with Diana. This is also greatly supported by the great affinity Assy establishes between Diana's funeral scene and Insherah's. Stripping both characters of social, cultural and religious pretensions and giving them to their instinctual human forms, they are nothing but one. Diana's funeral, witnessed by Insherah, Nahid, Ghada, Manal and Shaimaa, prepares the readers for a similar glorious one held for Insherah at the end of the novel. Assy's skillful identification of the two females with completely different social, cultural, religious, historical backgrounds suggests the perfect beyond space propagated by Bhabha, a beyond of no dictated pretensions where a human being has to see himself/herself merely as a human being. Here lies the needed insight.

Insherah's rejection of Ashraf's love testifies the insight gained by her and suggested to the Diana coming back from the beyond area of death. Though the actual Diana Spencer surrenders herself to an impossible hybrid love that should inevitably lead to her downfall, the fictional Diana comes with the wisdom that a forbidden love is the forbidden knowledge that is not allowed on earth. This is why Insherah rejects Ashraf's love despite his being her archetype of ideal manhood as reflected in the following words of hers:

He looked at her in a way that made her feel something incredible was taking place. The world around her disappeared, everything was gone and all details vanished. Nothing was clear to her except him surrounded by a flash of a warm glare that penetrated every bit of hers. For seconds she felt a flood of light creeping into her till she became a hovering entity with no weight and mass. She saw him; her eyes saw as if God was carving, from scratch, man archetype. Her eyes were following him formulated before her. Everything was finished until she smelled the scent of true masculinity testifying to his perfection and life was instilled in him. (Assy 204)

Though only then she feels relieved of Ibrahim's painful memory, Insherah decides not to meet him again; she is satisfied with the influential love feelings
and has no more expectations or demands. Assy here suggests an insight gained by the Diana/Insherah persona, the idea of a 'therapeutic love' as Insherah calls her love for Ashraf. Love is not a material physical affair; it is rather a sort of feeling with a healing power that helps life to go on. This idea is best illustrated as Insherah says:

Still you don't understand Nahid. I fall in love and need nothing further. I call my love for Ashraf 'a therapeutic love'. I'll take that special moment in my arms and live with till I die. I do not like to have this feeling of joy distorted. I fall in love and I am satisfied and filled with such moments of love that will give me a living soul. Once again, I will love everything; I will love Hassan and my kids. (Assy 213)

Insherah's beyond space, like that of Nahid, is a benevolent one that gives her insight into therapeutic love and helps her to build an identity exemplified in the identity of the Alouba. She is cured of her painful love to Ibrahim and is able to carry on.

Furthermore, Assy highlights types of insight gained by Insherah in her beyond space; insight came to her in the form of subsequent theological and secular messages carried by the night visitor about life and man-God relationship as well as messages about her own supernatural power, man-present state of alienation and the importance of transcending human limitation. The first message revealed to her is about death as the real world where humans get rid of fear, the most significant human defect. The visitor says: "Now your grandmother would move to the real world, one that is more liberated and cheerful. She would be liberated from the most important human deficiency, fear. You have to feel happy for her ... people are filled with fear when they feel weak and needy" (Assy 106).

The second message is concerned with the importance of the present moment, the dire consequences of one's being alienated from the present and being rather tied either to the past or to the future. The night visitor advises Insherah to be constantly tied to the present as the only time possessed by the individual. Assy writes: "oppression occurs because the past gives us an identity and the future carries a salvation promise. Both are illusion. Real subjugation is to live on memories and expectations"(56).

The third message being that God loves humans despite their instinctual sinful nature; she herself is loved by God, and this is why she has to gratefully keep God's love by developing the good side of herself. The night visitor reminds her of the sum of money she once found when her brother Sayed refused to get her a new dress to attend Nagwa's wedding. She was told then that God loved her and
sent her money with which she bought several dresses. She consequently, as the night visitor claims, has to believe that she is a good person as God never loves wicked people (Assy 181-82).

A fourth message forced upon Insherah's mind by the night visitor is that due to his human limitation, man falls short of understanding the true meaning of virtue. Ironically, receiving the way he once compared her to Jesus and saints, Insherah reminds him that she is a sinner who has sexual affairs with men. However, the night visitor pulls to pieces her own pre-beyond idea about virtue saying that virtue has other implications:

You are a human being rather than an angel. What you say is nonsense; all you say is due to the limited knowledge of human mind and its conceptions about virtue. Yet the soul has other implications. The soul is empowered through suffering; it is purified, elevated and becomes more capable of giving and communicating. What you consider a sin is actually suffering and what you consider a vice is humiliation and oppression. (Assy 183)

A fifth message is that making a choice is man's virtue; man has to make a choice and here lies his/her power. When Zouba asks Insherah to help her, with one of her magical incantations, to marry Waleed, the gangster, the night visitor says: "Do not blame her for her choice; it is hers and it is satisfying enough that she has the power to choose" (Assy 176-77). Thus, the Diana figure, resurrected in the Egyptian female Insherah, is suggested a new insight in her beyond of death. Every time she goes back to reality after a brief period of momentary death or daydream-encounter with the night visitor, Insherah shows a new gained insight. Her insight is more mature and wise than that of the real Diana. However, her actual death gives her more insight; she gains a clearer vision of enduring happenings, listens to the sounds, talks of inanimate objects and gains insight into their language. She can hear her doll, Om Ahmed, her oil pan and her scissors crying over her death. She is also aware of stories people tell about her after her death, of those who wrote a PhD thesis about her life and those who tried to write her life story. Her death has greatly liberated her so that she becomes able to freely speak out things as never before (Assy 15-16).

To sum it up, Assy's novel skillfully proves to be a highly sophisticated artistic text that critically applies and follows Bhabha's theory of the beyond space, hybridity and his mimicry technique. The novel as a whole is meant to be an analogy between a British cultured Alouba princess, Diana, and an almost ignorant, simple Egyptian one, Insherah. The novelist suggestively and symbolically builds the analogy with variations in time, social state, culture, and
religion. The fictional resurrection of Diana shows that the resurrected British Diana, replicated in Insherah, is suggested, within the boundaries of a literary text, with a different type of insight. This is clearly illustrated in the difference between the two Dianas’ attitudes towards love. Unlike Diana Spencer, the resurrected fictional Diana comes out with the insight that sometimes love is a sort of forbidden knowledge that cannot comply with reality; in other words, when love proves to be forbidden for some social, religious or even political reasons, one has just to allow its therapeutic power to cathartically work to help life go on. It has only to be kept within the limits of emotional satisfaction and filling oneself with joy and ecstasy. Thus, Diana Spencer is resurrected to live in the beyond/third space of \textit{104 Cairo} to gain insight and to help dismantle, through the mimicry technique, the myth of the colonizer's superiority over the colonized.

In Assy's novel, every female character chooses a beyond that complies with her needed insight. Their beyond spaces vary between momentary bouts of death and day dreams (Insherah), a ghostly beyond peopled with demons (Nahid), a beyond area within the self (Ghada) and a beyond area of a symbolic bed where one-night- sexual relationship is practiced with a variety of men (Manal). Assy's suggested moral here is that what judges the success or rather the failure of choice is the type of the gained insight that proves to be enough therapeutic and its accessibility back in reality. Though the characters in the novel prove to have gained the needed insight, still it is a type of insight that merely qualifies them to go through life armed with the required type of knowledge, however it just helps them to build fake fragile identities.

Besides, Assy's novel is a macrocosm beyond or a supernatural area created to give her female protagonist as well as all females in general a chance to gain a multiple-faced insight and to go back to real life to build their identities. The beyond created by Assy blurs the edge of the divide between life and death and calls upon those who died some years ago, like Diana, to come to her beyond to reason their own past mistakes committed due to a lack of insightful vision of the matters of things. It is a hybrid beyond that blurs the edge of the divide between historical eras, religions and cultures.

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Identity and Post-Colonial Discourse:  
Gene Luen Yang’s American Born Chinese

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Psychologists and social psychologists have long discussed the process of identity formation and the conflicts associated with it, especially in adolescents. While it was Erik H. Erikson who first set the broad lines for a theoretical framework of ego identity formation, it was James E. Marcia who developed Erikson’s work into an identity formation model. Similar specific models were then developed for adolescents from different ethnic minorities with different names for the various developmental stages. For example, Jean Kim and S. Sue and Sue suggested ethnic identity development models for Asian Americans.

Identity is a wide concept that includes several dimensions such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, religion, profession, interests, and roles in life. James E. Marcia operationalized Erikson’s two stage ego-identity development into a four-stage model. Marcia speaks first of the identity diffusion subject who does not show any specific commitments in life. He has no ideological or occupational interests. In the foreclosed identity stage, the individual expresses commitment based on his parents’ rather than his own choices, so it is a commitment not stemming from any source of self-exploration. The moratorium subject, in contrast, is one who is in a state of crisis, trying to reach a compromise with what his parents want for him, what society demands, and what he is capable of. After going through this stage, the individual realizes an achieved ego-identity. He has a higher self-esteem and a realistic set of expectations (552-57).

While ethnic identity might be more inclusive than racial identity as the latter is marked by distinct physical features and the former includes traditions and cultural heritage (Kim 139; Phinney and Rosenthal 147), this paper will use both interchangeably. Jean Kim came up with a model for the psychological theory of Asian American Racial Identity Development (AARID) that divides ethnic identity formation into five stages: ethnic awareness, white identification, awakening to social political consciousness, redirection to an Asian American consciousness, and finally incorporation (Kim 145). They are quite similar to Marcia’s ego identity development and D.W. Sue and Sue’s five stage

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Racial/Cultural Identity Development model (R/CID) which consists of five stages: conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and finally integrative awareness (Sue and Sue 214). The first stage in AARID could be characterized by either a neutral ethnic identity or ethnic pride based on whether these children live in a white neighborhood or an Asian one respectively (Kim 145). This is quite similar to Marcia’s foreclosed identity because the individual hasn’t really given it much thought yet and just adopts what he is told. If the individual doesn’t give it much thought because ethnic identity has no impact on his life, this is similar to Marcia’s diffuse ego-identity stage. (Phinney, “Stages of Ethnic Identity” 36-37). The second phase in AARID is similar to conformity in R/CID. It begins with school as Asian Americans are subjected to ridicule by their schoolmates and start to experience “alienation from the self and others”, believing that beauty means being white (Kim 146). They “experience periods of wishful thinking and fantasizing about being white”. They may begin to “mimic what is perceived as white mannerisms, speech patterns, dress, and goals.” They even project the same negative views on other minority groups (Sue and Sue 219-20).

Contrary to this stage, the third stage in AARID and the second and third stages in R/CID are characterized by social and political awareness as they realize that such racism is the responsibility of society and is due to no fault of theirs. They develop feelings of ethnic pride and shame of their past attitude, and they overcome feelings of inferiority as they develop a better self-image, but feelings of anger and hostility towards the White majority arise (Kim 147; Sue and Sue 220-22). They share a sense of political “comradeship” with other minority groups, especially in the third stage in R/CID (Sue and Sue 223). They begin to examine their ethnic identity just like Marcia’s moratorium stage. The fourth stage in Kim’s model as well as the introspection stage in Sues’ model comes as a natural development to this stage. Asian Americans forgo the anger and resentment of the previous stage. They realize that such “intensity of feelings” is “psychologically draining” and does not allow them to really understand themselves any better. They adopt an attitude of “selective trust and distrust” towards different individuals of the majority and realize the similarities between their group and other minority groups (224). Kim adds, however, that they get involved in Asian American culture and live proudly as Americans of Asian descent. By the end of this stage, they have resolved their identity conflict. The last stage in Kim’s model is just an extension of this stage characterized by even more self-confidence as the individual merges the racial part of his identity with all the other parts (148). It is similar to Sues’ integrative awareness stage where the individual becomes bicultural (Sue and Sue 226). By resolving their identity issues, individuals enter Marcia’s achieved identity stage (Phinney,
“Stages of Ethnic Identity 37-38; Phinney and Rosenthal 150, 161). Kim, however, believes that this is not a one-way ride as the individual can face regression. This is asserted by Phinney in “Ethnic Identity in Adolescents” as she identifies four possible ways of dealing with ethnic identity: biculturalism, marginality, assimilation, and separation, and she states that one does not stay in any of these stages forever as ethnic identity is ever changing (502).

Elsie Smith refers to the intense internal conflicts that the individual experiences on his way to ethnic identity formation. If the individual is faced at an early stage with the dominant group’s negative image of his ethnic group or any negative oppressive experience, he may suffer from a split identity in his inability to reconcile his Chinese and American selves, and unconsciously create a ‘double’ through which he can escape his ethnicity conflict (182-86). The value of the double lies, according to Zivkovic, “in its escapist qualities, in the possibility it offers to the individual to imagine his self and reproduce himself in endless ways” (122). The double, according to Zivkovic, is “a manifestation of unconscious desire … an externalized part of the self” (125). The conscious mind thus tries to defend itself against feelings of inferiority and self-hatred either by projecting all that it wishes to deny on a real person or by hallucinating and imagining such a person (125). The double could also be created by the White to demonize groups that possess qualities they lack. Otto Rank states in his study of the double that the double represents a person’s “desire to depict distinct and separate traits for himself, or …his desire for another existence” (xi). He says that writers use the theme of the double mainly to investigate the problem of “the relation of the self to the self” (xiv).

Sigmund Freud in his essay on “The Uncanny” specifies the double as a source of the uncanny. He explains the double in more or less the same terms. He says, “a person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other’s self for his own. The self may thus be duplicated, divided and interchanged” (142). Rank states that a “powerful consciousness of guilt … forces the hero no longer to accept the responsibility of certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another ego, a double” (76). Thus, the ego represses all the wishes, desires, and possibilities. The double is hence “something that has been repressed and now returns” (Freud, “Uncanny” 147). The double is thus familiar to the individual because it is originally part of his psyche, which he repressed, but it is then “ejected from the ego” as a form of defense mechanism “and is treated as something alien” (143). That is why the death of the double is actually the death of the self because the double is a reflection or a projection of the self.

In fact, the whole concept of colonization is based on the same principles. Fanon claims that the white colonizers need to project all their base emotions
and abhorred traits on someone else in order to escape acknowledging these qualities as actually belonging to them, and thus, it is the Negro and the colonized races who carry “the burden of original sin” and become completely demonized (*Black Skin* 149). Fanon also states another interlinked reason why the ‘other’ is so hateful but at the same time so alluring for the ‘self’. In an idealized racist reaction, the European colonizer or White majority believes that the ‘other’ possesses a highly desirable quality that is lacking in the ‘self’, which gives the White majority a feeling of inadequacy and an attitude of jealousy from the colonized. Derek Hook explains this by saying that the White European craves this quality and “comes to fear and hate it or, more directly, the racial other for possessing it” (130). Both forms of racist reactions toward the ‘other’ lead to the phenomenon of stereotyping which fabricates the identity of the colonized (Fanon, *The Wretched* 2; Said 6-7) “into a kind of quintessence of evil” ready to infect anything that comes close to it. The customs and traditions of the colonized become the mark of their depravity. As a result, the colonized is “dehumanized”, “reduced to the state of an animal” (Fanon, *The Wretched* 6-7), “a tertium quid” (Du Bois 67), “a thing” created by God only to serve the mentally and morally superior white race (Césaire, *Discourse* 41-42) as opposed to the backward uncivilized Orient in Said’s terms (6-7). The problem is the negative psychosocial effects that the minority or the ‘other’ suffers from because of this false fabricated identity.

An inferiority complex develops and is according to Fanon “internalize(ed)” or “epidermaliz(ed)” (*Black Skin* 4) as the colonized man measures his worth through the scornful look of the eyes of the colonizer (Du Bois 9; Césaire, *Discourse* 42) He is transformed into an “obsessive neurotic” undergoing a violent internal struggle between his “own sense of self” and an “ascribed self” suffering from “double-consciousness” (Fanon 43; Black 394; Du Bois 9), a “wrenching of the soul” as he has to live “a double life, with double thoughts,…and double ideals” (Du Bois 145). As he awaits rejection at every moment, he becomes envious of the colonizer and dreams of owning everything the colonizer possesses, even his wife. (Fanon, *The Wretched* 5). The colonized or the oppressed dream first of identifying with their oppressors and then replacing them altogether. This dream may lead to one of two paths: neurosis or violence.

Neurosis is when the colonized, or the oppressed becomes obsessed with the wish to be white, and his “psychic structure is in danger of disintegration” (Fanon, *Black Skin* 74). Derek Hook clarifies that at one point in this ‘racial neurosis’, “I, the black subject, experience myself to be white, I have taken on the subjectivity of whiteness” (127). This wish, however, as Hook states, is impossible to attain as it usually comes in conflict with being trapped inside a
body with distinct racial features (117) or inside the Duboisian “Veil of Color” (Du Bois 68, 145).

After being physically and psychologically humiliated, anger builds up in the colonized in the form of muscular tension and nightly “muscular dreams” of action and self-assertion (Fanon, *The Wretched* 15-16). Unable to keep this anger boiling inside him for long and at the same time unable to face his oppressor, the colonized unleashes his anger onto his own brethren (17), thinking “he is destroying once and for all the hated image of their common debasement” (Sartre qtd. in Fanon, *The Wretched* liii). By killing the double, the person actually desires to get rid of the part of him which he hates or is ashamed of.

Thus, the colonized or the oppressed people have to take the struggle one step further and actually attack the colonizer in their struggle for liberation. While Du Bois speaks of violence as a negative psychological and sociological result of discrimination (145), Fanon believes it is a necessary step towards liberation. Sartre states, “once their rage explodes, they recover their lost coherence, they experience self-knowledge through reconstruction of themselves” (qtd. in Fanon, *The Wretched* lv). The liberation struggle teaches them the importance of communal ties, brotherly love, and unity. They learn to embrace one another, and they seek to uncover a glorious common past and culture as psychologically balanced individuals (Fanon, *The Wretched* 148). This stage is quite similar to what Césaire, in an interview with René Depestre, calls “Negritude”, a rediscovery of African consciousness, an angry movement against assimilation, a revival of cultural history and pride in black civilization (30).

However, Fanon does realize the importance of embracing one’s culture but at the same time seeking to enter the global world, as he advocates a “dual emergence” for third world countries, which is based on “national sovereignty and international solidarity” (Bhabha qtd. in Fanon, *The Wretched* xxvi). This is exactly what is advocated by Du Bois as he believes that the end of the Negro’s mental and cultural struggle is to “merge his double self into a better and truer self” without foregoing either of the two selves. Du Bois claims that the Negro does not desire to Africanize America nor Americanize Africa, for he realize the importance of both. He just aspires to be able to live as both an American and a Negro (9). In his interview with Depestre, Césaire claims that the African American (or any member of a minority) needs to realize that he bears “the imprint of European civilization”, but he also should foster the belief in the contribution that the African civilization could make to Europe (30). This is quite similar to the ethnic minority individual moving from the stage of “resistance and immersion” to the “integrative awareness stage”; that is to say towards realizing achieved ego and racial/ethnic identities.
Identity issues and racism have always found their way into literature. They appear repetitively in the works of Chinese American writer, Gene Luen Yang (1973). Yang’s *American Born Chinese* (*ABC*), a graphic novel published in 2006 about Asian American identity issues, has received five “Best Book of the Year” awards; it weaves three seemingly disconnected and fragmented stories united by the themes of transformation, discrimination, and identity. The first story is a Chinese myth about the Monkey King, a Chinese deity who travels from India to China to bring the principles of Buddhism to China. The second story is a coming of age story of a Chinese American boy, Jin Wang. In an interview with Margolis, Yang admits that this story has autobiographical references to his own school years (“American Born” 41). The third story is written in the style of a sitcom on paper, according to Yang in an interview by Engberg (“Gene Luen” 75). It deals with an American boy called Danny and the troubles he has at school when his stereotypical Chinese cousin Chin-Kee comes to visit him. The connection among the alternating stories becomes clear only at the end when Danny is revealed to be really Jin Wang after having shed off his Chinese identity and embracing an all American identity, and Chin-Kee is revealed to be the Monkey King who comes to teach Danny a lesson about the need to embrace his heritage and his true self, a lesson the former has learnt at an expensive price.

This paper aims to show how racism and stereotyping can lead to an identity dilemma especially among American teenagers of Asian descent. Accordingly, it examines the psycho-social effects of racism on three different characters in the novel by employing the works of post-colonial theorists like Frantz Fanon and psychoanalytic theories of the double and uses the different models of identity development especially those applicable to ethnic identity development to trace the different identity stages these characters pass through on their way to finally achieving a balanced ethnic identity. The paper employs a formal analysis of the graphic novel as a genre by referring to different comics theorists to show how text and image combine to deliver Yang’s message about the necessity for Asian Americans to achieve a balance between mainstream and ethnic traits to live a healthy life as stable individuals serving their society.

The medium of writing, the genre of each story in *American Born Chinese*, and the choice of narrative voice in the different stories serve different purposes. Since graphic novels are a branch of comics, and comics have always been stigmatized and regarded as a form of low culture, Yang’s choice of the graphic novel is appropriate to the topic of racism and ensuing shame that is felt by certain ethnic minorities during the stages of their identity development (Oh 21). The genre of each story is also significant. Claudia Schumann states that the use of Eastern and Western style stories emphasizes Yang’s message about the
importance for Asian Americans to reconcile both parts of their identity (44). The Monkey King story is a myth of the collective unconscious acting as a frame that envelops the other two stories as it proves the same point they are trying to state and which the Monkey King voices at the end, “I would have saved myself from five hundred years’ imprisonment beneath a mountain of rock had I only realized how good it is to be a monkey” (Yang, ABC 223). Its narrator is a heterodiegetic omniscient narrator privy to the Monkey King’s thoughts. The Monkey King is only permitted to speak up for himself in the last section of the novel when he accepts his true self. Jin himself, a homodiegetic narrator, narrates his own story, as it is a semi-autobiographicalbildungsroman. However, the focalizer in the story is Jin before the revelation. Thus, his perceptions and interpretations are deficient because he hasn’t reached a mature stable identity. In one instance in the story of Jin just before his transformation (pages 163-164), there is disjunction between the narration on the one hand and the dialogue and pictures on the other hand as if Jin were distancing himself from his true self as he is ready to embrace the imaginary Danny. Moreover, while the narrator is recounting how the Chinese forbid dating at a young age, the dialogue and the pictures show how Jun Wang is contriving to set up a date for himself, which reflects the contradiction between the Chinese and American lifestyles and accordingly the protagonist’s dilemma.

The narrator recedes in the background in Danny’s story, which is a sitcom, mainly because the readers are aware that they are watching a show through the laughter track and the claps at the bottom of the panels, which makes them doubt the truth of what they are viewing. It reflects the dream world of Jin Wang created by him in an attempt to overcome the ethnic shame that made him into a neurotic desiring to “run away from his own individuality to annihilate his own presence” (Fanon, Black Skin 143). Addressing the reader directly in the narration, such as on page 166, also poses the novel as a metafiction and thus makes the reader doubt the reality of what he is witnessing as he wishes that Jin and all adolescents doubt the reality of the stereotypes they are bombarded with.

The story of the Monkey King starts with the monkey in Marcia’s identity diffusion stage. He self-confidently rules Flower Fruit Mountain. He is actually proud of who he is as he lives in a place inhabited mainly by his own species, which is exactly the same case for an ethnic minority individual who lives in an ethnic neighborhood. As the Monkey King goes to (school) the dinner party where all the other deities are invited, he is treated as an inferior because of his species/race, and he is sneered at by the guard, who supposedly occupies a lower station in life than him. But as is the case with racism, even white people from lower social classes are prejudiced against people of color. This is clear in the facial expression of the guard in the bottom left panel on page 15 as well as the
fourth panel on the same page where the guests all point their fingers at him laughing, as is clear from the onomatopoeic written sounds “Ha Ha Ha”, which is very humiliating. He is denied admittance to the dinner party because of a physically distinguishing ethnic marker, lack of shoes, which the monstrator emphasizes with a close-up in the top right –hand panel on page 14. The guard, who represents the colonizer, insists, “You may be a King-you may even be a deity-but you are still a monkey” (Yang, ABC 15). This statement stands out as a racial indictment, for as Michael Chaney claims, “the Monkey King operates less as an allegorical animal than as a metaphorical minority” (136), which is the same opinion reiterated by Mike Cadden. Americans have historically used the image of the monkey as a “racial diminutive, a way to picture Asians as subhuman” (Song 85). Seeing himself through the eyes of the White majority, the Monkey King, “embarrassed” (Yang, ABC 15), develops an inferiority complex, desires to annihilate his identity as a monkey, and plans to adopt a White identity.

The Monkey King is thus initiated in the second stage of Kim’s AARID model, white identification. He starts to look down on individuals from his same race/species and develop “racial self-hatred”. That is why as he starts feeling very self-conscious and ashamed of his simian/ethnic self, he could sense the "thick smell of monkey fur”, which previously he was unaware of (Yang, ABC 20). He starts seeing his own group through the lens of the dominant group and is accordingly repulsed by the “stink” and the “odors from the native quarters” (Fanon, The Wretched 6-7). The fact that the party is held up in the sky and that going back home for the Monkey King requires a ‘descent’ mimics the “compartmentalized world” of the colonizers and colonized where the colonizers enjoy the privileges of living in elite neighborhoods while the colonized live in poor crowded ones (Fanon, The Wretched 4-5). The descent also implies the inferiority of the Monkey King’s world in comparison to the world of the deities and spirits. The coloring of the panels, the use of lighting effects, and the positioning of the figure of the Monkey King are all techniques used by the monstrator to highlight the Monkey King’s trauma and identity crisis. The two panels on the right on page 20 are completely dark, which reflects the drastic fatal effects of the trauma on the psyche of the Monkey King. The lighting on the floor and the door as opposed to the dark figure of the monkey and the rest of the background creates a sinister air foreboding the process of schizophrenic severing of the identity especially as the shadow of the Monkey is reflected on the floor. The disproportion between the huge dark space surrounding the figure of the monkey in the last panel, which is termed negative space by Ralph Duncan, and the small positive space occupied by the monkey, “accentuates the figure’s vulnerability and isolation” (72) as he internalizes the racist remarks
directed against him by the majority. In an attempt to deal with the internal anger created by oppression, he lashes out against individuals from his own race/species as he issues a decree forcing all monkeys to wear shoes. When offered a banana by his subjects, the monstrator shows how he looks down upon them with disgust as if he has shed all ties with his former self, especially when he states of the scroll that he receives from heaven, “this monkey king it speaks of no longer exists” (Yang, ABC 60). He represents the Colonized elite in their mimicking of the White colonizers as he calls himself “the Great Sage Equal of Heaven”, and he teaches himself the four major disciplines of invulnerability-White mannerisms- which can make him stand up to any of the deities/White people.

Convincing himself that he is a deity, the character suffers from denial and uses this defense mechanism to deal with “psychological dissonance and discomfort” (E. Smith 186). The monstrator cleverly shows this in the first panel on page 60 as he uses a long vertical panel disproportionate to the other panels that contain images of other monkey subjects on the same page. The long vertical panel shows how the Monkey King imitates humans as he stands straight and tall on two feet. This aggrandizement of the figure of the Monkey King reflects that he aspires to be a god. His figure even extends outside the frame of the panel producing what Thierry Groensteen refers to as “the cat-walk effect” (57). The purpose of the cat-walk effect is to show that after developing a high sense of self, the Monkey King can no longer be contained within a panel. The Monkey King, just like the Asian American, suffers from a split identity in his inability to reconcile his Chinese/simian identity and American/deific identity. He “feels his twoness, . . . two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one …body” (Du Bois 9). Accordingly, he unconsciously creates a ‘double’- Chin-Kee- through which he can escape his ethnicity conflict. It is Tze-yo-Tzuh, the father of the gods, who forces him to explore his identity and enter the moratorium stage or the R/CID’s dissonance stage. Tze-yo-Tzuh tells him, “I created you. I say that you are a monkey. Therefore, you are a monkey” (Yang, ABC 69). He has to know that his inferior identity is only a fabricated social construct. As the Monkey King attempts to escape Tze-Yo-Tzuh, he rushes out of the panel frame, and is shown standing in a white frameless page facing five pillars which are really Tze-Yo-Tzuh’s five fingers. Although writing his name on one of these pillars might indicate his desire, like the colonized elite, to imitate the White colonizer/majority, urinating over this same pillar is an unconscious expression of his detest of this act of mimicking the White and his unconscious knowledge of the need to accept his true self before developing a unified self. The white space, signifying eternity and timelessness, indicates that no matter how hard the monkey tries, he has to face his ethnicity, his original creation.
Also, breaking the boundaries of the panel makes the reader identify more with the Monkey King and experience his feelings.

The moratorium stage in Marcia’s terms, or awakening to social political consciousness and redirection to an Asian American consciousness in Kim’s model, or introspection in Sues’ model happens in the five hundred years the Monkey King spends trapped under a mountain rock thinking. Literally and symbolically, his physical and psychological getaway comes from his transformation back to his true self, from his acceptance of his ethnic identity and finally realizing a balanced identity. Wong Lai-Tsao, the monk, tells him, “To find your true identity … within the will of Tze-Yo-Tzuh … That is the highest of all freedoms” (Yang, *ABC* 149). He accepts both parts of his identity as he takes off his shoes and uses natural monkey instincts-emitting gas- and more advanced human Kung-fu skills to save the monk. Only when he reaches self-acceptance does he reach his full potential, and accordingly Tze-Yo-Tzuh raises him to the status of an emissary. It is significant that in the adaptation of the story of Monkey King, *Journey to the West*, Yang gives the story a Judeo-Christian spirit as it bears semblance to the story of the three Magi who bring three gifts to baby Jesus, signified by the shining star which the Monkey King and the monk Lai-Tsao walk toward (P. Smith 8) and the portrayal of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus extending his hand to the Monkey King (Young, *ABC* 215). Thus, it is apparent that Yang merges Chinese and Christian beliefs to highlight the very composition of a balanced Asian American identity.

The Bildungsroman of Jin Wang echoes the same story of the Monkey King. Jin Wang starts out “un-self-conscious” (Sarigianides 41) about his ethnic identity and the meaning it holds; hence, he is in Marcia’s diffused identity stage as he lives near Chinatown among Asian friends conversing in Chinese as is clear from putting the spoken words uttered by the boys between angle brackets on page 26 to show that this is just an English translation. However, the panel in the lower right corner on page 25 foreshadows, according to Sheng-Mei Ma, the identity dilemma the character will soon experience as the reader sees baby Jin looking out of the window of his apartment to Chinatown store signs written in Chinese, but the television antenna on the right hand in the panel is pointing towards a McDonald’s sign with the letter M visible in the image. Since McDonald’s symbolizes one of American culture’s significant markers, fast food chains, the appearance of the sign and of the television in the image “commences an Americanization” but the baby looking out at the yang sign highlights that there is still hope of a “homecoming” for Jin Wang (110). It is noteworthy that it seems that Jin’s parents could be a reason for his upcoming dilemma, for though they talk to him in Chinese, they decide to move to a white neighborhood and send him to an all-White school, the purpose of which according to the
parents is to give him a good education so that he can live up to the model minority stereotype. Jin concludes this from the Chinese parable his mother narrates called “The Three Moves of Mencius’ Mother”, which is about Mencius, Confucius’ disciple who is taught to value learning (Yang, *ABC* 23-24). However, Jin’s mother does not narrate the story in the exact same order as the original (Ma 108), which could show either a distortion of Chinese past as the parents themselves seem unable to convey to Jin an authentic Chinese heritage or the parents’ desire for Jin to make use of the best of both worlds. Moreover, when Jin moves to an all-White school, he starts to feel the inferiority of his ethnicity. He is subjected to many racist acts from teachers and students alike ranging from mispronouncing his name; to making fun of his Chinese culinary habits as some students accuse him of eating dogs, a common misconception spread by American media; to calling him “bucktooth” (Yang, *ABC* 33), a derogatory remark hurled at Asian Americans. To finally warn him to break off his relationship with the White American Amelia as a result of racist White rejection of interracial marriage. In an Interview with Heeseung Kim, Gene Yang admits that some of the pejorative remarks spoken by Timmy in the novel were directed at him in junior high school (“Talking” N6). Sarigianides states that all these are just common misconceptions propagated by the America media and contributing to Asian Americans’ devaluation of their ethnic identity (42).

Moving from the safe haven of his Asian community and facing racism, Jin Wang suffers from an identity crisis just like his creator or in other words becomes “abnormal” and develops neurosis (Fanon, *Black Skin* 111). Jin develops a deep sense of shame and racial self-hatred. His loneliness is clear in the panel composition. On page 32, the first long horizontal panel is divided into three gutterless macropanels, depicting the different simultaneous activities other American children are involved in at school, suggesting how these children are enjoying themselves without sensing the passing of time. This image is directly juxtaposed with the subsequent image that is almost repeated two more times on page 35 and 179 with slight variations in seasons and the age of Wang. The reader would have to rely on braiding, one of the structural devices of comics, which forces the reader to opt not just for a linear reading of comics but to make bridges between different corresponding moments throughout the narrative (Groensteen 122). The repeated image in this case is a long horizontal panel of Wang, smaller in size than any other figure, sitting all alone in the right corner of the horizontal panel with the rest of the empty bench occupying the rest of the panel and a grey background. This serves to reiterate the long-time alienation of Jin Wang on account of his racial features and his sense of inadequacy. Moreover, since comics are supposed to be read from left to right,
According to McCloud (*Making Comics* 32), the reader’s eye would have to move for some time till it reaches the figure of Jin Wang on the other side of the panel, which gives the reader a sense of Jin Wang’s isolation. Ralph Duncan claims that “When a main visual element is placed outside the balance of the felt axis the element itself is more noticeable, and a greater sense of stress is created in the panel” (74). Accordingly, placing the main figure on the right side of the panel rather than the left or even the center creates a feeling of tension that mimics the internal turmoil the character is experiencing. The reader senses the disturbance to the normal order of the panel composition, which reflects a disturbance in Wang’s sense of identity. This composition also serves to accentuate the character’s marginalized position, as according to McCloud, readers only assign importance to figures that appear in the center of the panel (*Making Comics* 24). In addition, the long horizontal panel actually serves to increase the duration of the moment presented in this panel (McCloud, *Understanding Comics* 101). Hence, it emphasizes Jin Wang’s loneliness and shows that it has not been a one moment thing for him. His self-consciousness is also clear when Greg tells him to stay away from the white Amelia. He is shown as the only colored figure sitting in the right bottom panel on page 181 with a dejected look in a sepia and black class, which marks him out from the majority.

Jin Wang identifies internally with his white aggressor and harbors the dream of literally becoming white. Derek Hook further explains this when he states that “racial neurosis” does not just mean “racial alienation” but that a person’s race becomes “objectified” for him so that he understands his race only through a white lens (127). That is why Jin Wang, projecting Greg’s racist remarks about interracial marriage on the Taiwanese Wei-Chen, yells at him calling him an “F.O.B”, a racist slur that means fresh-off-the boat and tells him, “I just don’t think you’re right for her…I think she can do better than an F.O.B like you” (Yang, *ABC* 191). Just like the colonized person becomes full at first of self-loathing, Jin Wang becomes full of anger. He deals with his pent up anger in two ways before he embarks on the liberation stage. He unleashes his muscular tension, like the typical colonized, in daydreams as he fantasizes about standing up to Greg and even punching him in the face. While the traditional balloon color is white, any change in this color is considered by Groensteent “a carrier of information” (62). Colors, in general, and colored balloons, in particular, express characters’ emotions and create a certain ambience (Forceville et al. 61) This depends on the color saturation as well as the choice of cool or warm colors (Painter et al. 35). The monstrator uses the cloud-shaped balloon with a grey background on page 182 to relay Wang’s gloominess to the reader and to reveal that Wang is becoming detached from reality as he imagines ways of dealing
with Greg. The second way for dealing with this anger, after having adopted the colonizer’s view of himself, is by directing it against his own brethren, against his own race, trying to destroy the hateful image he has absorbed about himself. That is why he violates the honor of Wei-Chen by kissing his Japanese-American girlfriend since he does not dare kiss the White Amelia, and he does not even apologize but attacks Wei-Chen verbally.

Unable to use violence against the colonizer or the White majority, Jin Wang develops a neurosis. The hero, suffering from the condition of the “white mask psychology” (Hook 133), desires to shed off his racial markers and mimic the white oppressor in different arenas in life. He has to take up “the mother country’s cultural standards” in order to be “elevated above his jungle status” (Fanon, Black Skin 9). He enters Sue and Sue’s conformity stage. Gene Yang states, in an interview with Heeseung Kim, “I also began to distance myself from my parents and my ethnicity as a way of trying to fit in” (“Talking” N6). In his White Identification stage, according to Kim’s AARID model, Jin Wang refuses sometimes to speak Chinese. Fanon calls adopting a language different from the language of one’s parents “a dislocation, a separation” (Black Skin 14), as one becomes separated from one’s ethnic group. Second, Jin Wang desires to possess the White American Amelia as is clear from the wavy thought balloons with a pink background on page 177 to show that possessing a white woman constitutes a rosy dream for a man from an ethnic minority.

Third, Jin Wang changes his hair style and perms it in an act of self-erasure to imitate the American kid Greg and to shed off one of his Chinese markers, straight hair. Michael D. Boatright and Melissa Schieble respectively deem this a symbolic act of white identification (473; 211). To prove this, Schieble highlights the pivotal importance of the frames on page 97 (211). The monstrator shows a long shot of Jin entering his house with a big thought balloon that contains the iconic pictogram of Greg’s curly blond hair symbolizing his desire to embrace whiteness. The next panels directly show Jin with the curly hair. It is as if this curly hair gives him the confidence to speak up and ask Amelia out on a date, as is clear from the visual icon of lightning bolts that are emitted from his hair (Yang, ABC 105), which Groensteen calls emanata, graphic signs that convey a character’s emotions or physical state (124) and Forceville et al call pictorial runes (62). When Amelia responds with a “yes”, the monstrator decides to use it as a sound that bleeds out of the panel on page 105 in big yellow letters in a vertical line both to amplify the echo of the sound to reflect how Jin could not believe himself, naturally because of his sense of inadequacy and to show that for the first time in a long while he experiences hope and energy, notably after he has changed his hairstyle.
Jin Wang reaches the peak of his self-disavowal when the reader realizes at the end that Jin is actually Danny from the third storyline. Racism is based on Manichean thinking where everything, including racial groups, is ‘split’ into good and evil, leading eventually to a psychic splitting on the individual level, which is embodied in a double. In literature, this could appear in the form of separate, opposed, or complementary characters that represent “different aspects of a sundered self” (Zivkovic 122), which is what happens in *American Born Chinese*. Jin Wang makes his Chinese self-invisible by masking or disguising it in order to assimilate and blend in with the dominant group (Davis, “Childhood” 10). Wang projects his deep desire to possess what he thinks he lacks but covets onto an ‘other’, the white American Danny, who becomes “a psychic projection of Jin Wang’s ideal self” (Chaney 136). Sarigianides believes that this transformation is just an act of suicide, as Jin is actually eradicating a main part of his identity (44).

The transformation of Jin into Danny is actually one of the novel’s climactic scenes highly emphasized by the monstrator. The climactic scene is a natural outcome of the repeated strikes that Wei-Chen delivers to Jin’s face. The monstrator makes them visible markers on his face in the panels on page 192 to visually externalize his internal conflict in dealing with his ethnic identity (P. Smith 8-9). The splash panel on page 193, the black background, and the words in bold juxtapose this panel with the traditional 2X2 structure with colored background to attract the attention of the reader (qtd. in Hammond 27). The curved edges of the frame, according to Ralph Duncan, make the frame function as a visual sign conveying the feeling that this is an emotionally explosive panel or a violent dream (68), especially since it seems like an antique frame of an old picture; thus, it evokes a childhood memory that could be a turning point in the adolescent’s life. The extended claw-like hand of the old Chinese herbalist woman, associating the woman with Chin-Kee, appears to breach the upper border of the frame to indicate that Jin can’t really escape his past heritage represented by the hand of the old Chinese woman and to foreshadow that Jin will eventually revert to his former self. In the panel, the woman asks him what he would like to become and immediately, at the bottom of the splash panel on page 194, the reader views multiple images of Jin with his hair and eyes becoming lighter till Danny appears in the last image. The left corner panel on page 195 shows Jin/Danny in the bathroom after waking up from this dream. The side lighting in the bottom panel with Danny’s figure half in the light, half in the shadow denotes a split personality, or a morally ambiguous character (Duncan 110), or a character in a moment of internal conflict or “ambiguity” stemming from the conflict of two opposing forces (Forceville and Renckens 175), in this case Chinese and American loyalties. The lighting effects are thus
used by the monstrator to give depth to the moment and to mimic the split personality that is about to be physically materialized in the form of Jin/Danny. The next three pages are all splash one page panels showing Danny staring at the mirror. Since this takes place in three pages, this reiterates the main theme of transformation that serves as a structural link uniting the three stories. The gaze in the mirror is also important because the mirror reflects the self. It usually reflects the double or one’s twin soul, and it reflects a narcissistic but destructive love of the self as Jin now appears to be pleased with his new looks although this new image actually means the destruction and psychological death of his Chinese identity/Jin, for according to the herbalist’s wife, “It’s easy to become anything you wish so long as you’re willing to forfeit your soul” (Yang ABC 29).

Since transformation in the novel is represented by a toy robot, which Jin Wang and Wei-Chen play with as children, and The Transformers cartoon, which appears several times on TV in the novel, it becomes clear that any transformation is going to be merely fantastical and will not solve the identity conflict of the character. Therefore, for the member of an ethnic minority to reach an achieved ethnic identity and move on to Fanon’s liberation stage, he has to let go of childhood fantasies, face and examine his/her fears and conflicts, and transcend this implausible need to transform into a member of the dominant group. Philip Smith remarks that the transformer robots function as another symbol as well. Since the toys were originally designed by the American company Hasbro and the Japanese company Takar Tomy, the toys are “biracial” (9). Thus, they foreshadow the realized hybrid Chinese American identity of Jin Wang.

White identification or complete assimilation is not the solution for ethnic identity dilemma as mainstream perceptions of racial differences will never allow Asian Americans to completely assimilate (Sarigianides 47). That’s why Danny tells a school friend that every year he needs to change schools because something goes wrong, and other students start bullying him. Accordingly, Yang forces Wang to enter the following stage of Kim’s AARID model, which is developing a social political consciousness, or Marcia’s moratorium stage or Fanon’s liberation stage, or Sue and Sue’s resistance and immersion by having him explore his ethnic identity and come face to face with it rather than escape it. For Jin to be able to do that, Yang creates the character of Chin-Kee, Danny’s Chinese cousin who comes to visit him every year from China. Chin-Kee, who according to Fu is “a deluxe combo of the worst racial stereotypes” (274), reveals to Jin by the end of the novel that he comes every year to serve “as your conscience-as a signpost to your soul” (Yang, ABC 221), to teach Wang racial pride. It is as if he acts as Jin’s superego, the ego ideal which, according to Freud, “answers in every way to what is expected of the higher nature of man”. It takes
the form of conscience implanted in the individual by figures of moral authority (*The Ego and the Id* 49). Thus, Yang creates Chin-Kee to punish Wang for what Min Song calls a “lack of conscience” in severing one half of his identity (83). The name Chin-Kee, although a racial slur, is also significant if it is pronounced in Chinese as it is a combination of “blood relative” and “key” (Smith 8; Doughty 56). Thus, the literal and metaphorical blood ties between Chin-Kee and Danny/Jin are undeniable as well as the fact the Chin-Kee functions as the key to unlocking Danny’s true self. Chin-Kee pronounces Danny as Dan-nee which means “big you” or “strike you”, which could mean, in Doughty’s point of view, that Chin-Kee is the opposite Other of Danny’s Big White American Self and that it is through punching and striking Danny that Danny will be forced to confront his identity crisis (56).

Chin-Kee, according to Yang in an interview with Rick Margolis, is a controversial character whom some Asian Americans have been displeased with (“*American Born*” 41). He is an embodiment of both the good and bad stereotypes of Asian Americans (Wang 227). Chin-Kee, “a brutal and ugly caricature” (Gomes and Carter 72), is introduced for the first time in a big splash panel with squinty eyes, buckteeth, a queue, and yellow skin. He speaks Pidgin English, covets American women, and eats strange foods. By answering all the teachers’ questions like the model minority, Chin-Kee represents the coveted qualities that the ‘self’ lacks but desires to possess so it exaggerates such unrealizable qualities and demonizes them in the ‘other’ that possesses them. According to Gardner, American students’ jealousy of the model Asian American students like Chin-Kee, makes them exaggerate the positive stereotype eventually demonizing it and imagining Asian Americans as aliens coming to usurp their places in universities and in the work field (134). Unlike the simple Disney realistic style Yang uses for all his characters, he portrays Chin-Kee in an exaggerated cartoonish form, his body - “shorter, rounder, and somehow disproportionately larger than other figures” (Davis, “*Childhood*” 12).

Moreover, in a number of panels on pages 48, 49, 203, 207, 208, 209, 210, Yang draws Chin-Kee larger than reality and taking up most of the space in the panel to overstate the stereotype and make it more visible to force Jin Wang to face the negative image about himself from which he has been hiding (Davis, “*American Born Chinese*” 280) and to show how destructive this stereotype is on the psyche of the young Asian Americans. This is particularly emphasized when in one of the splash panels, Chin-Kee is seen standing on a table in the cafeteria singing, “She Bang”, imitating the exaggerated moves made by William Hung, a Hong Kong born Engineering student who sang the same song on American Idol in 2004. Commenting on the reaction to Hung’s performance, Randy Henderson claims, “People are not laughing with Hung, people are
laughing at him, and the whole entertainment industry seems to be supporting this collective racist guffaw.” By presenting it as a sitcom in one splash panel with the exaggerated image of Chin-Kee and his mispronunciation of the words of the song as well as the iconic sound of laughter “Ha Ha” at the bottom of the panel, Yang is actually presenting a dark comedy trying to make the audience conscious of the real reason for their laughter and thus feel ashamed of acquiescing to such racism.

Ashamed of Chin-Kee and unconsciously ashamed of his hidden Chinese self, Danny attempts to escape Chin-Kee by sending him away, which symbolizes his desire to escape his true-self, his inability to confront racism, and his unwillingness to admit that he is actually Jin in disguise. Chin-Kee tells him, however, he cannot leave yet, and he asserts in bold letters with a grin as the camera zooms in in a close-up shot on his face, “Chin-Kee rive for Amellica. Chin-Kee come visit evely year … Forever” (Yang, ABC 211), which symbolizes the fact that there is no escape for Danny because simply he can’t escape from himself, from his roots. The reader does not realize that this is because Chin-Kee is Danny’s double as there is also a physical similarity that Amelia points out; he is part of him, and so he can’t get rid of him. It is significant that Danny’s shadow appears on the wall in the panels on page 127 when he is complaining about Chin-Kee to show the importance of the shadow-the double-as a recurrent motif in the novel. Jonathan Doughty states, “Chin-Kee, then, functions as a return…of Jin's repressed Asian stereotypes about himself. Of course, "Danny" and "Chin-Kee" are later exposed as alter-egos of Jin Wang, the former his idealized American self, and the other his self-consciousness of being Asian” (57). The monstrator chooses to dress Wei-Chen, the Monkey King, Danny/Jin in secondary colors-orange, violet, and shades of green successively (“Understanding Formal Analysis”). The secondary colors are used to show that all these characters could be a secondary self to the main character Jin.

Yang wants to show that only by confronting such racist stereotypes and accepting what Chin-Kee was created to remind him of-his Chineseness can Jin/Danny “successfully transcend (by symbolically beheading) the stereotype and accept himself” (Davis, “Childhood” 14), an idea reiterated by Sarigianides (47). The physical confrontation before Wang enters the next stage of development is actually a confrontation between “Jin’s two self-images”: the “racist stereotypes of Chinese identity” and his “imagined identity” (Schumann 49). This physical fight is shown by the swift successive diagonal panels which indicate violence and struggle. The panel that shows Danny striking and beheading Chin-Kee takes up three quarters of page 212 with the head bouncing on the ground taking up the remaining quarter. The background of the panel is black, and all the words are large and bold with the onomatopoeic “pop”
indicating surprise, written in yellow. The monstrator decides to vary the style of this panel to indicate a climactic moment, which actually functions as the novel’s punch line. The marks left by the beatings on Chin-Kee’s face before his transformation into the Monkey King are similar to those on Jin’s face after his beating by Wei-Chen. They both serve to initiate a transformation; the latter initiates the transformation of Jin into Danny and the former the transformation of Chin-Kee into his true self, the Monkey King as well as Danny’s reverse transformation and the reemergence of Jin Wang as a complete self. By confronting the racist stereotype propagated in the American media, Jin/Danny is finally able to start calmly examining his cultural heritage in what Sue and Sue describe as the introspection stage before finally reaching an achieved identity.

Danny, thus, reverts to his true self, Jin. Jin finally learns the lesson that the Monkey King has been trying to teach him all along- the need for self-acceptance. The Monkey King sums up the situation as he tells Jin, “I would have saved myself from five hundred years’ imprisonment beneath a mountain of rock had I only realized how good it is to be a monkey” (Yang, ABC 223). The panels in this section highlight Jin and the Monkey King sitting all alone on the pavement at night with a sky full of stars. Thus, instead of the black background, the background here has white spots that represent the stars. Obviously, the sky is pure, and the atmosphere is serene in contrast to the violence in the previous scene to allow Jin, who is now in Sues’ introspection stage, to contemplate and think deeply about the lesson he has just learnt from the Monkey King and to show that only when Jin is ready to accept himself and to face the racist stereotypes can he achieve serenity. The rest of the panels give a close middle shot of Jin’s face to indicate that he is at a time of thinking and decision-making in his life. The positions of the Monkey King on the left-hand side and Jin on the right-hand side in the panels on page 222 indicate the dominant position of the Monkey King and the power he has over Jin at that moment, which foreshadows Jin’s succumbing to the lesson delivered by the Monkey King, for according to Karin Kukkonen, the character on the left in the panel has more power than the one on the right because of the direction of reading comics from left to right (8). Jin is then ready to move on to the final stage of the R/CID model which is integrative awareness and the final stages of Kim’s AARID model: redirection to an Asian American consciousness and incorporation.

His final development is clear in two instances. For the first time in the novel, as Jin feels at home with his Chinese roots, the reader is given a full picture of Jin’s Chinese parents who were previously drawn off frame or from the side. The dialogue between the parents is spoken in Chinese as is clear from the angle brackets on page 225. Second, when he seeks out his old school friend Wei-
Chen at an Asian café, Jin is actually socializing now with people from his own group. The person who has gone through the process of political and cultural awareness and finally achieves integration usually develops a more positive attitude towards individuals from other minorities in contrast to a more inferior look in his stage of white identification. As Jin’s identity develops, Jin’s knowledge of Chinese improves. Jin’s ignorance of Chinese dialects is clear at the beginning of his visits to the café as he is unable to read the menu, and then as time passes and he becomes even more confident of his Chinese self, the reader notices that Jin has no further problem reading the menu. Meeting Wei-Chen at a café that has an English and Chinese name is indicative of the reconciliation of both sides of his dual identity. To stress that Jin has successfully merged his Chinese and American identities, the monstrator resorts to an establishing shot on page 233 displaying the café from the outside with the name written in big Chinese letters and the two friends are shown laughing through the window; the purpose of the establishing shot is usually to show the importance of the setting (McCloud, *Making Comics* 23) while the laugh on Jin’s face hints at the reconciliation.

The themes of racism, identity, and transformation are thus the main core of *American Born Chinese*, depicted through the character of Jin Wang and his doubles. Wei-Chen’s character is also another character that undergoes transformation. Although Wei-Chen is subjected to the same racism that Jin encounters, he seems able to cope much better than Jin. He befriends Jin and Suzy, speaks Chinese, and talks comfortably to Amelia unlike Jin. He even tells Jin, “We’re brothers, Jin. We’re blood” (*ABC* 190). Thus, Wei-Chen starts out as being comfortable with his Asian identity and mainly intermingling with people from his own group. At the beginning, he is in the first stage of Kim’s model or in Marcia’s foreclosed identity stage, mainly because he has not yet experienced a crisis that pushes him to investigate his identity. He is what others, most probably his parents, have meant him to be, and this is clear as the reader learns at the end that Wei-Chen is the Monkey King’s son and keeps with him a Transformer robot given to him by his father to remind him of his roots. Wei-Chen, together with Suzy and Jin, is faced at school by racial slurs as “chink” and “gook” (*ABC* 96). The damaging effect of racism is at once clear in the last panel on the same page when the monstrator draws the three characters with three stripes like a zebra on each of their cheeks. Nevertheless, it is when Jin Wang, from the same underprivileged position, turns on him, betrays him, and racially insults him, that Wei-Chen is pushed into another stage of his ethnic identity development.

Critics have disagreed about which stage of identity development Wei-Chen moves into. He wears large eyeglasses, earrings, a necklace, holds a cigarette,
and his hair has an oily, sticky look- which makes him “all surface and emotional hardness” (Song 90). Philip Smith believes that this is Taiwanese gang style dressing adopted by adolescents stressing their Taiwanese roots.; other critics believe this look is like American hip hop style- originally established by the black subculture (10). In either case, it emphasizes Wei-Chen’s movement to Kim’s stage of awakening to social political consciousness/ Sue and Sue’s resistance and immersion stage where he becomes totally involved in his ethnic/minority culture and becomes resentful towards the culture of the majority, refusing even to speak English as is clear from the angle brackets in which his words are inserted in the last couple of pages. When he comes face to face with Jin who tells him he has met his father, the Monkey King, the mask immediately falls off and his true monkey self is revealed in a sepia image, forcing him to face this racial ‘othering’ instead of attempting to escape it. This panel of the monkey on page 229 might “encode either character’s image … serv(ing) to mediate Jin Wang and Wei-Chen as doubles of each other” (Chaney 137). It also reflects that they can never let go of their true selves and be completely assimilated in American society, simply because their racial birthmarks will always haunt them. They will have to deal with this ‘double consciousness’, mitigate racism, and accommodate the different parts of their identity. The last scene in which Wei-Chen is seen talking to Jin Wang in a friendly way-although Jin Wang is one of the major reasons for his anger at White culture- may indicate that he is ready to transcend this stage of anger and resentment and move on to the calmer stage of introspection.

*American Born Chinese*, a post-modern novel, encompasses a number of cultural allusions that Yang skillfully employs to deliver his message. *American Born Chinese* combines Chinese legend and American pop culture through the story of the Monkey King, which is based on the 16th century Chinese *Journey to the West*, and the sitcom of Danny and Chin-Kee, which is inspired by the style of the American sitcom ‘The Odd Couple’ (Chaney 135). The blending of Chinese and American texts solidifies the main theme of the text and the achieved identity that Jin achieves by the end of the novel. There are also two other popular references: the first one, according to Schieble, is a YouTube video, called “Asian Backstreet Boys: I Want it that Way,” containing two Asian-American boys singing the Backstreet Boy’s song (213), and the second is the Hong-Kong born Engineering student William Hung’s performance of the song “She Bang” on American Idol in 2004 (Davis, “Childhood” 13). They are both English songs sung by Asian Americans, so they represent the fusion of Asian and English identities. The Backstreet Video could actually be a challenging to the stereotype, for the two Asians are represented as interested in singing and sports (as they are wearing Jersey shirts), which are typical
American behaviors, and computing, which Asians excel at. Thus, they are promoting the idea that you can be American but in your own Asian way; you don’t have to conform to particular standards; it is a pluralistic society. The last image of Jin Wang and Wei-Chen is presented this time in a hybrid frame, that is a frame which is partly taken from reality (Groensteen 61)- a TV screen, it reminds the reader that what he is witnessing is not reality but a hyperreality that needs to be questioned. Thus, not every image presented about Asian Americans should be believed; it should be analyzed and thoroughly scrutinized and that is the message that Yang is trying to deliver to a whole generation of Asian American adolescents.

Works Cited


Good Tidings: 
Egypt’s Election Hit and the Multicultural Politics of Populist Nationalism*

Riham E.A. Debian**

Introduction
Without attention to the Eurocentric genealogy of multiculturalism, its tolerance-fashioned neo-liberal leanings and its global flow and cultural transposition across local settings, multiculturalism becomes the 'paradigm power' regulating the edifice of the Anglo-American liberal democratic order. The structural inequalities of the latter are framed as "problems of intolerance, not as problems of inequality, exploitation, injustice" (Zizek 2007 par. 1). The solution is posed through a global surge in "tolerance talk" (Brown 2006 p. 2). Its design is to address multiculturalism as the "central problematic of liberal democratic citizenship" and fashion tolerance as "a post-political ersatz" and "a mode of late modern governability"(Zizek 2007 par. 2; Brown 2006 p. 2, 8). The ideological operation underpinning this fashioning lies in multiculturalism's neo-liberal disposition. The latter's bid to regulate "the presence of the Other both inside and outside the liberal democratic nation-state" is administered through the"culturalization of politics" (on the inside) and the "politicization of culture" (on the outside) with the designated outcome of turning tolerance into a depoliticized ideology and a management technique for circuiting deviance and co-opting difference (Brown 2006 p. 8; Zizek 2007 par. 1).

Tolerance thus emerges as the political end and ersatz citizenry stakes. It becomes the codeword for the mass cultural fun of enjoying the 'shopping mall boutique summa of the world's culture'. It becomes the catchword for the pleasure of consuming mass culture products and production of what Stam

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qualifies as "state-or corporate managed United-Colours-of Benetton pluralism" (Stam 1997, p.190). It above all sets in as the means for containing and exploiting the lure of the popular fun aesthetics of subcultures in a gesture politics of inclusion to boost the power paradigm of authority and sell democracy to the masses:

Multiculturalism without the critique of Eurocentricism runs the risk of being merely accretive—a shopping mall boutique summa of the world's culture—while the critique of Eurocentricism without multiculturalism runs the risk of simply inverting existing hierarchies rather than profoundly rethinking and unsettling them. (Stam 1997, p. 200)

In the Egyptian setting and in the case of the election hit song Boshret Kheir (2014), tolerance figures as the political logic for the transposition and resignification of multiculturalism in its dialogue with nationalism and populism – i.e. tolerating the masses’ fun poetics to foster an anti-elitist national collectivity and project the image of democratic conversion before the world.

Similarly, Bayat points out the connection between discourse and authority in the following:

Any type of authority … may be realized only within its own discursive paradigm … the 'paradigm power' … any challenge from without or departure from within this discursive space amounts to a challenge to those in authority … fun … represents a powerful rival archetype … To maintain their authority, masters have to either modify their paradigm by enlarging it to embrace fun ethics … or resort to curbing diversion. (2010, pp. 155-157)

In light of the above, this paper, thus, deals with the transposition and resignification of tolerance-centric multiculturalism in Egypt’s election hit Boshret Kheir (Good Tidings 2014). The paper particularly tackles the question of the expressive culture of contemporary nationalism, its repertoire with the global edifice of multiculturalism, and its cultural representation of a new paradigm of populist national identity—away from the elitism of ideology-based nationalism, within the technologies of violence of gendered nationalisms (McClintock 1997) and through the strategic deployment of the powerful powerless dimension of populism. Adopting a multicultural feminist perspective, the paper utilizes insights from cultural and feminist theories (Hall 1985, Stam 1997, Zizek 2007, McClintiock 1997, Joseph 1993.1994, Bayat 2010) to examine “Boshret Kheir” (2014) as a cultural artifact, whose context of production and consumption
attests to the interrelation between the political and the cultural fields, calls
attention to the "need for 'dialogic' and 'carnevelistique' theory of politics and
popular culture" (Stam 1997 p.190) and highlights what Stam would qualify as
the multicultural colonization of representation veiling the "power relations
between the communities of the artifact" (1997 p.189).

The paper argues for the song’s representation of the multicultural politics of
populist nationalism, whose expressions transpose the opposition between
multiculturalism and nationalism onto the terrain of tolerance, repackage
nationalism through the populist fun aesthetics and politics and rebrand the
gender politics of both populism and nationalism via the corporate management
policies of neo-liberal capitalism. In its non-statist production and outlook (in a
break from the tradition of post-independent national singing), the song suggests
a neo-liberal model for expression and management of populist nationalism that
deconstruct the long-entrenched dichotomization of neo-liberalism and
populism, gendered nationalism and authoritarian consolidation: "neo-
liberalism’s valorization of the ‘free market’ by way of an ostensibly anti-statist
outlook” (Bruff 2012, p. 107-8). Boshret Kheir (2014) configures the shaky
nexus through its corporate cultural politics of representation, repertoire with the
maculinized political culture of the nation-state and their effect on both
marketing the popular rhetoric of formal politics and naturalizing the gendered
politics of populist nationalism. The paper conducts the analysis along three
axes. The first axis examines of the discursive process and construction of
gendered designated identity of the Egyptian nationals—geared towards
amassing popular support for the voting process and reducing democracy to an
electoral premise in accordance to the stakes of the power centers (neo-liberal
practices and militarized authoritarianism) governing the Egyptian setting. The
second axis inspects the song's audiovisuals and their effect on projecting an
image of national collectivity within the depoliticized neo-liberal multiculture—
honed to populist and popular imaginings and tethered to the populace's informal
fun poetics. The third axis poses an open query about the neo-singers of the
nation-state and its implication with respect to both Egypt's location within the
regional and international political economy and the end of nationalism/authoritarianism as 'we know it'.

Boshret Kheir (2014) was produced in the aftermath of the second wave of
Egyptian Spring (garnering a Western furor regarding its labelling – revolution,
'coup', democratic coup or 'popular coup') and against the backdrop of a global
backlash with respect to Egyptian 'exceptionalist' impregnability to democracy.
Time magazine cover (Vol. 182, no.4) featured Egyptians in terms of the
"World's Best Protestors, World's Worst Democrats" in implicit invocation of
the Eurocentric thesis of Arab exceptionalism (Debian 2015). The song's
message, a response to and ironically through the Anglo-American packaged power-paradigm, was a call for a massive turn over to the polls in vindication of the upcoming election process that is destined to materialize the translation of Egypt's laid out road-map to democracy. Its production management technique was tolerance-manufactured multiculturalism. Transposed to the Egyptian setting, it was re-signified in accordance to the national moment with its fear for and furor over the true nature of Egyptian identity and in tune with the political end of election. The re-signification came in through the simple thematic of the joy of life and the joyful everyday practices of the populace's popular fun culture. The populace was thence joyfully enlisted to fend for national identity and combat the threat of 'anti-fun-dementalism' (Bayat 2010, p.153) posited by Muslim Brothers' short-term rule. The prescribed means was through their jubilant assertion of recognized existence and voice before the world – as befitting their designed and designated gendered agency to a nation-state in the throes of patronizing neo-liberal capitalist world order.

To that end, its writer, Ayman Bahgat Qamar, wrote its lyrics in Colloquial slang Arabic – in deviation from the traditional mode of national singing. Its composer, Amr Mostafa (infamous for his conspiratorial take on the Arab Spring and the unrelenting advocacy of Mubarak's paternalistic/patriarchal regime) uses the jubilant hard-rugged beats of Cairo street music with a melancholic schmaltzy prelude. The song is audibly delivered through the exotically husky voice of a non-Egyptian Emirate singer, Hussain al-Jassmi, to be video clipped by director Hisham Fathy and produced by corporate T.V station CBC with the visuals -adaptation of Pharrell Williams' global hit Happy- localized to the Egyptian setting.

The result is a corporate election song and virtual-turned-national hit (receiving 1 million views upon its launch and 155 thus far), whose multicultural design ironically boosts the paradigm power through the self-defeating pursuit of exiting its discursive space. This is done through tethering politics and poetics to popular expression, populist experience and local-global culture in tacit cooptation of former's subversive potential and in line with the commodifying strain the latter. The outcome is a cultural artifact, whose venture into the corporate managed political field (and mix of disparate elements) showcases the accretive packaging thrust of depolitized multiculturalism (Stam 1997), the 'culturalization of politics' and 'politicization of culture' qualifying liberal multiculturalist ideological operation (Zizek 2007) and the nexus between corporate policies, multicultural politics and the gendering impetus of populist nationalism. The ultimate after effect is Boshret Kheir (2014) — the popular national song articulated in the new nationalist language of the corporate managed multicultural nation. The latter's simulation of 'life as politics' (Bayat
2010) revamps patriotic sentiments and exits the paradigm power to paradoxically deflate the resistant potential of life’s politics of fun and subverts traditional authority — departing from and configuring its discursive space along the intersecting interests of the multiple power-centers governing the post-Arab Spring Egyptian setting.

1. Culturalization of Politics: Boshret Kheir and Tolerance as Marketing Design

In his critique of the post-political liberal project of knowledge production, Zizek (2007) identifies the "culturalization of politics" as "the liberal multiculturalist's basic ideological operation" (par 1). Culturalization of politics operates through what Hall ([1973] 1980) would qualify as encoding of the political through the story of cultural with tolerance as the discursive form for the mediation of the political field. Accordingly, political problems of inequality, economic exploitation and injustice are encoded in the story of cultural difference that is decoded and communicated along tolerance and intolerance binary— depoliticized and neutralized in tune with the neo-liberal multicultural. Thus, tolerance becomes both the politically-correct ideological smokescreen of the "retreat and failure from direct political solutions" and the smoke signal for the turn from the "culturalization of politics to the politicization of culture"—designed to evade discussions of emancipation and political struggle (Zizek 2007, par 2). In Boshret Kheir (2014), this encoding of the story of tolerance designed to communicate the meaning of the nascent democratic exercise to the Egyptian populace - is enacted through the language and the visuals.

The language of Boshret Kheir (2014) is structured away from the abstracted symbolism of traditional nationalist singings. Written in a standard colloquial (ammiyyat al-umiyin in Badawi's typology), the song uses the everyday language of the masses. This linguistic choice - not a normative preference of nationalist aesthetic practice - constitutes a break from the elevated phraseology of traditional patriotic singing; the latter's conceptual parameter was hung on nation-ness, sacrifice and personality cult. It also institutes a shift towards a gesture democratic politics of inclusion, where the populace's lexicon becomes the vehicle for enunciation of the new conception of belonging and nationality. Moreover, this choice simultaneously encodes a reversal of both the linguistic hierarchy of national language varieties along with the top-bottom approach of envisioning the societal wellbeing and enacts a reversal of the militarized post-independent unity – “a unity that is synonymous with anonymity" (Thomas 1997, p. 75). The effect is strategically paying homage to the multiplicity of masculine individual and individualized cultures of Egyptian nationhood recognizing difference and diversity that is tied to the electoral map and voting
machinery. Ultimately, the song’s enunciation structure and language choice purport a shift to a new regulating parameter of the populist nationalism of the multicultural national collectivity, the terms of which is related through patriarchal idiomatic kinship (Joseph 1993). The latter coerces diversity into a brotherhood paradigm that is functionally designed to propagate massive turn outs of the structured as connective collective\(^4\) collectivity of male Egyptians. Male Egyptians figures as the rightful claimants of national polity and the indispensable cogs for the functioning of the voting machinery.

1.1. Patriarchal Idiomatic Kinship and Multicultural Nationalism

Divided into three stanzas, the song begins with incentivizing Egyptians to take the step forward and vote. Juxtaposing effeminate silence with maculinitized speech, the first stanza laments the past passivism that has robbed Egyptians of their manly status as the fenders of Egypt, who are capable of writing the future on their own terms and thereby dazzling the world into recognition of their august presence. The second stanza builds on the initial setting of masculine bravado through a sketchy chart of the political geography of the Egyptian voting map. Enumerating the regional or rather provincial identity politics of each locale, the stanza charts a personalized geography of the Egyptian setting through strategic employment of اسم النسب (\(ism alnasab\) is a personal noun that defines the subject's identity via ascription to a place of origin) that names each constituency after its local habitats: 'biheri', 'monoufy', 'demiati', 'iskandarany', 'saedy', 'sohagy', 'qenawy', sawaysah' … etc. This provincial politics of naming at once mobilizes tribal sentiment and projects a pluralistic image of Egypt's upcoming politics transposing the provincial onto national belonging, while back-staging the problematics of urban inequitable development and disenfranchisement rending Egyptian political geography. More specifically, this ploy to provincial politics discursively constructs a panorama of multiplicity and diversity to translate the multicultural politics of the new nation onto the Egyptian humanized geography acknowledging the individuality of the multifarious communal cultural identities to simultaneously enlist their collective agency and veil their unequal enfranchisement. The third stanza comes to foster this celebratory homage to multicultural populist nationalism, with its affected construction of tenuous heterogeneity-cum-collectivity underpinned by tribalism and provincialism, through maculinitized brotherhood rhetoric and idiomatic kinship. The latter regulates the different provincial differences and border zones in accordance to their geographical distance from the center. Not only is this "gathering a gathering of men" according to the song wording, but also"الصعيدى" (El-Sei’dy: the resident of upper Egypt) is brought in conjunction with "البورسعيدى" (the resident of the Suez Canal city of Port said) and is given
the epithet "ابن اخوه" (brother's son). Biheri, Monoufy and Demietti are more kin than brothers), whereas Halayeb (the Halayeb triangle referencing a place not people) are "اهل وأرايب" (folks and cousins) and "ناس مطروح" the people of Matrouhare given a "heartfelt welcome". Halayeb Triangle and Matrouh are two border zones, whose distance from the national center warrants a parallel kinship distance. The effect is a simplistic account of the social geography of patriarchal kinship relations between the northern, southern and border regions of the Egyptian nation-state. Despite its discursive design and particularly through its marketing politics, this sutured social geography encodes a story of national bonding and belonging away from the anonymity of nationalist articulation, and within the multiculture of current world order. The latter's tolerance-centric ethos linguistically reproduces the inequitable enfranchisement of the communities behind the artifact to project a tenuous heterogeneous collectivity that tolerates differences and injustices to uphold the new nation. The ultimate effect is forging a new language for both the neo-liberal nation and its newly forged multicultural nationals—designed to forge designated national agency.

1.2. Neo-Nation's Language and Gendered Designed Agency

Indeed, it is particularly through this new language that the shakiness of the linguistically forged multicultural nationals is covered up (if not redeemed) and national belonging is transposed onto a design for their gendered designated agency. Qualifying the register and language level of his previous song "تمرد" (Tamarad: Arabic verb for rebel), Qamr uses simpler wordings that reference direct material actions — "اعدلها", "خد عهدا", "قوم نادى" ("rise up", "take an oath", "put to right", "say before the world") — with the use of imperative indexing urgency and necessity and enlisting a sense of agency and duty. Abstracted concepts like dignity honor, nationhood and nationality are avoided with the traditional gendering of nationalist symbolism allocated to the first stanza—Egypt is mentioned once with its personified effeminnized presence structured as the backdrop and incentive for the action sought implementing. The anonymity of national unity is subverted through alternately adjusting the register to the dialects of the diverse geographic and ethnic provinces of Egyptians’ cultural identities—"مرحبا" ("marhab", a greeting word used in the Western border) is used in connection with Matrouh. Each province is referenced with idiomatic description—"الاسمعلوية ياما كادو العدا" (Ismalawiyah yama kado al-aada: people of Ismailia who teased the enemies). The gesture politics of solidarity through difference and diversity is structured among the multifarious constituencies constituting the patriarchal nation.
The message is clear: this gathering is manly, vote to actualize your patriarchal connectivity and control your destiny through fending (or rather as fenders) of Egypt’s national identity and unity—before a world order adamant on framing reality on its own term. Such tactful recognition of difference and diversity, underpinned by strategic deployment of idiomatic patriarchal kinship, purports national agency that is premised on the gendering of both Egypt and Egyptians. Building on the initial gendering of silence versus speech, the simplistic wordings discursively invert the care/control terms of the patriarchal kin contract entrusting the care to the populace, who are enticed into a transaction where their response for Egypt immanent crisis would garner their control of Egypt and their destiny. Egypt figures as the damsel in distress in need of saving. Her redemption is the nationals' votes and their specified function and benefit to a polity in the throes of legitimization crisis. As such, their national agency falls into what McClintock (1997) qualifies as gendered designated agency—" agency by invitation … bereft of historical motivation … [driven by] the structural necessity of war” (McClintock 1997, p.98). Driven by the structural necessity of legitimizing Egypt's road-map to democracy, the agency charted in the song is the gendered designated agency of the neo-liberal nationals—designed to simultaneously posit the urgency of fending national unity against an external enemy and construct their massive turn-out as national defense and security measures. This subtle bravado gendered construction is further enhanced by the audiovisuals. The latter's ploy to popular poetics paradoxically politicizes the fun culture of the street music to co-opt its dissent thrust and thereby parodying and culturalizing the fun of 'life as politics' (Bayat 2010).

1.3. Cutting the edge of ‘life as politics’: Audio-Visuals and Populist Singing/Imaging

In clear break from the enthralling enthusiasm of the sixties, the earnest formalistic celebratory tonalities of the seventies and eighties and in obvious distinction from the schmaltzy contemporary patriotic singing, the song video steers away from being prescriptive and peremptory through a tactful deployment of mahraganat (translates as “festivities”) street art performance. Building on their increasing popularity, Boshret Kheir emulates the mahraganat songs’ complex, fast-and-furious rhythms, rhymes, word-play and hip-hop tuning. Opening on a poignant melancholic tone, the song breaks into explosive disco-ish jingle with the movement from silence into action of the lyrics translated and audibly incarnated through the abrupt acceleration in tempo of the tunes and what writer Youssef Rakha (2012) qualifies as "sudden shift from deep poignancy to explosive silliness" (Rakha 2012, par 2). In fact, it is particularly
this explosive silliness and fun aesthetics that enables the song to instantiate the story of tolerance underpinning the “culturalization of politics" (Zizek 2007) through what Bayat's identifies as "the art of presence … in the life of non-movements, in life as politics" (Bayat 2010, p. 26).

Perfecting the packaging of tolerance, the audio-visuals capitalizes on the lure of what Bayat (2010) would qualify as "the politics of presence" of mahraganat youth's aesthetics, whose "normative subversion" figures as the new vehicle for imaging and singing the nation (Bayat 2010, p. 128). First, complementing the tribal and provincial sentiment invocation of the lyrics, the song's music administers a parallel invocation of the excluded urban spaces and cultures of al-ashwayat (Cairo self-developed or rather 'underdeveloped' communities). The anti-elitist aesthetics of mahraganat singing is strategically deployed to institute a gesture politics of inclusion. The latter accommodates the marginalized street music (consumed by the masses but not recognized as proper art form in the institutionalized cultural milieu) to project democratic veneer and pluralistic politics that ultimately sell the voting process (product) to the disenfranchised masses. Second, in its tactful reversal of the binaries of center/margin, high/low and mainstream/popular, the song's mahraganat-like music administers a tacit co-optation of the street music dissent-fun politics. An off-shoot of the statist hand-off policies towards urban planning, mahraganat aesthetics is an expression of the location from which it emanates where urban disenfranchisement and under-development bring forth self-regulating communities residing in congested spaces and deprived of essential services. These communities are forced to make do with communal tactics of survival, whose inadequacy furnishes the subtext of mahraganat songs that at once makes life fun and makes fun of life. Such fun politics or rather making fun of formal politics becomes the survival strategy and the dissent politics giving vent to the embroiled anger of disenfranchised youth. Third, in further co-optation of its dissent politics, the deployment of mahraganat issues the corporatization of the popular and populist thrust of mahraganat transposing the communal self-regulated underpinning of its production onto the politics of mass produced culture; mahraganat are communally financed through the collective effort of a group of youth, who makes جمعية (gamiaa: cooperative for collecting money) to finance and produce the song (costing average of 1000 to 3000 L.E). The song is then uploaded on YouTube to garners views, according to whose number the dream of fame and social upward mobility is liable to be realized (Interview with Kilany, 2016). Fourth, this strategic utilization and cutting of the oppositional edge of popular poetics sets a vexed relation between the state, its monopoly on the national and corporate politics. The latter institutes (borrowing Bayat’s) ‘a departure from within the power-paradigm' that sets the tune for the multicultural
imaging and singing of the neo-liberal nation publicizing the underground and marginalized aesthetics to standardize its populist lure and thereby parodies both its fun policies and formal nationalist politics. This is done in reversal of Bayat's thesis of the liberatory thrust of 'life as politics' and in successful ploy to regulate and deviate the dissent politics and poetics of mahraganat. Ultimately, the scatting rhythmic tunes of Boshret Kheir vexes the authenticity claims of formal nationalist singing and politics – with its underlying homogeneity ethos designed to monitor the border trespass of cultural identity boundaries – through a new nexus for the multicultural populist national image-nation that synthesizes the tribal provincial with the urban local to be wrapped in the global. The result is a neo-liberal nationalist pack – best encapsulated in the visuals.

1.4. Visuals and the New Nexus of the Neo-Liberal Nationalist Imagination

In its logic, the visuals seal the culturalization of politics and its underpinned gesture politics of inclusion further confounding the 'national' through a politicized adaptation of Pharrell Williams' hit song “Happy” (2013). Mimicking “Happy” (2013), Dir. Hindy adjusts the global hit's visual grammar to the domestic Egyptian setting localizing its imagery to the election context and politicizing its universal thematic to tune up with the unfolding neo-liberal democratic machinery. The camera opens on a wide angle long shot capturing a marine landscape rimmed with iconic architectural structure and cultural artifact (min. 0.05). People then make their appearance (min. 0.06) with banners transcribing the material action wording of the song: "حتعملها, حتعلدها, شارك, انزل, صوت, مصر خير" ("you can do it", "can put in order", "participate", "go and vote", "good tidings"). The camera then bursts into explosive kaleidoscopic movements capturing a phantasmagoria of images seething with Egyptians from diverse locations and different walks of life. Pictured in all their various looks, dress codes and environments, Egyptians are captured boogieing and bopping to the abruptly accelerated tempo of the tunes and smilingly waving as they bear signs of ‘vote’, ‘participate’ and the names of the geographic and ethnic provinces they hail from.

This adjustment not just issues a culturalization and domestication of a global artifact and aesthetics to local setting harnessing its utility to the immediate political context. It also institutes a parallel adjustment of global icons to localized pattern of consumption. The mix between human and cartoon figures in Happy (2013) is replicated and configured in accordance to the Egyptians' pattern of consumption with the Minions replaced with Sponge Bob and Dora (2:20) – given the latter's wide viewership by virtue of the dubbed versions infiltrating the Egyptian market. More importantly, this culturalization
administers a comparable usurpation of *Happy* and *mahraganat's* low-budget publicizing tactic utilizing their Web 2 technology-based pattern of dissemination to appropriate its popular lure and capitalize on its populist thrust. Like *Happy* and *mahraganat* song, *Boshret Kheir* was launched on You Tube (16 May 2014) prior to its release on the silver screen of a privately owned channel, CBC – the latter funded the production and holds the rights to the song. Ultimately, the visuals showcase a new mechanism for national imaging and singing. This new mechanism operates through the following: first, attention to the nexus between the provincial, local and global; second, utilization of populist expression, popular social media resources and youth imagery and icons to set up a token recognition of plurality without pinning it down to material aspiration and enfranchisement. Third, it sets in a commercialized promise of happiness for all through a simplistic and childlike content message (a pseudo- United-Colour of Benetton diversity and a Mobinil like-ads-content message). This not only made the song an easy-to be-bought political commodity, 8 it also enabled the marketing of the gendered designated agency covering up the logic of power, its context-specific dealings and its design for infantilizing the populace into buying into a polling commodity.

Ironically, or rather specifically due to its well-wrought design and well thought medial movement (from You tube to the Silver screen), *Boshret Kheir* became an anchor for vernacularized imaging of highly individualistic conflicting contested visions of national identities. In fact, it is particularly due to its deviation from the 'discursive space' of 'power paradigm' and gesture 'departure from within' that discursive space that the song set into action what Fiske (1989) and Bayat (2010) respectively posit as the paradoxical effect of the repertoire between mass and popular culture and the self-defeating pursuit of harnessing the youth politics of fun to sell the "anti-fun-damentalism" of authority-centric formal politics (Bayat 2010, p. 153). The repertoire between mass and popular culture, embodying both "forces of domination and the opportunities to oppose and evade them from the subordinated" (Fiske 1989, p.25), enabled the ironic spreading and checking of the popular lure of *Boshret Kheir* through mass consumptive reproduction. Literarily every Tom, Dick and Harry engaged in Web 2 technology driven remakes of the jubilant audio-visuals took the occasion to translate its content and tempo according to their own terms. The strategic deployment of the youth fun politics subverted the iconic political stature of nationalist singing. People's remakes were filled with ordinary and mundane visuals in a typical fashion of what Bayat identifies as the "tacit encroachment of the ordinary" ((2010, p. 10). This sets in (qualifying Zizek's dictum) the politicization of the personal and personalization of the political paradoxically making politics fun and making fun of formal politics. The effect
is a new paradigm for national imagining where neo-liberal democratic imaging becomes (configuring William's phrase) 'multiple rooms without a roof' – multiple multiple rooms with *corporate managed glass ceiling*.

2. Multiple Rooms with *Corporate Glass Ceiling*: the New Singers of the Nation

Corporately induced and managed, the subversive after effect of *Boshret Kheir* released a plethora of fun poetics, whose wide range (from overt dissent and ridicule to outright applause and celebration) provides for a tactile reflection of the ambiguous setting in the post-election landscape. This ambiguity, catalyzed by social media tacit re-charting of the media landscape, puts the state into an ever-deepening legitimation crisis with little possibility for tethering the multiplicity of national imaginings into a unanimous and uni-centric formula and little potential for the solidification of personality cult soaring above accountability. In a televised national address (August 2014), president El-Sisi states: «الزعيم الراحل جمال عبدالناصر كان محظوظ، لأنه كان بيتكلم والإعلام كان معاه» (The late leader Abdel Nasser was lucky; whenever he talked, the media was with him) (Abbas 2014 par 1).

Half right in that regard, Nasser's fortune was not due to the unanimous backing of state-owned media apparatus that magnified his leadership stature and personality cult aura. It was rather due to the absence of both digital communication technologies and corporate media. On the one hand, digital technology brings down the walls barring communication to bring about a multi-centric media order. In such order, the nation-state's policies are debated through multiple chat rooms contesting the unanimity of national unity and enabling the transience of uni-centric and personality cult driven vision of Egyptian national identity. On the other hand, corporate media capitalizes on the popularity of social media and its semblance of plurality to contain its de-centered multiplicity setting a glass ceiling regulating its potential dissent politics and composing neo-liberal statist tunes for singing the nation. This brings a question about the singer/singers of the nation and its implication with respect to the shape of populism and nationalism in today's' Egypt. This question is best answered through the neo-liberal politics underpinning the production and dissemination of *Boshret Kheir*.

Against the mainstream practice of state-T.V. production of national songs, the song is produced by CBC, a privately-owned satellite channel famed for its endorsement of neo-liberal capitalist policies, unrelenting advocate of gulf-Egyptian brotherhood and support of the military establishment. Against the classical practice of singing the nation, *Boshret Kheir* is sung by an Emirate singer Hussein al-Jassmi, who does not appear on screen, yet becomes the *Voice*
of the new nation instructing Egyptians on the benefits and necessity of voting; al-Jassmi’s citizenship is based on a no-vote pact. The song capitalizes on the global success of Williams’ “Happy” (2013), whose production-release date and mechanism of dissemination echo that of its replica Boshret Kheir with the latter's release first on YouTube before its launch on the silver screen. The song viral reception and wide-ranging remakes - fostered by the butterfly pattern of consumption of Web 2 technologies - enable the production of parodies. The latter, though divested off overt oppositional politics, disables the permanence of unanimous iconization of leadership stature and personality idolization.

Unlike the statist nationalism of the previous century, Boshret Kheir's singing, imaging and reproduction mechanisms attest to the evolution of new paradigm for populist nationalism where neo-liberal market forces interject with statist politics reproducing its nationalist poetics through a multicultural ethos and populist aesthetics. The latter injects the provincial, local and global within the patriarchal kinship structure qualifying the previous patriarchal statist outlook through shifting the focus of national identity and unity to the populace. The populace is granted a redemptive agency – bracketed by invitation and functionality of presence and salvaged by maculinized ethos and idiomatic kinship. The outcome is the glass ceiling of neo-liberal nationalist grid that markets multicultural populist nationalism to shift the gear away from statist authoritarianism while reproducing and re-articulating its paradigm in accordance to the congruence or conflicting stakes with the state. The news coverage of Egyptian maritime borders dispute with the KSA poses as a discoursal indicator of the complex relation and repertoire between the neo-liberal market-centric actors of the present-day nationalism and the state. The latter's legitimization crisis discursively sanctioned and managed by non-state actors through falling back on idiomatic patriarchal kinship.9

Conclusion
This paper tackled the question of cultural representation of populist national identity in the election hit “Boshret Kheir” (2014). The paper examined the hit song’s wordings, audio-visuals and their repertoire with popular culture and the political context of enunciation. The paper reached the following findings. First is the re-signification of multiculturalism in the Egyptian setting. Against the depoliticized theorization underpinning the academic enunciation of the present day multiculture, the song showcases the politicization of the muliculture through strategic transposition of its tolerance ideological operation in the Egyptian setting politicizing the Egyptians’ cultural differences and diversities to propagate its promotional call for election. Second is the multicultural politics of populist national identity construction. The transposition of multiculturalism
in the Egyptian setting and its tactile politicization of culture to sell politics issue a new logic for populist national identity construction and agency. This new logic undercuts the taken-for-granted statist authority of the previous century through the active involvement and manipulation of neo-liberal market-centric players. The latter strategically deploys the popular social media, the populist youth aesthetics and expressions to construct an image of solidarity tethered to populist imaging and imagining, and pinned down to the interests of multi-centric power regimes. Third is the gender politics of multicultural populist nationalism. Selling politics through culture, the political logic for populist nationalist identity replicates the technologies of violence of nationalism through both the gender symbolism of Egypt as a women and the functional agency of the Egyptians – designated and bracketed by their functionality to the election event. Gender politics thus function as the redemptive logic for gendering the national agency and building a brotherhood-furnished collectivity. The final finding is the instrumental employment of fun poetics and its bearing on selling populist nationalism, consolidation of what Bruff (2012) terms neo-liberal authoritarianism and the anti-fun-dementalism of authority solidification. The song’s success story (and still to an extent spirited afterlife) highlights the significance of the anti-elitist fun poetics in the logic of populist nationalism and its closure in authority consolidation—to the foreclosure of life as politics, and as a safety valve for the political. Against Boshret Kheir, al-Jassmi’s second election song “Masa al-Kheir ya Ra’is” (“Good Afternoon President 2018) fell short before Hakim’s election song “Aandak Nizoula” (“You have an Errand” 2018). Unlike al-Jassmi’s (2018), Hakim’s video-clipped song (2018) does not feature any celebrity actors rather ordinary people dancing in the streets with the people as the main addressees—spoken to and of within their anti-elitist fun politics and through the masculinized discourse of national identity.

Endnotes

1 Nationalism in the post-independent state of the previous century was avangardist or in McClintock’s terms, borrowing Said and Eagleton "anticipatory …grabs instinctively for the future, projecting itself by an act of will and imagination beyond the compromised structure of the present" (McClintock 1996 p.196). As such, its rhetoric was more elevated clocking difference in collectivity veneered with a spirit of inclusion and sophistication with careful attention to the political correctness of language. Contemporary protectionist populism is past-oriented designed to reclaim past glory through populist rhetoric. President El Sisi's campaign slogan "تحيا مصر " ("Long Live Egypt"), echoing Trump's "Make America Great Again", articulates the same
rhetoric and orientation with the life of Egypt predicated on the dis-life of disenfranchised Egyptians and the reclaiming of America's past glory hinged on making it white again. After all the failure of Clinton was forecasted by the popularity of the comedy drama web television series Orange is the New Black—hence the inevitability of White.

2 In "Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse" (1980), Hall argues against the linearity of traditional model of mass communication research. Hall calls attention to the different moments of production, circulation and distribution as a complex structure of relations that contributes to the communication of the discursive form in which the television discourse takes place. Hall's argument is for recognition of the privileged position of the discursive form in the communication exchange and attuned attention to the interface between the social practice and discursive structure. The latter enables the encoding of historical event into communicative event through the story-form the event might take. As Hall states: "the event must become a 'story' before it can become a communicative event" (Hall par 1).

3 According to Elgibaili (1996), low variety of colloquial Arabic, used by the uneducated, has been strategically deployed in political speech to affect solidarity with the masses.

4 In her fieldwork on the psycho-dynamics of Arab patriarchy in the Lebanese context (1993,1994), Joseph identifies the kin-contract as the regulating ethos of Arab patriarchy (in distinction from the sexual contract of Western patriarchy). According to Joseph, this Arab-specific kin-contract operates through four set of psycho-social dynamics that set the individuation of Arab selves, namely connectivity, kinship patriarchy and idiomatic kinship. First, connectivity is "an activity or intention, not a state of being…[whereby] women and men, juniors and seniors, equally engaged and interwoven in webs of relationality…[signaling] maturity partly by the successful engagement in a multiplicity of connective relationships across gender and age groups, with kin and non kin" (Joseph "Gender and Relationality" 467). Second, indirection involves "communication … often indirect … conveyed by circumlocution or through statement to third parties" (Frontier 18). Third, kinship patriarchy is gender and age marked where gender-relations and roles are predicated on the interdependence of care/control (love tempering the imbalance of power). Fourth is the idiomatic kinship in which the boundaries between domestic/public arenas are shifted and in some instances effaced with kinship idioms and morality flowing into public life so that "non-kin persons could evoke the legitimacy and expectation of kin relationships in political, economic and social spheres" through the cultural legitimacy of the language of kinship. (Gender and Relationality 468)

5 Music critics identifies two sources for the origin of Mahraganat: first, the traditional mystical melodies of the mould singing or Islamic festivals that feature rhythmic music and mystical poetry; second, the earlier generation of youth music, known as Shaabi, roughly translated as popular, originating in the 1970s with working class musicians starting their production of their own soundtracks. Shaabi singers were in part inspired by mould singing, which they turned into raspy voiced songs about the common people.
infused by Egyptian humor. Originating in Salam city (in Cairo suburbs), mahraganat stayed largely in Salam City and the surrounding suburbs until 2011, when the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak brought its artists greater exposure. A prominent mahraganat singer, Sadat released a series of songs over the internet dealing directly with politics — “The People and the Government” and “The People Demand Five Pounds of Phone-Credit” (a riff on the revolutionary popular chant "People Demands a Regime Change"). Yet, mahraganat artists resent the oft-made suggestion that their art is born of the revolution. They started making music long before Mubarak fell, which does not deal with national politics, particularly because the latter often ignores the basic needs of struggling communities. Many of the Mahraganat singers are opposed to political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood, because hard-line conservatives see music as sinful, though mahraganat is equally criticized by the less conservative. An offshoot of the burgeoning informal communities of el-ashwaiyat, mahraganat songs articulates the dire realities of governmental negligence to the people that leads the youth to evade the quagmire realities of the real world through drugs, sex, singing and dancing. Indeed, as an embodiment of what Fiske identifies as the evasive pleasure of pop-culture, mahraganat celebrates the fun politics of libidinal pleasures of their subculture and status in society. This celebratory articulation not only shames society and government by their negligence, but also shocks mainstream society and politicians into recognizing their social and political presence and claims—especially that mahraganat has infiltrated the Egyptian cultural scene. Like “Boshret Kheir”, mahraganat songs steer away from politics—only a few songs are explicitly political—since as Sadat states: “this is not what most people like … Most people want to have fun, so our most popular songs are humorous” (qtd. El Nabawi par 5).

6 According to Bayat (2010), the art of the presence is the mode of political practice of youth. The latter are social agent of change in the Middle East by their unconventional practice of life-as-politics where the politics of presence and assertion of right carve out spaces and places from the power paradigm and change the practice of authoritarian politics through practice, not protest. For Bayat, the art of the presence is closely related to the non-movement nature of youth action. Unlike conventional social movement, non-movements are not organized challenges with articulated ideology or recognized leadership. Their practice of politics revolves around 'practice', not protest, and is characterized by collective consciousness of non-collective actors. The latter are self identified by visible markers of life-style and ways of doing things. Their everyday practice and presence effects normative subversion and dissent that takes away from the power paradigm and changes its exclusive monopoly on public space. Bayat cites mahraganat among the youth practice of dissent politics where fun—the terrain of the political practice of non-movement youth culture—becomes a means for assertion of presence and invasion of public spaces against power-paradigm disenfranchisement and marginalization.

7 In a personal interview conducted with an insider to the mahraganat world, Ibrahim al-Kilany, a 28 years old taxi driver and Alexandrian mahraganat producer, explained the working of the business and how he has entered into that world. His story with
mahraganat started with wedding parties, when he and his friends alternately were giving each other wedding presents in the form of production of a song where the groom's name is mentioned. The wedding present or نقوت (noqout is a a customary act of complementing where an amount of money is given to the person who has a celebration be returned or repaid to the person who gave the money whenever s/he has a happy event) are regulated through the structure of gamiaa, where an informal contract are written between the parties involved to save each's right for the amount of money contributed. This money is given to song writers, composers and street dancer and a song is produced in the wedding with the name of each money contributor mentioned, which gives acknowledgment, recognition and fame to each one amid his community and in his district. The singer then would use the song produced and start on marketing his product through networking—normally conducted via Tok Tok drivers and on YouTube. When the song proves a hit, the singer then would promote it further through the mahraganat private channels. The latter would publicize the song according to the number of hits it garners on YouTube and the intensity of its reception with the masses.

On asking Kilany about copyright issues, he answered that normally the singer would ask their permission and they would normally grant it, since everyone has taken their bid—the groom and the friends got fame and recognition in their district. If the song proves a T.V. hit, the recognition would reach the silver screen. The money is not the issue.

The song proved a smash hit. During and in the aftermath of the election, it was widely played on wedding ceremonies, voting polls, coffee shops and shopping malls. As befitting its popular media of dissemination, it has triggered a butterfly chain of myriad remakes with the jingles adapted to highly individualized imaging of Egyptians (from different walks of life and social settings) dancing to the tunes, personalizing its imagery to momentous events in their lives and invoking its iconic political stature to produce an image of (commercialized and packaged) solidarity and dissent that cuts across various spectrum. The last of these remakes is Peace Cake Production's ELECTION RESULTS! — "Boshret Kheir" American version launched on Face book (17 November 2016) upon Trump's announced win.

The framing of Tiran and Sanafir border dispute was administered through the privately run media channels—mostly financed by a mix of Egyptian and Gulf based money. Its discourse management fell back on idiomatic kinship discourse markers rationalizing the government unilateral decision on the grounds of the brotherly relation between the two states (بين الإشقاء) and in terms of the just historical rights that is unlikely to jeopardize Egyptian interests, since 'it is the house'—in colloquialArabic (في بيتها).
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Ideologically-Induced Understatement in English/Arabic News Translation: A Critical Discourse Analysis – Socionarrative Approach

* Sama Dawood Salman

Introduction
The classical definition of ideology is a set of beliefs dominant in a certain community (Hatim & Mason, 1997). In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), however, this term means much more than this. For most CDA scholars, including Thompson (1984); Van Dijk (1993); and Fairclough (2003), ideologies are very much related to power. Fairclough (2003) maintains that ideology is a social theme that is not merely related to attitudes and beliefs, but is also about power and supremacy. He views ideologies as the means through which power is “established, maintained, enacted and transformed” (1995/2010, p. 26). According to Cheng (2012), ideology is very much related to narratives in news articles. They are interrelated and inseparable because ideologies control narratives, while narratives build the dominant ideologies.

Translators, mainly those of news stories, adopt different strategies to get along with the ideologies of their agencies and, sometimes, to manipulate with the source text’s suggested narrative. Among these strategies, and the one that this study is focusing on, is understatement. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2017), understatement denotes the use of lexical items to describe something in a way that makes it seem less important, serious or shocking than it is believed to be.

This study investigates the strategy of understatement in the context of English – Arabic news translation. To achieve this end, the lexical choices of both the source text and the target text are analyzed adopting Fairclough’s Relational Approach (2003). However, since Fairclough (2003) himself maintains that textual analysis alone is not enough to provide full understanding of ideology, and that there is a need for opening up to other disciplines (2003), the present study benefits from Harding’s Socio-narrative Approach (2012) to explore how temporary narrators (i.e. translators) can contribute to a distinct ideology through changing the original narrative.

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Research Questions

This study hypothesizes that understatement is a framing tool that news writers and translators utilize to promote for different narratives in line with the ideology of the media institutions they represent. Therefore, the translation of news stories and their embedded narrative need to be analyzed intertextually and intratextually within the framework of a transdisciplinary approach. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

• To what extent can ideology influence the translation of news stories?
• How can the translation strategy of understatement change the original narrative of a given news story?
• How can a transdisciplinary approach be applied to provide a systematic analysis of the narratives?

Understatement in News Translation

When translating a news story, translators should always bear in mind space and time limitations, in-house style preferences, and, above all, ideological considerations which may all force the translators to re-write the whole story. Van Dijk (2003) points out that ideology in news writing covers a wide range of issues including how news are gathered and covered. He believes that the ideologies of the institutions that news producers represent decide what will be included and mentioned. Fairclough (2003) sheds light on the question of narrativity in making news stories. He believes that news narrators (i.e., journalists) usually impose their narrative on the audience. This is because they interpret and construct events through including certain aspects and excluding others. Darwish (2006) argues that translation of news stories involves “a reframing process” that entails reshaping of events due to the influence of the institutions that translators represent (p. 52). Van Doorslaer (2010) mentions that translating news stories is much more than just finding linguistic equivalence; as it involves ideological considerations. He maintains that translators of news play three main roles: mediators between cultures, decision makers and gatekeepers. Similarly, Chen (2011) likens news translators (i.e. journalists who are transediting news or translators who work with journalists), to “gate-keepers” as they filter out what information should be passed and what other information should be kept out (p. 120). Van Doorslaer (2012) points out that the ongoing confusion between translating and rewriting news stories has led to the emergence of the concept of “journalation,” that is, the use of translated material when creating a news story (p. 1046). In the same vein, Schäffner (2012) holds the view that news translation is “a textual and a sociocultural process which involves transformations” (p. 881). The same idea is expressed by Liu (2013) who points out that when transediting, translators of news stories usually adopt
the frames of the institutions they belong to. Omar (2016) mentions that the ideology of publishers and institutions affect the process of news translation, since they impose their ideology on the translators. Gambier (2016) points out that while translating news, a number of transformations take place, including changing the focus of the source text, omitting or adding parts.

All this implies that news stories can be described as representations of power relations. Fairclough (2003) believes that producing news is about including some parts while excluding others in an attempt to impose a given narrative on the readers, which serves a given ideology. One of the ways that news translators appeal to in their attempt to include/exclude elements of a news story is understatement. According to the Literary Devices website (2017), understatement is defined as a tool utilized by writers “to intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is.” This study attempts to look into the issue of understatement as a translation tool from a CDA-Socionarrative perspective.

**Theoretical Framework**

**CDA: Fairclough’s Relational Approach (2003)**

Van Dijk (1993) notes that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is significant because it explains how language is used to produce/reproduce dominance. Dominant groups use language tools (e.g. lexical elements and structures) to develop certain ideologies in the public mind. Thus, he defines CDA as an analytical research that investigates how “social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (2015, p. 466). Among the scholars who contributed to CDA is Fairclough whose Relational Approach to text analysis is adopted in this study.

Fairclough (2003) distinguishes between two types of relations when it comes to text analysis: the first type is internal relations which refer to semantic, lexical, grammatical and phonological choices. The semantic level is related to the meaning between words, and phrases; the grammatical level has to do with the grammatical units such as morphemes, clauses and sentences; the lexical relations are those related to vocabulary and collocations; and phonological relations are specifically found in spoken language such as intonation and rhyme. Then there are the external relations of a text, which are related to how much of the world it reflects and how it represents that world. Fairclough (2003) believes that the internal textual analysis is a significant part of the external textual analysis, as it helps understand the ideology implied. Fairclough then suggests the term “intertextuality” to refer to incorporating within a given text parts of other texts. Intertextuality could be done indirectly in the form of summary or directly as in reproducing the actual words. This feature quite often
appears in news since writers, and in most cases translators, tend to include in their stories parts of other texts or voices. These parts could either be in the original language of texts or, as the examples in this study show, in the language these texts are translated into.

In the same book, Fairclough (2003) supports a transdisciplinary approach to the study of texts. He maintains that “dialogue with other disciplines” can help formulating theories and methods of analysis (p. 225). He puts special emphasis on the integration between textual and social analysis, pointing out that textual analysis should not precede social analysis, but the analysis should be “an open process which can be enhanced through dialogue across disciplines” (pp. 15-16). Fairclough sees texts as components of social interaction. To analyze a text, one should also look into such social, non-linguistic elements as body language, the relation between participants, and the social environment. Furthermore, he believes that texts and social events affect one another. The social settings affect how texts are constructed and texts, in turn, can bring about social changes through affecting people’s ideology. Such an approach has also been backed by other CDA scholars. Van Dijk (2003) believes that in order to understand the ideologies of a text, one should analyze it within its cultural and social context. Similarly, Wodak and Meyer (2008) argue for analyzing texts from a social perspective as they believe that CDA, by definition, is not about analyzing linguistic units, but rather about examining “social phenomena” (p. 2). This is the main reason why this study tries to benefit from a theoretical approach in Translation Studies that is based on sociology and narratology.

**Harding’s Socionarrative Theory (2012)**

Since the twenty first century, Narrative Theory has been viewed as a tool for analysis not only in literature but also in various disciplines including history, education, gender studies, and even physics (Harding, 2012). In 2006, Baker in her book *Translation and conflict: A narrative account* cites examples that show how the Narrative Theory can say a lot about the strategies that translators appeal to while playing their role as cultural mediators. The main focus of Baker’s application is the role that translators play during political conflicts. She touches upon how narratives are used by political powers to shape the public perception of events, and upon whether or not translators/interpreters have the right to reframe narratives during conflicts.

Harding (2012) takes Baker’s Narrative Theory (2006) as a starting point to develop her application in Translation Studies through mingling between the narrative and the sociological approaches. She believes that the Narrative Theory alone cannot provide detailed textual analysis and that, therefore, there is a need to have it integrated within a sociological approach. The Socio-narrative Theory,
according to her, is a strong theoretical framework to describe how translation can affect “the construction and reconstruction of narratives” (Harding, 2012, p. 290). Perhaps the most important aspect that Harding adds to Baker’s work, and the one that is significant to this study, is that she focuses on the role of narrators (original storytellers) and temporary narrators (translators) who are thought to be contributors to a distinct narrative.

While applying Baker’s theory (2006) to online media reportage, Harding classifies narratives into two types: (a) personal narrative; and (b) shared or collective narratives; though they are interconnected and one can hardly draw a clear-cut line between the two. The former are those stories that are created by individuals, whereas the latter are stories that are constructed through circulation among members of a given society. She believes that this typology reflects the fact that individuals in the case of personal narratives are held accountable for the stories they construct about themselves, whereas in the shared/collective narratives, stories are being constructed and circulated among the community either by agreement or force. Under these two main categories, there are local narratives that relate “particular events … in particular places at particular times” (Harding, 2012, p. 293); societal narratives which are institutions-specific and not for public circulation; theoretical narratives which are relevant to theories and the general use of abstract terms to refer to concrete situations; and meta narratives that refer to our role as individuals in a certain historical period.

Furthermore, Harding (2012) admits that most of her work in this regard is based on Mieke Bal’s *Narratology: An introduction to the theory of narrative* (2009). Bal sees texts as a structured “whole composed of language signs” told by an agent (i.e. narrator) in a particular way (2009, p. 5). In other words, news stories are texts produced by narrators (news agencies) talking about certain events within a certain narrative.

Applying the Socio-narrative Approach to media texts, Harding sees news agencies as narrators and calls the original text the primary narrative which consists of four elements: “events, actors, time and location” (p. 296). These primary narratives can later be contributed to or manipulated by temporary narrators who could be translators, commentators, or correspondents. Harding (2012) states that news translation can provide many examples of how “political conflicts are narrated by, and to, key players” (p. 303). And since aspects of news stories could be manipulated by translators to promote for a different narrative, a text and its translation can share the same elements, yet differ in the way each one represents the events (Harding, 2012).

This study offers an intertextual analysis of texts based on Fairclough’s Relational Approach (2003) and an intra-textual one that builds on Harding’s Socio-narrative Theory (2012). Such a transdisciplinary analysis can reveal how
textual components are manipulated or selectively appropriated to contribute to constructing narratives. It is to be noted that the two levels of analysis are interdependent and that, therefore, the analysis is not be carried out sequentially, but rather simultaneously, where one moves backwards and forwards between the two levels.

**Methodology**

Fairclough (2003) believes that textual analysis alone is not enough to provide full understanding of all the ideological aspects of texts. Therefore, he calls for opening up to other disciplines, mainly to social research, that can provide deeper insight into the link between texts and social life. It is for this reason that the present study draws on the Socionarrative Approach of Harding (2012) to be a complementary to Fairclough’s Relational Approach (2003). The former approach is chosen because it highlights the role of translators as temporary narrators, and relates texts to their social contexts. Fairclough’s approach, on the other hand, is selected because it focuses on ideology and offers detailed textual analysis.

Selected parts of English news stories and their Arabic translations are analyzed within the framework of the two theories. The analysis covers the lexical choices of the text producers/reproducers (i.e. writers/translators), and the narratives that are implied and intended to promote for the ideologies of the text producers or the institutions they represent. However, as Fairclough (2003) recommends, the analysis of the texts is not done as two separate stages, but rather as a simultaneous process where socionarrative analysis complements textual analysis. This is because although the two stages seem separable, the interaction between them is necessary for full analysis of the text.

**Data**

The data for this study are collected from a number of news stories published on electronic versions of some newspapers and news websites in both English and Arabic. English news articles were selected from a number of electronic news outlets, including Reuters, BBC, Washington Post, and The Daily Telegraph, and compared with their Arabic translations posted on a number of governmental or pro-governmental Arabic websites, including Al Ahram, Al Wafd, Masrawy, and Youm7. The articles cover two incidents that took place in Egypt: the crash of a Russian plane in Sinia (31st October, 2015) and the murder of an Italian student in Cairo (25th January, 2016). Both incidents represent a type of what Harding (2012) calls “shared/collective narrative.” That is, stories that are “constructed collectively… through either consensus or coercion” (p. 292). Moreover, the examples fall under the category of local narratives, since
they are related to specific events that took place at specific times and specific places. The analysis focuses on the way the ideologically-loaded lexical items employed in these articles are translated into Arabic.

**Data Analysis**

**The Plane Crash: Guilty vs. Victim Narrative**

Example (1)

Russian and Egyptian officials are not to be trusted over airline crash… the Sissi and Putin regimes were focused on defending themselves

*(The Washington Post, 2015 November 6)*

انتقدت صحيفة الواشنطن بوست في مقالتها الافتتاحية اليوم أن لا يمكن الوثوق بكل الحكومتين المصرية والروسية... حيث اكتفت كلا منهما بموقف الدفاع

*(Masrawy, 2015 November 7)*

The Washington Post refers to the Egyptian and Russian governments using the last names of their presidents in an attempt to imply the dictatorship and the one-man state ruling system of both countries. The translator avoids delivering such a message by translating “the Sissi and Putin regimes” into “الحكومتين المصرية والروسية”. Understatement is achieved in this example by replacing the names of the presidents with the adjectives that refer to the nationalities of the governments.

Furthermore, by using the verb “focused” (ركزت), the English text implies that the two governments do not care about investigating the plane crash as much as they care about denying the media accusations. And while this meaning is partly comprehended from “اكتفت”, this Arabic verb implies that they simply did not play an active role in the investigations, and not the intended meaning that defending their stances was the central point of their attention other than anything else.

Example (2)

BOMBING an airliner out of the sky would be a major step up in capabilities… for the two men who have built the forces of jihad in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula into a major threat.

*(The Daily Telegraph, 2015 November 9)*

أن تفجير طائرة الركاب الروسية في الجو قد يعد بمثابة تقدم لقدرات تنظيم "الدولة الإسلامية," مرجعين أن يكون الرجلين الذين أنشأنا جماعة الجهاد في شبه جزيرة سيناء مسئولان عن التفجير

*(Youm7, 2015 November 11)*
This example shows how deleting one or more lexical items can undermine the effect of the original narrative. The Arabic translation, which was published on the website of the Egyptian Information Authority, does not include the last phrase in the original English text “major threat,” probably in order to underestimate the enemy and conform with the ideology espoused by the local media that Egypt can defeat such terrorist acts, and to foster the narrative that Egypt, though the victim in this case, is a powerful country.

Example (3)
Resisting Bomb Theory, Egypt Finds Itself Increasingly Alone
(The New York Times, 2015, November 6)

Example (4)
... the idea that Regeni was killed by the Egyptian regime of Al-Sisi is ... quite illogical
The writer of the original text uses the verb “kill” to describe the incident of Regeni’s death. The translator, on the other hand, replaces this lexical item with “له مصلحة” which literally in English means (could benefit from), in an attempt to undermine the shocking effect of the literal equivalent "قتل" on the target language reader. Moreover, “the Egyptian regime of Al-Sisi” is rendered as “نظام الرئيس المصري عبد الفتاح السيسي”. The translator adds the phrase “الرئيس المصري” (The Egyptian President) to stress the legitimacy of Mr. El Sisi in an attempt to refute some western media’s claims that he took over the presidency after a military coup.

Example (5)
Giulio has been killed because his research shed light on the brutality of the Al-Sisi regime.

The lexical item “brutality” is undermined by using the less shocking lexical item “عنف” (violence) instead of the literal translation “وحشية”. While both “عنف” and “وحشية” refer to the use of physical force, the latter denotes its use in a more excessive or savage manner. Moreover, “has been killed” is paraphrased into longer, less forceful translation in Arabic as “عدد دوافع لمقتل ريجيني”.

Example (6)
… creates friction between Italy and Egypt…

The writer of the original text believes that the murder was committed by Muslim Brotherhood to create “friction” between Egypt and Italy. According to Oxford Dictionary website, the lexical item “friction” means “conflict or animosity...
caused by a clash of wills, temperaments, or opinions” (2017). The translator understates this idea by rendering “friction” into “توتر” which literally means (tension) rather than the literal equivalent “خلاف”. While both “friction” and “tension” refer to instability in the relationships between the two countries, the former conveys a higher level of disagreement than the latter which simply denotes strained political relationships.

Example (7)
… his [Regeni’s] murder is the first time such an act has happened to a foreign academic researcher working in Cairo

(Canadian Geopolitical Monitor, 2016 March 28)

مقتل الطالب الإيطالي يعتبر أول حادث قتل لباحث أكاديمي في مصر
(Al Wafd, 2016 March 30)

This is another example where deletion is resorted to by the translator in an attempt to understate what is being suggested by the source text. The lexical item “foreign” has disappeared from the translation to suggest that this is the first incident of its kind in Egypt for a researcher whether Egyptian or foreigner. Such deletion keeps the idea of targeting a human rights activist away from the reader’s mind.

Example (8)
Whilst it [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] did express that these [allegations] indeed were ‘unproven’, it also elaborated that every possible scenario should be explored.

(The Tab Cambridge, 2016 April 26)

وأضاف البيان أنه رغم أن المزاعم بأن قوات الأمن المصرية كانت وراء مقتل الطالب "لم تثبت صحتها" إلا أنها "تدعو السلطات المصرية إلى دراسة كل السيناريوهات أثناء التحقيق".
(Shorouk News, 2016 April 26)

This article entitled “UK government FINALLY responds to the murder of Giulio Regeni” comments on a statement issued by the UK government on the murder of Regeni. The statement implies that the allegations that the Italian student was killed by the Egyptian authorities, though not proven, should be taken into consideration. However, the translation delivers a different message. By adding "تدعو السلطات المصرية "، the translator manages to change the role played by the Egyptian authorities from “the accused” to “the investigator.” That is, according to the translation, the statement does no criticize the Egyptian
authorities, but rather it advises them to look deeper into various possible “scenarios.” This example shows that understatement can be achieved not only by deleting part of a message or substituting it with a milder way of expression, but also by inserting additional lexical items that can help change the narrative intended by the original text’s producer.

Example (9)
… with Rome unwilling to jeopardize commercial ties over the brutal murder
(Reuters, 2016, April 12)
لاترغب روما في تعريض علاقتها التجارية مع مصر للخطر بسبب هذا الحادث
(Zahret El Tahrir, 2016 April 12)

The phrase “brutal murder” is replaced by the more neutral, milder lexical item “الحادث” (incident) probably to conform with the ideology of the newspaper which is one of Egypt’s pro-governmental websites, and to reframe Regeni’s story as an “incident” rather than a “murder.”

Discussion
The findings of the study reveal how ideological considerations can influence the translation of news stories. In the cited examples, the translators manage to change the narrative of the source text by manipulating the narrative elements, mainly the events and the actors. This manipulation is achieved through the technique of understatement. Some English lexical items are deleted or rendered into less-provoking Arabic equivalents in an attempt to reframe the events. While the plane crash is narrated by the English texts as a terrorist act that resulted from the inefficiency of Egyptian security measures, it is reframed as part of the Muslim Brotherhood’s conspiracy to take revenge upon the Egyptian government. Similarly, Regeni’s death is represented by western media as a murder committed by “Al Sisi regime,” while the Arabic articles re-narrate it as an accidental death. These findings agree with the argument of Darwish (2006) and Liu (2013) that news translation is influenced by the ideology of the agencies that the translators belong to, and that it involves reshaping of events. This means that translators of such texts, as Doorslaer (2010) and Chen (2011) point out, filter the information of the source text before they start their task.

The results also show that understatement is not achieved only through replacing lexical items with less shocking equivalents in the other language. Deleting or inserting some words are also used in the discussed examples in order to avoid promoting for a competing narrative. It seems that the choice of the strategy adopted to underestimate a certain way of expression is not systematic. It does not depend on factors other than the translator’s preferences,
and more importantly, the internal relations of the text (i.e. the semantic, grammatical and lexical aspects). These relations help the translator to determine the kind of change (be it addition, omission or substitution) that can be made. This change should later be checked against the events that the text is representing in the real world and the ideology that the media institution releasing the translated news item desires to promote for. This proves the point made by Schaffner (2012) that news translation is “a textual and a sociocultural process” (p. 881).

Moreover, the findings go in line with Harding’s (2012) view that news narratives can be manipulated by translators to promote for different narratives. This is clearly shown in the cited examples where the original English texts and their Arabic translations cover the same events and refer to the same actors, yet they differ in the way they shape the public understanding (i.e., their narratives). This difference is signaled through the use of vocabulary to serve the purpose of the texts’ producers (be them narrators or temporary narrators).

Furthermore, the data bring up to the surface the importance of combining more than one approach to analyze the way media institutions can win over their audience. While textual analysis alone can explain the linguistic decisions made by the text producer (be it a writer or a translator), it falls short of linking the ideology expressed by such linguistic decisions to its socionarrative context. Therefore, to analyze news translation, there is a need for a transdisciplinary approach that explains how translators’ lexical choices are prompted by ideological consideration to promote for certain narratives.

The results, thus, prove the hypothesis of the study that understatement is a tool that is used by news producers (whether writers or translators) to promote for narratives that reflect the ideology of the media institutions they are work at. A systematic analysis of news translations, therefore, requires a transdisciplinary approach that allows examining texts textually and intratexually.

**Conclusion**

World events are subject to manipulation by news writers and translators. In most cases, the language used in reporting/translating news is far from being neutral; lexical choices are made and translation strategies are used to serve the interest of one group or institution over the other, and to reflect certain ideologies and narratives. In most cases, when a news story is translated into a competing culture, it brings into conflict two distinct narratives and ideologies. Therefore, the translation of news stories involves modifications that may take the form of addition, omission, or substitution. These modifications are dictated by the ideology of the institution that publishes the translated news. This has led to the emergence of the term “transeditors” and the newly coined term “journalator” to
refer to news translators. Understatement is one of the techniques used by translators to change the narrative of news. Deleting, adding, or replacing some lexical items are all possible strategies that translators may adopt to understate the message of the original text. Such understatement is usually reflected in the narrative suggested by source language text’s producers (which again is probably prompted by the media institution they are part of). In the examples analysed above, a different competing narrative is promoted for by the translator through using less shocking modes of expression.

This study thus shows how translators of Egyptian pro-government online media outlets use understatement to re-frame political events and, thus, undermine the opposing narrative or, even, circulate a different, probably competing narrative. The examples discussed show how ideologies of media institutions influence the production and translation of news stories. Ideologies force both the writer and the translator of a given news story to make certain lexical choices promoting certain narratives that go in line with their institutions’ ideologies. More often than not, the source text and its translation cover the same events, yet they differ in the way they shape the public understanding of these events.

Finally, it is to be noted that the advantage of integrating CDA with a Socionarrative Approach is that it can take us beyond the textual analysis, bringing an additional dimension into focus. Texts are no longer viewed as choices dictated by the nature of the language in use, but rather as intentional decisions made by participants involved in a social interaction (i.e. translation). It is believed that such an approach can explain and justify the strategies that translators use when dealing with news stories, and highlight translators’ role as active key participants in the communication process.

**Definitions of Terms**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>The key concept within the framework of Baker’s (2006) Narrative Theory and Harding’s (2012) Socionarrative Theory, referring to a number of techniques that people use to narrate the same event in different ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>A social theme that is not merely related to attitudes and beliefs, but is also about power and supremacy (Fairclough, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology-loaded lexical items</td>
<td>Words or phrases that implicitly or explicitly establish a certain ideology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ideologically-Induced Understatement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Narrative Theory</strong></th>
<th>A theory developed by Baker (2006), suggesting that people usually narrate events from their own points of view using framing techniques.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrators</strong></td>
<td>A term used in Harding’s (2012) Socionarrative Theory to refer to original producers of news articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>News translation</strong></td>
<td>The translation of online and printed news articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational Approach</strong></td>
<td>An approach suggested by Fairclough (2003) that views texts as combinations of internal and external relations. The former refer to the semantic, lexical, grammatical and phonological choices, whereas the latter are related to how much of the world the texts reflect and how they represent that world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socionarrative Theory</strong></td>
<td>A theory developed by Harding (2012) where narrataology and sociology are integrated to analyse texts intratextually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary narrators</strong></td>
<td>A term used in Harding’s (2012) Socionarrative Theory to refer to translators of news articles who are thought to contribute to reframing the source texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transdisciplinary approach</strong></td>
<td>An approach that links theories and concepts from two or more disciplines. In this study the link is established between Critical Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understatement</strong></td>
<td>Translating an ideology-loaded lexical item in a way that can make a certain event seem less important, serious or shocking than it is believed to be.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References


**Online Articles**


Painting in Poetry: A Stylistic Analysis of Ekphrastic Poems on Pieter Brueghel’s *Hunters in the Snow*¹

_Sameh Saad Hassan*

**Introduction**

The main aim of this paper is to conduct a stylistic analysis of five ekphrastic poems: Walter de la Mare's “Brueghel's Winter,” John Berryman's “Winter Landscape,” William Carlos Williams's “The Hunters in the Snow,” Anne Stevenson's “Brueghel's Snow” and Joseph Langland's “Hunters in the Snow: Brueghel,” all inspired by *Hunters in the Snow*, a 1565 painting by Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel. The paper argues that these attempts to transform Brueghel's painting into words are not mere verbal accounts of their source of inspiration but rather poetic transformations of it in terms of meaning and style. Some of the main questions that this study attempts to answer are: How do the aforementioned poets employ the ekphrasis technique? What features of the painting does each poet foreground, background or even change? What is the poet’s most central preoccupation? To give answers for these questions, a stylistic analysis of the poems will be conducted consecutively to highlight the similarities and differences between them and Brueghel's painting in terms of meaning and style.

Former studies of some of the poems at hand include David M. Wyatt (1977), Paul Boam and Hugo McCann (2001), and Jeffrey Meyers (2015). However, none of these studies employs stylistics to the analysis of the poems, nor brings together as many of the poems on Brueghel's painting as the present paper does. Though the significance of Wyatt’s and Meyers’s cannot be ignored, the two attempts are limited in their scale and scope to a discussion of “spatial order” in Williams’s and Berryman’s in the former and a rebuttal of Berryman’s interpretation of “Winter Landscape” in the latter. Others like Boam and McCann, for example, started the discussion but did not give answers to essential questions about the relationship between the poems and the painting. They refer to three of the poems (Berryman’s, Williams’s and Stevenson’s) in their discussion of poetry which engages with painting. Nevertheless, their passing discussion of these poems raises so many questions and provides no answers:

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Each of the poets gives a different title to their poetic response to the same painting. Apart from indicating something of what they have particularly chosen to focus upon, one wonders what the titles reveal about each poet’s approach to the painting. One wonders if Williams’s and Berryman's poems could be really understood without a viewing of the painting. Brueghel’s painting is so rich in detail that it allows one to focus on several frames within itself yet one wonders what, despite or indeed because of Brueghel's richness of detail, he has left out from the scene. (Boam & McCann’s “The Painter and the Poet”)

Such enquiries and explorations about the relationship between poetry and painting have concerned writers through the centuries. For example, Plutarch attributed the quotation “Poema pictura loquens, pictura poema silens” to the Greek lyric poet Simonides of Keos to praise writers who used words and phrases, in the same manner artists used colour and design, so that readers could “see” the moments they were reading, “Simonides, however, calls painting inarticulate poetry and poetry articulate painting: for the actions which painters portray as taking place at the moment literature narrates and records after they have taken place” (501). Similarly, Horace established literature as an art form comparable to painting, “As is painting, so is poetry: some pieces will strike you more if you stand near, and some, if you are at a greater distance” (321). Horace meant that poetry deserves the same extensive analysis that painting requires. Arguably, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing emphasised that both arts are similar in the effect they produce, but “the arts themselves differ both in the objects and in the methods of their imitation” (ix). In other words, poetry and painting each has its own character and both differ in their subject matter and in their methods. In 1951, Wallace Stevens emphasised some common characteristics of poetry and painting, “No poet can have failed to recognize how often a detail, a propos or remark, in respect to painting, applies also to poetry” (The Necessary Angel 160). In Opus Posthumous, Stevens argues that, “To a large extent, the problems of poets are the problems of painters” (187). In this sense, painting provides an excellent source of inspiration for poetry.

Though poetry and painting represent two distinct genres of artistic creation, as Lessing once argued, both are inseparable and related to each other in a variety of ways. Sometimes, the painter and the poet are one and the same person, though “poet-painters are rare” (47) as observed by Osbert Sitwell. In many cases, however, poets and painters turn to one another for inspiration, as suggested by Stevens. The result in poetry is evident in the existence of an extensive literature of the “ekphrastic poem,” defined by Peter Barry as “one which speaks to or of an art object, such as a painting, a statue, or a photograph”
(155), a definition which highlights the verbal-visual, or rather word-image, interrelationship between poetry and visual arts. However, the main problem in the current discussion of the “ekphrastic poem” is how closely the adaptations (i.e. poetry) follows the original (i.e. painting) and what changes the poets make in the process of transformation.

To achieve its purpose, this paper will make use of key concepts of stylistics and stylistic analysis proposed by modern stylisticians such as Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short. Stylistics, which is, in its broadest sense, “the study of style” (Leech *Language in Literature*, 54), proves itself as an efficient tool in comparative analysis of the relations between poetry and painting. After all any piece of art, be it a poem or a painting, is in theory capable of being analysed in terms of style. The goal of the stylistic analysis of a work of art, in Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell’s words, “is to associate or differentiate a work of art with or from others, creating stylistic categories on the basis of a specific set of visual qualities and object properties” (21). Likewise, the main aim of a stylistic analysis of a literary text is to give “a description of a literary text through a detailed linguistic analysis relating to meaning” (Krishnamurthy 50). Writing in 2010 about the use of stylistics in the study of ekphrastic poetry in particular, Berkan Ulu notes that “Stylistics and “ekphrasis” are seldom united and articulated together…. Therefore, the combination of ekphrastic poetry and stylistic analysis, as an interdisciplinary and extracurricular study, could provide insight for more comprehensive and resourceful studies” (39). Therefore, applying concepts and theories of stylistics, particularly those borrowed from art criticism such as foregrounding, would provide useful insights into the study of the ekphrasis technique.

One of the approaches of applying stylistic analysis to literary texts is “to apply the ‘levels’ model of language to the language of literature and investigate, in turn, everything from the phonology to the semantics of literary texts” (McIntyre and Jeffries 34). In addition to the study of different levels of language in the selected poems, the paper will make use of the theory of foregrounding. Leech notes that:

It [foregrounding] is certainly valuable, if not essential, for the study of poetic language. The norms of the language are in this dimension of analysis regarded as a ‘background’, against which features which are prominent because of their abnormality are placed in focus. In making choices which are not permissible in terms of the accepted code, the poet extends, or transcends, the normal communicative resources of the tongue. (*Language in Literature* 30)
Foregrounding is one of the most important theories within stylistic analysis of any text. According to Short, there are two ways to produce foregrounding: deviation and parallelism. As noted by Short, “If a part of a poem is deviant, it becomes especially noticeable, or perceptually prominent” (11). He maintains that parallel structures in a text are equally important because “in addition to their perceptual prominence… they invite the reader to search for meaning connections between the parallel structures” (14). Therefore, the paper will focus on how the selected poets highlight (foreground) parts of the original painting which are especially important interpretatively by breaking the rules of language (i.e. deviation) or using particular linguistic structures more often than the readers would normally expect (i.e. parallelism). A stylistic analysis of the selected poems will attempt to reach clear conclusions as to how and why the poets foreground by means of language (e.g. graphology, phonology, syntax, lexis and semantics) some features of Brueghel's painting and ignore others, and what meanings and effects are associated with these foregroundings.

**Brueghel’s Hunters in the Snow**

A stylistic analysis of poems inspired by *Hunters in the Snow* is likely to start with a discussion of the cultural background and stylistic aspects of Brueghel's painting. *Hunters in the Snow* is commonly known as an example of the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting response in the 16th century to Italian Renaissance painting. This is how the painting is described by Fred S. Kleiner who used it as the cover art of his book *Gardner's Art through the Ages: Renaissance and Baroque*:

Like many of his contemporaries, Brueghel produced landscape paintings, and *Hunters in the Snow* is his finest. It is one of a series of six paintings that Brueghel produced for the home of Nicolaes Jonghelinck, a wealthy Antwerp merchant. The paintings illustrate seasonal changes, with each of the panels representing a pair of months. This one is the December/January panel and shows the Netherlands locked in the particularly severe cold of the winter of 1565. (vi)

As the painting depicts the “weary hunters” who “return with their hounds” from a hunting expedition in the winter landscape of the Netherland, the title of the painting, “Hunters in the Snow,” refers to this event as well. In the painting, the three hunters accompanied by their dogs are in the left foreground. Along with a number of bare trees, the weary hunters and the dogs at the top of the hill take up almost one third of the scene and are all the dimmest objects in the painting, coloured in dark browns and greys against a white-filled background. All the
other elements in the painting are more or less behind, either in the mid-ground such as the women and child who tend the fire in front of the tavern or in the distant background such as landscapes including the valley, the houses, the river, the frozen lake and mountain peaks. Still in the background, as John Malam observed, “In the distance, people are skating on frozen ponds. Some are playing ice hockey, while others are spinning tops” (16). According to Polyxeni Potter, “Hunters in the Snow was created during a frigid period known as the Little Ice Age, the second part of the 16th century” (61). Thus, the 1560s was a time of the so-called “Little Ice Age” and as shown in the painting, the water is frozen, the land is snow-covered, the trees are leafless, and the exhausted hunters return with the corpse of one fox which illustrates the paucity of the hunt.

However, the movement of the hunters in the painting going downhill to the valley is actually a movement from the foreground to the background, which gives the painting its depth as Helen Gardner describes it:

A clearly enunciated diagonal movement, marked by dogs and hunters, and trees, starts from the lower left-hand corner and continues, less definitely but none the less surely, by the road, the row of small trees, and the church far across the valley to the jutting crags of the hills. This movement is countered by an opposing diagonal from the lower right, marked by the edge of the snow-covered hill and repeated again and again in details. (450)

That is to say, the weary hunters will appear, in a moment subsequent to the one captured by Brueghel, very small and unimportant like the other villagers skating on the frozen lake in the background. As Richard Galligan noted, “The hunters are walking away from us as viewers, taking our eyes with them toward to the remaining two thirds of the painting. The hunters are simply starting points that lead us deeper into a more complex and life-affirming painting” (61). Indeed, the structure of the painting reinforces Galligan's interpretation that the painting is not really about hunters at all, but about “outsiders – neither glorified nor denounced – on the fringe of society” (61). The movement of the hunters towards the remaining two thirds of the painting shifts attention to the attempt of the townspeople to keep themselves warm and lively in winter and snow. Moreover, the fact that the weary hunters are in the foreground and all other elements including the ice skaters are in the background appears to determine the way in which Brueghel made this shift from the foreground figures to the large snow-covered scene in the background. In the title of the painting, “Hunters in the Snow,” the headword of the title is “Hunters,” and so it is the most prominent element in the title as in the painting. The prepositional phrase in the title, “in
the snow,” which acts as a modifier to the head noun emphasises that the painting does not show the men in the act of hunting. Instead, it shows them walking in the heavy snow towards their village. So the title puts the weary hunters in the foreground and at the same time it emphasises the presence of signs of winter in the background.

**De la Mare’s “Brueghel’s Winter”**

Written in the early years of the twentieth century, Walter de la Mare's poem, “Brueghel's Winter,” could reflect what critics I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis and Randall Jarrell described as a sort of escapism from the real world into unreal one in most of the poems by the poet. However, Henry Charles Duffin defends the poet arguing that “Is it any wonder if de la Mare, his soul aching for perfection, turns his back on the appalling mess ‘that man has made of man’, turns to contemplate the supreme loveliness of the world of spirits? There are critics of narrow vision who call this escapism” (126). Duffin’s words draw attention to the fact that de la Mare’s poems should not be stripped off their meanings under the charges of escapism.

Stylistically, the title of de la Mare's poem, “Brueghel's Winter,” gives the reader a key to the poem. Although the painting depicts hunters in the snow and its title refers to that event as well, the hunters are backgrounded in de la Mare's poem. In the painting the hunters are in the foreground taking up a large portion of the scene and are the dimmest object in the painting against the white snow in the background. Although the return from the hunt is the most important thing in the painting, it is being played down in the poem via de la Mare's manipulation of foreground and background, as if it is less important than the image of winter in the background. It is like the poet is encouraging the reader to search for the deeper meaning in the scene. Also, if one looks at the titles of the painting and the poem grammatically, “Hunters” is the most salient word in the noun phrase title of the painting, but the most salient word in the title of the poem is “Winter” and “Brueghel’s” only acts as a possessive pre-modifier. So the title also puts the painter in a more backgrounded position.

Starting from the background of Brueghel's painting, the poet uses lexical parallelism based on the use of lots of adjectives (e.g. *Jagged* mountain peaks, skies *ice-green*, *cold* scene, *ink-black* shapes, *gabled* tavern, *naked* trees, *sinister* spears, *frozen* sea, *infinite* line, etc.). It is also important to note that most of the adjectives used in the poem are negative (e.g. *Jagged*, *cold*, *ink-black*, *sinister*, *frozen* and *subtle*). One can infer from the use of negative and critical adjectives more often than the readers would normally expect that the poet's attitude towards the scene is rather negative. De la Mare depicts an image of a dark,
gloomy atmosphere. Even the people skating on the frozen lake are described by the poet as “ink-black shapes” void of life and human liveliness. Despite the fact that the poem itself makes no explicit reference to the painting, the poem is filled with details such as placement of objects and people as well as scenery and thus it succeeds to capture the identity of Brueghel's painting. By means of listing and lexical parallelism, the poet is able to introduce most of the elements depicted in the painting:

Jagg'd mountain peaks and skies ice-green  
Wall in the wild, cold scene below. 
Churches, farms, bare copse, the sea  
In freezing quiet of winter show;  
Where ink-black shapes on fields in flood  
Curling, skating, and sliding go.  
To left, a gabled tavern: a blaze;  
Peasants; a watching child; and lo,  
Muffled, mute--beneath naked trees. (de la Mare 59)

The vocabulary of the poem is not complicated, but it is reflects the use of an archaic poetic diction (Jagg'd, copse, gabled tavern, lo, etc.) which all along with the Gothic architecture of the tavern suggests a dream-like mysterious scene.

The acoustic aspects of the poem are an essential part of the poet’s verbalization of the scene in the painting. The silent aspect of the scene is formed by phonological parallelism in the alliteration between “Muffled” and “mute” by the repetition of the bilabial consonant /m/. The poem is made up of two stanzas with a strict alternate rhyme scheme. The first is a fourteen-line stanza in which the second line rhymes with the fourth line, the sixth line, the eighth line etc. The second is a six-line stanza in which the second line rhymes with the fourth line and the sixth line. Although the poem reflects a deviation from the typical sonnet style, it has a similar structure to a Petrarchan sonnet because of a typical turn of thought between the two stanzas, like that of an octave and sestet. The descriptions in the first stanza provide the context for the poet's comment in the second stanza. The overall meaning of the poem lies in the second stanza in which the poet declares that none of the things he described throughout the poem would help someone looking at the same scene to solve life's mystery:

But flame, nor ice, nor piercing rock, 
Nor silence, as of a frozen sea,  
Nor that slant inward infinite line
Of signboard, bird, and hill, and tree,
Give more than subtle hint of him
Who squandered here life's mystery. (de la Mare 59)

The first line in the second stanza, called the “turn” or “volta,” signals a change in the tone or mood of the poem, which is typical of a sonnet. The last line indicates a departure from the wintery scene in Brueghel's painting to indulge in an undefined sense of mystery, emphasized by the use of lexical repetition of the word “nor,” implying a sort of nonspecific transcendent reality or a spiritual quest that is wholly independent of the material universe portrayed in the painting. However, the way de la Mare depicts the event in Brueghel's painting is typical of his style:

The trick of revealing the ordinary in whimsical colours, of catching the commonplace off its guard, is the first of de la Mare's two chief gifts. The second gift is the sense of the supernatural, of the fantastic other-world that lies on the edges of our consciousness. (Untermeyer 415)

Thus, de la Mare predicts a moment in the future of the reader/spectator who shall see the depicted scene, by the eye of the mind or the eye of the head, and shall get nothing but a “subtle hint” in the attempt to unravel life’s mystery. The poet ends his poem in mystery giving no answer, no indication or advice to the reader because in writing about the scene depicted in Brueghel's painting he spent his time trying to understand life's mystery, but it was no use. Still, the poem provides a new angel of approach for the original painting.

**Berryman’s “Winter Landscape”**

John Berryman’s poetic response to Brueghel's painting first appeared in 1940. Here, the fact that Berryman’s poem was written at the beginning of WWII (1939-1945) cannot be overlooked. Berryman himself argued that the poem is a reaction against the hysterical political atmosphere of the period “So far as I can make out, it is a war poem, of an unusual negative kind” (“One Answer to a Question” 325). In other words, the poem becomes a recontextualisation of the event in the painting to reflect a period in the twentieth century similar to that period of severe political and religious conflict in which Brueghel lived, “Bruegel’s era was of course a period of great conflict and religious and political division caused by the advance of the Protestant Reformation and its conflict with the Catholic Church” (Zagorin 74).

Berryman starts his poem with a detailed description of the foreground of Brueghel's painting and then moves to the background:
The three men coming down the winter hill
In brown, with tall poles and a pack of hounds
At heel, through the arrangement of the trees,
Past the five figures at the burning straw,
Returning cold and silent to their town. (Berryman 3)

It seems clear then that the main focus of Berryman's poem, though named as “Winter Landscape,” is on the return from the hunt rather than the landscape. The presence of the hunters is felt in the five stanzas of Berryman's poem as “The three men,” “they,” “these men,” and “this particular three in brown,” but never as “hunters.” The fact that the words “hunt” or “hunters” are not mentioned at all in Berryman's poem does not cut the links between the poem and Brueghel's painting for everything else depicted in the poem proves that the poem is a representation of the winter scene depicted in the painting. Instead, Berryman's poem shifts interest from the hunt to the result. That the men in the poem are “returning cold and silent to their town” indicates that whatever they had been doing was not successful and after they reach their town, they “will keep the scene” and say “What place, what time, what morning occasion/Sent them into the wood.”

Throughout the poem, Berryman is more interested in the experience of weariness and defeat portrayed in the painting rather than the painting itself. As Meyers put it, Berryman may have intentionally deviated from the actual details of the painting to avoid an exact equivalence:

He [Berryman] distanced himself from the picture by calling his poem “Winter Landscape” rather than “Hunters in the Snow.” The weary hunters – one dressed in green (not brown) – ignore the four adults and one child around the fire, whose smoke and flames shoot up dangerously toward the house. Two of the hunters appear between the stark verticals of the brown tree trunks (the third man is parallel to the trunk), which provide a sharp structural contrast to the frozen horizontal ponds. The hunters carry spears to kill (not poles to carry) their prey; the ladders are on the roof of the burning chimney (not on the church). (473)

Indeed, Berryman's poem includes no explicit references to Brueghel. Even the poem’s title, “Winter Landscape,” gives the sense that what is being described in the poem is an external landscape rather than a lifeless, motionless winter scene captured in a painting. This assumption is verified by the extensive use of the progressive form like “coming down,” “burning,” and “returning,” which
occurs only with dynamic verbs that usually show qualities capable of change as opposed to stative verbs. The future form is equally significant in Berryman's poem. It appears in the third stanza which is, syntactically speaking, the predicate of the subject “The three men coming down the winter hill” in the first line of the first stanza:

Are not aware that in the sandy time
To come, the evil waste of history
Outstretched, they will be seen upon the brow
Of that same hill: when all their company
Will have been irrecoverably lost. (Berryman 3)

As explained by the poet, the poem “is mounted in five five-line stanzas, unrhymed, all one sentence. (I admit there is a colon near the middle of the third stanza)” (“One Answer to a Question” 324). Thus, to preserve the integrity of the painting and the unity of the single moment depicted in the painting, the poet wrote the whole poem as one sentence with shifting parallel phrases and clauses. This one-sentence structure is stylistically different from one-line poems other lengthy poems without punctuation. The poem can be semantically divided in two parts. In the first part, the poet is describing the scene depicted in the painting, and in the second part he is reflecting about the future of the scene. The use of the future form in the centre of the third stanza “Outstretched, they will be seen upon the brow” allows Berryman to depart from the present moment and predict a moment of the “time to come” that is not captured in Brueghel's painting. However, speaking about the future moment that has not arrived does nothing but highlighting the present moment (the beginning of WWII). Despite the fact that Berryman uses a different style that depends on the use of dynamic verbs, progressive forms, and future forms, the poem as noted by Wyatt seems to convey the same sense of timelessness in Brueghel's painting:

While such devices can act as the ground for sequential development, they can also suspend their typical forwardness through effects of repetition. The poem calls attention to this timelessness in no uncertain terms – through thrice repeating the very words descriptive of repetition itself. “Returning,” “Returning,” “return”: upon these three words progress through the poem turns, and halts. (257)

Similarly, Meyers argues that “since there is no manifest danger in either the painting or the poem, the claim in his [Berryman’s] essay to a profound theme, which he "refuses to say" or even suggest, is not convincing” (475). He maintains that “the dominant theme, which Berryman clearly expresses in the third stanza,
is the familiar poetic idea of ars longa, vita brevis (the Latin version of a Greek aphorism by Hippocrates): the Classical belief that art transcends time and that the painting will last when the people portrayed in it are dead” (475). In this sense, Meyers refutes Berryman’s argument about a violent world, impending disaster or plunge into war. Berryman obviously painted with words a moment in time. In doing so, however, the poet distanced himself from the meaning of the original source of inspiration as well as the historical events taking place in the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance. The poem becomes Berryman's own description of an unchanging winter scene which emphasises a different reality from the one portrayed earlier by Brueghel. As such, the poem is neither a verbal equivalent to the picture nor an interpretation of it. It is nothing but the poet’s reaction to that moment of history when the world rushed again into a war that would sooner or later become, in the poet’s words, “the evil waste of history”.

**Langland’s “Hunters in the Snow: Brueghel”**

In 49 lines, Joseph Langland presents his poetic response to Brueghel's painting. Langland's “Hunters in the Snow: Brueghel” was published in his first book of poems, *The Green Town* (1956), and republished in *Selected Poems* (1992). The poem reflects the poet’s interest in the Flemish painter. With regard to the choice of Breughel's painting as a source of inspiration for Langland’s poem, it should be noted that Langland “began service in the U.S. Army as an infantry soldier and officer in the allied campaigns in France and Germany during World War II. Captain Langland served in the Allied military government of Bavaria from 1945 to March 1946” (Greasley 308). It is during that time in Europe that Langland knew a lot about Breughel and contemplated several of his paintings.

The poem opens with a description of the hunters and their hounds. What is really evident in such description is that Langland is using a style with lots of adjectives to draw an image full of much of the details of Brueghel's wintery scene:

```
Quail and rabbit hunters with tawny hounds,
Shadowless, out of late afternoon
Trudge toward the neutral evening of indeterminate form
Done with their blood-annunciated day
Public dogs and all the passionless mongrels
Through deep snow
Trail their deliberate masters
Descending from the upper village home in lovering light.
```
In a poem of approximately 296 words, the poet uses almost 42 adjectives (e.g. *tawny*, *shadowless*, *neutral*, *passionless*, etc.), 8 compound adjectives (e.g. *blood-annunciated*, *stone-carved*), and 7 noun adjuncts (e.g. *rabbit* hunters) which results in sophisticated stanzas full of details in the painting that the viewer of the painting might overlook such as “sooty lamps” and “stone-carved kitchens.” The poem, however, is written in conventional syntax that maintains clear relations between thought and language.

There is something threatening in Langland’s description of the late afternoon with its fading light and indeterminate form. As they move towards their home village, the hunters walk slowly and with heavy steps, typically because of exhaustion and harsh conditions. The fourth line, “Done with their blood-annunciated day,” can be interpreted as a subtle reference to the poet’s military memories when he served in the U.S. Army during World War II. The hunters are accompanied by dogs described by the poet as “tawny hounds,” “Public dogs” and “passionless mongrels.” Langland’s ominous description of the scene represents significant departure from the painting. Most of the adjectives used in the first stanza are *evaluative* rather than *descriptive* which emphasises the presence of the poet’s personal vision.

The “deep snow” in line 6 represents hardships experienced by the hunters and the dogs. Despite the fact that the hunters and the hunting dogs are walking home “out of late afternoon … toward the neutral evening,” at a time when the shadows are the longest, they are described as “shadowless” due to the absence of sunlight. It is twilight so that the surface of the Earth is neither wholly lit nor wholly dark. The adjectives used to describe different elements of the wintry scene fit this intermediate stage of light (e.g. *neutral*, *passionless*, *lovering* and *sooty*). This is the perfect time, the poet argues, “of shape and form.” The reference to *shape* (two-dimensional) and *form* (three-dimensional) links the poem to the painting as well as fuses two different visual styles together in one scene. Likewise, pure colours are mixed together, which generates colour mixtures such as *gray-black-olive*, *green-dark-brown* and *gray-green*. These colour mixtures, which are often darker than the components separately, serves to reinforce this state of indefiniteness and uncertainty. Another important feature in the poem, though being descriptive of Brueghel's painting, is the avoidance of verb *to be* and the lexical parallelism based on the use of monosyllabic verbs of motion (e.g. *trudge*, *trail*, *skate*, *move*, *walk*, *creep*, *crunch*, *tip*, *stalk*, *slide*, *fall*, *perch*, *slip*) and signals of spatial order, “Through deep snow,” “Descending from the upper village,” “On the mill ice pond,” “High
in the fire-red dooryard,” “Near it,” “across the valley,” “Above the gray-green valley” and “over the snow-capped homes” that take us/readers from one place to another in the wintery scene. However, the poet is keen on reminding everyone that the movement in the scene being depicted is actually a kind of “moving in stillness.” The repetition of the adjective Flemish, “Flemish children” and “Flemish cliffs and crags,” reflects the poet’s knowledge of the culture and geography in the painting and his strong sense of place. He does not attempt to at any moment in the poem to strip the scene depicted in Brueghel's painting of its geographical and cultural context.

A very significant feature of Langland’s poetry is the use of music, “Langland has an acute ear for the speech rhythms of the rural Midwest, and music often informs his poems” (Greasley 308). There are five irregular stanzas in the poem. There is no rhyme scheme at all or any consistency in rhythm or line length. However, the poet makes use of metrical parallelism such as alliteration in lines 14 “Scattered and skating”, line 21 “Creeps and crunches”, line 26 “parents and peasant,” etc. The most significant and noticeable of these examples occurs in the last line of the poem where darkness and silence are fused together in one image putting an end to all the activities that were taking place in Brueghel's scene. As Thomas Hardy wrote in Tess of the Durbervilles, “In the twilight of the morning, light seems active, darkness passive; in the twilight of evening, it is darkness which is active and crescent, and the light which is the drowsy reverse” (155). The same is true in the scene depicted by Langland in this poem. Darkness pursues the hunters stealthily until everything is covered by darkness:

Darkness stalks the hunters,
  Slowly sliding down,
  Falling in beating rings and soft diagonals.
  Lodged in the vague vast valley the village sleeps.

The last line contains an example of consonance. There is the use of phonemic parallelism in the repetition of the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ sound from “vague” to “vast” to “valley” to “village.” This line represents the final image of the “valley” and the “village” completely embraced by darkness and silence. The consonance between the two helps to connect them aurally. It is in the final stanza that one can reach an understanding of Langland’s poetic vision of the scene. Langland's poem on Brueghel's painting turns the painting from a passive construction of a wintery scene in 1565 into a dynamic extension of the same scene where the hunters and all that lies around them are stalked by darkness and silence or fall into a death-like status as suggested by the image of “The night-
black raven” that “Weaves a net of slumber over the snow-capped homes” of the village.

William’s “The Hunters in the Snow”

“The Hunter in the Snow,” inspired by and named after Brueghel's painting, is one of ten poems written by William Carlos Williams towards the end of his career between 1950 and 1962 each based on a Brueghel painting. According to James A. W. Heffernan, “Williams’s poems on these paintings inevitably reflect the ways in which he experiences them: through reproductions that transmit them to his eye or revive them in his memory, through commentaries that purport to explain them” (160). That is to say, Williams takes liberties with the paintings and ignores large portions of their scenes. Right from the beginning, Williams asserts that he is depicting an over-all picture of winter:

The over-all picture is winter
icy mountains
in the background the return
from the hunt it is toward evening
from the left
sturdy hunters lead in. (Williams 5)

According to Grant F. Scott, the title of Williams’s poem suggests his concern with stasis, “Williams never attempts to substitute a tale for the visual artwork he surveys” (415). Thus, unlike his predecessors, de la Mare, Berryman and Langland, Williams does not attempt to animate the depicted scene or to predict a future moment, and instead he emphasises its motionless by fixing it in time with words. Along with the title of the poem, the use of words like “picture,” “foreground,” “in the background,” and “from the left” emphasises that the poet is describing a painting rather than an external scene of winter even before the reader comes to the last lines of the poem where the association between the poem and Brueghel's painting becomes crystal clear with an explicit reference to the painter’s name. Signals of place used in the poem reflect the poet’s interest in the structure of the painting. Williams said openly in an interview, “I've attempted to fuse the poetry and painting, to make it the same thing…. A design in the poem and a design in the picture should make them more or less the same thing” (Sutton 321).

The fact that Williams is describing a painted scene is highlighted by syntactic parallelism in the extensive use of verb to be as a main verb that describes a state rather than an action and the complete absence of the progressive form that describes movement and change. However, in the case of his verbal rendition of
Brueghel's painting, which apparently has more purpose than mere description, his approach seems more deviant to his original source of inspiration. As noted by Heffernan, Williams's poem, unlike Brueghel's painting, “makes no explicit reference to the hunters' descent, and scarcely any to the meaning of their movement” (165). Instead, Williams reverses the spatial movement in Brueghel's painting. In the poem, Williams moves from the skaters and icy mountains in the background to the return from the hunt and the winter-struck bush in the foreground:

the hill is a pattern of skaters  
Brueghel the painter  
concerned with it all has chosen  

a winter-struck bush for his  
foreground to  
complete the picture. (Williams 5)

In other words, Williams is aware that the “winter-struck bush,” though in the foreground in Brueghel's painting, is mainly used by the painter “to complete the picture” of winter. That is why he tries to put the elements of Brueghel's scene in the order of their visual importance. In Williams’s scheme, Brueghel was first concerned with the icy mountains and the skaters before shifting his attention to the hunters who “lead in” from the left. As Christina Giorcelli notes, “Williams restructures the painting along his own sightlines and according to his own peculiar, ichnographically motivated, axes of vision” (200). Thus, Williams's poem is not only a verbal representation of Brueghel's painting but also a careful recreation of the winter scene by means of language to draw attention to the contrast between two groups of people, foregrounding Brueghel's skaters who enjoy winter on the frozen lake in the background and backgrounding the hunters who struggle against winter in a winter-struck bush in the foreground.

The poem is divided into three-line stanzas in which scenes from Brueghel's painting are depicted by means of stylistic deviation. Metrically, the poet experiments with a version of free verse he calls “versos sueltos” (“loose verses”), which makes use of the triadic stanza and a variable foot measure. Graphological deviation indicated by lack of punctuation (commas and periods) and the use of lowercase letters, instead of capital letters, at the beginning of new sentences in the poem results in line breaks that occur mid-clause or enjambment (i.e. incomplete syntax at the end of the line) allowing the meaning to run over from one line to the next. Enjambment increases the pace of the poem and leaves it open to interpretation. For example, line two is an example of a common form
of enjambment “in which the end of one line and the beginning of the following one belong to different phrases, but are part of the same clause” (Leech, *A Linguistic Guide*, 125). The line introduces the noun phrase “icy mountains” but the reader gets nothing and must continue on to the next line where the spatial relation between the “icy mountains” and other elements in the scene is indicated by the adverb phrase of place “in the background.” Throughout the poem, the presence of the stative verb *to be* is felt both explicitly (used five times as a main verb) and implicitly in cases of ellipsis where it becomes clear to the reader that the missing verb is verb *to be*, yet it is so obvious that it is avoided, e.g. “icy mountains [are] in the background” and “the inn-sign [is] hanging from a broken hinge” (Williams 5). The absence of a linking verb (*to be*) that connects the subject “icy mountains” in line two to its adverbial predicate “in the background” in line three as well as the absence of punctuation to determine the relation between the adverb phrase, “in the background,” and the following noun phrase, “the return,” are examples of syntactic deviation that allows, as Wyatt argued, for many spatial relations to exist between different elements in the picture.

“In the background,” sandwiched between the mountains and “the return,” now becomes foreground. Does the phrase in fact refer only to the location of the return? Common sense links it with the position of the mountains, while lineation connects it with this now visible activity. (253)

Also, many line-divisions between subjects and predicates throughout the poem achieve creative rhyme schemes as in (return/lead in), (cold/beyond), and (painter/picture). To sum up, Williams's poem is his attempt to describe the composition of the scene in Brueghel's painting. That is why Williams’s poem is short and simple as it lacks many of the specific visual details in the painting. His main focus in the poem is to provide an explanation not of its meaning for “Williams passes no judgment, points no moral, draws no inference” (Braider 146) but of its construction. In doing so, Williams highlights through language what was happening in the scene immediately before its completion. The poem provides Williams's own speculation about the work’s creation and the painter’s artistic choices.

**Stevenson’s “Brueghel’s Snow”**

In her poem “Brueghel's Snow,” Anne Stevenson adopts a different approach to Brueghel's painting as she includes herself in the scene and puts herself into a state of questioning about what she sees happening. Stevenson starts the poem with a description of the foreground of Brueghel’s painting as indicated in the use of the proximal deictic expression “here” at the beginning of the poem:
Here in the snow:
three hunters with dogs and pikes
trekking over a hill,
into and out of those famous footprints –
famous and still. (Stevenson 25)

The word “here” refers to a location relative to the speaker and indicates active participation in the scene. In this way, Stevenson (presumably the speaker of the poem) walks into that wintery world she is describing. In the snow, she sees three hunters making their own way slowly or with difficulty as the verb “trekking” in line 3 suggests. The footprints of the hunters, clearly visible in the heavy snow, are described at the end of the first stanza as “famous and still.” The description of the hunters' footprints, along with the title “Brueghel's Snow,” links the poem and the painting. The hunters' footprints draw their fame and stillness from Brueghel's painting. The word “snow,” used in the title to refer to the whole wintery scene portrayed by Brueghel, is also suggestive as it is the chief physical sign of winter in the Netherlands. In this sense, snow is a synecdoche in which a part is taken for the whole. Also, the genitive construction “Brueghel's Snow” involves two nouns, the head “snow” and the possessive determiner “Brueghel's” that modifies the head. In other words, Brueghel's snowy scene in 1565 is of special significance. Commenting on the influence of the historical events in the 16th century on Brueghel's painting (which in turn appear in Stevenson's poem), Michael Jackson wrote:

1565, the year Brueghel painted The Hunters in the Snow was particularly bad and epidemics swept the land. Brueghel's vivid depictions of death and of hell must surely have come from direct personal knowledge of the rape, killing, and pillaging that swept the Flemish countryside during this period. (181)

From the first stanza, it is apparent that Stevenson’s experience of the painting is being transmitted to the reader in a more or less conventional syntax and rhyme. Although some of the lines in the first and third stanzas, such as “three hunters with dogs and pikes/trekking over a hill” and “Bent shapes in black clouts, /raw faces aglow/in the firelight, burning the wind,” are marked by the ellipsis of the auxiliary verb to be which accelerates the pace of the poem, the syntactic relations between words are self-evident. As for the use of rhyme, the poet employs perfect rhyme in examples like “hill/still/ill/kill” and “snow/show/below/aglow”. Elsewhere, she uses half-rhyme, e.g. “pikes/footprints/clouts/stoups,” or no rhyme at all. These syntactic and
phonemic deviations are used by the poet so that the reader can take pauses and think of the word and to reflect that her thoughts about the painting flow more like natural conversation.

The second stanza starts with a rhetorical question “What did they catch?” that is asked (obviously by the speaker) to make a point rather than to elicit an answer since the answer is given directly by the poet “They have little to show.” The use of the interrogative form here is an example of stylistic deviation from the declarative and descriptive style employed in the first stanza. It is intended to start a discussion of the contrast between the weary hunters in the foreground and the “delicate skaters below.” Here, the adverb “below” is used as a post-modifier of the noun “skaters” to highlight the vertical distance between the two groups. The contrast between the hunters and the skaters is also foregrounded semantically by the use of negative adjectives to describe the hunters such as “little,” “bowed,” “grim,” and “ill.” In the village, things are completely different and people, with their faces glowing with warmth or excitement, are in a state of total absence or neutrality to the misery and suffering of the three hunters.

The movement from the foreground to the background is marked by the use of a spatial order signal “In the village” at the beginning of the third stanza. The semantic relation between the hunters and the skaters is again emphasised in this stanza through the use of the adjective “Bent” to describe the skaters which reminds the reader of the adjective “bowed” that was used in the previous stanza to describe the hunters. The word “clouts,” used in the third stanza to refer to the clothes of the people of the Flemish village, is “a British dialect word” (Manser 197) meaning winter clothing (as in the old English proverb: ne'er cast a clout til May be out). The word is an example of the use of language that distinguishes the voice of the speaker from a unique culture against the Flemish background and gives the reader insight regarding the culture of the Anglo-American author. The hunters’ arrival to their final destination is marked by syntactic parallelism in “The hunters arrive,” “pull off their caked boots,” and “curse the weather slump down over stoups” which, as the poet suggests, describe actions that could have happened after the moment captured in Brueghel's painting. In this sense, the poet gives the readers that what is being described in the poem is not a painted picture but an event that is going on before her eyes (or perhaps a motion picture).

In the last two stanzas of the poem, Stevenson uses more rhetorical questions. The significance of questions in Stevenson's poetry is highlighted by Emily Grosholz as follows:

Anne Stevenson's poems are full of question marks. No matter what she writes about, she seems to be wondering, perplexed, speculative,
dissatisfied, because there are so many things she can't pass over, can't not notice, can't forget; so many things that seem impossible in conjunction, and yet there they are. (49)

Asking about “What happens next? In the unpainted picture?” at the beginning of the fourth stanza and “Who's painting them now?” in the fifth stanza, Stevenson is being speculative about the scene. She wants to know what happens next to the hunters in the painting, who is painting such moments now and what has survived from this scene that took place four hundred years ago:

Who's painting them now?
What has survived to unbandage
my eyes as I trudge through this snow,
with my dog and stick,
four hundred winters ago? (Stevenson 25)

The transitive verb “unbandage,” along with its object “eyes,” is used metaphorically by the poet to reflect a desire for illumination. Accordingly, the poet encourages the readers to enquire not only about the scene depicted in the painting many years ago but also about its present. The fact that Stevenson ends her poem asking about an “unpainted picture” draws attention to Murray Krieger’s argument about the possibility of fictive ekphrasis or “an illusion of ekphrasis”:

The claim of naive imitation no longer applies, not even in a genre like ekphrasis, which seems to have been created expressly for mimetic purposes. The genre is thus used to allow the fiction of an ekphrasis, a make-believe imitation of what does not exist outside the poem’s verbal creation of it. Literal ekphrasis has moved, via the power of words, to an illusion of ekphrasis. The ekphrastic principle has learned to do without the simple ekphrasis in order to explore more freely the illusionary powers of language. (18)

Giving many questions to which the reader attempts to find answers, the poem allows Stevenson to ponder about what does not exist in the original painting and produce an illusion of ekphrasis.

**Conclusion**

Based on the stylistic analysis of de la Mare's “Brueghel's Winter,” Berryman's “Winter Landscape,” Williams's “The Hunters in the Snow,”
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Stevenson's “Brueghel's Snow” and Langland's “Hunters in the Snow: Brueghel,” all based on Brueghel's painting *Hunters in the Snow*, many points can be established regarding the earlier questions about the relation between the poems and the painting and the different approaches adopted by the poets in terms of meaning and style.

It is now clear that these poems on Brueghel's painting are not mere literal ekphrases of the painting. They are intended by their writers to be personal reflections rather than impersonal descriptions of the painting. Therefore, certain aspects of the original painting have been foregrounded as well as given a personal and sometimes a historical context. Each poet employs foregrounding to emphasise a particular theme in the painting and to imply a meaning that becomes either part of the poem’s vision or even refers to something outside the poem. Indeed, all the poets represent a significant departure from the meaning and context of their source of inspiration. De la Mare’s meditative poem serves to reflect the poet’s undefined sense of mystery and unease in the early years of the twentieth century. De la Mare speaks of it interpretively and implies a transcendent reality or a spiritual quest that is wholly independent of the material universe portrayed in the painting. Berryman’s adds a new historical context to the painting placing Brueghel's scene in the world of WWII. Langland’s poem represents his mature philosophical reflections on Brueghel's painting as it becomes stalked by darkness and silence and all its elements fall into a death-like sleep. Williams’s poem focuses on the structure of the painting at the expense of its meaning and context, providing a recreation of the painting rather than a detailed description of it leaving it open to interpretation. Stevenson's, emphasising the special significance of Brueghel's wintery scene in 1565, speculates about its future. She includes herself in the painting and puts the readers in an inquisitive stance about the painted and the unpainted. Thus, the poems are not simply objective verbal accounts of the work of art. Instead of making conclusions about what the painting means, each of the poems presents a unique poetic response to the painting and each of the poets warps the scene depicted to subjective ends.

In terms of style, the parallelism between the titles of the poems and the title of the painting reveals each poet's approach to the painting and indicates something of what they have particularly chosen to foreground or ignore. A key stylistic difference between the poets in their poetic responses to Brueghel's painting is the spatial order each of them used to describe the winter scene. Whereas De la Mare, Berryman and Williams started with a description of the background (icy landscapes) and then moved to the foreground (the return from the hunt), Langland and Stevenson moved from the foreground to the background. The poems also reflect different authorial styles: De la Mare's use
of negative adjectives, archaic diction and traditional rhyme; Berryman's use of
dynamic verbs, progressive forms, future forms and one-sentence structure;
Langland's use of compound adjectives, noun adjuncts, colour constructions,
monosyllabic verbs of motion and signals of spatial order; Williams's preference
of a mixture of stative verb to be and verbless poetry form, loose verses, lack of
punctuation, and lowercase letters; and Stevenson's use of rhetorical questions
and conventional syntax and rhyme. The poems vary in length (De la Mare's 122
words, Berryman's 196 words, Langland's 296 words, Williams’s 94 words, and
Stevenson's 124 words) and structure (De la Mare's quasi-Petrarchan sonnet,
Berryman's five five-line unrhymed stanzas, Langland's irregular stanzas,
Williams's triadic stanzas, and Stevenson's five five-line half-rhymed stanzas).
Apart from de la Mare and Stevenson who are traditional and conservative in
form and rhymes, the other poets are varyingly modern and experimental.

Endnote

1 *Hunters in the Snow* by Pieter Brueghel.
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Language as a Means of Power: A Comparative Study of Harold Pinter’s *No Man’s Land* and Alfred Farag’s *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa*

*Usama Raslan*

This paper is an attempt to examine how the British Nobel-laureate dramatist, Harold Pinter (1930-2008), and the Egyptian versatile writer, Alfred Farag (1929-2005), depict the power struggle between two dramatic characters obsessed by a conflict of wills. The plays under study are Pinter’s *No Man’s Land* (1975), and Farag’s *ʕali: Ganaḥ al-Tabri:zi: wa tabiʕuḥu Quffah* (1969 [translated into English by Rasheed El-Enany and Charles Doria as *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa*]). Both plays are analyzed in the light of Foucault’s theory of power and Wittgenstein’s theory of language games, to prove that language is a medium through which efforts for dominance are exerted among individuals. This motif explains how one character employs language as a means of gaining power to direct and determine the behavior of the other. To achieve such an objective, the paper concentrates on how both playwrights draw extensively on a theatrical language that dramatizes the power struggle between characters as well as the linguistic tactics employed by them to sustain their desire for power.

In order to fully comprehend how power is exercised among individuals, one should consider that power, as this paper argues, is a tying relationship among individuals, a relationship in terms of which one character tries to direct and govern the behavior of another by adopting multiple forms of linguistic tactics/language games. When comparing Pinter's *No Man’s Land* to Farag's *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa*, one can discover that the thematic schema of both plays shows how the struggle for power is manipulated and actualized by the same linguistic strategies, or rather language games. In this regard, Pinter’s theatre is described as “a theatre of language” (Esslin 40), where words become weapons that give rise to “suspense, dramatic tension, laughter and tragedy” (40). This denotes that language is the key point in terms of which one can probe deeply into a Pinteresque drama to better understand the relationship between characters and power struggle. By so doing, one can infer that through language, a Pinteresque character defines “its mode of being, which

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is reflected in his/her response towards a concrete state of affairs, a specific object, individual or relationship” (Rosca 11) of power.

Like Pinter’s theatre, Farag’s can be described as a theatre of language. This epithet can be traced back to the fact that Farag is one of the most accomplished Arab playwrights who creates a special dramatic language. His theatrical language does not include “contrived imagery and convoluted linguistic constructions; it is stimulating to read and easily comprehended in performance” (Amin 46). Holding that a Farag play can be perceived in performance, one can conclude that Farag creates a new dramatic language that helps him convey his dramatic vision, a vision that aims at revealing the power struggle within which the dramatic characters are entangled. To dramatize such a struggle, Farag draws a comparison between literary and dramatic language. Such a Farag comparison leads one to estimate that what distinguishes the dramatic language from the literary one is that the former is an aesthetic instrument that results from dialogues between characters: “the literary language, whether colloquial or formal, has its own expressive and aesthetic objectives. On the contrary, the theatrical language is completely different; it is an aesthetic artistic instrument that springs from the exchanged dialogue among characters” (Farag Dali:l al-mutafarrig al-đakij 163 [trans. mine]). Farag lays heavy emphasis on the aesthetic function fulfilled by dramatic dialogue in negotiating relationships of power.

In highlighting such relationships, the two plays under study can be analyzed in the light of Foucault's theory of power. This theory implies that "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (Foucault *Truth and Power* 95). Such an approach, when applied to the analysis of Pinter’s *No Man’s Land* and Farag’s *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa*, shows that both playwrights are practitioners in a theatrical school established by Foucault and Wittgenstein. Although Pinter and Farag do not voice the aesthetic impact of Foucault and Wittgenstein's philosophies on their dramatic oeuvre, their dramatic pieces are identical with the power mechanisms outlined by such two philosophers. Both plays provide a plot that revolves around two characters locked in a battle for control that stems from their desire for power. This thematic structure elucidates that power relations, to use Jean-Francois Lyotard's terms, are "composed of language moves" (10), or rather language games. Such games (moves), invented by the dramatic characters, reflect how language can be used as a means to maintaining and imposing power.

In comparing the two plays, significant plot parallels regarding the issue of power can be discovered. *No Man’s Land*, a two-act play, tells the story of Hirst, a successful poet, who invites Spooner, a failed poet, home for a drink. The play revolves around power struggle – Sponner’s attempt to find a secure haven at
Hirst's home. His attempt, unfortunately, is doomed to failure, mainly because Hirst stands out against any attempt to disturb his fabricated existence. This thematic structure indicates that the struggle for power is an important aspect of Pinter's play, which brings to light the notion that "all human contact is a battle between who and whom" (Billington 2).

In similar ways, Farag composes a two-act play inspired by tales from *The Arabian Nights* in order to illustrate the power issue. Such tales are fused together to produce a plot that depicts the story of Ali Janah al-Tabrizi, a young man from "a wealthy family who has squandered his inheritance and has now become impoverished" (Leeuwen 215). When Quffa, a poor cobbler dressed in rags, drops into al-Tabrizi's house asking for hospitality, al-Tabrizi welcomes him, ordering the servant to provide an imaginary banquet for his guest. This imaginary banquet endows al-Tabrizi with a chance to exercise power over Quffa by convincing him to be his follower and servant in a journey to a distant land, the mountain Qaf, where al-Tabrizi uses the power of language to change reality. In so doing, al-Tabrizi tricks the citizens and the King of such a land into holding that he is a rich merchant waiting for the arrival of a great caravan. This lie stirs the greed of the king and other merchants as they lend him large amounts of money, "hoping for his generous reward when his caravan arrives" (Amin 42). However, al-Tabrizi depletes the king and the merchants' safe, running away accompanied by Quffa and the princess whom he has married. This thematic structure implies that *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa* is almost as clear as *No Man's Land*: both plays dramatize the idea of power struggle, particularly how Pinter's Spooner and Farag's al-Tabrizi use language as a strategy to overpower the other, Hirst and Quffa.

A close reading of the selected plays elucidates that though Pinter and Farag belong to different cultural milieus, both are identical in dramatizing the same *leitmotif* of power struggle. Such a *leitmotif* helps them both show how their characters use language as a device to attain power by imposing their space position as a supreme law. In so doing, the present study explores the relationship between power and language by proving that both dramatists compose a dramatic discourse whose speech patterns are nothing more than an instrument to negotiate such a relationship. To realize such an aim, it is useful to proceed first with an overview of Foucault’s theory of power and Wittgenstein’s language games in relation to Pinter and Farag's dramaturgy.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984), the French theorist of history and systems of thought, is considered the forerunner of shaping an aesthetic understanding of power. He is regarded as the founder of the theory of power. His philosophy introduces two forms of power: “Power—with a capital P” and “power relations”
with a small p (Foucault Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology 451). In Foucault’s estimation, the former refers to the political and economic Power practiced by the State, while the latter stands for power relations incarnated by all members of a society who are overwhelmed by a desire for power. In trying to exercise such a power within the society, the individuals interact with each other. This interaction denotes that power is not a concrete concept. Rather, it is a relationship between two individuals in terms of which one has an urgent desire to “direct” and “determine” the behavior of the other. For all that, thinkers misunderstand the idea of power by drawing an analogy between power and government, mainly because power is a relationship used everywhere in any society to refer to multiple forms of controlling the other. Power can be practiced by anyone who longs for governing a society, a group, a community, or another person. To accomplish such a target, the individuals of a society give voice to their will to direct and dominate the behavior of the other in terms of “a strategy” by resorting to a number of linguistic “tactics.” Foucault remarks:

Power is relationships; power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals, a relationship which is such that one can direct the behavior of another. … One can govern a society, one can govern a group, a community, a family; one can govern a person. When I say “govern someone,” it is simply in the sense that one can determine one’s behavior in terms of a strategy by resorting to a number of tactics. (Foucault Live 410)

To determine the behavior of the other, the individual should resort to a number of tactics. Such tactics can only be discovered in Wittgenstein’s theory of language games. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), an Austrian British philosopher, is considered the greatest philosopher in the 20th century. Although he did not write a single work on aesthetics, his theory of language games attempts to bridge the gap between power-relations and communication-relations. In his book, Philosophical Investigations (1958), Wittgenstein introduces this theory in terms of a very primitive language. He asks the readers to imagine a primitive form of language in which language is used as a means of communication between two parties: a builder A/the speaker and assistant B/the addressee. A is building with certain materials like blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams. The function of B is to pass such materials in the order in which A needs them. In a sense, they employ language that sustains their communication, a language in which A gives orders and B has no option except obeying such orders. The interaction between A and B simplifies what Wittgenstein means by language game that goes like that: when the builder/A utters the word ‘slab’, his
assistant/B brings him the object that is needed. The builder uses the power of language to force the assistant to carry out a certain task on hearing words as "blocks," "pillars," "slabs," and "beams." His language illustrates the role played by language game in subduing the other. This is the natural law of language game: one gives orders, and the other has to obey him/her:

The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words "block", "pillar", "slab", "beam". A calls them out;---B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call. (3)

The reaction of the assistant to the words of the builder indicates that a “kind of rapport is established between the builder and the assistant” (Ara 48) with such words as "block", "pillar", "slab", "beam". Such rapport is the reason behind the appearance of the language game which contends that "block", "pillar", "slab" or "beam" is not “a description, but an order or an appeal” (Ara 48). In this regard, Wittgenstein’s theory of language games highlights how a human subject can use language as a tactic to direct and determine the behavior of the other.

Foucault’s concept of power and Wittgenstein’s theory of language games are best depicted in Pinter’s *No Man’s Land* and Farag's *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa*. These two pieces have the same thematic schema: how the characters approach language as a tactic for governing and controlling each other. This critical practice places both playwrights among the forerunners of the philosophy of power as well as a theatrical language that brings to light the relationship between language and power struggle. In his essay, “Introduction: Writing for the Theatre” (1996), Pinter analyzes the aesthetic interaction between language and reality. His analysis elucidates that what theatre represents is not a reality, but a version of it. He goes on stating that there is no static interpretation of “a common experience,” partly because “language is a highly ambiguous business.” To avoid such an ambiguity, the dramatist should provide the characters with an aesthetic space so as to negotiate with each other and express power struggle, using language as a tactic to “reveal the thing known and unspoken.” This critical practice indicates that the dramatist should depend on an aesthetic stage dialogue that gives the characters a chance to describe their aspirations, motives and history as well as their desire for power in terms of language games. The interaction between the dramatist and his characters creates “a territory,” an aesthetic construct that enables the audience/reader to
comprehend how the conversant in a dramatic dialogue manipulates language to determine the behavior of each other. In this respect, the audience/reader can find out that “under what is said, another thing is being said” (xii). This dramatic practice is the outcome of a respectful relationship between the author and characters, a relationship that helps the characters unfold the power struggle that dominates their speech patterns. To set up such a relationship, Pinter insists that the dramatist should equip the characters with a “legitimate elbowroom” by which the unspoken/power relation can be interpreted. He argues:

Language … is a highly ambiguous business. So often, below the word spoken, is the thing unknown and unspoken. … The relationship between author and characters should be a highly respectful one, both ways. And if it’s possible to talk of gaining a kind of freedom from writing, it doesn’t come by leading one’s characters into fixed and calculated postures, but by allowing them to carry their own can, by giving them a legitimate elbowroom. (xii)

In his book, *Dali:l al-mutafarrig al-ðakij ʔala al-masrah* (1989), Farag examines the distinguishing features of dramatic dialogue. He argues that dramatic dialogue is the essence of theatre. It is the best medium through which the struggle of power can be best illustrated. Dialogue gives a clear indication of the existence of opposing interests, ideologies and power-relations between characters, mainly because it stands for a struggle between two parties: a speaker and an addressee. Each party, overwhelmed by a desire for power, attempts to govern and direct the behavior of the other. Farag observes:

Dramatic dialogue represents a form of struggle that results from a clash between two human forces, two natural systems, or two contradicting wills. Such a struggle should end with the victory of one power over the other. … Thus, the dramatic dialogue between characters is a truthful expression of the conflicting desires that sublimate the struggle as well as the dramatic action. Such desires enable the dramatic dialogue to end up with the final and fatal collision between the speaker and addressee by asserting the total victory of one party over the other. (159f )

That is to say, the interaction among characters reflects not only the power struggle that deepens the dialogue, but also how each character draws on the power of language to impose his/her will on the other in terms of linguistic tactics. Such tactics indicate that "theatre is in need of a stage language; a well-focused expressive language that expresses in a direct clear way the struggle
Language as Power

between characters to help the audience/reader conclude that below the spoken word, is the thing unknown and unspoken" (163f).

Pinter and Farag's concept of the aesthetic interaction between the dramatic dialogue and stage language motivates one to infer that both writers hold the same dramatic vision. The very objective of such a vision is to dramatize how language can be used as a means of subduing the other. However different their language, culture and nations might be, both writers, to use Rosca’s terms, contend that “power is not a pre-given fact, but an attribute that has to be acquired and reacquired through a variety of strategies” (7). Both dramatists are preoccupied with the issue of power, or rather the relationship between power-relations and communication-relations. To encapsulate such relationships, both create a multitude of linguistic tactics that help the dramatic characters attain power by “imposing their singular space position as the supreme law” (Rosca 10) on the other. This is the leitmotif that dominates the two plays under study as well as the oeuvre of both playwrights. To theatricalize such a leitmotif, both Pinter and Farag demonstrate how the analysis of power relations characterizes “the manner in which men are ‘governed’ by one another” (Foucault 1997 463). In a word, both writers are consistently recognized for their innovation in dramatic language that highlights the power struggle between characters. Both of them develop a theatrical language that fits their dramatic project which, to use Quigley’s words, employs theatre as “an instrument to negotiate relationship of power” (54). In so doing, both writers shed light on the aesthetic value played by the stage language in illuminating power relationships. This assessment is best reflected in No Man’s Land and Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa.

To negotiate power relationships, Pinter's No Man’s Land rotates around the idea of power struggle. In order to dramatize such a struggle, the play represents "a battle between two men, one trying futilely to escape the isolation of the artist's perspective, the other trying, equally futilely, to gain it" (Latrell 160). This battle results from a power struggle between Hirst who tries vainly to escape the isolation; and Spooner who seeks to gain it, as well as the power strategies adopted by both characters to maintain and direct the behavior of each other. To direct the behavior of Hirst, Spooner exercises four forms of linguistic activities, or what Wittgenstein calls Language games, which express his desire for power. His games include flattery, giving orders, bettering himself and helping Hirst. These are the four tactics in terms of which Spooner attains power that helps him impose himself on the fabricated existence of Hirst. What is axiomatic is that whenever a tactic fails, he never hesitates to try another one, waiting for the reaction of Hirst. This can be related back to the fact that Spooner is an outsider who aims to win the favor of his host. His only weapon in this struggle is "the power of speech, and he successfully dominates the conversation.
with Hirst" (Britt 12) in the first act, but Hirst resists such a domination by adopting a language game of resistance in the second act.

Like *No Man's Land*, the main motif of Farag's play arises from a battle for control between two characters: al-Tabrizi and Quffa. The former is fired with a desire to transform his imagination into a tangible reality, while the latter sticks to the power of reality. Both are obsessed with a hunger for exercising power over each other. In Farag's estimation, al-Tabrizi is a destitute prince who has squandered his fortune on his imagination and adventures. He is a dream vendor who believes in the reality of his dreams. This belief leads him to mix reality with illusion, and truth with lies in the hope of imposing his fabricated imagination as a supreme law on Quffa. On the other hand, Quffa is a realistic character who believes only in the power of reality, not imagination, simply because he is a downright pauper who lives on selling cobbler. In an interview with the Algerian critic Saleh Lambarkia (1948-2015), Farag argues:

Al-Tabrizi is an imaginative person who envisions a dream and believes in its reality. His dilemma consists in combining reality with dreams. This leads him to hold that the caravan that stands for imagination/illusion is nothing more than a reality. … Unlike al-Tabrizi who was a wealthy prince and has now become a destitute one, Quffa is a realist downright poor shoemaker who insists on living within the limits of reality. His insistence prevents him from joining al-Tabrizi’s imagination. (33)

The power struggle between both characters motivates one to figure out that the play represents a power relationship between two conflicting characters: a visionary and a realistic character. One tries to live within the domains of his strong imagination, and the other attempts futilely to escape such domains. In failing to escape such an imagination, Quffa takes the risk of saving al-Tabrizi from being executed. His attempt can be conceived as a direct expression of the victory of imagination over reality.

In *No Man’s Land*, Spooner exercises power over Hirst by hinging on a variety of linguistic tactics that enable him to "wheedle his way into Hirst's confidence" (McGeever). This is best illustrated in the first scene in which Hirst and Spooner celebrate the acquaintance they have. Hirst offers Spooner a glass of whiskey, asking him whether he prefers the whiskey as it is or not. Spooner replies: "as it is … absolutely as it is." His reply shows that he uses such a question as a pretext for establishing a language game of flattery. He says that this question is a perfect example of the kindness of Hirst. This kindness leads him to feel peace and security never felt before. For all that, he shall not stay long at Hirst's home because he does not like to stay long with others. His feeling
of peace and security does not spring from his existence at such a comfortable house; but rather, from his belief that Hirst is a reticent man who stands for kindness itself:

Spooner: Thank you. How very kind of you. How very kind. … Terribly kind of you. … May I say how very kind it was of you to ask me in? In fact, you are kindness itself, probably always are kindness itself. … I speak to you … because you are clearly a reticent man … and because you are clearly kindness itself. (322f, emphasis mine)

Spooner's speech is replete with the repetition of the word "kind" with its various derivatives, which is mentioned seven times. Such a repetition is a linguistic activity produced by Spooner to give voice to a hunger for power. To achieve such a goal, he embarks on a language game of flattery that aims to trick Hirst into offering him a secure haven where he can feel tranquility. This indicates that the language of a Pinter play "functions primarily as a means of dictating and reinforcing relationships" (Quigley 4) of power. To reinforce such relationships, Spooner, to use Benveniste's words, holds that language is the only medium in terms of which he can constitute himself as "a subject, because language alone establishes the concept of ego in reality, in its reality" (244). In a sense, he uses the language game of flattery as a strategy to gain power by imposing himself as a subject of speech on Hirst's existence. His strategy draws on deploying such a game as well as indexical signs: "you" indicating Hirst and "I" referring to Spooner himself. The index "you" is used seven times, while the pronoun "I" is mentioned only once: "I speak to you." The repetitive use of such indices along with the language game of flattery unfolds the power struggle that exists between the speaker and his addressee.

Spooner insists on using language as a strategy to create power that he does not possess. His attempt, to quote the American novelist Saul Bellow, can be traced back to the notion that "powerlessness appears to force people to have recourse to words" (72). Thus, Spooner plays the language game of giving orders to attain influence over Hirst by forcing the latter to shelter him. His language game aims at forcing Hirst to delve into his memories to tell more truths about his own life. In so doing, Spooner formulates a common ground between himself and Hirst, a relationship that will help him direct and maintain the behavior of Hirst. He introduces himself as "a staunch friend of the arts, particularly the art of poetry" (335). His house is opened to poets who always ask him to evaluate their verse. In return, he asks Hirst to describe his own life, on condition that Hirst be frank about unfolding what he conceals, but Hirst does not obey him. Nevertheless, Spooner pretends to share something with Hirst: a
memory of the bucolic life. This pretension leads Spooner to get the feeling that he is enraptured, asking for more and more information about the socio-political-economic background of Hirst:

Spooner: Be frank. _Tell me_. You've revealed something. You've made an unequivocal reference to your past. Don't go back on it. We share something. A memory of the bucolic life. . . . I am enraptured. _Tell me more_. _Tell me more_ about the quaint little perversions of your life and times. _Tell me more . . . Tell me more._

Hirst: There is no more. (335f, emphasis mine)

This conversation shows that Hirst is in a subordinating position to Spooner. Such a position results from Spooner's use of the language game of giving orders. His context of utterance is permeated with a central imperative locution: "Tell me," which is repeated five times. Hirst replies to such a locution by stating that "there is no more," mainly because he refuses to be indulged in any power relation with Spooner. His refusal can be traced back to the fact that he has no rapport with Spooner. To empower his language game, Spooner follows two power strategies: first, he tries to convince Hirst that they both share something; second, he utilizes the imperative locutions to induce Hirst to establish a rapport with him. In using the language game of giving orders, Spooner, to use Althusser's words, aims at forcing Hirst to behave as "a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission" (75). Instead of acting as a powerless character, Hirst resists any force relations imposed on him by Spooner. In short, the language game between the two characters goes like that: when Spooner says, "tell me more," Hirst replies, "there is no more."

Hirst's reaction to the language game produced by Spooner evinces that both characters do not "possess any common memory or outer context to which they could refer" (Napiorkowska 214). To avoid such a failure, Spooner tries another power strategy: the language game of helping Hirst. Such a game motivates Spooner to play the role of a psychoanalyst who probes too deeply into the inner world of Hirst to find out the hidden causes of his psychogenic trauma, a trauma that lies in the lack of a social contact. Spooner does not only analyze such a trauma, but also proposes himself as a possible solution to it. His proposal draws on persuading Hirst that the only solution to this dilemma is to find a close friend that is discovered to be Spooner himself. To reach such an objective, he continues his manipulation of imposing himself on the fabricated existence of Hirst by using an imperative verb: "Heed me." He motivates Hirst to seize the opportunity and accept him as a friend and a relevant witness. To force Hirst to
seize such an opportunity, he introduces himself as the only friend on whom Hirst can rely to erase his feeling of loss and lack of social contact. He recommends himself by stating that he is the only person of "such rare quality," entreat ing him to think carefully before accepting or refusing such an offer. For all that, Hirst answers him by saying "No":

Spooner: You need a friend, You have a long hike, my lad, up which, presently, you slog unfriended. ... In other words, never disdain a helping hand, especially one of such rare quality. And it is not only the quality of my offer which is rare, it is the act itself, the offer itself – quiet without precedent. I offer myself to you as a friend. Think before you speak. ... Hirst: No. (339f)

The above-mentioned dialogue encapsulates Spooner's pursuit to impose his will as a powerful character on Hirst. His pursuit arises from a desire to set up a power relation with Hirst. This relationship leads one to hold that "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault 1978 93). To improve such a situation, Spooner devises the language game of helping Hirst by employing many imperative locutions, e.g. "Heed me," "never disdain a helping hand," and "Think before you speak." By using the imperative form, Spooner attempts to force Hirst into believing that he is a subjected being who has to submit to Spooner's will and to welcome the conditions of his submission. Instead of acting as a subjected being, Hirst, to cite Althusser's terms, insists on playing the role of a free subject, or rather "a center of initiatives, author responsible for its actions" (75). In this regard, Hirst becomes a free subject who refuses Spooner's desire to exercise any control over him.

In acting as a free subject, Hirst urges Spooner to take one final tactic: the language game of bettering himself. This game leads Spooner to believe that he is a salesperson who should use language as a device to attract the attention of Hirst to the necessity of offering him the job of a secretary, partly because he is a talented person. His very objective is to convince Hirst that he has a lot of talent that fits much the job descriptions of a secretary/a friend in need, urging Hirst to consider him for the post. His talent includes some experience in dealing with tradespeople, "hawkers, canvassers and nuns." Moreover, he can be silent as well as convivial when desired. He can be what Hirst wishes:

Spooner: (To Hirst.) Let me live with you and be your secretary. Hirst: Is there a big fly in here? I hear buzzing. ...
Spooner: I ask you … to consider me for the post. I'm extremely good with tradespeople, hawkers, canvassers, nuns. I can be silent when desired or, when desired, convivial. I can discuss any subject of your choice. … I can be what you wish. (392f)

The language game used in the dialogue, to use Birch's terms, "shows rather than tells" (6). It shows the power relation that exists between Spooner as a slave and Hirst as a master. The master here is not in need of a slave, while the slave longs for a master. That is why, Spooner (the slave) deploys the language game of bettering himself to spur Hirst (the master) into accepting him as a secretary. His language game is actualized by the use of the indices: "I" referring to Spooner and "you" indicating Hirst. The index "I" is mentioned six times, while the pronoun "you" is used twice. The iterative use of the index "I" provides the speaker with a chance to gain what Benveniste calls a sort of "linguistic superiority" (73) that highlights the power struggle preoccupying the addressee (I) and the addressee (you). Such an assessment leads one to infer that power can be "exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault 1978 94).

By the end of the play, the struggle for power between Spooner and Hirst reaches the climax: Hirst resists the language games invented by Spooner to subdue him. Whenever Spooner attempts a power strategy to dominate Hirst, the latter stands out against such a strategy, refusing to be controlled by Spooner. His refusal can be traced back to Foucault's belief that "Where there is power, there is resistance. … This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance" (Foucault 1978 96f). These points of resistance are the very indication of the existence of power relations. Without resistance to power, "no power relation can be conceived: where there is power, there is always someone who resists it" (Balan 3).

Hence, Hirst employs a language game of resistance to shun being dominated by Spooner. His game depends on refusing to be involved in any language game invented by Spooner as well as directing the attention of the latter to the necessity of changing the topic of their discussion – Spooner's aim to live with Hirst and be his secretary. Hirst refuses to be an addressee. Instead, he insists on becoming a powerful addressee to keep the peace of his fabricated existence and isolation from any disturbance caused by Spooner's desire for power. This provides Hirst with a chance to gain control over the conversation by adopting the tactic of refusing the reality imposed on him. He pretends that he does not know Spooner. When Spooner asks him to consider his request of being his
secretary, Hirst answers him by saying "let's change the subject for the last time"

Spooner: Before you reply, I would like to say one thing more. ... Let us content ourselves with the idea of an intimate reading, in a pleasing and conductive environment, let us consider an evening to be remembered, by all who take part in her.

Silence
Hirst: Let us change the subject ... for the last time. (394f)

The power relation between Hirst and Spooner can be analyzed in the light of Lyotard's description of language game, particularly the notion that "every utterance should be thought of as a 'move' in a game" (11). Such a move should be followed by what Lyotard calls “countermoves” (11) that can be expressed in terms of the language game of resistance. In this regard, Hirst deploys such a game as a reaction to Spooner's attempt to impose himself as a supreme law on his existence. Thus, Hirst's language game of resistance is best illustrated in his use of the imperative form: "let's change the subject." Such a form can be modulated as an order in terms of which "the sender is clearly placed in a position of authority" (10), mainly because he expects the addressee, Spooner, to perform the action referred to. That is why the addressee accepts his exile with open arms, stating that he is fated to live in "no man's land. Which never moves, which never changes, which never grows older, but which remains forever, icy and silent" (399).

A close reading of Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa shows that the play, like Pinter's No Man's Land, rotates around the idea of power struggle between al-Tabrizi and Quffa. Such a struggle arises from the clash between al-Tabrizi's imagination and Quffa's realism. To convince Quffa of the reality of his imagination and dreams, al-Tabrizi, unlike Spooner who embarks on different forms of language games, lays emphasis on the language game of giving orders. His tactic/game aims to maintain and direct the behavior of Quffa by forcing him to accept to be "his disciple and alter ego" (El-Halawany 339). To accomplish such a goal, he uses what Wittgenstein calls "the language game of giving orders and obeying them" (127), taking into account that Quffa should play the second part of the game: obeying orders. That is why he dominates the dramatic dialogues with Quffa by insisting on playing the role of a powerful addressee who issues orders to his powerless addressee, waiting for their achievement without delay. This is best demonstrated from the very beginning of the play, particularly in the first scene in which both characters are first introduced.
In such a scene, Quffa pretends to be blind by covering his eyes with a bandage, wondering if there is a hospitable man in the city to invite a tired homeless shoemaker who is in pain. Impressed by such a call, al-Tabrizi invites him to a banquet, which is later discovered to be an invisible one, "of the kind the servant [Sawab] has been serving to his master for the past couple of days" (Badawi 179). In fact, al-Tabrizi has no food in the house because he has been forced to sell everything, including the stove, the pans, the spoons, the copper dishes, and the glasses. Still, he orders the servant to serve the food quickly for his poor guest. When the servant lays an imaginary tray in front of Quffa, al-Tabrizi asks him to partake of the imaginary food. Quffa puts his hand eagerly, but touches nothing. When he removes the bandage from his eyes quickly to see the food, he is shocked because he finds no food, concluding that al-Tabrizi mocks him. That is why he is afraid of al-Tabrizi, making up his mind to go along with him in the hope of the arrival of a real food. He implores al-Tabrizi to forgive him because he has not seen such a great meal for a long time, acting as if he were enjoying real fabulous food:

Ali (taking him by arm): Come and sit here at the middle of the table and help yourself to any dish you fancy; don't be shy! I know how hungry you are. Look at this nice white bread. … Do eat, my guest. You're weak; you need nourishment. Try this chickens stuffed with pistachios.

Quffa (As though tasting it and beginning to enjoy the game): Yum-yum! By God, master, this food's the best I've ever eaten. (311)

Through al-Tabrizi's speech with Quffa, one can figure out that al-Tabrizi is a powerful character: he embarks on the language game of giving orders to subject Quffa to submission. His language game enables him to enforce his imagination as a supreme law on Quffa; therefore, his context of utterance is replete with the imperative locutions, e.g. "come and sit here," "help yourself," "don't be shy," "look at this," "do eat," and "try this." Such imperative locutions, to use Lyotard's terms, are "prescriptions" invented by the speaker (al-Tabrizi) to maintain and direct the behavior of the addressee (Quffa). In this regard, al-Tabrizi is placed in "a position of authority" that uses language as a tactic to control the addressee because he "expects the addressee to perform the action referred to" (10). Thus, Quffa becomes a subjected being who ought to submit to a higher authority. His submission can be traced back to the fact that al-Tabrizi's language game does not only deprive him of feeling any sense of freedom, but leads him to welcome his submission and domination by enjoying the imaginary dishes of al-Tabrizi.

In acting as a subjected being, Quffa begins to step into "the scene of make-believe" (El-Halawany 348) by enjoying the enactment of eating the invisible
meal. This is best illustrated when he behaves as if "he were frantically gobbling different foods from all the dishes near and far, picking up what he drops and wiping off what dribbles from his mouth" (311f). Moreover, when Quffa gets hiccups because of eating too much from al-Tabrizi's imaginary dishes, he asks for water to get rid of such hiccups. Al-Tabrizi replies that the house contains no water as he drinks only the best wine, ordering the servant to bring the wine to his guest quickly. Thus, the servant enters, carrying the imaginary wine and glasses. As soon as al-Tabrizi serves such an imaginary wine to Quffa, the latter pretends to get drunk as a sponge, asking for more imaginary glasses because he has never drunk like them before. When informed that al-Tabrizi has stolen the wine from the very cellar of Omar Khayyam, Quffa slaps al-Tabrizi on the face. Such a slap forces al-Tabrizi to get angry with Quffa, deciding to punish him with an imaginary whip. Quffa kneels down pleading for forgiveness and mercy, but al-Tabrizi shows no mercy. Quffa demonstrates his best to escape such whipping, but he feels that he has been lashed, crying out in pain, swearing that he hears the whip with his own ears, swishing in the air:

Ali: You'll pay with your life for this. Come here!
Quffa (Drops on the ground with fear and shakes violently): I'm lost.
   Master, I'm only your slave to whom you've been so kind. . .
Ali (Stands over Quffa and makes as though he was whipping him.) Here,
   for your impudence. Take this.
Quffa (Jumps away as if stung; feels his back in terror. Aside:) I swear I
could hear the whip with my own ears, swishing in the air. I've been
whipped. (He cries and feels his body in pain.) Oh! My back, my back!
Ali: Come here! (313)

The scene of whipping outlines the power relationship between Quffa and al-Tabrizi. It also brings into prominence Wittgenstein's belief that "in the practice of the use of language, one party calls out the words, the other acts on them" (6). If such statement is carried a step further, one can sum up that the power struggle between both characters goes like that: one party calls out words/games, the other should act upon them. When such an other (Quffa) shows some forms of resistance, the addresser (al-Tabrizi) punishes him. In this regard, Quffa's slapping of al-Tabrizi is conceived to be a form of power resistance created by Quffa to resist al-Tabrizi's attempt to keep him in subjection. To suppress such a resistance, al-Tabrizi adopts what Lyotard names "a countermove" which is best manifested when he orders the servant to hand him a whip to chastise Quffa. This assessment results from the notion that al-Tabrizi creates a linguistic tactic abounding with imperative speech acts: "come here," "fetch me," and "take this."
The repetitive use of such locutions highlights al-Tabrizi's desire for power, as well as proving that language is a means of power, or as Lyotard puts it: "to speak is to fight" (8). Motivated by Lyotard's belief, al-Tabrizi devises a power strategy that enslaves Quffa by coercing him into feeling the pains of the imaginary whip. This motivates one to infer that Farag's al-Tabrizi and Quffa, and Pinter's Spooner and Hirst are engaged in a power struggle and the winner is the one who deploys a power strategy that enables him to direct the behavior of the other.

Hence, Quffa's statement that he "can feel the pain where the whip hit" (313) him epitomizes a total submission to al-Tabrizi's power strategy. His submission, to borrow Foucault's terms, comprises "a mechanism of power" by which Quffa acts in a certain way to "increase the subjected forces and to improve the force and efficacy of that which subjects" him (Power/Knowledge 104). To improve such forces, Kafur, a renaming of Quffa, accepts to follow al-Tabrizi on a journey to a legendary place named by the latter "the mountain Qaf" (313). When both characters reach the mountain Qaf, a city near the Chinese borders, they are taken aback by its poverty and large number of beggars. Frustrated by such a scene, Quffa/Kafur blames al-Tabrizi for bringing him to a place where he will never be able to find a craft to work at. Al-Tabrizi announces that the best suitable profession for them both is to trick the people of such a miserable town into holding that they are both rich tourists. He asks Quffa to spread the rumors that he is the richest man in Baghdad as well as on the earth. Such a rumor can become a recognized reality on condition that Quffa play the role of a clever salesman who uses the power of language to sell al-Tabrizi's illusion as if it were a precious stone. To accomplish such an aim, he urges Quffa to try attributes of power rather than those of weakness and poverty:

Ali: You must sell me as you would a precious stone, and you must do it like a gold salesman.
Quffa: What shall I say?
Ali: Say anything that comes to your mind as long as you play your part well. Act naturally.
Quffa: Naturally?
Ali: Yes. Give free rein to your imagination. ... Try to describe me. Who am I? ... Superb. But always make sure you say the right thing at the right time. And don't overdo it. (318)

This dialogue reflects al-Tabrizi's power relationship with Quffa, a relationship that leads him to play the role of a power instructor. This instructor teaches Quffa some practical lessons on how power is exercised to direct and maintain the
behavior of the other in terms of linguistic tactics. To assert his presence as a powerful instructor, he produces many imperative locutions that arise from his insistence on deploying the language game of giving orders. Such a game is used nine times in his utterance: "you must sell me," "you must do it," "Say anything that comes to your mind," "Act naturally," "Give free rein to your imagination," "Try to describe me," "Superb," "make sure you say the right thing," and "don't overdo it." Indeed, such locutions are a form of an exercise of power practiced by the addresser (al-Tabrizi) to act upon the addressee (Quffa) by transforming him into a powerful dominator instead of being a powerless dominated.

Motivated by al-Tabrizi's lessons, Quffa provides a new description of al-Tabrizi as "the chief merchant of all chief merchants under the sun," not as a destitute prince. This indicates that Quffa becomes dominated and "transfigured by the power of al-Tabrizi's poetic imagination, the ingenuity of his word play and artistry" (El-Halawany 354) of his power strategy.

Motivated by al-Tabrizi's poetic imagination, Quffa spreads the rumors about the fabulous wealth, saying that his master's caravan consists of "three hundred mules, each led by a special slave and bearing a chest packed with gold and precious stones" (323). Thus, when the news of al-Tabrizi's richness reaches the king, he asks al-Tabrizi's to marry his daughter, the royal princess. This urges Quffa to rebel against his master for the first time in the play, declaring that the princess should be his wife, not al-Tabrizi's because he has seen her before him. His reaction stems from the belief that he and al-Tabrizi are operating with his own capital; thus, he tries to remind al-Tabrizi of the money he has borrowed from him. He criticizes al-Tabrizi for insisting on calling himself a "master" and addressing him as a "slave." Al-Tabrizi replies that such discrimination is not his own; rather, it is the outcome of the law of nature which classifies humans into slaves and masters. With this in mind, al-Tabrizi contends that such a law gives him the right to marry the princess, while Quffa ought to marry her maid as he is the valet. To avoid being involved in a dispute with al-Tabrizi over marrying the princess, Quffa suggests that he will accept al-Tabrizi's marriage to the princess on condition that he share the princess with al-Tabrizi, or he will reveal their secret to the king:

Quffa (Pulling Ali to a corner, aside): I saw her too, maybe even before you did. I want to marry her.
Ali (Aside): But the King wants to marry her to me.
Quffa: (Aside): No, no, no. We're operating with my own capital.
(Wagging his notebook at him.) She'll be my wife.
Ali (Aside): By all means. Tell the vizier that. …
Quffa (Aside): Do you want me to be killed? Listen, you marry her and then let's share her between us. (330)

This rapid dialogue summarizes Quffa's attempt to resist al-Tabrizi's pursuit to enforce his imagination as a supreme law on him. To resist such a pursuit, he, like Hirst, adopts the language game of resistance, a game which ascertains Foucault's notion that where there is power, there is resistance. This resistance endows Quffa with a chance to act the role of a free speaking subject who uses the power of language to assert his existence as a powerful addresser, not a powerless addressee. Thus, he opposes al-Tabrizi's project to marry the princess by repeating the adverb "no" three times. His "noes", like Hirst's, reveal a powerful will to maintain his space position as a free subject. To accomplish such a goal, he uses many indexical signs: "you" indicating al-Tabrizi, "I" referring to Quffa, and "her" standing for the princess. The index "you" is employed three times; the pronoun "I" is used six times; and the indexical sign "her" is mentioned twice. The repetitive use of such indices constructs what Elam calls "the dramatic dialect in which I becomes 'you'" (142). This dramatic dialect illustrates the power struggle between both characters, a struggle that leads the I/speaker, Quffa to force the you/addressee, al-Tabrizi into sharing the her/princess between them both. Unlike Spooner, who surrenders to Hirst's will and stays in no man's land, Quffa's language game helps Farag depict a new Quffa that wields the mechanism of resistance to force his dominator(al-Tabrizi) into submission.

Inspired by his position as a free speaking subject, Quffa runs out of patience with his master. He asks al-Tabrizi to settle their accounts, but al-Tabrizi insists that they should wait for the arrival of the caravan. To take revenge on al-Tabrizi, Quffa reveals their secret to the king in return for thirty dirhams; therefore, al-Tabrizi is sentenced to death. Such a sentence makes Quffa sympathize with him by disguising as a custodian of al-Tabrizi's caravan, asking the citizens of the city about a royal personage called Ali Janah al-Tabrizi. Pretending to be shocked at the sight of al-Tabrizi's humiliation, he scolds the chief merchant and the executioner for degrading his master. When the executioner unties al-Tabrizi, Quffa tells him that they should escape immediately to save the caravan from the bandits. By listening to such advice, al-Tabrizi escapes execution, accompanied by Quffa and the princess to meet the caravan:

Quffa (In his natural voice, aside to Ali:) Master, we must escape at once.
I'm Quffa.
Ali: (Aside to Quffa): What's delayed the caravan?
Quffa: What can I say to him? (Aside to Ali:) Listen, my friend, if we hang around for one minute longer, bandits will get to the caravan before we do. Hurry! (348)

Quffa's context of utterance draws on the index "we" that refers to al-Tabrizi and Quffa himself. The iterative use of such an index helps Farag formulate a dramatic dialect in which the addresser/I and the addressee/you become a "we." This "we" stands for a new power relationship, a relationship that enables al-Tabrizi to impose his imagination/caravan as a supreme law on Quffa.

The play, therefore, ends with the sweeping victory of al-Tabrizi's dream over Quffa's realism. This victory is the outcome of a power struggle between two different dramatic characters: "the dreamer Tabrizi and the down-to-earth Quffa, the Don Quixote and Sancho Panza" (Badawi 182). The interaction between the two characters unfolds the power relations between the powerful and powerless as well as the social dreams that dominated the Egyptian society during the 1960s, particularly when Gamal Abdel Nasser rose to Power. This assessment arises from Qaid Diab's belief that the play contains a sense of social and political satire that explains Farag's attitude towards Nasser as well as the relationship between the Egyptians and Nasser's dreams. In this regard, al-Tabrizi symbolizes Nasser, while Quffa stands for the Egyptians who have a complete confidence in Nasser's political and social agenda, or rather al-Tabrizi's caravan. This leads one to infer that the power relationship between al-Tabrizi and Quffa epitomizes Nasser's politics that aims to subject the Egyptians into submission. Like al-Tabrizi, Nasser is a dream vendor who believes in the reality of his dreams/caravan. On the other hand, Quffa, deluded by al-Tabrizi's imagination, represents the Egyptians waiting for the arrival of the caravan up till now, but in vain:

Many critics argue that *Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa* has an overt political message that reflects the relationship between Gamal Abd al-Nasser and the Egyptian people. Al-Tabrizi stands for Nasser, while Quffa symbolizes the Egyptians. The relationship between both characters highlights Nasser's politics that rest on selling dreams to the Egyptians who, like Quffa, never had the benefit of such politics [caravan]. (93)

In approaching Pinter' and Farag's theatre in light of Foucault's conception of power and Wittgenstein's theory of language games, one can conclude that power is not a concrete concept. Rather, it is a relationship between two individuals. This relationship reflects how a Pinter and a Farag character manipulate language as an instrument to dominate and control the behavior of
the other. Bearing this in mind, I would like to make four main points regarding the dramatic achievement of both playwrights. First, both Pinter and Farag mould a dramatic vision that illustrates the motif of power struggle. This motif portrays how one character wields a linguistic tactic of power to dictate and reinforce his/her singular space position as a supreme law on the other.

Second, to dramatize such a motif, both dramatists develop a new stage language. This language enables them both to create a dramatic vision, a vision that shows how power is exercised between characters as well as the aesthetic function performed by the dramatic dialogue in negotiating power relationships. However, both hold a different approach to theatrical language. Pinter contends that dramatic language is a highly ambiguous business simply because below the word spoken is the thing unknown and unspoken. To remove such an ambiguity, the artist should supply his/her characters with a legitimate elbowroom through which they can reveal the unspoken in the text. Unlike Pinter, Farag asserts that dialogue is the essence of theatre. It is the best medium in terms of which the writer can elucidate the struggle between characters. To clarify such a struggle, the language of a dramatic dialogue should be a clear expressive well-focused one that expresses in a direct way the dramatic crisis between characters.

Third, Pinter and Farag's motif of power are best translated in No Man's Land and Ali Janah al-Tabrizi and His Servant Quffa. Thus, when making a comparison between these two pieces, significant thematic and technical analogies regarding the issue of power struggle can be discovered. Pinter's play depicts a power relationship between Spooner and Hirst, two conflicting characters who are engaged in a battle for control. The former deploys a variety of language games to exercise power over the latter who resists such games by adopting the language game of resistance. Like Pinter's, Farag's piece provides a plot that theatricalizes the idea of power struggle, particularly how the characters employ language as a strategy to subdue each other. To highlight such a struggle, Farag presents a linguistic battle between two contradictory characters: al-Tabrizi and Quffa. This struggle results from al-Tabrizi's insistence on imposing his imagination as a supreme law on Quffa who, unlike Hirst, shows no resistance by believing in the reality of such an imagination.

Finally, in addressing the power struggle between Spooner and Hirst, and between al-Tabrizi and Quffa, Pinter and Farag draw on different forms of Wittgenstein's theory of language games. Pinter's Spooner deploys four-language games—the language game of flattery, giving orders, bettering himself and helping Hirst. Such games endeavor to compel Hirst to act as a subjected being that should submit to a higher authority, mainly because he has been stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission. Still, Hirst defends his freedom and fabricated existence by resorting to the language game.
of resistance. In so doing, he acts as a free subject who resists Spooner's language game by repeating the adverb "no" more than once. Unlike Spooner, Farag's al-Tabrizi embarks only on the language game of giving orders. His very objective is to spur Quffa into acting as a subjected being, taking into account that Quffa should perform the second part of the game: obeying orders. Like Hirst, Quffa insists on behaving as a free subject, an individual responsible for his action by adopting the language game of resistance, which is best reflected in duplicating the adverb "no" three times. In short, the language games devised by Pinter's and Farag's characters bring into prominence the fact that every utterance should be thought of as a move in a game.

Endnotes

1 See Appendix for the Arabic phonetic symbols used according to IPA.
2 All translations from Arabic are mine.

Works Cited

A- English


B- Arabic
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**APPENDIX**

**List of Arabic Phonetic Symbols (from IPA)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Arabic Consonant</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
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<tr>
<td>أ</td>
<td>Voiced glottal stop</td>
<td>/ʔ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ب</td>
<td>Voiced bilabial stop</td>
<td>/b/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ت</td>
<td>Voiceless dento-alveolar stop</td>
<td>/t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ث</td>
<td>Voiceless interdental fricative</td>
<td>/θ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ج</td>
<td>Voiced post-alveolar fricative</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ح</td>
<td>Voiceless pharyngeal fricative</td>
<td>/h/</td>
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<td>خ</td>
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<td>/aː/</td>
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<td>ِ ي</td>
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<tr>
<td>ْ و</td>
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Stage or Page? A Dub Performer or A Dub Poet?
A Study of Linton Kwesi Johnsons’ Political Activism in
“Five Nights of Bleeding” and “Di Great Insohreckshan”

Yasser K. R. Aman*

This paper investigates Linton Kwesi Johnson’s political activism in “Five Nights of Bleeding” and “Di Great Insohreckshan” in order to answer the much-debated question: which is more effective in conveying Johnson’s political message: the performed song or the scribed poem? First, the paper gives a brief history of dub music which started in Jamaica, Johnson’s motherland. A discussion of dub poetry follows highlighting the pioneers such as Johnson and Mutabaruka. I argue that the performed songs and the scribed poems under study are effective in convey Johnson’s message each in its own way; however, the scribed form has a stronger, more longstanding impact on imparting the message than stage performance because it relies on the musicality of the words created by sounds and aural images easily grasped even by an international readership alien to the heritage of dub music. An analysis of political events in the two poems shows that a scribed poem, which, as in “Five Nights of Bleeding”, graphically represents a tension between Standard English, and Jamaican Creole and Jamaican English, and which highlights sounds at play as in “Di Great Insohreckshan”, asserting identity, can do without stage performance.

Dub Music

The origin of “dub” may be traced back to film making or dubbing and “the ghoulish habit of re-recording voices onto a soundtrack” (Sullivan 7). It echoes in the pronunciation of the word “ghost” in Jamaican, which sounds as “duppy” (Sullivan 7). It is “a sub-genre of reggae” (Pablo 120). Many definitions have been given to “dub”, some of which are sexual referring to rub-a-dub dance where a man rubs against a woman’s body, or citing The Silverstone’s song title “Dub the Pum Pum”, (“pum pum” being the Jamaican slang for female genital) (Veal 73). Compared to jazz, blues and salsa, dub is distinguished by levels of modification. It was in Kingston that the process of mixing is completely achieved. In fact, deconstruction is an artistic process per se:

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The way in which the dub pioneers (with Lynford Anderson, Errol Thompson, Augustus Pablo, King Tubby, Keith Hudson, Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry among them) began deconstructing songs into their constituent parts then rebuilding them into alternative compositions – literally turning them inside out to reveal their ‘seams’ – made the music simultaneously avant-garde and hugely popular with the sound system crowds. (Sullivan 8)

Dub music is characterized by reverb and delay, things a printed poem/song loses. Reverb and delay are used to present the song as a unified whole and to create a psychedelic vision for the listener in order for him/her to “greater appreciate the stripped-down ‘riddim’ of the track” (Chambers 122) and to go into their ancestral past. Dub music is characterized by bass, a lower powerful tone similar to an old man’s voice, which refers to masculinity. Dub music has also been claimed to have a feminine power. However, as Jah Wobble argued, the main purpose, besides having both masculine and feminine powers, is that it is supportive (Sullivan 11). It was almost a decade - from 1970s till 1980s- that dub music flourished in Jamaica. The strategies of dub, viz., the sound system, the deejay, the remix, have outlived it and their repercussions reached different placed in the diaspora.

In Kingston Jamaica, dub music developed so much that the accompanying dances witnessed social gatherings where people discussed social and political affairs along with listening to dub music. In music competitions, known as clashes, sound systems, which owned up-to-date specific records, played an important role in deciding on “Champion Sound” (Sullivan 16). In 1960s “Jamaican Stereo” (Sullivan 21), which depended on recording the band on one track and the vocals on another, emerged and later proved important to the appearance of dub music. “The rude boys” and “skettels” played rocksteady and reggae whose “slow rhythms” and “extra sonic space” (Sullivan 23) were very important in releasing dub music, known also as “drum and bass mixes” (Sullivan 26), which came to existence in 1967 as a result of Byron Smith’s unwitting mistake and Rudolph Ruddy Redwood’s embrace as “art” (Sullivan 23-4). Dub paved the way to the emergence of Jamaican deejay/selectors in 1950s who were first allowed to toast between songs till their presence in the version became so effective that the first acclaimed generation of dub toasters, led by U-Roy (Sullivan 30; Moskowitz 94).

Multi-tracking made it easy for dub to be created with an option of adding to the final mix at liberty. However, it should be noted that there is no such a thing as an original mix since the nature of dubbing defies this notion of originality (Toop 355). Lynford Anderson (Andy Capp) is considered one of the early
landmarks of dub music. Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry was a follower of Anderson. Sylvan Morris is another landmark who later became a mixing engineer. He mixed many dub albums and released two on his own. For some time, Errol ‘E.T.’ Thompson worked with Morris; however, he left Morris and later worked with Clive Chin. There are many other Jamaican dub pioneers such as Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry, King Tubby and Scientist.

After World War II many Jamaicans migrated to Britain but they were faced by racial treatment as they were denied the right to have a job and a respectable life. Though the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 limited entry to Britain, the Caribbean Community became part and parcel of the British society (Sullivan 57). Duke Vin (Vincent Forbes) and Count Suckle (Wilbert Campbell) were of the first soundmen to reach Britain. They helped introduce white British youth to Jamaican music. “By the mid-1960s, sound system culture had spread to most major British cities” (Sullivan59). Later on other famous figures appeared such as UK dub producers was Dennis Bovell, Adrian Sherwood, a producer in the post-punk scene, and Neil Fraser, aka Mad Professor.

**Dub Poetry**

In her article, “Dub Poetry: Legacy of Roots Reggae” Janet L. DeCosmo highlights the importance of dub poetry and reggae as “critical social instruments” (33). For Linton Kwesi Johnson African consciousness, which can be approached through “cultural nationalist”, representing identity, and “pan-African imaginary”, showing solidarity, is best expressed through reggae music, priding on “African ancestry” and highlighting “the historical experience of slavery”, helping form “new identities of un/belonging” and providing “a nexus for a cultural of resistance to racial oppression”. However, for “today’s Black British youth, reggae is no longer “the dominant music” (Johnson, “African Consciousness in Reggae: Some examples” 41-43). Although Johnson is known to be the founder of dub poetry, Oku Onuora is claimed to have coined the term dub poetry in 1970s. Louise Bennett’s performance poetry and Bob Marley’s roots reggae are sources of dub poetry, “a continuation of the African oral tradition” (DeCosmo 34).

In her article, “Orality, Creoles, and Postcolonial Poetry in Performance” Janet Neigh maintains “[w]hile the reader can see the end rhyme represented on the page, hearing it reveals its full rhythmic effect” (172). Dub poetry’s status, whether to be printed on page or sufficient to be performed on stage has been much debated by supporters of both points of view (Gingell 222-25; DeCosmo 34-35). Dub poetry has been seen by many, including Lillian Allen and Carole D. Yawney, as political in nature since dub performance entertains as well as provokes the oppressed audience in order to protest against racism, oppression
and social injustice exercised by the hosting culture against the “accented culture” (Gräbner 56). Therefore, dub poets vocalize anger, protest using certain rhythms that suit the sounds of their words. In 1970s, Both Mutabaruka and Linton Kwesi Johnson use of ‘toasting’ classified their work as “dub poetry or dub lyricism” (Nerys 107). Wheatle Coppola defines dub poetry as “the fusion of reggae rhythms with practice of the spoken word, focusing on the primacy of the voice (...) dub poetry offers interesting insights on standardization and textualization of Creole” (12). Dub poetry bridges the gap between white and black traditions, with themes that focus on political and social aspect. It investigates “narratives of oppression, histories of economic exploitation, and protests against racism and police brutality” (Nerys 108). Famous figures of dub poetry are Mutabaruka, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Michael Smith, Jean ‘Binta’ Breeze, and Levi Tafari and Benjamin Zephaniah.

Mutabaruka’s “Dis Poem” is a protest against all kinds of racism, against segregation on national and international levels. It is a call for past figures to attend the contemporary scene and try to solve the longstanding problem in a way or another. On the other hand Johnson’s poem ‘Di Great Insohreckshan’ is a cry against police brutality and misuse of political power. Benjamin Zephaniah’s can be considered as a development of Johnson’s and Mutabaruka’s works. Zephaniah’s “Dis poetry’ from City Psalms” (1992) marks a shift away from the first wave of anger of dub poets in order to provide a soothing effect through rhythm. “The implications of this healing are evident in Zephaniah’s desire to create poetry, as he puts it in ‘Dis poetry’, which ‘goes to yu / WID LUV’ (13)” (Nerys 112). In “Rapid Rapping” he paid homage to Johnson and Mutabaruka since they paved the way of dub poetry to others.

Linton Kwesi Johnson

In 1963 Linton Kwesi Johnson, born in Chapelton, Jamaica, travelled to London and joined the Black Panther Movement. He wrote many volumes of poetry but his first works were published in Race Today. In 1974, his first volume, Voices of the Living and the Dead, was published. The following year he published Dread Beat An’ Blood. In 1980 Inglan Is A Bitch was published. In 1981 he started his LKJ Records. He released different albums the latest of which is: LKJ-Live in Paris with the Dennis Bovell Dub Band, 2004. He is considered the first black poet whose work was published by Penguin’s Modern Classics series.

A seventeen-year-old boy, LKJ discovery of back literature written by black people had a formative influence on his life (Johnson, “A Conversation with Linton Kewsi Johnson” 36). However, these books were not that accessible. LKJ
had to search for them in bookshops that sell Caribbean/Black literature. Sam Selvon, author of *Lonely Londoners* 1956 and *Moses Ascending* in 1975 encouraged him to read and start from the scratch since his work is original. He was lucky to have attended Caribbean Artists Movement when he was a young poet. In 1982, and as a member of the Race Today, he participated in setting up an International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books where booksellers and publishers from England and all countries took part. That Book Fair, which lasted till 1995, was a “whole cultural movement” (Johnson, “A Conversation” 36).

Johnson’s aim was to write poetry with words that have music in themselves; therefore, his voice would make his words a bass line:

> I wanted to write poetry. … I didn’t want to be a DJ. I wanted to draw upon my Jamaican Heritage, use the everyday language of Jamaican speech. I was also heavily influenced by dub – I wanted my verse, the actual words, to sound like music, to sound like a bass line. So when I was talking, I wanted to use my voice like a talking bass and that’s how I developed my style as well as my poetics. (Johnson, “A Conversation” 38)

Johnson’s scribed poems are based on oral tradition, preferring to choose “phonetical spelling” and to “follow the demands of pronunciation” (McGill 568); therefore, as Mutabaruka, talking about the dub poet, says: It’s not the music that’s pushing the poem, it’s what he’s saying (Doumerc 24; Phillips 257), contrary to what DeCosmo maintains concerning teaching dub poetry at schools as she deems it necessary to provide a recording of the performance along with the printed poem (36). Johnson’s work is very often recognized and categorized as performance poetry bearing the sense that it is not real poetry. He objected to such categorization and never seeks recognition from any literary institution for he insists on doing things on his own without being forcibly and unjustly categorized.

Dub poetry depends in written British Creole where conventional Standard English is modified; hence, representing a great variety of Jamaican and diasporic speech communities. Jamaican Creole is used in oral as well as in written communication. Poets as early as Claude McKay wrote their poems in Jamaican Creole. With the passage of time the use of Jamaican Creole has appeared almost in all aspects of life to the extent that, in 1961, Jamaican Vernacular standardization was much debated highlighting the political implications of orthography which supports identity of creole (Coppola 8-10). It was much debated whether performance poetry was fit for publication or not.
Many attempts had been made in order to homogenize and standardize the spelling of Jamaican Creole (Coppola 11).

Sound and “riddim” representation on the page is one of the most important issues of the textualization of dub poetry. In her paper, “Always a Poem, Once a Book”: Motivations and Strategies for Print Textualizing of Caribbean-Canadian Dub and Performance Poetry”, Susan Gingell considered what Michael Andrew Bucknor offered as answers to the strategies for print textualization, viz., “graphic configuration, aural structure and spatial arrangements” (221) insufficient; therefore, she proposed a complete account of printing strategies used by dub poets in order for the aural performance to be printed:

Providing introductions and other explanatory apparatuses; using contextualizing illustrations and other graphics; exploiting the semantic possibilities of unusual placement of words and letters on the page; privileging sound over verbal semantics; using varying fonts and letter sizes, and employing capitals to script differing voices and sound dynamics; deploying non-alphabetic symbols as semantic resources; making allusions to substantive and stylistic aspects of music and other parts of oral tradition to link the written text to the oral and to guide how the text should be vocalized; and paying careful attention to prosody and using non-standard spelling and code-switching in order to convey the riddims and other phonological dimensions of Caribbean English Creoles and dub itself. (221)

Kamau Brathwaite was considered the forerunner of getting performance poetry printed. However, it was not an easy task since many problems arose so much that using “eye dialect” was a necessity. Absence of Jamaican Creole standardized orthography made writers free to show variations. LKJ did not agree on “authenticity” and “correctness” and “resist the notion of standardized orthography” (Coppola 14). As a political activist, his poetry records historical events such as Notting Hill Carnival disturbance (1976/1977), New Cross Fire and Black People’s March (1981), and Brixton and Toxteth uprising (1981/1985). “Fite Dem Back” and “Sonny’s Lettah” (1979) point us to Johnson’s attempt at subverting Standard English as a means of protest, while poems such as “Di Great Insohreckshan” and “New Craas Massakah” (1983) underscore political aspects in Johnson’s poetry. (Saroukhani 257-258). Therefore, his dialect poetry highlights efforts exerted on subverting linguistic hierarchies and pinpointing political lines supported by these hierarchies (Connel & Sheppard 183). Johnson disapproves of passive thinking such as the
Rastafarian back-to-Africa call and worshipping Selassie; however, he accepts the rest of Rastafarianism (Sarikaya166).

“Five Nights of Bleeding”

“Five Nights of Bleeding”, Johnson’s first published poem (1974) republished in Dread Beat and Blood (1975) and Voices of the Living and the Dead (1983), was dedicated to Leroy Harris, a black victim who was stabbed at a party. The music depends on the diction and syntax of the poem which is an attempt at following Standard English accompanied by a tension between Standard English and Jamaican Creole and Jamaican English, which marks a cultural difference and preserves identity.

In fact, mixing Jamaican Creole with Standard English is an intentional attempt at Standard English spelling subversion. Johnson’s unique system of spelling drags the reader’s attention to what this system implies of resistance and cultural identity, to the creativity and prestige of Jamaican Creole. Non-standard spelling used by British Creole is a strong example of resistance against assimilation in British culture. Of many words that show phonemic and phonetic differences, Coppola quotes, are: “cyan”, “dung”, “taak”, “numbah”, “oppreshan” (15). Johnson has been noticed to show inconsistencies throughout his work. For example, “Forces of Victory”, 1979, was spelt as “Forces of Viktry”, only to be spelt “Forces of Victory” when included in Inglan i a Bitch, 1980. Moreover, the spelling as “vict’ri” occurs throughout the text (Coppola 15).

The opening stanza, which introduces the five nights in the subsequent five stanzas, starts with anaphora of “madness” creating an audio-visual image of violent acts enhanced by the sounds. The /k/ sound in “broke”, “cruelin’” and “cold” gives a sense of smashing, cracking bones and crying of pain. The /s/ sound in “madness”, “bitterness”, “glass”, “nights”, “stabbin’” and “amongs’”, along with the /z/ sound in “heads”, “rebels”, “blas’”, “blades” and “eyes” stress the crescendo of the fight which starts as a hissing sound and develops into deafening buzzing sounds of cries, stabs and smashes. It ends in “it’s war amongst the rebels/Madness…madness…war”, a recurrent motif, a riff that closes almost every stanza underscoring the futility of back-against-black war.

Dioramas of riots are depicted in the five stanzas of the poem, reflecting nightlife in London. Night number one marks the spark of ferocious fighting accompanied by powerful music, referred to in rhythm beating by “the legendary Streatham sound system soprano B” (McNamee), creating a simile of violence likening strong music to street fighters. The aural image portrayed by the intersection of different sounds anticipate the ferocity of the carnage. The /s/ sound in “Brixton”, “soprano”, “sound”, “system”, “spinal” and “start”, which
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creates a hissing illustrating the first signs of fighting, develops into a /d/ sound in words such as “down”, “bad”, “wild” and “madness”, illustrating the readiness of the “rebels” for stabbing and bloodshed.

Commenting on Johnson’s combining music with themes, giving this poem as an example, Andy wood maintains that “LKJ employs aspects of music and musical cultures, along with the street as a location, in his music and poetry, which is full of references to reggae artists, sound systems and record shops, together with quotes from lyrics” (111). Moreover, Such works as “Five Nights of Bleeding” may suggest “an epic sweep of suffering and resistance” (Baugh 269), an apocalyptic image of the black beast, an anti-hegemonic state threatening the system, and a record of black violence colored with blood and rhythm (Bajraktarević 56-58).

The aural image in night number two unexpectedly introduces the carnage. The bustling of drinking people, the sound of music with the rhythm “bubbling” and “back-firing”, “raging” and “rising” create a carefree ambience disturbed by the “cut” of music, the sound of silence was so trenchant as it prepares for the bloody action, for the sound of stabbing by steel blades. The metaphor of blades drinking blood illustrates the bloody scene which is fiercely developed in night number three when suffering is portrayed in heartbreaking sound of a “screaming soul”. The confrontation of the rebels and policemen is depicted in a complex aural image. The sound of the fight created by “pounced”, “a jab an a stab” (Johnson, “Five Nights of Bleeding.” Selected Poems 23: 45), develops into a simile of a cacophony, of notorious sounds of blades being likened to that of a song. This simile develops into another one of blacks’ expression of protest against bitter oppression likened to an act of vomiting a bile, the sound of which illustrates black people’s hatred of oppression and racial practices. This bloody scene culminates into a cry suggested by the wounds of two policemen as a result of the fight. The /sh/ sound followed by /s/ sound in the anaphoric righteous seals the scene with such commandingly approving sounds and underscores the attack on policemen as undoubtedly legal.

The “blues dance” in night number four ends in Leroy bleeding near death. The aural image suggested by “broke glass” “axes”, “blades” and “storm blowing” crystallize a powerful vent of depressed feelings of the rebels. The visual image in “splintering fire” (Johnson, “Five Nights of Bleeding.” Selected Poems 25:55) completes the chaotic scene. Night number five witnesses acts of wrecking vengeance among the rebels, so violent that vengeance is personified as a person walking through the door of the telegraph. The aural image suggested by such a walk, which is “so slow, so smooth/so tight and ripe” (Johnson, “Five Nights of Bleeding.” Selected Poems 26: 65-66), and the caesura suggested by the comma that separates slow and smooth are put in juxtaposition with the
unexpected attack crystallized in the aural image of “smash!/ broke glass, a bottle finds a head” and “crack” (Johnson, “Five Nights of Bleeding.” Selected Poems 26: 66-68). The night ends in a carnage with rebels stabbing each other and bleeding as a result.

“Di Great Insohreckshan”

The poem, which is part of the album Making History (1983), and is republished in Tings an Time (1991), commemorates the 1981 Brixton riots and shows a revolutionary spirit that protests against injustice and oppression, against the “brutally oppressive stop-and-search tactics of the Brixton police”, giving full vent of black people’s anger (Saroukhani 264; Sarikaya 173; Wilson 806). In fact, the poem’s anger and protest represent different ethnicities. It highlights “frustrations and activism of blacks, whites, and Asians alike” (Buettner 365).

The opening lines illustrate the setting and highlight the government’s political failure which causes such social disturbance crystallized through sounds:

it woz in april nineteen eighty wan
doun inna di ghetto af Brixtan
dat di babylan dem cause such a frickshan
dat it bring about a great insohreckshan
an it spread all owevah di naeshan
it woz truly an histarical occayshan

(Johnson, “Di Great Insohreckshan” Tings an Time 43:1-6)

The first stanza’s stretched rhyming sound “an” echoes the ending sound “an” in the last word of the poem’s title “Insohreckshan”, which functions as a tuning fork supported by other examples of /n/ sound dispersed all over the lines in such words as “nineteen”, “wan”, “doun”, “inna”, “babylan” and “bring”. The aural effect of the rhyme raises a question: which has more powerful impact: a poem performed, or a poem scribed? The two opinions have been much debated by supporters of both sides. For Johnson, he prefers to be called a poet whose words create music and whose voice, used as a bass line, complements the musicality of the poem. By so doing the message of the poem, commemorating Brixton riots, is conveyed to the reader/listener.

The riots can be traced back to what was suspected by black people as an arson rather than an accident, later known as the New Cross Fire of 18 January 198, when a house party caught fire and thirteen black people died and twenty six were seriously injured. On March 2, known as the Black Peoples’ Day of
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Action, a peaceful march from New Cross to Hyde Park, protesting the death of black people and demanding justice, was organized but some of the marchers were arrested. The spark of riots was ignited by a rumor that a young black man died while in police custody. As a result, there was a violent clash between 7000 policemen and 5000 young people, white and black. Other main reasons that might have caused the riots are the “sus” law, “swamp 81”, unemployment which was recorded as the second reason (Solomos 138-9), poverty and discrimination.

In Brixton between 6 and 10 April, 1981, one arrest for robbery was recorded from 943 stops with a great number of police targeting black people only, which “cause extra resentment and anger on the streets of Brixton” (Cloake & Tudor 62). Johnson portrays the negative results of the government’s miscalculated measures such as swamp 81:

it woz event af di year
an I wish I ad been dere
wen wi run riot all ovah Brixtan
wen wi mash-up plenty police van
wen wi mash-up di wicked wan plan
wen wi mash-up di Swamp Eighty-wan
fi wha?
fi mek di rulah dem andahstan
dat wi naw tek noh more a dem oppreshan

(Johnson, “Di Great Insohreckshan” Tings an Time 43: 7-15)

Johnson subverts the false image of black people being well-integrated in UK’s social fabric. The antithetical relation between “wi” and “dem” subscribes to the irresolvable problem of “oppreshan”. The anaphora of “mash-up”, whether in these lines or in subsequent ones, stresses the forceful action taken by black people, by “wi”, against racial practices in the hope “di rulah dem understand”. Time and again, sounds play a vital role in conveying the feelings and the message of no more oppression. The /n/sound is so dominant that it prepares for the crescendo of violent acts. The riot was fearful in its expenditure of energy, of souls and property. It was reported that more than 300 people were injured, and the damage caused came to an estimated value of £7.5m (John). This is illustrated by couples of twin acts Johnson has drawn from the rebels’ stories: “di burnin an di lootin/smashin an di grabbing/di vanquish an di victri” (Johnson, “Di Great Insohreckshan” Tings an Time 43: 20-22).

The Brixton riots encompassed other cities such as Leeds, Moss Side in Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool, Bristol, Leicester, Handsworth in
Birmingham, Derby, and Southampton. Margaret Thatcher's policies were blamed as being the direct cause of the riots since many black people suffered from penury. The riots come as a result of black people’s frustration, voicing their anger against racial policies and practices. Johnson shakes the belief in stereotypical images of black people as savages and organized gangs, of saboteurs who care for ransacking and looting. They are depicted as defending themselves against the atrocities of the police who use an iron fist no matter it is legal or not.

well now dem run gaan goh plan countah-ackshan
but di plastic bullit an di waatah cannan
will bring a blam-blam
will bring a blam-blam
nevah mind Scarman
will bring a blam-blam

(Johnson, “Di Great Insohreckshan” Tings an Time 44: 46-51)

The above lines portray an aural image which illustrates the violent counter attack. The anaphora of resounding “bam-bam” highlights bloody acts of killing protesters. Using hoses recalls into mind Bull Connor who curbed a march organized by Martin Luther King in Birmingham in 1963 using police dogs and pressure hoses fiercely. Johnson records the impracticability of Scarman’s report which approves of racial practices so long as it is not *institutional*. Lord Scarman’s report on Brixton’s riots published in November 1981 stressed the fact of racism as part of British life, yet it exculpated the institution of the police from any racial acts. Scarman’s report led to many improvements in building trust between the police and ethnic minorities such as Police Complaints Authority; however, it did not lead to the abolition of “sus” law (Runnymedetrust.org) though Cindi John, a BBC News community affairs reporter, in his article titled “The legacy of the Brixton riots”, saw that Scarman’s report “led to an end to the Sus law”.

The poem outlives Briton riots of 1981 so much that when Tottenham riots took place, after the murder of Mark Duggan by the police, in 2011, Johnson was giving a performance of the poem in Belgium. Commenting on the Tottenham riots, Johnson pointed out that problems have increased since “the days of Di Great Insohreckshan” (Crossley 264). He further relates Tottenham riots to Brixton riots stressing the fact that “It is clear to me that the causes of the riots are racial oppression and racial injustice, as well as class oppression and social injustice” (“Trust between the police and the black community is still broken”).
Conclusion

Even a cursory look at the printed version of “Five Nights of Bleeding” and the version preformed on stage many differences show up. Although the printed poem mostly adheres to Standard English, intervention of Jamaican Creole and Jamaican English cannot be avoided. Words such as “doun” and “soun”, “an”, “yout” and “jus” endorse the tension created because of linguistic mixture which functions both as a subversion of Standard English and a preservation of identity. Johnson’s reading of the poem from a book (Johnson, “Linton Kwesi Johnson - Five Nights of Bleeding” 3:49) asserts that music is essentially created by both carefully choosing his diction and using his voice as a bass line. On the other hand, Johnson’s performance of “Five nights of Bleedings” (Johnson, “Linton Kwesi Johnson - Five Nights of Bleeding (Poet and The Roots)”4: 28) has been a success in conveying the message and attracting audiences; however, it lacks the linguistic tension the scribed poem has. Further, the scribed poem conveys the message to readers alien to the reggae music as well as those familiar to it.

In “Di Great Insohreckshan”, Johnson chose a celebratory tone because, as he maintained “I wanted to capture the mood of exhilaration felt by young people at that time” (“Trust between the police and the black community is still broken”). The mood of exhilaration is conveyed through performance as well as scribal form. Johnson’s reading the poem (Johnson, “Di Great Insohreckshan - Linton Kwesi Johnson - Venezuela 2008” 2:08) stresses the fact that the words and the poet’s voice create effective music enough to attract the audience so much as a performance does. If compared to this reading, the accompanying music of Johnson’s performance (Johnson, “Linton Kwesi Johnson - Di Great Insohreckshan” 4:04) supports the “mood of exhilaration” and fills in the gaps created by the very nature of the performance.

Works Cited


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