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A special issue devoted to
Applied Linguistics and Literature

Guest Editors:
Chan Swee Heng and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya



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Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities

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Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I), 1st Floor, IDEA Tower II, UPM-MTDC Technology Centre
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Tel: +603 8947 1622

E-mail: nayan@upm.my; journal.officer@gmail.com

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Preface

These papers are mainly a collection of paper presentations from the 7th Malaysia International Conference on Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (MICOLLAC), *Research Rigour, Practicality, and Relevance in Current Contexts*, held on July 10-11, 2012. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication and hosted by Universiti Putra Malaysia. The 16 selected papers cover research on two broad domains of language studies, that are, Applied Linguistics/Linguistics and Literature. In line with PERTANIKAJSSH's guidelines, the papers underwent blind review and the final papers were accepted after further editorial comments.

We are grateful for the rigour on the review process and thank the reviewers for graciously consenting to the job, and also to the successful contributors who patiently went through every draft and comment.

This special issue is dedicated to the success of the 7th Malaysia International MICOLLAC Conference and to the outcome of the intellectual endeavour in the form of a journal publication. We owe this success to the full cooperation of the Chief Executive Editor of UPM Journals, Dr. Nayan Kanwal and his able assistant, Miss Erica Kwan Lee Yin. We would also like to thank UPM Press, headed by Puan Kamariah Mohd Saidin, who had a hand in the realization of the publication.

Last but not least, we are indebted to the reviewers — whose names are acknowledged at the back of this issue — for providing their critical and timely feedback.

On a final note, we give thanks to all others who had helped in this publication, especially to Puan Wan Nurfateihah Wan Nawang, who untiringly compiled and managed the Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics papers until final submission for publication.

Chan Swee Heng
Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya
Guest Editors

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Patterning of Interactive Metadiscourse Markers in Result and Discussion Sections of Academic Research Articles across Disciplines

Khedri, M.*, Ebrahimi, S. J. and Chan Swee Heng

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

A generic analysis of research articles can cover a wide variety of issues; among them are rhetorical features. A crucial part of the rhetorical features of research article is the use of metadiscourse that can help to make the text persuasive and acceptable to a discourse community (Hyland, 2005). The underlying principle behind metadiscourse use is the view of writing as socially engaging: in particular metadiscourse reveals the ways writers project themselves into their discourse to declare their perspectives and commitments to the readers. The present paper focuses on interactive metadiscourse markers in the result and discussion sections of academic research articles across four disciplines, namely, English Language Teaching, Civil Engineering, Biology, and Economics to clarify the manner of metadiscourse use among the varied disciplines. Sixteen research article result and discussion sections (4 from each discipline) were sourced from four internationally reputed refereed journals for analysis. Results indicated some cross-disciplinary similarities and differences in the use of interactive metadiscourse markers. Results of this study can be of value especially for novice research article writers who belonged to disciplinary communities focused in the present study so that they get an entry into their own particular research communities.

Keywords: Metadiscourse, interactive metadiscourse markers, genre, academic research articles

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E-mail addresses:

khedri295@yahoo.com (Khedri, M.),

jetco2003@yahoo.co.uk (Ebrahimi, S. J.),

shchan@upm.edu.my (Chan Swee Heng)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

To Swales (1990), a discourse community has the following features: 1) determined and fixed set of common public aims; 2) mechanisms and approaches for its members to communicate with each other;

3) one or more genres in the communicative assertions of its goals; and 4) a threshold level of members with an appropriate degree of relevant content and discursive expertise. Following Swales (1990), the academic community is a typical discourse community, and disciplinary communities can be assumed to be more specific academic discourse communities.

Getting entry into the community can be achieved through defining its particular goals (Bizzell, 1992) and being aware of and competent in its writing practices (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). In the same line of argumentation, Swales (1990) asserts that to write effectively and acceptably, one has to be familiar with genre-based conventions, rhetorical structures, public goals, and requirements set up by a specific disciplinary community. For any discourse community, there are established ways to communicate, which give rise to different genres. The defining characteristic of a genre is the communicative purpose it fulfils. This communicative purpose is reflected in the rhetorical structure or organization of the genre.

Bruce (2005) argues that in the academic discourse community, research articles function as firmly established social genres of communication. They are the manifestations of the various epistemological and social assumptions of disciplinary communities. In support, Bazerman (1988, p. 46) asserts that articles from different disciplines vary in their representations of the subject matter, the audience, and the authors themselves, to the extent that “each text seems to be making

a different kind of move in a different kind of game”. A generic analysis of research articles can cover a wide variety of issues such as rhetorical features. A crucial part of the rhetorical features of research article is shaped by the use of metadiscourse that is used to make the text persuasive and reader-friendly and also help authors to secure acceptance from audiences (Hyland, 2005).

The Notion of Metadiscourse

There are some definitions surrounding the notion of metadiscourse. Williams (1981) takes it as “writing about writing, whatever does not refer to the subject matter being addressed” (p. 212). As defined by Vande Kopple (1985), metadiscourse is “the linguistic element which does not add propositional content, but rather signals the presence of the author in the text” (p. 83). Mauranen (1993, p. 8) and Crismore *et al.* (1993, p. 40) take roughly the same stance referring metadiscourse to linguistic material in the text that goes beyond the propositional content, that add nothing to the subject matter but guide the listener or reader through organizing, interpreting, and as well as evaluating the information mentioned.

However, Hyland (2004) defines metadiscourse as “self-reflective linguistic expressions referring to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined readers of that text” (p. 133). His definition is based on a view of writing as a social and communicative engagement, and in academic contexts, shows the ways writers project themselves into their argumentation

in order to control their interactive intentions and signal their perspectives and commitments (2005, p. 14).

Hyland's (2005) Taxonomy of Metadiscourse

A number of taxonomies on metadiscourse markers have been proposed since initial interest began some decades ago (see Crismore *et al.*, 1993; Vande Kopple, 1985; etc). Many metadiscourse analysts have resorted to the Hallidayan distinction to code their data (Halliday, 1973). Vande Kopple (1985) asserted that the primary or discourse level of writing achieves Halliday's ideational function and the secondary or metadiscourse level fulfils the other two functions, textual and interpersonal. He categorized metadiscourse elements functionally and puts them into two broad categories: textual and interpersonal. Textual metadiscourse refers to the organization of discourse, while interpersonal metadiscourse reflects the writer's stance towards both the content in the text and the potential reader. While adopting the same major textual and interpersonal categories, Crismore *et al.* (1993) however, presented a revised classification system for metadiscourse categories. Hyland (2004, 2005) and Hyland and Tse (2004) suggested another modification for the categorization of metadiscourse which they called an Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse based on which metadiscourse elements are put into two types "interactive" and "interactional". The former helps writers organize propositional content and displays

the extent to which the text is produced based on the readers' demands in mind. They are a result of the writer's assessment regarding the "readers assumed comprehension capacities", "understanding of related text", "the need for interpretive guidance", as well as "the relationship between the writer and reader". These resources consist of **transitions** (e.g., and, but, thus, then, in addition to) that help readers to understand the pragmatic relationships between ideas in the text, including additive, contrastive and consequential steps in the discourse; **frame markers** (e.g., to conclude, my purpose here is to) that indicate text boundaries or elements of schematic text structure, **endophoric markers** (e.g., see figure 1, in section 2, as noted above) that refer to information in other parts of the text and make the additional material available for the readers; **evidentials** (e.g., according to X, Z states) that refer to sources of information from texts other than the current one, and finally **code glosses** (e.g., for example, in other words, namely) that provide more information by restating and rephrasing of ideational content to ensure that the reader can get the writer's preferred interpretation.

Interactional metadiscourse unlike the interpersonal refers to the approaches writers interact with the audience by intruding and commenting on their own argumentation. Here, the writer's also aims to make his/her ideas and perspectives clear and to engage readers, allowing them to give feedback about the unfolding text. The interactional resources include such markers as **hedges**

that reveal the writer's decision to realize the other voices and points of view. Hedges (such as perhaps, about, possible, might) mark the writer's unwillingness to present propositional information categorically, while **boosters** allow writers to close down alternatives and express certainty in what they say (it is clear that, definitely, obviously, etc.), and **attitude markers** indicate the writer's influential, not epistemic, viewpoint and attitude towards propositional content. Through attitude markers the writer conveys his/her personal feelings such as surprise, agreement, importance, obligation, frustration and so on. Attitude markers can be characterized through such lexical choices as in attitude verbs (agree, prefer), sentence adverbs (unfortunately, hopefully), and adjectives (appropriate, remarkable). **Engagement markers** address readers clearly either to attract their attention or engage them as discourse participants in the use of expression like *note that*, *consider*, *you can see that*, etc., and finally, **self-mentions** refer to the extent of author presence through pronouns such as: I, we, our, my, etc. (Hyland, 2005, pp. 49-54).

Many studies have been conducted on the use of metadiscourse (Abdi, 2002; Crismore, *et al.*, 1993; Khedri, *et al.*, 2013; Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2005, 2007; Vande Kopple, 1985; Vazquez & Giner, 2008). Among them, Abdi (2002) analyzed 55 conclusion sections of research articles across two fields of social sciences and natural sciences in order to investigate how writers mapped interpersonal metadiscursive devices in their own discipline-related articles. Harwood (2005) conducted a

qualitative corpus-based study of self-promotional "I" and "we" in academic writing across four disciplines. By analyzing 240 academic research articles in eight disciplines, Hyland (2007) studied code glosses so as to find out how professional academic writers control and manage their discourses for readers through code glossing strategies. Vazquez and Giner (2008) worked on the use of epistemic markers as hedging rhetorical strategies in research articles in English cross-disciplinarily.

Most cross-disciplinary studies on metadiscourse have focused on different disciplines other than those investigated here, different rhetorical sections of research article (henceforth, RA), or they focused on the use of particular types of metadiscourse markers. In the existing literature, studies on metadiscourse in the genre of RA are extremely low. The scarcity is felt greater when it comes to the status of interactive metadiscourse markers, especially in RA and its various rhetorical sections among disciplines. With this scarcity in mind, especially driven by the notion that application and concept of metadiscoural features are variant among disciplines (p. 143), this study aimed to explore the status of interactive metadiscourse markers in academic RAs. The investigation scrutinized how interactive metadiscourse markers were used by RA writers across four various different disciplines. In all, two major research questions below addressed the concern of our study:

- i. What are types of interactive metadiscourse markers mapped in the

- result and discussion sections of RAs written in four selected disciplines?
- ii. Is there a difference across the four disciplines in the manifestation of interactive metadiscourse markers?

METHODOLOGY

Following Grabe (1987) and Paltridge (1996), the corpus selection was based on three criteria; namely, genre, ESP, and text type. In line with Swales (1990), Mauranen (1993), and Connor (1996), who postulate that RAs act as a genre, academic RAs were selected to meet the first criterion. To meet the second, RAs solely from two main fields, hard sciences and soft sciences, were selected. Lastly to fulfil the third criteria, this study was narrowed down and focused on the result and discussion sections of RAs since the persuasive nature of these rhetorical sections is suitable for the identification of metadiscourse elements which carry the interactive function.

Thus, the corpus applied in this study consists of a sample of sixteen academic RA result and discussion sections in four disciplines (4 from each discipline). The four disciplines were selected from two sciences: English Language Teaching (ELT) and Economics (Eco) representing soft sciences, and Biology (Bio) and Civil Engineering (CE) representing hard sciences. All selected articles were published in 2009 or 2010 and sourced from four referred journals published by Universiti Putra Malaysia that serve four identified disciplines: Social Sciences and Humanities, Economics and Management, Tropical and Agricultural

Sciences, and Science and Technology. These journals are indexed in Scopus.

Sixteen RAs in each field of study were taken randomly from the selected journals and they were given to some experts in each discipline to confine that the selected articles do indicate a variety of authors' style and discipline. It is worthy to point out that the selected articles were experimental articles (henceforth, EA) which shaped through Introduction, Method, Result, and Discussion (IMRD) as a pattern of rhetorical development, a widely accepted conventional structure of experimental research papers identified by Swales (1990).

There is a common belief among scholars that metadiscourse is an inborn fuzzy and functional category. Lexicogrammatical features which serve as metadiscourse can be multifunctional and context dependent (Ädel, 2006). Such multifunctionality and context-dependency imply that metadiscursive elements can be considered not strictly as linguistic feature but also as a pragmatic and rhetorical feature. As Hyland (2005) opines, metadiscourse is a relative notion in which textual devices solely act as metadiscourse in concern with another part of the text. What might be regarded as metadiscourse in a particular context may serve the function of propositional information in another. Thus, in analyzing metadiscourse, it is important to clearly identify the strategies applied by writers in creating those elements at specific point in their arguments. In the current research, Hyland's (2005) taxonomy was used to analyse metadiscourse and the researchers

performed a rigorous analysis taking the functional meaning into account. Firstly, all the selected research articles, either those that were obtained directly from the electronic versions of the relevant journals or those which were manually scanned and converted into Rich Text format, were saved on the computer and word count was run on them as well. Next, all articles were traversed in search of metadiscourse markers electronically using MonoConc Pro, a text analysis and concordance programme. Then, all metadiscourse illustrations were carefully analyzed individually and manually based on the context in which they occurred in order to be certain about their functions. Furthermore, in this study, to preclude the threat of unreliability and misinterpretation in the analysis, and to verify the interpretations, the functionality of the interactive metadiscourse markers in a small subset of the corpus, 4 result and discussion sections of RAs (1 from each discipline) were double-checked by an expert in applied linguistics working independently.

RESULTS

According to figures presented in Table 1, the total number of words in the hard disciplines is 485 words more than that of in the soft disciplines. This was unexpected as the researchers premised that the soft disciplines would use more words since Hyland (2005) has remarked that disciplines in soft sciences are more interpretative than [hard] sciences, and as a result argumentations are lengthier compared to

discourses based on the reporting of science that shows more certainty in the procedures applied to create facts. He reached the above conclusion through analyzing the entire rhetorical sections of RA. In this study, the length is not a clear distinguishing determinant of discipline discourse. What might be concluded based on the data is that ELT articles are much longer than Eco articles, and Bio articles are a little longer than the CE articles.

Table 2 illustrates the results of the frequency analysis of interactive metadiscourse markers and their percentages in four disciplines. In the following sections, the distribution of the categories of interactive metadiscourse markers per discipline and across disciplines will be interpreted separately.

Categorical Distribution Per Discipline

According to Table 2, ELT article writers used the most transitions and code glosses in comparison with the other interactive markers, totalling 105 cases or 32.11% and 94 cases or 28.74% respectively. Amongst other the markers, they showed more affinity towards endophoric markers (63 cases or 19.26%) followed by evidentials 46 cases or 14.06%. Regarding frame markers, it was found that ELT article writers employed them infrequently, only 19 cases or 5.81%.

In contrast, Eco writers were more predisposed to use code glossing devices in their academic papers, with a total of 79 cases or 39.69%, followed by transitions which were applied at least twice more than the other three interactive metadiscourse

TABLE 1
Number of words in the result and discussion sections of RAs

	ELT	Eco	Bio	CE
Article 1	2316	1089	1585	1120
Article 2	999	853	1512	1069
Article 3	720	829	915	981
Article 4	706	477	717	575
Total	4741	3248	4729	3745

TABLE 2
Frequency analysis and percentage of each category per discipline

Categories	Soft Science Disciplines				Hard Science Disciplines				Total	
	ELT		Eco		Bio		CE			
	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per	F	Per
Transitions	105	32.11	54	27.13	87	26.52	60	32.25	306	29.42
Frame markers	19	5.81	16	8.04	25	7.62	15	8.06	75	7.21
Endophoric markers	63	19.26	26	13.06	50	15.24	49	26.34	188	18.08
Evidentials	46	14.06	24	12.06	75	22.86	5	2.68	150	14.42
Code glosses	94	28.74	79	39.69	91	27.74	57	30.64	321	30.86
Total	327		199		328		186		1040	

Note: F = Frequency, Per = Percentage

markers (54 cases, or 27.13%). Interestingly, endophoric markers and evidentials were manifested identically in Eco academic RAs, 26 cases (13.06%) and 24 cases (12.06%), respectively. Similar to ELT, frame markers had the lowest frequency in Eco academic RAs (16 tokens or 8.04%).

In the case of Bio, code glosses (91 cases or 27.74%) and transitions (87 cases or 26.52%) were the most used categories of interactive metadiscourse markers. Following code glosses and transitions, evidentials (75 cases or 22.86%) were the third more frequent metadiscoursal features employed by biologists. Compared to endophoric markers (50 cases or 15.24%), they were realized precisely a quarter more.

Frame markers were the least frequently used interactive metadiscourse markers in RAs written by biologists which showed a similarity with ELT.

Finally, findings illustrated that similar to the ELT writers, transitions and code glosses were commonly used with a higher proportion by CE article writers. These two markers were the most frequently used categories with identical occurrences (60 cases or 32.25% for transitions and 57 cases or 30.64% for code glosses), followed by endophoric markers with a total of 49 cases or 26.34% in the CE academic articles. It could be concluded that the leading category in ELT and CE was transitions, while code glosses played a more major role in Eco and

Bio. The least used metadiscourse in ELT, Eco, and Bio was frame markers but not in CE where evidentials were the least used.

Total Categorical Distribution across Disciplines

As results revealed, all interactive metadiscourse markers were used in each discipline with roughly different frequencies across disciplines. Furthermore, by comparing the absolute frequencies as well as their percentages, we could say that code glosses and transitions had the highest occurrence in the corpus [321 cases (30.86%) and 306 cases (29.42%), respectively]. Amongst other markers, endophoric markers (188 cases or 18.08%) were placed in third position, followed by evidentials (150 case or 14.42%), and finally frame markers as the least frequent (75 cases or 7.21%).

Comparing disciplines together, results indicated that transitions and code glosses were the first and second most frequent types of interactive metadiscourse in ELT and CE, whereas in Eco and Bio it was the other way around. In terms of endophoric markers, they were the third most frequent in ELT, Eco, and CE, while in the fourth level in Bio. Although evidentials had the least use in CE texts, they were used more frequently in other disciplines, particularly in Bio.

Such variations can lead to certain conclusions about the specific disciplines. Bio, as a hard discipline, used metadiscourse in a highly similar fashion as ELT, a soft science discipline. Bio and ELT probably

shared the same degree of tentativeness. Thus, Hyland's (1998) claim that metadiscourse is affected by the lack of control of variables in the soft-knowledge fields, making argument more protracted appear not be supported. Similarly, Eco as a soft science discipline did not use more metadiscourse than Bio. Compared to Bio, CE stood out as the hard science discipline that used the least metadiscourse. This speaks for metadiscourse analysis to be more focused on being discipline specific rather than being inclusive, when referring to differences between hard and soft sciences.

DISCUSSION

On one hand, the writers' job is to produce a piece of writing that encodes the meanings and organizes the discourse. On the other, it is the readers' responsibility to decode the preferred meanings intended by writers. It is quite clear that it is a two way process but it seems that the readers' success in going through the text and grasping the flow of information smoothly is somewhat subordinated to writers' profession while creating the text. Among rhetorical structures, interactive metadiscourse markers are devices which can be of help for writers to organize the discourse and produce a more cohesive, reader-friendly, and well-organized text in a way that readers be able to share the flow and rhythm of ideas in the text.

The main purpose of transitions is to assist readers interpret the connections between ideas pragmatically. As quoted by

Hyland (2005), their syntactic coordination and/or subordination are of secondary importance and it is the writer's internal duty to guide readers in understanding and interpreting the logical links between ideas which is of primary value (p. 50). By the use of frame markers, writers try to frame the proposition. To do so, they show explicit additive relations, label text stages, announce discourse goals, or alter topics. The data showed that biologists resorted to this employment highly to equip readers with framing devices. ELT writers also had a strong belief in well-framed texts. It is worthy to point out that RA writers in the other two disciplines, Eco and CE, showed less affinity towards a similar need of metadiscourse use in this aspect in this study.

Endophoric markers are at the readers' disposal for decoding the intended meanings for better comprehension and arguments' support. In order to achieve this, writers refer backward and forward textually. In CE and ELT, article writers were more accentuated to steer readers to get to the preferred meanings by means of endophoric markers. In contrast, these markers were less used by biologists and economists.

The next category, evidentials, signposts references to information external to the texts. Writers normally take advantages of these markers to cite a number of earlier works in order to support their own work and make new findings more acceptable to the discourse community they belong to. This need was more prevalent among biologists. As found in this study, they

tended to compare and contrast their findings to previously found results and used other works to support their argumentations and claims. RA writers in ELT and Eco disciplines (the soft sciences) were positioned very differently with regard to evidentials; while civil engineers (the other hard science) paid the least attention to having to justify their claims in relation to other previous studies. Hyland (2005, pp. 89-90) posits that "it is in research articles that writers exhibit both the relevance and the novelty of their work to colleagues" leading to more evidentials usage. In this study, there appears a marked difference in how this strategy was used by different writers in different disciplines.

In terms of code glosses, authors resort to its use by rephrasing, explaining, or elaborating so as to provide readers with extra information with the aim of becoming more precise and accurate in the decoding of their own intended meaning. The majority of writers in the present research, especially economists and biologists, gave the highest preference to code glossing devices with these tools as one of the two top frequently used markers. This high inclination towards applying such markers signals that in RAs, writers generally tended to predict about their readers' existing knowledge base and saw a need to provide them with information they feel necessary to signpost information by using code glosses.

CONCLUSION

Interactive metadiscourse markers assist writers in organizing propositional content and display the extent to which texts are

produced based on readers' demands in mind. In a nutshell, they are used by writers, as Hyland (2005, p. 50) puts, it to assess "readers' assumed comprehension capacities", and "understanding of related text", and to fulfil "the need for interpretive guidance" as well as to establish "the relationship between the writer and reader".

In the present research, we displayed a cross-disciplinary picture of metadiscourse interaction between writers and readers in academic writing highlighting interactive metadiscourse markers in the academic RA genre. Based on the results, there were some similarities and differences across disciplines. This study analyzed interactive features only in the result and discussion sections of academic RAs. Some scholars believe that the communicative aim of the various rhetorical sections of RA influence the degree of uncertainty, flexibility, writers' involvement, authorial persona, and attitudinal language characterized by different linguistic expressions (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988, Salager-Meyer, 1994). Obviously, it seems necessary to investigate the manifestation of metadiscourse markers, both interactive and interactional, in other rhetorical sections such as introduction, methodology, and conclusion among different fields to achieve more plausible findings. Further precise research must be done in order to accentuate variations or similarities among disciplines. All in all, the results of this study has highlighted differences and similarities in metadiscourse use in four disciplines. Insights enable disciplinary communities to become

more familiar with public and discipline-related goals, norms, and conventions and understand some discourse features that could play an essential role for writers, especially the beginners, to increase their chances of publishing in international leading journals.

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Conjunctive Ties in Conference Proceedings of EFL Persian Graduate Students

Naderi, S.*, Yuen Chee Keong, and Hafizah Latif

School of Language and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of a research on academic writings of Persian scholars in English language with focus on conjunctive ties used in the proceedings of a conference. Basing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004) as theoretical framework, this study investigates conjunctive devices which are one of the main devices of cohesion making in academic writings. Frequency of occurrences of the three categories of conjunctions (Extension, Elaboration, and Enhancement) was investigated and comparisons were made between the two groups of Persian who are studying in Iranian and Malaysian universities at graduate levels. Although there were some variations in the distribution of conjunctives used by the two groups of Persians, they were not distinctively different regarding employment of conjunctive relations in their conference proceedings. In comparison with other ESL/EFL users of English, Persian scholars revealed similarities with small variations that could be traced which are mainly because of their mother tongue backgrounds.

Keywords: Conjunctions, conjunctive cohesion, systemic functional linguistics, academic writing, Persian.

INTRODUCTION

Writing acceptable academic texts in English language that meet expectations of international academic societies as

well as publishers' standards could be challenging for non-native English speakers. Forming cohesive scientific writings is more demanding because interference of mother tongue has serious effects on rhetorical selections of the writers (Trebits 2009; Liu & Braine 2005; Clachar 2003; Zhang, 2000). This is particularly related to the methods of teaching and learning foreign languages which mainly focus on sentence

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E-mail addresses:

snaderi33@yahoo.com (Naderi, S.),
yuenck@ukm.my (Yuen Chee Keong),
hlatif@ukm.my (Hafizah Latif)

* Corresponding author

building since EFL learners show serious problems in creating texts even though their sentences are correctly built (Zhang, 2000). Problems in connecting sentences and writing compositions (i.e., organizational problems) indicate inadequate cohesive devices that Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) believe are developed through conjunctions, references, substitution and ellipsis, and lexical cohesion in discourse. Among these four cohesion ties, conjunctive devices are the focus of this study, since Halliday (1994, p. 337) stresses that substitutions and ellipsis “are more characteristically found in dialogues”. Similarly, Schleppegrell (2004) also confirms priority of conjunctions and references in the structure of schooling language and scientific texts, while other cohesive elements are important in oral discourse. Hence, this research merely concentrates on conjunctive cohesion makers via evaluation of the frequency rates of explicit conjunctions of conference proceedings though the implicit conjunctions are not counted here.

SOME PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON CONJUNCTIONS

Explicit conjunctions, which act as a flexible device serving writers’ comments and ideas as well as readers’ interpretations (Gardezi & Nesi, 2009), have been under investigation especially after Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) influential work *Cohesion in English*. In general, the studies on conjunctions can be divided into two major groups with regard to their objectives; firstly, descriptive research that discuss the use of conjunctive ties in

different nations (namely, Bolton *et al.*, 2002; Gardezi & Nesi, 2009; Green *et al.*, 2000; Hinkel, 2001; Clachar, 2003; Bacha *et al.*, 1980). Some of them focus on a single conjunctive and its role in the performance of language learners such as Klerk’s (2005) research on the use of *actually* by English users of South Africa with Xhosa as their mother tongue, Ogoanah’s (2011) research in *as in* among Nigerian English speakers, and Bao and Wee’s (1998) investigation on the employment of *until* among Singaporean English users. Such studies mainly report variations in the use of conjunctions among the discourse of ESL/EFL learners from different nations. They try to relate the dissimilarities to aspects of the native languages or environmental issues, such as influence of culture or major studies of the subjects.

The other class of conjunctive research compared the level of writing proficiency with the frequency of the conjunctives, such as the works by Jafarpur (1991) and Vahid and Hayati (2011), who correlated writing quality and cohesive devices among Persians, or Liu and Braine (2005) and Zhang (2000) who did similar comparisons in Chinese universities. Here, a brief review of the most related research to the present study that firstly described the conjunctive markers found in academic writings of Persian scholars is presented. Then, some comparisons are made between two groups of Persians to examine the influence of foreign academic environment on the use of conjunctive cohesion of academic writings, particularly that of conference proceedings.

In a research on cohesion markers of academic writings, Hinkel (2001) compared cohesive devices produced in texts by students with five different mother tongues (English, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, and Arabic). By cohesive ties, Hinkel (2001) means phrase-level coordinators, sentence transition, logical semantic conjunctions, demonstrative pronouns, and enumeratives, as well as resultative nouns. Among these cohesive ties, only coordinating phrase conjunctions and logical-semantic conjunctions are related to the present study. His findings show relative similarity in the usage of logical-semantic conjunctions among students of the corpus, while phrase conjunctions have been overused by Arabs but underused by Indonesians. Hinkel (2001, p. 129) mentions Arab students employed coordinating conjunctions in repetitions as well as parallel structures of noun and verb phrases; however, Indonesians used them for “detailed information and elaboration of ideas”.

Bolton *et al.* (2002) investigated 20 essays from students of the University of Hong Kong for connectors. Moreover, they made comparisons between their findings and two other sets of data: a list of British connectors from the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB) as well as another list of connectors that was extracted from published academic writings. Analysis of the list of connectors showed that 19 connectors of the list of published academic writings have never been used by British or Hong Kong students. The study sees overuse of other connectors to compensate

although the overuse among the Hong Kong students (+11.8) is twice as much as the British students (+6.7). Generally, Bolton *et al.* (2002) concludes that the overuse of connectors by the students in their academic writings happens with native English speaker students, as well as non-natives, since the range of the connectors used is much more limited compared to the academic writings by professionals. The authors think the overuse of connectors by students is the result of their limited ability to connect the ideas properly through lexicalization.

Gardezi and Nesi (2009) researched conjunctive relations among academic writings of British and Pakistani students. Their study hypothesized massive overuse of conjunctive ties in academic texts by Pakistani students because of their limited competence in logical relationships as well as their mother tongue interference. Conjunctive ties of this study followed Halliday and Hasan's (1976) four categories of conjunctive relations (Adversative, Causal, Additive, Temporal). Quite unexpectedly in the Pakistani sub-corpus, Causals, Additives, and Adversatives showed very similar frequencies of use, followed by Temporals. In the British sub-corpus, however, Adversatives were the most popular, followed by Causals, Additives and Temporals. Although the Pakistani participants in Gardezi and Nesi's (2009) study knew English as their first language, their selection and usage of conjunctive elements were dissimilar to the British students of the same discipline.

Therefore, the researchers concluded that the use of conjunctive elements is influenced by the discourse of the local academic environment as well as cultural backgrounds because the main objective of the undergraduate writers is to adjust their academic writings to the expectations of their local discourse communities. The researchers related the preference of causal and adversative conjunctives and the neglect of temporal conjunctives to the level of sophistication in university assignments and the features of argumentative texts (the task) that mainly involves facts, views, and opposing ideas. Some features of this research will be discussed later in the discussion part of the present study.

Although Trebits's (2009) research is not on academic language, it is reviewed here since she also confirmed major dissimilarities in the conjunctions used in the European Union (EU) documents and British National Corpus (BNC). Believing that cohesion is a matter of "grammatical dependencies", Trebits (2009) studied a corpus of EU documents in English language (from all subjects: economy, education, law, business, etc.) for conjunctive cohesion in order to describe the EU documents and to arrive at some pedagogical implications. She defined seven categories in her study; Additives, Adversatives, Causals, Temporals, Continuatives, Hypotheticals, and Clarifyings to evaluate both conjunctions and linking sentence adverbials as conjunctive cohesion elements. To begin with, she found the most frequent conjunctions in EU documents to be 94,

which occur 12,197 times in the 200,000 words corpus. The results of her analysis with BNC proved major differences in both the order and categories of the occurred conjunctions.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

As mentioned in the literature review section, research on conjunctive devices either describe the frequency and type of conjunctives of EFL/ESL learners, then compare them with native English speakers, or relate the frequency of conjunctive ties in the writings with the quality of the compositions. This study combines the objectives of previous research on the study of conjunctions. It firstly describes and then compares conjunctive ties of the academic writings of Persian scholars. In the first phase, it describes the general frequency and arrangement of categories of conjunctive ties used in the papers. After that, it compares two groups of texts written by Persian writers from Iranian and Malaysian universities to examine the influence of studying abroad (in Malaysia) on the conjunctive cohesion of the texts written by Persian students of Malaysian universities. Therefore, the present study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the general frequencies of conjunctive ties employed in conference proceedings of Persian participants?
2. What are the frequencies of the categories of conjunctions (Extensions, Elaboration, and Enhancement) based

on Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics?

3. Is there any dissimilarity between Persian students of Malaysian and Iranian universities regarding the use of conjunctive devices?

METHOD

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) of Halliday (1994) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), which describes and interprets sense-making and strategic views of language. Generally, SFL aims to show the potential meaning that a speaker could convey through semantic networks and to indicate the wording and its meaning through lexicogrammar. Halliday (1994) believes users of any language intentionally select their intended meaning in order to reach their communicative aims, so it is important to investigate how individuals make meanings or communicate by the help of language in their social activities. In other words, a series of choices by language users constitute text and consequently, the choices in every text show the special configurations of that particular situation or situational context (e.g. a friendly chat, an academic discourse). Situational context that surrounds acts of verbal behaviour is the focus of studies of registers as well as academic languages, and is presented through three levels of language: field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse that refer to ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning, respectively.

According to systemic functional views, textual meaning (or Mode of discourse) is the symbolic organization of language which refers to what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in the situation or the function of the text in the context, alongside its symbolic organization (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Textual analysis (or Mode of discourse) depends on investigation of lexicogrammatical choices in order to find thematic and cohesion structures of the texts. In SFL approach, cohesion in texts is achieved through conjunctions, references, ellipsis and substitutions, as well as lexical cohesion. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define three categories for conjunctions; which are Elaboration (e.g. *actually, for instance*), Extension (e.g. *and, also*), and Enhancement (e.g. *then, if*). Based on SFL, the present study focuses on conjunctive cohesion of academic texts written by Persian authors who have attended a conference in Malaysia.

Participants

The participants of this study were Persian scholars who presented their experimental proceedings at a conference on Nanotechnology held by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. There were twenty-seven proceedings written by Persians though only twenty-three of them were used as the data of this study. Eleven of these twenty-three proceedings were sent to the conference by the participants from Iranian universities, while twelve other proceedings were written by Persian postgraduate students who were studying

in two of the best universities of Malaysia [National University of Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)]. Therefore, the selected Persian scholars of this study were divided into two groups; the ones who are graduate students in Malaysia with English language as the medium of instruction, and those who are studying in Iranian universities and attended the conference from Iran. Like most studies on academic language, age factor is not controlled among the participants, though all of them have Persian nationality and studied according to Iran's educational system until their undergraduate degrees.

Data

The data of this study, which are formed by the conference proceedings of Persian scholars were not written within a limited time since the scholars had made their papers ready over a period of days or even weeks with ample time to check for any possible linguistic mistakes or errors. All of them presented experimental procedures which were done by the authors and reported in the proceedings with within a word range of 308 to 1792 words. It seems that Persian scholars in Iranian universities had written longer proceedings compared to their peers in Malaysian universities. The proceedings differed in terms of the number of words even within the same group, though the group from Iran had written relatively longer proceedings. While the group from Iran had eleven proceedings in the conference, their total number of words (10229) is slightly higher than the total number of words in

the group from the twelve proceedings of Persians in Malaysian universities (9129). The mean for the number of words also shows this difference between the two groups, i.e. 930 words and 760 words for Iranian and Malaysian universities, respectively.

Procedure

Since many transition words can appear both as prepositions and conjunctions, the conjunctions were counted manually to make sure about their relative/ conjunctive function in the texts. In other words, conjunctive ties in the present study were counted manually because this study is interested in conjunctions that are merely linking clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. According to SFL, these links form the theoretical framework of this study, and conjunctions used in parallel structures or complex verbs are not really related to the cohesion of the texts. Therefore, using software did not lead to more precise and ordered finding as software cannot decide about the function of conjunctive devices and they simply report on the frequencies. For this reason, this study was designed to obtain a relatively small corpus to enable the manual handling and management of the data.

Of particular methodological interest here is the great variation in the method of calculating the frequency of the conjunctions, specifically *and*. Most of the available research in the literature on conjunctions adopts a ratio of occurrence regardless of the functional connection that is made by each

conjunction. Such a method fundamentally contradicts with the aims of this study since most *ands* appear in parallel structures (e.g., *make it reusable and compatible*) rather than connecting clauses. Such structures have nothing to do with the cohesion of the text. Although the number of conjunctions used in the papers of this study is quite high (mostly *and*), only the conjunctions that are related to the cohesion of the papers (connecting two clauses or sentences) were counted. The conjunctions that have been used in parallel structures are not included in the conjunction frequency rates because Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics defines conjunctive cohesion in the context of connecting the clauses (Eggs, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Therefore, the numbers of conjunctions in this study are not comparable with other corpus-based analyses done through the use of software since the results of such research are not sensitive to the function of conjunctive elements in the texts. Corpus-based studies mostly include the conjunctives found in parallel structures in the total number of conjunctions which inflate the data in the final results. Only Gardezi and Nesi (2009) who have counted the intersentential conjunctions have found relatively similar findings that will be discussed later.

Then, the final conjunctive ties are presented according to the classification of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Finally, the frequency of each conjunction was recorded in an excel file for it to be clearly distinguished in the three categories that

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define for conjunctions: Elaboration, Extension, and Enhancement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sixty-two different conjunctions were used in the data gathered 376 times for this study. All three classifications of conjunctions according to Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics existed in these found conjunctions though their distributions were not equal among the three types. While thirty-nine conjunctions belonged to the enhancement class, there were nineteen extension conjunctives and only four elaboration conjunctives. However, the nineteen extension conjunctive elements in the data formed half of the total conjunctions (50%). The enhancement category was the most varied, including thirty-nine different conjunctive ties, and they constituted 48.6% of the clausal and sentential linkers, leaving 1.3% of the total conjunctives in the elaboration category. These results are presented in the table 1.

Extension conjunctions that are used more than the other groups generally could have two purposes; they could be produced for addition of information (*and, also, but*) or variation of information (*on the other hand, on the contrary*). It seems that Persians are used to using these kinds of conjunctions, mostly for addition, since variation conjunctions were used only in seven cases, leaving 181 out of 188 cases for addition type conjunctions (Table 2)

(Thence, tables on the individual class of conjunctives are reported as a percentage of the total number of conjunctives found. Examples shown are those obtained from the data).

Enhancement conjunctives were classified into four main categories by Halliday (1994); temporal (time and sequences), spatial (place), manner (means and comparison), and causal-conditional (referring to causes and conditions). Persian writers of this study used causal-conditional

conjunctives (23.2%) more than the other types – Temporals (14.1%), Manner (8.53%) and Spatial conjunctives (2.4%). Detailed findings are presented in Table 3.

The frequency of the elaboration conjunctives is very low (5 occurrences, 1.3%); hence, their precise sub-classifications according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) is presented in Table 4.

All eleven proceedings by the Persian students/researchers from Iran universities contained both Extension and Enhancement

TABLE 1
Distribution of conjunctives based on SFL

CONJUNCTIONS	Frequency	No. of types	Percentage
Elaboration	5	4	1.3%
Extension	188	19	50%
Enhancement	183	39	48.6%
Total	376	62	100%

TABLE 2
Distribution of Extension conjunctives

Extension Conj.	Sub-types	Frequency/Percentage	Examples
Addition	Positive	146/ 39.2%	<i>and, also, moreover</i>
	Negative	1/ 0.26%	<i>Nor</i>
	Adversative	34/ 9.06%	<i>but, on the other hand</i>
Variation	Replacive	7/ 1.86%	<i>on the contrary</i>
	Subtractive	0	-
	Alternative	0	-
Total		188/ 50%	

TABLE 3
Distribution of Enhancement conjunctives

Enhancement Conj.	Frequency/Percentage	Example
Causal-conditional	89/23.2%	<i>then, if, ...</i>
Temporal	53/14.1%	<i>after, when, ...</i>
Manner	32/8.53%	<i>as, so, thus, ...</i>
Spatial	9/2.4%	<i>where</i>
Total	183/48.6%	

types of conjunctive ties, while Elaboration type (the least frequent) appeared in only two of them (Table 5). Similarly, Extension types appeared in all proceedings of the other group (Persians from Malaysian universities), except for Enhancement that was not used in one paper and Elaboration that was seen in only one proceeding out of twelve (Table 6). Apparently, there is no marked difference regarding the quantity of conjunctive ties between the two groups (Tables 5 and 6).

Comparison of the Two Groups of Persians

Leaving the general description of the data aside, the second objective of this study

was to look for differences between the two groups of Persian scholars; the ones who were doing graduate degrees in Iranian universities and the ones who were studying in Malaysian universities in graduate levels. Differences in the distribution of the conjunctive ties between the two groups of Persians were calculated using the online Rayson’s Log-likelihood Calculator (Rayson, n.d.). This study used the Log-likelihood Calculator because simply measuring the frequencies of the linguistic items is not very valid when the sizes of two sets of data are different. This website has been designed for corpora comparison when two sets of data do not have the same quantity regarding the number of words.

TABLE 4
Distribution of Elaboration conjunctions

Elaboration Conj.	Frequency/Percentage	Examples
Apposition	4/ 1.06%	<i>e.g., for instance,</i>
Clarification	1/ 0.26%	<i>actually</i>
Total	5/ 1.3%	

TABLE 5
Findings of the Persians from Iran’s universities

Proceeding no.	Elaboration	Extension	Enhancement	Total
1	0	5	4	9
2	1	2	3	6
3	3	8	14	25
4	0	5	5	10
5	0	5	1	6
6	0	19	9	28
7	0	7	7	14
8	0	7	7	14
9	0	17	11	28
10	0	12	11	23
11	0	16	4	20
Total	4	103	76	183

TABLE 6
Findings from Persians in Malaysian universities

Proceeding no.	Elaboration	Extension	Enhancement	Total
1	0	7	6	13
2	0	5	15	20
3	0	1	5	6
4	0	1	5	6
5	1	6	7	14
6	0	16	11	27
7	0	4	10	14
8	0	9	8	17
9	0	14	13	27
10	0	3	0	3
11	0	4	5	9
12	0	15	21	36
Total	1	85	106	192

Log-likelihood Calculator uses Dunning's G^2 ratio as a statistical measure to compare the frequencies of a linguistic feature against the total number of words in two different-sized corpora. The higher the G^2 ratio, the more considerable the difference is between the two frequency scores. Rayson interprets G^2 value as significant and meaningful when it is 3.8 or higher at the level of $p < 0.05$ and 6.6 at the level of $p < 0.01$. In the following tables (Tables 7 and 8), relative frequencies calculated indicated occurrence of the linguistic feature per 100 words.

Table 7 shows that the frequencies of Elaboration and Extension types of conjunctive elements are similar in both sets of data, but there is a significant difference in the use of Enhancement conjunctions between the two groups. Persian writers of both Iranian and Malaysian universities employed Extension and Elaboration types of conjunctions similarly in this study, which

is apparent from the low G^2 value of these two classes, whereas Enhancement type is more preferred among the Persian students who are studying in Malaysian universities (G^2 value = 8.97). The G^2 value of the total use of conjunctive elements between the two groups was 2.45, which was lower than the level of significance (3.8) based on Rayson's Log-likelihood Calculator.

The Most Frequent Conjunctions

The most frequently used conjunctive elements and their comparative frequency in the two sets of data are listed in Table 8 (below), in which + is a sign of overuse by the Persians of Malaysian universities in relation to Persians of Iranian universities, whereas – refers to underuse by Persians of Malaysian universities compared to Persians of Iranian universities. A comparison of the occurrence of the most frequent conjunctive ties of Persian writing in this

TABLE 7
Relative frequency and log-likelihood scores

Conjunctions	Iran (10229)	Relative frequency	Malaysia (9129)	Relative frequency	G ² value
Elaboration	4	0.04	1	0.01+	1.60
Extension	103	1.01	85	0.93+	0.29
Enhancement	76	0.74	106	1.16-	8.97
Total	183	1.79	192	2.10-	2.45

TABLE 8
The most frequently identified conjunctive ties

No.	Conjunctive ties	Iran (10229)	Relative frequency	Malaysia (9129)	Relative frequency	Total	G ² Value
1	<i>and</i>	43	0.42	41	0.45-	84	0.09
2	<i>also</i>	24	0.23	8	0.09+	32	6.66
3	<i>then</i>	8	0.08	14	0.15-	22	2.41
4	<i>however</i>	8	0.08	13	0.14-	21	1.84
4	<i>as</i>	10	0.10	11	0.12-	21	0.23
5	<i>after</i>	8	0.08	11	0.12-	19	0.88
6	<i>therefore</i>	8	0.08	4	0.04+	12	0.94
7	<i>While</i>	8	0.08	3	0.03+	11	1.83
8	<i>Thus</i>	6	0.06	4	0.04+	10	0.21
8	<i>But</i>	4	0.04	6	0.07-	10	0.66
8	<i>When</i>	5	0.05	5	0.05-	10	0.03

study with students from the Hong Kong University (Bolton *et al.*, 2002) revealed a 60% similarity, while there was only a 41% similarity between the findings in present study with that of the British students. In the same way, half of the most frequent conjunctive elements in Gardezi and Nesi's (2009) findings did not appear as the most frequent conjunctives used in the present study. The results were also very different when compared with the most frequent conjunctions of academic writings written in English by Chinese students reported by Green *et al.* (2000).

However, in line with some other studies (see Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010; Zhang,

2000), additive conjunctions hit the first position and half of the other conjunctive ties also listed as the most frequent ones (*and*, *also*, *however*, *while*, and *but*. The ties belong to the addition class of Extension (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Other conjunctives (*then*, *as*, *after*, *therefore*, *thus*, and *when*) fall under the Enhancement category. Elaboration conjunctives did not make it to the most frequent list.

According to Halliday (1994), the conjunctive elements play two crucial roles regarding their functional relationship, which combined with expansion increase cohesion between clause complexes (*also*, *however*, *therefore*). They could

also emphasize interdependency between clauses in a clause complex (*and, but, then, while, when, after, as*). *Thus* can appear in both functions, as it could make a text more cohesive when placed in the initial position of the sentence, but it is more interdependent when used within a sentence. Since the G^2 value of most conjunctive elements in the most frequent list in this study (except *also*) is less than 3.8, it can be concluded that the Persians of both groups have employed the conjunctive ties in a similar fashion. So, studying in Malaysian universities has not changed the Persian writers' use of conjunctive cohesion.

ALSO, the Exception

Ten conjunctives that were most frequently used in this study were employed in a relatively similar way in the two groups. However, there is one exception. *Also*, which stands in the second position of the most frequent conjunctive ties, is the only conjunctive element that was used in a very distinctive manner in the two groups, with a G^2 Value of 6.66. Apparently, the Persian students of Iranian universities employed *also* much more fluently and frequently in their writings. It could be assumed that Persians of Malaysian universities did not employ *also* as extensively because they

used other more suitable connectors. The overuse of *also* by Persians supports the findings of Bolton *et al.* (2002), whereby the students of Hong Kong University had also overused *also* quite similarly (relative frequency = 0.43). The Persian students from Malaysian universities used conjunctives in more similar way when compared with native English speakers' academic writing. This comparison is shown in the following table (Table 9).

AND, the Dubious One

Although *and* is the most frequently used conjunction in both groups of this study, its frequency is not comparable with most other studies (see Hinkel 2001; Terbits 2009; Bolton *et al.*, 2002) because of some methodological differences. As it has been explained earlier, *and* in this study is counted only when it is used to connect clauses or sentences, while other research included all *ands* regardless of the functional positions in the text, resulting in the frequency of *and* in those studies to be very high. Gardezi and Nesi (2009) also calculated the frequency of *and*, but only in the initial position of the sentences in their data, leaving out the ones occurring between the clauses. Consequently, the frequency of *and* in their research is much lower than

TABLE 9
Comparison of the findings of also

Academic writings of	This study			Bolton <i>et al.</i> (2002)	
	Iran universities	Malaysian universities	Hong Kong University	UK's native students	Native professionals
<i>ALSO</i>	2.3	0.9	1.56	0.28	0.02

The relative frequency figures of this table indicate occurrences per 100 words.

other research. Even though there are some differences in the method used in the present study and that of Gardezi and Nesi's (2009), the two studies can be compared in the use of reg *and*. As mentioned earlier, the British participants of the research by Gardezi and Nesi (2009) did not use intersentential *and* in their assignments at all, thus, the relative frequency of the intersentential *and* in the Pakistani sub-corpus of their study was 0.32 (per 100 words). The relative frequency of *and* in academic writings of Persian scholars was 0.43 per 100 words, which is not very different from the Pakistani in view of the fact that this frequency is not limited to intersentential usage and includes the case of connecting clauses as well.

Complexes with AND

One interesting point in the results of the present study is the excessive use of *and* + another conjunctive tie as in *and also*, *and thus*, *and then*. Although such linguistic features also occurred in other studies, it seemed that Persians were inclined to its use (overall 14 cases, 3.7%) compared to the other nationalities. In addition, Persian scholars had utilized some complex combinations by adding *and* to another conjunctive element like *and therefore* and *and still* which are not in style of academic texts. In such cases, the added conjunction could be perfectly meaningful without the addition of *and*. It seems that Persians are more used to wanting to confirm the sequence of events or it could be that they added *and* because of L1 interference. The frequency of such complexes in texts

produced by Persians is higher compared to other studies (see Hinkel, 2001; Gardezi & Nesi, 2009). The use of some of them (*and therefore* and *and still*) have not been reported in any other research.

Temporal Conjunctions

In the table reporting the most frequent conjunctive ties (Table 8), there are five elements referring the timing of actions (*then*, *as*, *after*, *while*, *when*) that Halliday and Hasan (1976) call Temporal conjunctions. This finding emphasizes on the nature and objective of the academic texts that need to observe the sequence of events in describing for instance, test processes, method, procedures, as well as experiment clarifications. The Temporal conjunctions play a major role in academic texts, and their frequent use found in the present analysis is reasonable and consistent with Trebits' (2009) findings, in which Temporals ranked the second most frequent after additives. The use of Temporals in academic writings of two groups of Persians of the present research is very similar (G^2 value < 3.8).

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to describe the use of conjunctive cohesion of academic writings of Persian scholars through exploration of the frequency of conjunctive ties in conference proceedings written by Persian scholars in Iran and in Malaysia. A comparison of the use of different conjunctive elements used by the Persians was made based on Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen,

2004). The conjunctive ties found in this analysis were categorized into three types; Extension, Elaboration, and Enhancement, while the similarities and differences were highlighted. The findings of this research emphasize the importance of textual cohesion created by the use of conjunctive elements in academic writings.

However, there is no significant difference regarding the usage of conjunctions (conjunctive cohesion) between Persian students who are studying in Malaysia and their peers who are studying in Iran. Persian students of Malaysia employed more logical relations in their academic writings since 1.78 % of the total number of words written by Persians from Iran universities were formed by conjunctives, while the figure is 2.10 % for the texts by Persian students of Malaysian universities. The G^2 value of 2.45 indicated that the frequency of use of conjunctive ties of the Persian students of Iranian and Malaysian universities is not significant ratio ($LL < 3.8$). Therefore, it could be said that studying in Malaysia at the graduate level within an environment where English is emphasised did not increase the use of conjunctive cohesion of the academic writings of Persian students. It could be deduced that leaving the native country after the first degree and starting graduate studies at an environment where English is the second language does not positively influence writing insofar as conjunctive cohesion of academic writing of EFL learners is concerned. Although the frequency of the conjunctive ties was not exactly equal

in the two groups, the difference in their occurrences was not considerable according to inferential statistics. The data of this study are limited to only conference proceedings. Researching other aspects of cohesion, such as referential and lexical cohesion will enhance the description of cohesion in the academic writing of Persians. The findings can also contribute to the teaching and learning of English for academic purposes.

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Manifestation of Theme as a Point of Departure in the Result and Discussion Section of Academic Research Articles

Syed Foad Ebrahimi* and Chan Swee Heng

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message in a clause. It plays a major role in text organization, enabling a text to be communicated and understood clearly (Halliday, 1994). One issue in research article writing is how the writer deals with this important textual feature. This study did an analysis of theme types used in result and discussion section of research articles using Halliday's (2004) model of thematic organization. The study was carried out on the corpus of 16 result and discussion sections that were sourced from 16 research articles published in UPM journals in 2010 and 2011 from four disciplines, which are English Language Teaching, Economics, Biology, and Civil Engineering (4 from each discipline). The results revealed disciplinary differences in the use of theme across the four disciplines. These differences are supported by the claim that writing in each discipline is shaped by the discipline's own rules and conventions (Hyland, 2009; North, 2005). The results also supported the idea proposed by Gosden (1992) that theme types are important in fulfilling rhetorical functions of research article sections.

Keywords: Genre, research article, result and discussion section, theme

INTRODUCTION

Swales (1990) defines "discourse community" as a social space with experts at the centre and aspiring novices at the

periphery. He argues further stating that discourse communities differed from each other regarding their public goals, methods of communication between community members, and high level expertise. Academic community is a discourse community, within which there are some disciplinary communities that are more specific. As mentioned above, every discourse community may use different

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E-mail addresses:

seyedfoade@yahoo.com (Seyed Foad Ebrahimi),

shchan@upm.edu.my (Chan Swee Heng)

* Corresponding author

methods of communication, which results in different genres (Swales, 1990). Research article (RA) writing, as an important method of communication between disciplinary discourse community members, has received great attention. Many writers from different disciplines suffer from the feelings of exclusion and marginalization mainly because their RAs are rejected and not published in the professional journals of their discipline. Jalilifar (2009) argues that one reason for RAs to be rejected is not meeting the reviewers' criteria at macro structures (rhetorical) or micro structures (linguistic conventions) or both. For macro structures, writers should keep to the rhetorical sections of RA writing, which include introduction, method, result and discussion (IMRD), and for micro structures, they should make correct use of conventional linguistic features that characterize the text. This study will focus on the manifestation of one of the linguistic features using Halliday's (1994) notion of theme, in the rhetorical section of result and discussion of RA.

Halliday (1994, p. 38) defines theme as the element in a particular structural configuration taken as whole, that organizes the clause as a message; this is the configuration of theme and rheme. Based on this definition, a clause is made of two parts theme followed by rheme. Theme is the starting point for the message; it is the ground from which the clause takes off. Theme helps us to know what the clause will be about and what it is going to tell us. He also gives two examples to show the

importance of theme in the meaning of the clause.

1. A halfpenny is the smallest English coin.
2. The smallest English coin is a halfpenny.

In the first sentence, theme is "*a halfpenny*" which means the writer wants to tell us about "*a halfpenny*" but in the second sentence, the theme is "*the smallest English coin*", which means, the writer wants to tell us about "*the smallest English coin*".

Result and discussion sections have great potential for textual investigation. This is because of their important functions and roles in RA writing. Result is a rhetorical section in which researchers: a) present, highlight, and give comments on new findings (Brett, 1994); b) rationalize the employed method, justify the findings, compare, contrast, and elaborate on the similarities as well as the differences of their findings with the earlier reported findings (Swales, 2004); and c) present qualitative and quantitative analysis to provide answers to educational problems. This analysis can be defined "as studying the organized materials from many angles in order to find out inherent facts" (Jalilifar, 2009, p. 65). Discussion section is a rhetorical section in which researchers: a) "seek to establish their importance" (Ruiying & Allison, 2003, p. 366); and b) attempt to pull together or integrate the various parts of the study by summarizing the major findings (Jalilifar, 2009). Some times, result and discussion sections are merged and presented together under the heading of result and discussion

section (Swales, 1990). In this study, result and discussion are merged into one section.

There have been hosts of studies on theme manifestation in RA and its sections during the last decades (Gosden, 1992, 1993; Whittaker, 1995; Ghadessy, 1999; Martinez, 2003; Jalilifar, 2010; Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2011; Chan & Ebrahimi, 2012). In particular, Chan and Ebrahimi (2012), Ebrahimi and Khedri (2012) and Ghadessy (1999) investigated the RA abstracts in terms of thematic choice, focusing on disciplinary differences, while Gosden (1992) studied marked and unmarked themes and their manifestation in different rhetorical sections (IMRD) of RAs. In addition, Whittaker (1995) studied the thematic structure of RAs in two disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Economics. More recently, Jalilifar (2010) analyzed thematic structures applied in ELT RAs published in local and international journals. Martinez (2003) compared and contrasted the used theme types in the method and discussion sections of Biology RAs.

Even though many researchers had examined the theme issue in the RA as well as its sections, in the existing literature, little work has been done to examine the similarities and differences between/among different disciplines regarding theme types. Therefore, this study addresses the issue of thematicity in result and discussion section of RAs among four disciplines; namely, English Language Teaching (ELT), Economics (Eco), Biology (Bio), and Civil Engineering (CE), to find how theme types are dealt with by RA writers in each discipline.

CORPUS

This study was carried out on a corpus of 16 (4 from each discipline) result and discussion sections of RAs taken from four disciplines; namely, ELT, Eco, Bio and CE. These RAs were selected randomly from 2010 and 2011 issues of Journal of Social Science and Humanities, Journal of Science and Technology, Journal of Tropical and Agriculture Science and International Journal of Economics and Management published in Universiti Putra Malaysia and indexed in Scopus.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

In this study, the following instruments were used:

1. Sixteen result and Discussion section were used to find the theme/ rheme structure across four disciplines.
2. Halliday's (2004) model of thematic organization was used for data analysis.

Halliday's (2004) model of thematic organization includes: Topical, Textual, Interpersonal, Simple, Multiple, Marked, and Unmarked patterns. The rationale behind this selection was that this model is the most plausible and updated analytical model compared to other models proposed by Davies (1988), Gosden (1992), Berry (1989) and Downing (1991).

Halliday (2004, p. 68) categorized the elements, which occur in initial position of the clause as follows:

1. **Topical theme** which is presented by a nominal group (e.g., everyone), a prepositional phrase (e.g., with ships

continually at sea) or an adverbial group (e.g., by the middle of 15th century).

2. **Interpersonal theme** which consists of any combination of vocatives (direct addresses such as personal names), modal adjuncts and mood marking elements (finite verbal operator (temporal & modal), WH-interrogatives and imperative).

3. **Textual theme** that includes continuatives (small set of discourse items which signal that a new move is beginning, such as yes, no, oh...), structural elements (coordinates & subordinates) and conjunctive adjuncts which relate the clause to the preceding texts (e.g., in other words).

Following the above classification, Halliday (2004) introduced simple and multiple topical themes, as follows:

1. Simple topical themes always have a topical element.

For example: The dragging problem has also induced some deformation on the railway line.

Topical

2. Multiple topical themes may have the interpersonal and textual themes in addition to topical theme.

For example: and, it comprises of mainly very soft silty clay and very loose silty sand.

Textual Topical

The other categorization made by Halliday (2004) is marked and unmarked

theme. When an element that occupies the theme position of the clause conflates with grammatical subject, this theme is called unmarked theme.

For example: The least important indicator was health conscious.

Unmarked

In marked theme, however, an element other than the subject occupies the theme position, so a condition is created for the appearance of marked theme.

For example: Due to this reason, this model was considered to be acceptable.

Marked

Unit of Analysis

This study adopted t-unit as the basic unit of analysis. The t-unit is defined by Fries (1994) as a clause complex, which contains one main independent clause, together with all the hypotactic clauses, which are dependent on it (p. 318). The rationale behind this selection was that:

Analyzing theme at the level of t-unit rather than the individual clause makes it easier to focus on patterns of thematic development in large amounts of text, and can be justified on the grounds that the thematic structure of a dependent clause is often constrained by the independent clause.

(Fries & Francis, 1992)

Procedure

First, 2010 and 2011 issues of the above mentioned journals were collected. Second, sixteen result and discussion sections of RA four from each discipline were randomly selected. The rationale behind selection of result and discussion section was the difficulty of writing this section for RA writers (Martinez, 2003). Third, the selected result and discussion sections were analyzed based on Halliday's (2004) model of thematic organization. Finally, the frequency of the different types of theme was calculated.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theme Types

The data were analyzed for the frequency of different theme types and the result is illustrated in Table 1. All theme types, with the exception of interpersonal theme in Eco, were manifested in the result and discussion sections of all the four disciplines in focus.

Marked and Unmarked Topical Themes

The gathered data were analyzed for the topical theme types, marked (example 1) and unmarked (example 2). The result showed that the unmarked, compared to the marked theme, was manifested four to five times more. The greater use of the unmarked theme suggests that the topical theme occupied both thematic and subject positions. Theme/subject compliance may be indicative of structural simplicity of texts. This result supports Halliday's (1994) idea that writers mostly prefer placing theme in

the subject position of the clause. He added that the unmarked theme is used in the text if there is no prior context leading up to it, or no positive reason for choosing anything else.

Comparing the four disciplines for the frequency of the marked theme, this theme was applied with different frequencies in different disciplines. ELT with 29% was the highest, and CE with 15% was the lowest, suggesting that CE RA writers, at least in the context of this study, preferred emphasizing the subject as a starting point of their argument. Meanwhile, in the case of the marked theme preference from a functional viewpoint, writers used this theme to put some elements that frequently indicate notions such as validation of internal evidence, location in discourse, time or space, and writer viewpoints into the theme position (Davies, 1988). These elements, often at sentences boundaries, commonly have the function of textual organization, like signalling changes and turning to real world and discourse circumstances (example 3). It is recognition of these internal signals that helps identify the rhetorical moves outlined by Swales (1990) (Gosden, 1992). The small number of the marked themes in CE result and discussion section may be rooted in that the writers, at least in this study, prefer placing theme in the subject position of the clause. This is a simple way of constructing canonical English sentences that follow NP-VP pattern. They must keep in mind, that fronting is a powerful recourse to highlight adverbial or objects and that this fronting acts as a focused manner of

organizing information in the sentence shown below.

1. **In this study**, the number of participants in the high strategy group (n=140) is double than that of the medium strategy group (n=52)
2. **The result** indicates that the parameters are free from offending estimates.
3. **In Figure 3**, WP is plotted against irrigation water.

The result supported earlier findings by Martinez (2003), and Jalilifar (2010). This support could be justified based on genre similarity since Martinez (2003) and Jalilifar (2010) both focused on RA genre.

Textual and Interpersonal Themes

In all the four disciplines, as shown in Table 1, writers displayed greater tendency towards employing the textual theme (example 4) in comparison with the interpersonal theme (example 5) forming a cohesive and factual result and discussion with an impersonal tone. This is in line with Ebrahimi and Khedri's (2011), McCabe's (1999), Ghadessy's (1999) and Whittaker's (1995) findings. Ghadessy (1999) believes that this finding is not surprising since in most texts, there are plenty of conjunctions, coordinators, and subordinators functioning as textual theme. Just like Ghadessy (1999), Whittaker (1995) says that this is quite reasonable, since scientific writing tends to be impersonal and objective and at the same time aims at persuading readers to read (p. 109). Martinez (2003) states that the possible reason behind the low proportion of the

interpersonal theme are twofold: 1) Writers may not be aware that the textual signals could be placed later in the sentence; and 2) When more than one interpersonal theme appears, only one attitude is emphasized; this is not the case with the textual theme. Here, it is possible to find two textual themes; one internal, and the other external. Whittaker (1995) points out that the internal textual theme gives information about the organization or function of the text (e.g. 'and' and 'but', as in example 6), and the external textual theme, expresses logical relations which hold in the world outside the text (e.g., 'thus' and 'then', as in example 7). Martinez (2003) added that the textual theme could also be metaphorical in the same way as the interpersonal theme is. The worthy point was that in all four disciplines, writers mostly used the textual theme to create external relationship or what is noted by Whittaker (1995) to create relationship in the world.

4. The historical records for the 200 year ARI flood are not available. **Therefore**, a comparison with the predicated values could not be done.
5. **In particular**, St-3 recorded the highest number of species.
6. The selected river reach was divided into seven sub-reaches, **and** each sub-reach with a length of 5 km but the last sub-reach was 4.4 km long.
7. Meanwhile, the mean scores of 3.5 and above show high use of strategies. **Thus**, it can be concluded that Iranian post graduates are high strategy users.

Regarding the textual theme, the result indicated disciplinary differences between the four disciplines where the application of this theme fluctuated from 22% in CE to 27% in Bio and Eco. This finding is compatible with that of McCabe's (1999), who found that 23.40% textual theme in English and 23.91% in Spanish History text, and that of Ebrahimi and Khedri's (2011), who found 23% in Applied Linguistics abstracts and 27% in Chemistry abstracts. The finding of this study is in contrast to Jalilifar's (2010) who found 10.05% and 15.29% in ELT local and international journals. The difference between the results of this study with that of Jalilifar (2010) could be rooted in disciplinary difference as he only analyzed ELT RAs. This could well support the idea proposed by North (2005), that academic writing is shaped by its disciplinary background.

The disciplinary difference in findings of this study may suggest that in Eco and Bio result and discussion section, writers resorted to the textual theme by linking each clause to the surrounding text and context (McCabe, 1999). It also shows their ability to take a more authoritative stance in their result and discussion section or to reflect that their results and discussion is a rhetorical process rather than treating it merely as a transparent medium for reporting reality.

While in Bio, ELT and CE, the interpersonal theme made up 7%, 3%, 2% of all themes respectively, this theme was totally put aside in the Eco result and discussion section. Neglecting the interpersonal theme by the Eco writers shows

their preference in presenting and reporting facts or an approach termed by McCabe (1999) as "a mirror of reality" in the result and discussion section. In Bio result and discussion section, where the interpersonal theme were applied more, it seems that these writers used expressions such as *In general*, *As expected*, *Theoretically*, *Basically*, and *Consequently* to reinforce their gained result and emphasize to the readers that their arguments are beyond question (examples 8 & 9) (Hawes & Thomas, 1997).

8. **Basically**, there were only slightly differences in the accumulation and deputation patterns of these two metals.
9. **Theoretically**, there should be no difference in term of thickness as the slab was designed to a target thickness of 70 mm throughout the entire section.

This result is in line with studies conducted by researchers such as Martinez (2003) who found 5% of the interpersonal theme in Bio RAs discussion section, and Jalilifar (2010) who reported a 3.85% presence of the interpersonal theme in result and discussion section of ELT journal. These similarities could be explained in terms of genre similarities. The gained result is at the same time in contrast to studies conducted by Whittaker (1995) and Ghadessy (1995), who reported a higher frequency of interpersonal themes. The difference between the results of this study with Ghadessy's could be justifiable by difference in genre. On the one hand, the difference with Whittaker's (1995) findings suggests that the study undertaken has a

higher degree of impersonality in writing the result and discussion section.

Simple and Multiple Theme

Data analysis declared marked tendency in using simple theme (example 10) in all the four disciplines, supporting the findings by Martinez (2003). In her study of theme in the method and discussion sections of Bio RAs, she found a high percentage of simple themes, 94.9% in method and 78.1% in discussion sections. Finding on simple theme in this study was more than that reported by Jalilifar (2010). This difference could be explained by the impact of disciplinary difference on theme selection as a linguistic recourse. Over-use of simple themes in the result and discussion of the in focus disciplines meant that there were no overt textual and/or interpersonal elements in the majority of the themes. In other words, text continuity did not overtly rely on textual or interpersonal themes in text development and in persuading reader to read.

10. **Table 6** summarizes the mean strategy scores for students of art and science.

Disciplinary difference regarding application of the multiple themes (example 11) was illustrated by the data analysis. On one extreme, the highest application was in Bio, where writers dedicated 32% of the total theme types to this selection, and on the other, the lowest application was in CE, with 24% of the total themes falling under this theme type. This finding yielded results that writers in Bio result and discussion section wrote with greater rhetorical consciousness and this is in contrast to CE result and discussion section, in which writers chose to concentrate directly on establishing knowledge about the subject, rather than synthesizing arguments and analyzing from different sources to support the argument. A greater use of the multiple themes in Bio result and discussion section may propose that in addition to the textual purpose, there is a preference to include the interpersonal theme to the topical theme to create continuity and cohesion between the clauses in the text. The reasons behind the importance of multiple theme from the cohesion perspective are as follows: 1) it may contain more use of overt cohesive elements as writers signal the thematic

TABLE 1
Frequency and percentage of theme types

	Eco (%)	ELT (%)	Bio (%)	CE (%)
Textual	43 (27)	58 (26)	71 (27)	38 (22)
Interpersonal	-	6 (3)	17 (7)	4 (2)
Marked	33 (21)	63 (29)	55 (21)	26 (15)
Unmarked	125 (79)	158 (71)	205 (79)	146 (85)
Simple	115 (73)	158 (72)	176 (68)	130 (76)
Multiple	43 (27)	63 (28)	84 (32)	42 (24)

perspective of the sentence in producing the text (Hasselgard, 2000); 2) it creates overlaps in thematic progression as a means of emphasis in so far as it links a clause to the preceding clause (Hawes & Thomas, 1997); and 3) it is a useful guide to the rhetorical path that the writer has chosen to follow (Bloor & Bloor, 1995).

11. **Meanwhile, the peak value of the tensile stress is 5.7 MPa and the compressive stress is 5.6 MPa, which are located at the dam heel**

Textual Theme Types

The data analysis indicated that in all the four disciplines, conjunctive adjuncts (example 12) were used more than structural forms (example 13) while continuatives were totally put aside. This was in contrast with the findings of McCabe's (1999) study. She found that the most frequent type of textual theme was the structural. Halliday (1994) states that while conjunctive adjunct is that item relates a clause to the preceding text, a structural theme relates a clause to the preceding clause in the same sentence or the same clause complex. A structural theme is similar in meaning to the conjunctive adjunct used but they differ in that, while a conjunctive adjunct sets up a semantic relationship with what precedes, a structural

theme sets up a relationship which is semantic and grammatical simultaneously. A structural theme constructs the two parts into a single unit. Therefore, it is postulated that structural theme could be helpful in aiding comprehending and creating cohesive texts. Therefore, result and discussion section of CE appeared to be more cohesive because structural theme was used more frequently (47%) compared to other disciplines. Continuatives were totally ignored by all the writers of the four disciplines. This can be explained and justified with regard to Halliday's (1994, p. 81) definition. He contends that "continuative is a discourse signaller that shows a new move is beginning in the dialogue or a move to the next point if the same speaker is continuing". Continuative appears to be generally used more as a signaller of spoken discourse rather than written discourse. Table 2 displays the frequency and percentage of textual theme types used in the analyzed result and discussion section.

12. **Therefore, many sand begs** had to be placed at the heading face to stabilize the soil during the removal of the abstractions.
13. The results show that all of the variables under study are cointegrated, **and there** is only one cointegration equation.

TABLE 2
Frequency and percentage of textual theme types

	Eco (%)	ELT (%)	Bio (%)	CE (%)
Structural	10 (23)	13 (22)	21 (30)	18 (47)
Conjunctive Adjunct	33 (77)	45 (78)	50 (70)	20 (53)
Continuative	-	-	-	-

Interpersonal Theme Types

Interestingly, while no interpersonal themes were found in Eco result and discussion section, the other three disciplines only relied on the use of modal adjunct (example 14) and chose not to use other interpersonal theme patterns (see Table 3). Halliday (1994) asserts that modal adjuncts express the speakers' judgment regarding the relevance of the message. The high frequency of modal adjuncts in the corpus was in line with findings gained in Ghadessy's (1995) study on sports reports. He found that the most common interpersonal theme was marked by the modal adjunct.

14. **Interestingly**, the concentration of ammonia was found in a reverse pattern when compared to be concentrations of nitrate and orthophosphate.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed at identifying how themes are used in result and discussion section of RAs written in ELT, Eco, Bio, and CE disciplines. It also aimed at investigating whether the possible differences support that academic writing, in this study, result and discussion section of RA, is shaped by the writers' disciplinary background.

The result showed disciplinary differences concerning the use of theme types. These findings illustrate that the disciplinary rules and conventions may influence the choice of a particular theme type to help the writers to forward the claims or arguments. These findings also indicate that theme is one of the linguistic features which could show the disciplinary differences in the academic genres.

As for pedagogical implications, this study is of great help to RA writers and readers in general, and to non-natives writers and readers in particular. This study shows that themes can help writers to create awareness of text cohesion predominantly in three ways: 1) By using topical theme where the writer represents the propositional content; 2) By employing interpersonal theme, the writer mediates structure, and expresses his or her attitude; and 3) By applying textual theme, the writer can organize the message in the clauses, create texts, and set up a local environment in which the reader can interpret the intended message more easily. The present study can also benefit readers in text comprehension. The readers need to know how different thematic choices are realized in different texts. This knowledge can guide them

TABLE 3
Frequency and percentage of interpersonal theme types

	Eco (%)	ELT (%)	Bio (%)	CE (%)
Modal Adjunct	-	6 (100)	17 (100)	4 (100)
Finite Operator	-	-	-	-
Wh- Interrogative	-	-	-	-
Vocative	-	-	-	-

through the logical path constructed by the writers as they weave through the text to connect the subsequent segments after the theme to forward text cohesion. The theme helps readers in meaning realization driven by choices and purposes of the writers who are often situated in specific disciplines in the context of writing.

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The Use of Reflective Journal in a Postgraduate Research Methodology Course: Student Experiences

Yong Mei Fung* and Tan Bee Hoon

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the research skill development of an intact group of postgraduate (Master of Arts) students in a research methodology course. Data were collected from the students' weekly introspective reflective journals over one semester and a semi-structured interview at the end of the course. Results from the students' reflections revealed the initial high anxiety among novice researchers who had to juggle between learning new concepts and applying the knowledge in practice. Those who looked at the rewards instead of the challenges found their learning processes more meaningful although they also struggled in completing tasks and writing assignments. The students' research skill development culminated in a sense of achievement and satisfaction. The findings from the study contribute to the awareness of the difficulties, the strategies used and the worthwhile learning experiences of novice researchers in acquiring and developing research skills. Suggestions for pedagogy are identified for the use of reflections in the classroom.

Keywords: Reflective journal, reflection, research methodology, metacognitive strategies, graduates

INTRODUCTION

Reflection is a deliberate cognitive activity where learners connect thought, feelings, and experiences related to the learning activity in which they are involved in.

(Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997, p. 2)

One of the ways to increase the value of the learning process and experience is to ask students to keep records through

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E-mail addresses:

yong@upm.edu.my (Yong Mei Fung),

tanbh@upm.edu.my (Tan Bee Hoon)

* Corresponding author

reflective journals (Ong, 2004). Schön (1987) proposes that reflection bridges the gap between theory and practice which in turn changes practice. He distinguishes two types of reflections: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former is sometimes described as 'thinking on our feet'. It involves monitoring and modifying actions in the situation that is unfolding during the learning process. The act of reflecting-on-action refers to evaluating our activities and practice to explain why we acted the way we did.

The benefits of using reflective journal are numerous (Bourner, 2003; Levett-Jones, 2007; McGuinness & Brien, 2007; Ong, 2004). First, reflective journal fosters an active and independent approach for students to take ownership of their own learning process, to make sense of subject matter which is novel to them and to take note of the processes they are engaged in (Ong, 2004). Second, reflection increases the use of higher order thinking skills because students have to develop a deep, personal understanding and awareness of themselves as researchers (McGuinness & Brien, 2007). Third, it helps the teacher as well as the students to monitor their understanding and ability to handle new concepts or knowledge (Ong, 2004). In addition, the teacher can track the changes in the cognitive and metacognitive abilities of their students. Furthermore, reflection can heighten the students' awareness of strategies used to regulate their cognitive processes and to understand their own learning styles and approach (McGuinness

& Brien, 2007). Finally, reflection can also be used as an assessment tool for teachers (Bourner, 2003; McGuinness & Brien, 2007).

Students' reflective journals, thus, provide valuable qualitative data, which may not be available from other sources (Wagner, 1999). Although research has been conducted on the role of reflection on student's writing (Xie *et al.*, 2008; Yang, 2010) or learning experience (Kaur, 2003; McGuinness & Brien, 2007; Ong, 2004), study using reflective journals in obtaining students' learning experiences in research skill development is lacking. Hence, this study is conducted to add to the knowledge of previous research about students' learning processes, particularly in acquiring research skills.

This study is based on constructivist theory. From the constructivist point of view, learners take control over their learning when they move from other-regulation to self-regulation (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, the learners become more independent learners and start regulating their own learning processes. In order to achieve this successfully, students require cognitive and metacognitive knowledge and strategies (Perfect & Schwartz, 2002). Cognitive strategies refer to the strategies that writers use to implement the actual writing actions. Metacognitive strategies are those that writers use to control the writing process consciously. Metacognitive strategies consist of three components: planning, monitoring and evaluating. By using these skills to guide, direct or regulate their own thought process, the learners can

take control over the learning process and select which method of learning works best (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Wenden, 1998). Reflection provides the avenue for learners to think about what they need or want to accomplish and how they go about accomplishing it. By monitoring their own learning processes, students are able to recognise which strategies they are using and whether what they are doing is effective to meet their learning goals.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to obtain insights into the learning experiences of postgraduates when they learn about research. Specifically, the study seeks to gather insights into the novice researchers' trajectory and learning processes through reflective journal entries. In addition, the study aims to tap the students' awareness of their cognitive and metacognitive development. Findings from the study should be able to help research course instructors to incorporate mediation and supportive measures in the instruction, and to improve on the teaching and learning processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach whereby qualitative data collected through students' reflective journals were examined by content analysis. The data collection spanned over one semester (14 weeks).

Participants

The participants were from an intact class of adult learners who were enrolled in a Master degree Research Methods in English Studies course at a public university. Table 1 provides a brief profile of the participants. The actual names of the students have been changed and pseudonyms are used.

There were initially 20 students in the intact class, but one student dropped out in week seven. A majority of the students were Malaysians with the exception of three international students from Iran, Syria and Palestine. Out of the 19 students, two were in their first semester, 11 were in their second semester, and six were in their third semester of their Master degree programme.

The majority of the students opted to do a coursework Master degree, which requires them to submit a research project paper as a prerequisite for graduation, while Jenny and Wendy chose to pursue a Master programme with thesis. As shown in Table 1, all the Malaysian students had taken a research methodology course or a similar course at the undergraduate level whereas the international students had not. Hence, the Malaysian students would have some knowledge about research.

Research Instrument

On the first day of the research methodology course, the nature and the purpose of the study was clearly explained to the students by the instructor cum researcher. The students were asked to participate, on a voluntary basis, in writing weekly reflective journal

TABLE 1
Participants' profile

Name	Year of study	Country	Research knowledge
Jenny	1 st sem	Malaysia	Yes
Najwa	1 st sem	Palestine	No
Ali	2 nd sem	Syria	No
Atikah	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Ayu	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Farah	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Munah	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Shaida	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Shamila	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Sheila	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Yen	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Wani	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Wati	2 nd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Donya	3 rd sem	Iran	No
Annie	3 rd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Hajar	3 rd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Nur	3 rd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Sharon	3 rd sem	Malaysia	Yes
Wendy	3 rd sem	Malaysia	Yes

entries. They were advised to consciously engage in journaling to keep track of their understanding of the subject matter and the development of their research skills. The two main purposes of the reflective journals are: 1) to keep a record of their weekly learning and 2) to reflect honestly about problems or challenges faced, steps and strategies employed to carry out tasks and assignments, as well as their personal concerns and feelings. The students were assured that their participation or non-participation would not in any way affect their relationship with the lecturer. All the students participated in the study.

As an incentive, 10 per cent of the overall course assessment was allocated

for the reflective journals. Instruction for reflection was given every week based on the topics covered in class or activity for that particular week to help students focus on what to write. The students then submitted the reflection the following week and this pattern was followed until the end of the course. The students wrote 13 reflective entries throughout the course. There were two or three students who skipped writing some entries.

The students were also interviewed at the end of the course to elicit information about their awareness of their learning experiences, the strategies they used, what they gained from writing the reflections, and how these awareness were translated

into action when they wrote the research proposal. The semi-structured interview lasted about 20 minutes per individual. The responses from the interview were used to triangulate the reflective journal entries.

The weekly reflective journals and the interviews were then analysed qualitatively to uncover categories that emerged from the content of the individual's reflections. The major categories were then presented in themes and discussed collectively. The reflective journals and interview responses were quoted verbatim in the discussion.

Writing Tasks

The students were assigned a few tasks and three assignments throughout the course. Some of the tasks were done individually while the assignments were done in pairs or in groups of three. The majority of the students worked in pairs except for two groups who worked in trios because of convenience in arranging meetings as they were working in the same place. There were three students who had to do the assignments individually because they could not find a partner to do the same topic. One of them was partnering the student who dropped out of the course halfway and she was left to work on her own.

During the initial few weeks, the students were asked to search for a research topic which was of interest to them. After narrowing down on a topic, they wrote a one-page problem statement. The two tasks were done individually. The students were encouraged to continue the task of searching for relevant literature as much as possible.

The three assignments were: a) critical review of qualitative articles, b) critical review of quantitative articles, and c) a research proposal. For the first assignment on critical review of qualitative articles, each student was asked to select two journal articles relevant to his/ her topic. Initially the students critiqued the articles on their own and later they met up with their group member(s) to synthesise their critiques. The assignment was submitted in week 8. The same process was followed when they did the second critical review of quantitative articles in week 12. The class activities and assignments culminated in the preparation of a research proposal in week 14.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results from the participants' reflective journal entries were categorised and presented in major themes in line with the chronological progression of the course over the semester. Some of the themes, however, may surface in a recursive manner at various stages as learning does not occur in a linear process. The entries were presented verbatim.

Apprehension and Challenges

In the first few weeks of the course, the students were asked to reflect on their experiences of identifying a research topic, doing literature search and writing a one-page statement of problem. The reflections below captured the anxiety and the challenges that some of them went through in completing the tasks.

Like drowning in the deep sea without knowing how to swim. This was how I felt in my first days in Research Methods course. I found myself amid too many tasks to do which made me feel confused not knowing where to start.

(Najwa)

Nailing down a research topic is not an easy matter at all. I am dying thousand times everyday to find one but in vain. It took me 8 hours to write a one-page problem statement assignment.

(Ali)

Najwa and Ali, who are both international students, used metaphors to draw an analogy of their mental struggle. The metaphors “like drowning in the deep sea”, “dying a thousand times”, depicted very strong emotion. Najwa, who joined the course two weeks after it commenced, and Ali, who did not have knowledge about research, chose the metaphors to illustrate their deep sense of anxiety and anguish in fulfilling the tasks and doing research for the first time.

Even students who had taken research methods before also found the tasks very challenging as they struggled to overcome the initial hurdle of finding a topic and writing the statement of problem. The students laboured over the tasks in states of confusion, despair, helplessness, and directionless as described in the reflections below.

No clear idea of what to work on. My head is a complete mess.

(Nur)

I have sit in the library for hours since collecting good material is not an easy task. Now I can start preparing the material and write statement of problem. In front of me I can see many thorns and holes.

(Atikah)

I was into the internet almost 15 hours per day, multitasking, browsing articles after articles but ended up in failure... I was drowning deeper and deeper, not getting help from anyone.

(Shamila)

Guess a person can misplace the screws on their skulls thinking about a topic. I didn't have nightmares but I was the nightmare for everyone else. I bugged every single person I speak to. I spent the entire day, skip lunch to browse for two articles.

(Sheila)

All the students tried to cope with the demands of extensive reading, choosing relevant literature and a topic of interest in their own capacity regardless of the cultural variations between international and local students. Sheila consulted other people for ideas, but ultimately she had to do the tasks on her own. The apprehensive feelings that resonated through the reflections were

legitimate because the students were still at the early stage of learning how to conduct a proper research which includes proper planning, reviewing literature, rigorous process of collecting data, analysing data, reporting and evaluating the research (Creswell, 2008).

Excitement

Despite the overwhelming anxiety and pressure that some students felt in carrying out the initial tasks, there were others who were excited about research. Below are the reflections from the motivated students.

I should have a topic soon so that I can plan my whole semester ahead. A topic will navigate me in the right direction and hopefully keep me sane. Finally got a topic after much searching in the dark. The light is finally showing itself.

(Sharon)

Doing a research is quite interesting because of the benefits we can get to explore something, gain new findings in a certain topic and manage ourselves to be discipline in order to finish the research.

(Wani)

Sharon and Wani viewed the tasks in a positive manner although it was also tough going for them. Sharon knew that the sooner she narrowed down on a topic, the easier it would be to progress. In the interview, she mentioned that she conscientiously

searched for a topic until she found one in order to have a head start. Meanwhile, Wani considered the benefits of doing research in gaining new knowledge and being trained to be disciplined. Some students also acknowledged the difficulty of researching but they purposed in their mind and had the strong determination to understand the concept of research, to put effort in the study, to conduct a useful research and to be resilient. This is evident in Annie's, Farah's, Yen's, and Wendy's reflections.

Experiment knowledge on research and rectify my misunderstanding on various concepts of carrying a research. There are rocks along the way, but it is our choice whether to build a bridge or a wall. I have chosen to build a bridge and I will.

(Annie)

Research need hard work, the struggle and people who involved in research should be consistent with the study. Therefore, no matter what happened, we have to put all our efforts in the study and the piece of work should be appreciated.

(Farah)

The idea of research sounds scary after the first class. Is it really hard? However scary it may sound, I've purpose in my heart that I want to do a research that benefits the society.

(Yen)

*Excited about learning new things...
the word resilient and resolute are
key words for research.*

(Wendy)

By adopting a positive attitude and eagerness to gain new knowledge, these students found learning about research and preparing to write a research proposal less daunting. They chose to concentrate on the reward instead of the hardship of doing research. This positive approach remained with these motivated students throughout the semester as evident in their subsequent reflections and interview responses.

Learning to Critique Literature

The critical reviews of qualitative and quantitative articles were firstly done individually and later the students combined and synthesised their reviews with their partner or group members. They had approximately four weeks to do each review. The students found the first critical review extremely difficult to do since it was the first time for them to critique journal articles. They were asked to reflect on their personal experience of writing the critique to find out what were the challenges faced, steps taken or things that they learned.

*Initially I did not have any opinions
about the articles. But as I read
more and made comparisons, I
began to have ideas and comments
about the articles. Summarising the
journals in a table was very helpful.*

(Yen)

*I do not know how to critique,
since I don't know what are the
design types and methods. Thus, I
have to spend more time on further
reading. I started with reading
about methods. Then I read the
presentation notes of my colleagues
about research methods. I searched
online and have found a great essay
explains other study designs...
google for "how to criticize a
qualitative research".*

(Najwa)

*I learnt a few valuable rules on
critical analysis. 1) to identify
the focus of the assignment. 2)
to identify your point of view. 3)
to consider how you'll persuade
other people of your point of view.
4) to find the proof. 5) to engage
in debate. 6) to structure your
argument. The most important
thing that I learnt was on argument.
Argument here doesn't mean
disagreement or unpleasantness. It
simply means presenting a strong
case to support a point of view.*

(Shamila)

The first challenge for the students to do a critical review was to fully understand what the journal articles were about. The next challenge was to comprehend the research design and methods used before the students could even start to critique. The most difficult challenge was the critique

itself. All the students mentioned in the interview that they had to read the articles two or three times to fully grasp the content. As seen in the reflection, Yen had taken steps to help her carry out the task. After she had read each article, she summarised and categorised the objectives, methods, key findings, and conclusion in a table format. This technique was taught in class to help the students manage their readings and to make comparisons easier. The majority of the students also used this technique to keep record of their readings. Najwa, who did not have a partner to work with, devoted time to find out more about different research methods and how to critique from the class presentations and online sources. Shamila discovered a few rules which helped her in the critical review task and in understanding the real purpose of presenting an argument.

Other students recorded the steps which they consciously took to complete the task. Among the cognitive strategies and the steps they took were making notes and paraphrasing ideas, incorporating salient details, and synthesising. Ali knew that his writing had to be original and he had to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the articles equally. Annie, on the other hand, focused on finding out information about 'need to know now' and 'must investigate further' from the articles to help her critique. She also placed emphasis on synthesising her work. Wati realised that she could not be overly critical when doing the critique because she believed that the authors have their rationale in choosing

a particular methodology. She had to be neutral and avoid biasness. What she learned from the critique was how to overcome the weaknesses in her own study. The task also provided the practice to hone her research skill. Below are the students' reflections.

I was making notes on the margins of the papers and highlighting the points that really needs to be evaluated. I started paraphrasing and discussing the journal in my own way. I did not literally jot down any line from the journal, but my writing was original. After I gave a meaningful brief summary, I evaluated the journals to give the strengths and weaknesses.

(Ali)

I ensured that my critics cover the "need to know now" versus the "must investigate further" aspect of the study. I provided the details and allow the reader to know who, what, where, when, why, and how-about the study. I always relate one study to another, and not just repeat the same things again and again.

(Annie)

I try to be neutral for certain situations, for example when it comes to methodology and data collections parts. On my mind, I just I think it is the writer's freedom to create their own research and she/

he knows what is the best for their research. I realize that from this task, actually I can overcome their weaknesses on my current study. As I write my critical reviews, I also imagine that I actually in process of doing these research.

(Wati)

Working with Peers

The majority of the students liked the opportunity of working with a partner or in a group because group discussion allowed them to see things in wider perspectives and to justify their viewpoints. In addition, group members also provided valuable feedback, clarification and emotional support for each other. Working in pairs or in a group also helped the students to identify the weaknesses in the critique and to improve their own writing.

The debate com dialogues among us brought about a free flow of meaning about the research papers. We had the opportunity to know the different angles that we can view the code-switching phenomena.

(Annie)

I gained loads of information by discussing with my group members. The more we argue, the more ideas came into my mind. We are not passively accepting everything we read or hear, but questioning, evaluating, making judgments and finding connections. It means being

open to other points of view and not being blinded by our own biases.

(Shamila)

Doing critical review with a partner really gives me an extraordinary view as we could discuss, argue, presenting the facts and critics with each other's ideas... we evaluate the articles together, argued in certain parts, asked a lot of 'why' questions. It taught me for not being too rigid and sees things in a straight way because actually other person does not view things as the same as I do.

(Wati)

We can discuss and give feedback to each other from the various perspectives. For examples, if I don't understand about the journal articles, I will ask my partner to clarify my confusion and vice versa. I can kindly ask my partner to review my writing and in the same time I can also help her to review her task. We can help each other especially in improving our writing and content of the journal review.

(Munah)

Having a partner allow me to express what I do not know and it gives me some emotional approval.

(Shaida)

Critically reading the work of another writer enables me myself to become more able to identify, diagnose, and solve some of our writing issues.

(Farah)

The reflections show that the students gained more when working with peers. Almost all who had the opportunity to work with a partner commented in the interview that the experience was beneficial for them, except for Wendy who felt otherwise. In the interview, she voiced that it would be better to do a critical review alone because at the graduate level, students should be able to work independently to develop autonomous learning. Moreover, she felt that when working alone, one would be more careful to attend to details in one's writing. Her reflection also shows her preference for individual work.

I don't think working together is very fruitful because we were just trying to get the assignment done. I think individual critical review will be better because when everyone is doing in groups, we just tend to write ourselves and combine without actually looking at the coherence. Everyone is busy and don't have time to actually sit down to discuss things together.

Cognitive and Metacognitive Development

Cognitive and metacognitive strategies are closely related and dependent upon each other. The former is used to help a person

achieve a particular goal while the latter is used to ensure that the goal has been attained. Sometimes it is difficult to make a clear distinction about both strategies because one follows the other. Metacognitive strategy always follows a cognitive goal. Some cognitive strategies have been discussed in the earlier section. Below are some examples of the metacognitive strategies used by the students in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their actions.

At the initial stage, Nur did not have a clear goal or direction on what to do. As Nur progressed, she started to plan her actions. She realised that to do the critical review, she had to come up with an outline and to think through her framework. This provided the focus on what to say or how to justify her arguments convincingly to the readers. She seemed to be in more control. When Najwa monitored what she had been doing so far, she discovered that in doing the critique, she detected common mistakes which researchers made. She started to avoid plagiarism, include sufficient literature review, and use correct research instruments and analysis in the writing of her research proposal. The followings are Nur's and Najwa's reflections.

I realized that now I am more critical and analytical when deciding on something that are very important such as ability to analyze and critique the journal articles and argue on it. It is essential for me to make an outline and think through the framework before I start writing. I need to think what I

would say, why I say that and why I believe it is true and how to make the argument clear.

(Nur)

The process of criticising is a useful means that enables the researcher to know the most common mistakes other researchers often fall in. I have been more able to avoid some common mistakes like plagiarism, inconsistency, invalidity, unreliability and lack of literature review.

(Najwa)

Wati felt that her awareness of herself as a researcher has deepened. During the interview response, she mentioned that reflection was one way to develop higher order thinking skill because students could learn from experience to solve their problem. By thinking about what she was doing and why she was doing it, had made her learning process more meaningful. This concurred with what she wrote in her reflection.

Metacognition means the awareness and understanding of myself as a thinker. When I hit blind alley, I stop, analyse and reflect... I realised that I have gained an awareness of alternatives to my own processes. I turned out to be a person who has learned to learn.

The evaluation component of metacognitive strategy was also evident. Ayu realised that she had to critically

scrutinise and evaluate journal articles and read additional journals to justify her critique. Hajar found that the critical review task had developed her critical and analytical thinking. When she did a self-assessment, she was aware that she could detect weaknesses and strengths in people's writing and provide feedback more confidently. She also felt that her academic writing had improved. As seen in Ayu's and Hajar's reflections:

I have to evaluate these materials critically - study the details, how far the materials are appropriate, how far the evidence used really proves the points that the writer claims. Extra readings become useful as I can use it to support my arguments when doing the review.

(Ayu)

I forced my brain to think critically and analytically to finish the assignment. Now I feel confident and did not lost in space if I have to encounter another critical review. Furthermore, when someone asked me to check his/her final year project or journal, I can easily spot the lacks, strengths in their work and I can give them opinion of how they can improve their work. My academic writing skill has improved because of those assignments, in helping me gain those hard and difficult yet precious experiences.

(Hajar)

Reflections of Research Trajectory

During week 13, the students were asked to express their views about writing reflections. Nur's reflective journal entry showed the progression in her research trajectory. From a person who felt overwhelmed about research in the beginning, she had become someone who is more knowledgeable about research. Annie, who has always been positive, felt that the course encourages personal responsibility in researching and developing academic writing. The reflection task has also helped Ayu to assess her understanding of the subject matter and her cognitive processes. Munah found that the weekly reflective writing developed her fluency. Below are excerpts from the students' reflections.

Research logs had helped a lot on writing my research proposal step by step. I was able to reflect on what I have learnt and what I was trying to achieve. The exercise also helped me document problems encountered and how would I overcome them. Reflecting my own learning experiences had helped me to become a more active and aware writer.

(Nur)

I believe that critical and creative thinking skills are incorporated in the learning outcomes to enable us solve simple to complex problems, make decisions, and express ourselves creatively in formal and

academic language. The nature of this course which seemed to be of self-learning has integrated the aim of enabling us to take responsibility for our own learning.

(Annie)

The reflection tasks help me know if I understood the lesson or if I should do more on my own or seek additional instruction. By writing the reflection, I can assess my knowledge. I would review what I did or practice more of the same to better understand the subject. I also become aware of my thinking process as I write the task.

(Ayu)

I have become a more advanced thinker. Last time I have to think a lot before I write my logs. It is very short. But now once I get my pen down, I start to write non-stop and it is much longer. Even my housemate says my writing has improved.

(Munah)

CONCLUSION

One of the main goals of the course is to develop autonomous learning where ample opportunities were given to students to discover and construct knowledge on their own. The reflections provided valuable insights into the students' struggles, action plans, and achievements which are useful for a better understanding of how they

independently coped with the pressure, pinpointed strategies that worked for them, and displayed new found awareness.

There are a few suggestions how teachers or practitioners could use reflective journal effectively to enhance the teaching and learning process. Firstly, reflective journaling must be purposeful and focused. Students have to be guided on what to reflect to maintain interest; otherwise, they would find it a chore. The topic provided should be in line with what the students did for the week to enable them to reflect and to assess whether they have learned or have not fully learned new concepts.

Second, based on the weekly entries, teachers should act on the concerns raised by the students as some may be too shy to voice the issues in class. For instance, if there are problems that arise during group work or a particular task is beyond the students' capability, negotiation and solutions can be worked out. By addressing issues early, the course could progress smoothly.

Third, teachers can use students' reflective entries as a gauge to strike a balance between fostering learner autonomy and providing assistance to weaker students. Teachers can allow time for students to work out problem-solution through various strategies before giving help at the appropriate time. This increases students' sense of responsibility and independence as they gain control of their own learning processes.

Fourth, teachers can inform their students that writing reflection enhances the use of metacognitive strategies when

students engage in purposeful thinking of how to reach goals. They will have to monitor and evaluate their performance constantly and plan possible ways to attain the goals. Reflection also pushes students to assess what was done well or what could be improved and to adjust their action strategically. These problem-solving activities can broaden students' critical thinking.

Finally, teachers can remind their students that consistent writing of reflections can improve writing skills. It reduces writer's block and increases fluency in writing. Students can also read one another's reflective entries to find out what their peers experienced. It can act as mutual support to know that others are facing the same challenges or they can emulate the strategies used by others.

In closing, reflection which is regarded as a mental route into one's internal processes can be used to inform and to improve practices in the classroom. Further research can be carried out in different disciplines to add to the pool of knowledge concerning students' learning trajectory in various fields in order to come up with the best practices.

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Promoting Tertiary Level Students' Critical Thinking through the Use of Socratic Questioning on the Blog

Zahra Shahsavar¹, Tan Bee Hoon^{2*}, Yap Ngee Thai² and Bahaman Abu Samah³

¹*Department of English Language, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, 7143914693, Shiraz, Iran*

²*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

³*Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysi*

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, much has been done to improve students' critical thinking in education. This study investigates if applying Socratic questioning on the blog can promote students' critical thinking. It applies a generic model, which associates with three fundamental components. Participants were an intact class of tertiary level students enrolled in an obligatory course. Students practiced Socratic questioning during face-to-face and online sessions. To serve this goal, they were asked to be attentive and share their ideas or questions with other students on the blog. Students' critical thinking ability was assessed using the Cornell Critical Thinking Test before and after they were trained in Socratic questioning. The results showed that the Socratic questioning training had a significant positive change on students' critical thinking ability. If students master the art of Socratic questioning, they can bring it into various courses they take. They can also use it in different discussions they engage in, and apply it not only in raising and asking questions about what is taught, but also in making questions concerning the issues in their daily life in a meaningful way.

Keywords: Blog, critical thinking, Cornell Critical Thinking Test, Socratic questioning

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E-mail addresses:

shahsavarzahra@gmail.com (Zahra Shahsavar),

tanbh@upm.edu.my (Tan Bee Hoon),

ntyap@upm.edu.my (Yap Ngee Thai),

bas@upm.edu.my (Bahaman Abu Samah)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, much has been done to improve students' critical thinking (CT) by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. It is believed that "all which the school can or need do for pupils, as far as their minds are concerned, is to develop their

ability to think” (Sharifah Nor Puteh *et al.*, 2010, p. 87). In the same line, Mahathir Mohamad, the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, said that Malaysian education should focus more on developing critical and creative thinking minds rather than acquiring knowledge that is fleeting in nature. In fact, to optimize students’ CT, they need training in particular skills “to make predictions, propose solutions, create, judge ideas, express opinions, make choices and decisions, and solve everyday life-like problems” (Maria, 2010, p. 111).

In 1979, the Cabinet reviewed different aspects of Malaysian educational system. The report emphasized on the Ministry of Education’s responsibility to review the education curricula for both primary and second schools to develop students’ CT. In this perspective, the Ministry of Education designed two new curriculums called “the Integrated Primary School Curriculum for School Curriculum (KBSR)” and “the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS)” in 1982 and 1988, respectively (Curriculum Development Center, 1989, p. 1).

Later, in 1989, the need for developing college students’ CT was discussed in the ICSS (Rosanani & Moomala, 2007), while official attempts started in 1994 by the Ministry of Education to introduce CT into the educational curriculum in colleges (Rajendran, 2010). After 1998, local universities such as Universiti Putra Malaysia, University Malaya, Universiti Utara Malaysia, and more recently, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris have begun offering

courses on CT at the undergraduate level. They conducted different courses and workshops on training CT skills (Rajendran, 2008); however, the question on how CT should be applied has yet to be investigated (Dhanapal, 2008).

Research shows that using critical questions plays an important role in stimulating students’ cognitive processes such as “self-reflection, revision, social negotiation, and conceptual change of student misconceptions” (Yang *et al.*, 2005, p. 164). To this end, Paul and Elder (2007) refer to Socratic questioning (SQ) as one of the most effective techniques that instructors can apply to guide students in asking thoughtful questions, thus promoting their CT. Although some research studies have investigated the effect of SQ on students’ CT (e.g., Yang *et al.*, 2005; Chin, 2006), there is a lack of research on using SQ on blogs. Therefore, this study aims to investigate if applying SQ on the blog can promote students’ CT. Following this introduction, the paper presents a literature review which includes the role of CT, SQ, and blogs in education. It discusses the framework of study that underlines the research. This is followed by an elaboration on the methodology of the study. It then presents the results and related implications. Finally, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research, as well as conclusions, are presented.

Definitions of CT

A number of definitions of CT emerge from the literature. Cheong and Cheung

(2008) claim that individuals who think critically can ask questions, collect relevant information, search through the information in an efficient and creative way, reason logically from gathered information, and arrive at a valid and truthful conclusion that enables her/him to live and act successfully in the world. In fact, CT refers to examining a statement by considering its assumptions, supportive evidence accuracy, and logical reasoning to come to a reliable conclusion (Paul, 2003). In the context of this study, we focused on the pedagogical aspect of CT, in which it is applied to analyze information, identify reasons, and judge the quality of an argument to draw logical conclusions by students (Woo & Wang, 2009).

SQ and CT

King (1995) believes that SQ is the heart of CT because "the level of thinking that occurs is influenced by the level of questions we ask" (p. 13). Through SQ, students can really think and learn (Paul & Elder, 2007), as their levels of thinking are reflected by the type and level of questions they ask or answer (Teo, 2009). This idea implies that CT and SQ have a unique common end which may lead to demonstration of self-disciplined thinking. It means that the CT perspective offers a considerable, accurate, and deep understanding of SQ. On the one hand, CT offers the conceptual tools to show how an individual mind functions in terms of meaning and truth. On the other hand, SQ applies those conceptual tools in framing vital questions to pursue the functions of the mind (Teo, 2009). This claim enhances

the understanding that central to CT are thoughtful questions that invoke individuals' higher level of thinking (Yang *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, instigating critical questions from students tends to be more important in stimulating their minds than suggesting provocative questions to them (Seiferth, 1997; Yang *et al.*, 2005; Cheong & Cheung, 2008; Teo, 2009).

Research has supported that using SQ can foster students' CT (e.g., Yang *et al.*, 2005; Teo, 2009;), but to practice SQ in face-to-face classrooms, instructors often face difficulties, which include large class size and limited contact time with students (Mandernach, 2006). To overcome these barriers, advanced technology has produced a wide range of online tools such as blogs to help instructors promote students' CT (Tan & Shahsavar, 2011).

Blogs

Research shows that blogs have been used in various ways in a learning environment. For example, they allow students to interact with each other (Tu *et al.*, 2007), to share information and to collaborate with one another anywhere and anytime (Johnson, 2004). Blogs not only induce students to think critically (Wang & Woo, 2010) but also provide a good chance for instructors to apply different strategies and techniques in their instruction. From this perspective, blogging as an act of bloggers' communication on blogs has been used to facilitate students' collaboration and expand their learning beyond the classroom environment (Blackstone *et al.*, 2007).

Wong *et al.* (2009) argue that blogging can assist students in enhancing their written communication skills, self-reflection, sharing and transferring knowledge and experience, encouraging personal reflections, and evaluating their performance. All the above advantages suggest that blogs have many positive features that can be applied as educational tools to facilitate students' learning particularly in promoting their CT (e.g., Oravec, 2002; Davi *et al.*, 2007; Woo & Wang, 2009; Shahsavari & Tan, 2010).

In spite of the benefits of using blogs in education, some difficulties which may hinder the development of CT among students are found in using blogs in classrooms. For instance, due to the asynchronous feature of blogs, *sometimes gap* exists between blogging activities such as posting and receiving comments. Another concern is that other Web pages may distract students' attention away from their blogging (Online Education Blog, 2011). Considering all these factors, this study aims to investigate if applying SQ on the blog can promote students' CT.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study is based on constructivist and connectivist learning theories, and the generic PST (pedagogy, social interaction, and technology) model developed by Wang (2008). In the following sections, the learning theories and the description of the PST model are elaborated.

Learning Theories

Constructivists believe that learners gain knowledge by directing their own learning (Mergel, 1998). In this theory, learners are not empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. They are active learners who are trying to create meaning. One of the most considerable instructional principles driven from this theory is designing a learning environment to support and challenge learners' thinking (Savery & Duffy, 1996). The foregoing principles generally support the design of this study.

However, like behaviorism and cognitivism, constructivism learning theory only addresses learning that occurs inside individuals and it does not address learning that happens outside of individuals like storing and manipulating learning by technology such as blogs. As a result, in this study, sticking to constructivist learning theory alone does not seem sufficient to distinguish the effects of SQ on the blog. There is a need for another theory such as connectivism learning theory to give insight into learning skills and tasks required for learners in order to excel in a digital age (Siemens, 2012).

According to Siemens (2012), connectivists believe that information and knowledge exist not only in human brains, but also in electronic networks that are persistently moving and being organized. As a result, networking is essential for learners to expand, grow, react, and adapt their personal learning through technology, as well as their individual learning.

The PST Model

As noted earlier, in addition to the constructivist and connectivist learning theories, this study was guided by the PST model developed by Wang (2008). This model is based on the theory of affordance in education, which was first introduced by James Gibson (1977). According to Gibson, affordance shows the interaction between the learner and the technology (Gibson, 1977), which provides an opportunity for action based on a perception of all ways that a technology can be used (Norman, 1988). In fact, affordance makes a connection between knowing technology and using technology (Wallace, 2004).

The PST model is designed to determine if learning occurs effectively in the design of a learning environment (Bower, 2008). According to Wang (2009) content, pedagogy, social interaction, and technology are four elements associated with the model. Following the PST model, all elements except the content are explicitly presented in the framework (see Fig.1).

Content refers to any “subject topics, concepts, theories, ideas, or organizational frameworks” used to support students’ learning (Wang, 2009, p. 5). The pedagogical affordances show how a particular learning activity could probably be enacted in a given educational context (Wang, 2009; Wang & Woo, 2008). The social affordances refer to learners’ interactions and perception of a learning environment in applying any ICT tools (Kreijns *et al.*, 2002). The technological affordances show an ICT tool’s usability. It indicates if any technological tool allows for the accomplishment of a set of tasks efficiently and effectively to satisfy users in a learning environment. Within this model, pedagogical and social affordances are the main factors that influence learning effectively, while technological affordances show the extent of pedagogical and social affordances in using any ICT tool (Wang, 2009). Therefore, without technological affordances, any ICT tools would be at risk of being useless (Wang & Woo, 2008).

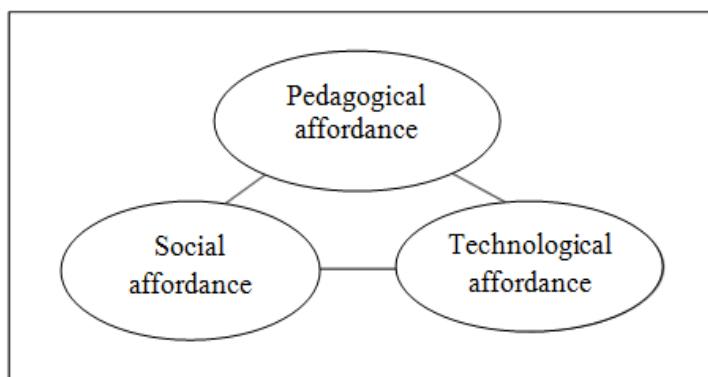


Fig.1: The PST model (extracted from Wang, 2009, p. 16)

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Fig.2 presents the conceptual framework applied in the study. Content refers to constructivist and connectivist learning theories, and Socratic discussions that support students’ learning. Pedagogy affordance shows how the SQ training is applied in the study. In this perspective, students are expected to apply SQ in their blog comments. Social affordance reveals the reciprocal relationship among students and students and an instructor. Technology affordance reveals students’ blog activities based on their own interpretations of the blog. In this perspective, the blog would be considered as a useful Web 2.0 tool if students could promote their CT skills after they had been trained in SQ; otherwise, the instructor should consider adopting another Web 2.0 tool.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were an intact class of tertiary level students enrolled for an obligatory

course of an undergraduate programme. In this study, the course name is not revealed to protect the identity of the participants. They were 40 tertiary level students aged between 20 and 25. One of the students was absent from the SQ training. The students were from three ethnic origins, namely, Malay, Chinese, and Indian. All had English as their second language. Ninety two percent had personal computers and 50% had home or student’s dorm Internet access. Most students were familiar with blogs. Students’ display names on the blog were changed to allow them to communicate freely in blog activities and protect their identities.

Procedure

The course ran for 14 weeks and was conducted twice a week. The blog was set up by the instructor at www.blogger.com. Students practiced SQ during face-to-face and online sessions.

All the face-to-face sessions were conducted in a computer lab. Each session lasted for 60 minutes. During the first face-to-face session, after registration on

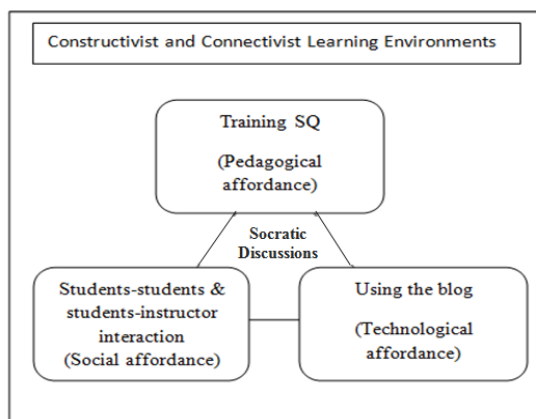


Fig.2: The conceptual framework of the study

the blog, all bloggers were given hands-on practice on basic blogging skills such as posting or giving comments to each other's posts.

Before the SQ training, various types of Socratic questions were distributed to students (see Appendix). To overcome the problems of large class size and also to encourage effective interaction among students in face-to-face sessions, they were divided into three or five members in groups of their own choosing. To take part attentively in each SQ discussion on the blog, the students were allowed to *consult* various types of Socratic questions with other group members. They were also asked to be attentive, think well, and share their ideas with their group mates before responding to group members' ideas or questions. In each group, one of the students was to post the blog comments.

To train SQ method, the instructor started the discussion by posting a statement on the blog. Following the SQ method, the instructor's statement was replied by students' blog comments through asking series of questions and pursuing answers.

The same procedure was carried out in online sessions, except that in these sessions, students took part in each discussion

individually and independently outside the computer lab. Fig.3 shows a sample of students' Socratic discussion on the blog.

During Socratic discussions, the instructor played the role of a facilitator to lead students' questions and answers to a reasonable conclusion. All discussion topics were selected from Paul and Elder (2007) (e.g., Thinking through the Concept of Friend). Topics gave students experience in clarifying, sorting, analyzing, and evaluating their thoughts to distinguish known from unknown (Paul & Elder, 2007).

Instrument

In this study, the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) Level X developed by Ennis and Millman (2005) was applied to detect students' CT ability before and after training in SQ. It contains 76 questions in which five questions are sample questions and the rest are test questions. In this study, 50 sets of the CCTT were purchased from the CT Website (www.criticalthinking.com/series/055/index_c.jsp) at a cost of US\$ 150 which was paid by a research grant. Forty sets were used in this study. The test items are not appended because of copyright reasons. According to Ennis *et al.* (2004), students' CT scores can be measured in two

I: How do you know someone is your real friend?
S1: Someone who stands by you when you really need him/her... when you face with problems.
S2: What do you mean by problems?
S3: To me it is not that important to have a real friend.
S2: @ S3, why isn't it important to have a friend? Can you give us any reasons?
S4: @ S3, I think we can't live without our friends. We need their support.
S5: @ S4 Agree! True friends are always support us through the bad times as well as the good.

Note. I=instructor, S=student

Fig.3: An example of practicing students' Socratic discussion on the blog

ways: using the total right scores, where only the correct answers are counted, or using the formula total right scores minus one-half of the wrong scores. In order to avoid students' making wild guesses, the second method was applied in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To investigate if applying SQ on the blog can enhance students' CT ability, we examined students' pre-test and post-test scores in the CCTT-X test before and after the SQ training, respectively. To do so, we run a paired sample *t*-test by using *SPSS*. A paired sample *t*-test succeeded to reveal a statistically reliable difference between the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 19.83$; $SD = 9.66$) and the post-test ($M = 27.26$; $SD = 14.02$), where the students had $t(38) = -4.83$, $p(\text{sig}) = .00$, $\alpha = 0.05$. The result also showed that using SQ caused the a significant increase in the students' CT ability.

An implication of this finding is that deep questions such as Socratic questions help students become independent and reach CT in their destination as good thinkers (Paul & Elder, 2007). The result seems to be consistent with other studies which found that using SQ can promote students' CT and also produce high level of thinking among students (Chua, 2004; Chin, 2006; Teo, 2009).

Besides, assessing students' CT ability before and after training, SQ also indicates that practicing SQ on blogs allows all students equal chance and enough time to think. Blogs help students not only to

come up with provocative questions and answers by surfing on the Net but also to find reasonable answers and novel materials to justify their answers. This view is supported by the notion that using blogs can foster students' CT (Wang & Woo, 2010) and give all students an equal chance to ask deep questions (Tan & Shahsavari, 2011).

The finding supports Huit's idea (1998) that since CT is a complicated activity, it does not seem logical to expect that any CT skill training is sufficient to ensure students' CT. Hence, teachers must have the competency in selecting different CT skills. In this study, a highly significant increase in the students' CT after they have practiced SQ may imply that firstly, applying SQ have the potential to promote students' CT by giving students more time to think and reflect on their own learning (Paul & Elder, 2007). Secondly, Web 2.0 tools can be used to practice SQ and promote students' CT (Yang *et al.*, 2005). Thirdly, to maximize the effectiveness of SQ training, students must participate in pre-planned discussions guided by a teacher (Paul & Elder, 2007). Therefore, to expand students' understanding through SQ, a systematic step-by-step process is required to improve and guide students' thinking to ask thoughtful questions (Chin, 2006).

Moreover, the application of the PST model can support three fundamental aspects of acquiring CT skills. The pedagogical affordance supports the effectiveness of practicing SQ in promoting students' CT. The social affordance supports the efficacy of the course in promoting students' social interaction. In addition, a technological

affordance supports the effectiveness of using blogs in promoting students' CT in a learning environment. Obviously, without using blogs, the two other affordances, the training SQ and students' interaction were meaningless.

LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted with tertiary level students; a similar study could be carried out with students at other learning levels. In addition to using SQ, some other factors such as student's personality, cognitive style, age, and gender may affect students' CT. Moreover, this study did not investigate if the SQ training had any significant effect on asking thoughtful questions in students' blog comments. This research is currently underway and the preliminary results are satisfactory.

CONCLUSION

The current study shows that applying SQ on the blog can promote tertiary level students' CT. If teachers feed students by asking questions, it would, metaphorically, be like jumping continually on the brakes in a car which is already switched off. Students require the skill of asking critical questions, which turns their intellectual engines on and reaches CT in their destination. In fact, if students master the art of SQ, they can bring it into various courses they take. They can also use it in different discussions they engage in and apply it not only in raising and asking questions about what is taught, but also in making questions concerning the issues in their daily life in a meaningful way.

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APPENDIX

Taxonomy of Socratic questions

#	Question Category	Examples
1	Questions that seek clarification	
	<i>Explaining</i>	Can you explain that...?
	<i>Defining</i>	What do you mean by...?
	<i>Giving Examples</i>	Can you give me an example of...?
	<i>Supporting</i>	How does that help...?
2	Questions that probe reasons and evidence.	
	<i>Forming argument</i>	Why do you think that...?
	<i>Assumptions</i>	How do we know that...?
	<i>Reason</i>	What are your reasons...?
	<i>Evidence</i>	Do you have evidence...?
3	Questions that explore alternative views.	
	<i>Re-stating a view</i>	Can you put it another way...?
	<i>Speculation</i>	Is there another point of view...?
	<i>Alternative views</i>	What if someone were to suggest that...?
	<i>Counter argument</i>	What would someone who disagreed with you say...?
4	Questions that test implications and consequences.	
	<i>Implications</i>	What follows from what you say...?
	<i>Consistency</i>	Does that fit with what we said earlier...?
	<i>Consequences</i>	What would be the consequences of that...?
	<i>Generalising rules</i>	Is there a general rule for that...?
5	Questions about the question/discussion.	
	<i>Questioning</i>	How could you test to see if it were true...?
	<i>Analysing</i>	Do you have a question about that...?
	<i>Connecting</i>	What kind of question is it...?
	<i>Summarising</i>	How what does was said help us...?
	<i>Coming to conclusions</i>	Who can summarize so far...? Are we any closer to answering the question...?

Fisher's (1998)

APPENDIX (continue)

Rhodes' questions	1	Informational questions	How does it work?
	2	Interpretive questions	What do you mean by that?
	3	Explanatory questions	What is the reason for that?
	4	Procedural questions	How is that done?
	5	Relational questions	How do these compare or contrast?
	6	Verificational questions	What are the facts to support it?
	7	Heuristic questions	What could we find out?
	8	Evaluational questions	What difference does it make?
Chin's Taxonomy	1	Pumping	"Right", "Uh-huh", and "Ok"
	2	Reflective toss	S1, "I think ..." T, "Any suggestions to her answer?" S2, "Yes, ..."
	3	Constructive challenge	How to find the density of one's body?
Elements of Thoughts	1	Questioning goals and purposes	What was your purpose when you made that comment?
	2	Questioning questions	What question you are raising. Could you explain it?
	3	Questions information, data, and experience	On what information are you basing that comment?
	4	Questioning inferences and conclusions	How did you reach that conclusion?
	5	Questioning concepts and ideas	Are we using the appropriate concepts?
	6	Questioning assumptions	What exactly are you taking for granted here?
	7	Questioning implications and consequences	Are you implying that...?
	8	Questioning viewpoints and perspectives.	From what point of view are you looking at this?
Universal intellectual standards	1	Clarity	Could you elaborate further on that point?
	2	Accuracy	How could we find out if that is true?
	3	Precision	Could you be more specific?
	4	Relevance	How is that connected to the question?
	5	Depth	What are some of the complexities of this question?
	6	Breadth	Do we need to consider another point of view?
	7	Logic	Does all this make sense together?
	8	Significant	Is this the central idea to focus on?
	9	Fairness	Do I have any vested interest in this issue?

Sources: Fisher (1998, pp. 7-10); Wenning and Holbrook (2006, p. 11); Chin (2007, pp. 824-825); Paul and Elder (2007, p. 5 & 9)



Animal Metaphors in Malay with Semantic Derogation

Sabariah, M. R.* and Nurul Nadia, M.

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Zoosemy, or what is understood in the current semantic literature as the use of animal names to denote human qualities or animal metaphors, has been the subject of investigation in various languages and cultures such as English, Spanish, Hungarian and Chinese. Studies focusing on this topic have examined the role of conceptual dimension relating to APPEARANCE/PHYSICAL/CHARACTERISTIC in the process of zoosemic extension in different languages. This study examined the use of animal metaphors in Malay. Data on Malay animal metaphors were extracted from various databases, namely the electronic database on Malay *peribahasa* and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malay corpus. The analysis of the data focused on how domesticated animals such as cow, goat and donkey are manifested in the respective figurative expressions, i.e., what information or aspects are encoded in the source domain in the conveyance of specific meanings in the target domain of the expressions, as well as whether they have positive or negative evaluations. Findings of the analysis revealed that the behavioural characteristics, as well as the appearance of the domesticated animals, are a common source domain of animal metaphors in Malay. The general conceptual dimension of BEHAVIOUR/APPEARANCE and other specific aspects related to the domesticated Malay animals motivate the intended meaning of the expressions. The findings also illustrate that the use of domesticated animals in the Malay figurative expressions is also often negative, in that they are often employed in a derogatory sense. These findings are in line with those found in the analysis of animal metaphors in other languages, which suggest cultural universality in the conceptual mechanism of zoosemy.

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E-mail addresses:

smrashid@upm.edu.my (Sabariah, M. R.),

nad286@yahoo.com (Nurul Nadia, M.)

* Corresponding author

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INTRODUCTION

Animal metaphors are ubiquitous in languages of the world. This is evident in the use of animals in conventional expressions of many languages worldwide such as in English ('black sheep') and in Malay *hati binatang* (liver animal). Kövecses (2002), for instance, asserts that a substantial part of human behaviour seems to be metaphorically understood in terms of animal behaviour, which leads to the conceptualisation of 'PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS' metaphors that underlie various daily expressions. In this light, it has been emphasised that the cultural meaning of animal words is triggered by the cognitive mechanism of human beings or what has been called the cognitive model, or sometimes referred to as the cultural model (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Through direct experience and frequent contact with animals, human beings have recognised the categorical attributes of animals. As a result, via cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor or metonymy, these attributes of the animal are mapped onto other abstract elements or concepts because of their relevance or similarity. The metaphorical meaning conveyed by the mapping is gradually established through frequent association and become conventionalized, conceptualized and lexicalized.

The use of animals in such expressions has intrigued scholars from various disciplines such as linguistics and anthropology as to why and how animal-related words have acquired the meaning

¹Small caps are used to indicate concepts and conceptual metaphors.

they have now, as well as the variation in meaning and connotation or evaluation in different languages and cultures. This has led to a culmination of research which focused on the examination of animal metaphors in different languages within the cognitive linguistic and semantic paradigms.

In relation to that, the use of animal metaphors is often associated with semantic derogation, understood as the use of a word to convey negative connotations and stereotypes. This is in line with the Great Chain of Being (Lakoff & Turner, 1989) that assigns everything in the universe in the hierarchical order in which human beings are placed at a higher level than animals. Thus, when they are equated with animals, it implies that their value is somehow being degraded and the animal-related words are seen as conveying undesirable human characteristics (Talebinejad & Dastjerdi, 2005). For instance, pig is frequently used metaphorically to indicate human filthiness and greediness (Anaider Iza Erviti, 2012; Goatly, 2006).

In fact, Rodriguez (2009) puts forward that the notion of control becomes the fundamental of the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor. The attribute or quality that differentiates people from animals is the ability to control their behaviour in which individuals are said to have animal side within them and to live as civilised human beings, they must let their rationality surpasses those beast instincts. Therefore, when someone is described using animal terms, it is most likely to convey negative evaluation.

However, a close inspection on the use of animal metaphors revealed that this is not always the case. Even though most of the time the use connotes negative meanings, there are some that do portray positive meanings associated with desirable characteristics of people. To illustrate a few, animals such as lion and bull are associated with positive human values like courage and strength (Rodriguez, 2009). In relation to this, scholars (Basso, 1976; Gibbs, 1999; Emanation, 1999; Song, 2009, to name a few) often associate metaphors with the cultural aspect attached to that particular community. They assert that social and cultural environment influences the understanding of metaphors. Hence, the evaluation of one same animal may vary from one community to the other. Talebinejad and Dastjerdi (2005), in their comparative study of animal metaphors in English and Persian, found that the same animals are differently conceptualised in those two languages. For instance, the bee is often associated with being “very busy” in English, while it could be used to refer to a person with a sharp tongue in Persian. Other cross-cultural studies have also revealed that there are differences in the evaluation of the meaning attached to the same animal and it is closely related to the cultural and social values upheld by the people of that culture.

Despite the numerous studies that have been done on animal metaphors, studies on Malay animal metaphors are still under represented and hardly found in the literature. Thus, data on animal metaphors from the Malay language would

provide insights into how different animals are conceptualised in the Malay culture, for instance, whether in Malay, animals are conceived derogatively and how these are invoked in the source domains of the metaphorical expressions. The inadequacy calls for more studies to be conducted on Malay animal metaphors with more animal terms to be examined. Thus, this paper attempts to examine domesticated animal metaphors in Malay figurative expressions and to discuss the mappings and evaluation of the meanings attached to those animals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employed the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING (GCB) metaphor (Lakoff & Turner, 1989), which is a widely used cultural model in the studies of metaphors. In this model, all the things and beings, as well as their properties, are placed on a vertical scale and divided into “lower” and “higher” levels. Human beings occupy the highest level, followed by animals, plants and finally inanimate substances and things at the lowest level.

Further, within each scale of being, there is a scale of properties embodied by each level of being. For instance, at the lowest level, a rock is a mere substance and a chair has a part-whole functional structure. A tree, in contrast, will have both properties, i.e., substance and part-whole functional structure, as well as life. Another level of being such as an insect will have all these properties plus animal behaviour (instinct) and humans. In addition, these properties will have other refined properties such as abstract

reasoning, morality, communication, highly developed consciousness, etc. (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). These characterisations are not scientifically-based knowledge but common folk theories (Honeck, 1997).

In other words, higher level of beings will share some properties that other lower beings possess and in any level in the basic Great Chain, “the highest properties of beings at that level characterise those beings” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 168). What is apparent in the Great Chain model is there is a “generic-level” parameter of each level of being. For instance, although different individuals have different characteristics such as different mental abilities, emotion and desires, all human beings have some common general traits.

Thus, the Great Chain provides a generic-level characterisation of an implicit unconscious cultural model, in that, it does not distinguish among beings within the same level but distinguish the behaviours and attributes between beings from different levels. Together, the Great Chain and the nature of things offer knowledge about the order of things in the Great Chain and why they have certain attributes and this knowledge is seen as unconscious, automatic, commonplace, and culturally shared. In this light, metaphorical expressions such as proverbs, which concern people albeit on the surface, seem to portray other things such as animals and plants. For example, *Make hay while the sun shines* can be understood through the Great Chain of Being model. Since this model concerns kinds of beings and places them on a vertical

scale comprising a specific order of “higher” and “lower” beings with specific attributes, it “offers us ways of comprehending the complex faculties of human beings” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 166) in terms of the other things included in the proverbs. The Great Chain of Being allows us to understand people as animal, or plants, or objects, and so forth. Specifically, deriving from the Great Chain of Being and at a higher level of abstraction or generalisation, we have, for example, PEOPLE BEHAVIOUR ARE ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR, PEOPLE CHARACTERISTIC ARE ANIMAL CHARACTERISTIC metaphor, and so on.

Whilst some studies have examined the manifestation of the concept ANIMAL – in certain types of figurative expressions, i.e. focusing on the source domain of the metaphorical expressions, others have focused on various animals manifested in data extracted from a relatively large corpus of written discourse. Among the studies that have investigated the use of animal metaphors in different languages are those of De La Cruz Cabanillas and Martínez (2006), Fernández Fontecha and Jiménez Catalán (2003), Macarthur (2005), Talebinejad and Dastjerdi (2005), Kieltyka and Kleparski (2007), Sakalauskaite (2010), and Imran-Ho Abdullah (2010).

A study conducted by Esmail Faghih (2001) focused on the interpretation of animal metaphors in English and Persian. It examined whether and to what extent there are similarities in both languages and aimed to determine whether animal metaphors have positive connotations or not. Faghih

found that the same animals were used to suggest different figurative meanings in two different languages and cultures. Besides that, the findings of the study revealed that the source domain of the metaphors in Persian tended to emphasise more the aspects of physical appearance as compared to those in English.

Another study by Olátéjú (2005) focused on the stylistic aspect of the animal-related metaphors in Yorùbá from a literary perspective. The data consisted of domesticated and wild animal metaphors in Yorùbá language. Animal metaphors are stylistically used, especially in poetry, in paying tributes and compliments to animals and humans as well. When human beings are predicated of an animal, they are either intentionally or consciously used in ²anthropomorphism to highly praise, pay compliments and tributes to human beings. When used in an uncomplimentary manner, they are usually intended to satirize, rebuke, condemn or describe negative aspects of his character.

Wei and Wong (2012), in their study of snake metaphors in Mandarin Chinese and British English, found that characteristics and appearance of a snake contributed to the construction of metaphorical expressions in both languages. Besides that, these two languages share the same metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE SNAKES. In addition to this, their study also showed that the universality of snake metaphors exists

²This refers to the attribution of human characteristics, which is assumed to belong only to humans, animals, other non-living things, phenomena, and abstract concepts.

at the generic level, while the individuality of those metaphors appears at the basic level in which different specific conceptual metaphors are used in generalizing the man and woman in those two languages. As for the meaning evaluation, the snake metaphors in Chinese conveyed a much more derogative meaning for the man, while the opposite is found in English whereby the woman receives much more derogatory remarks.

Taking a slightly different angle, Haslam, Loughnan and Sun (2011) studied factors which contributed to offensiveness of animal metaphors by focusing on the content, as well as the context in metaphor use. They found that a feeling of strong dislike towards the animal, as well as a dehumanizing view of the target that it implied, made those metaphors offensive. Looking at the contexts in which the animal metaphors are used, factors like tone of the expression, gender and group status (in-group/out-group) influence the offensiveness of those metaphors. Animal metaphors are regarded to be more offensive when they are used in a hostile manner towards female targets and out-group members. However, when those metaphors are uttered towards in-group members, they are acceptable and the members would take it as a mere joke, unless it is expressed in a hostile tone.

In their study of semantic derogation in animal metaphor, Fontecha and Catalán (2003) analysed the use of metaphorical expressions of the word pairs, *fox/vixen* and *bull/cow* in English and their counterparts,

zorro/zorra and *toro/vaca* in Spanish. They sought to find out: 1) whether these animal metaphors are equally conceptualized in those two languages; 2) whether the use of those two paired examples in each language leads to semantic derogation; 3) whether semantic derogation applies equally to both gender terms; and 4) whether those examples in English and Spanish have the same degree and kind of semantic derogation. The findings revealed that those animal pairs are applied to people and semantic derogation does appear in both languages. As for the meanings, female terms connote worse qualities compared to those connoted by the male terms metaphors. Apart from that, there are some dissimilarity in the degree and type of semantic derogation that occurred in both languages.

Despite the continuing interest in metaphors of animals, such studies seem to have focused on specific animals. This study aimed at examining the use of domesticated animal metaphors in Malay. It focused on the mapping of the aspect and information used in the source domain in the conveyance of the respective related meanings of the figurative expressions in the target domain, as well as their connotations or evaluations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data of the study comprised Malay figurative expressions that utilise domesticated animals, which in this study, is defined as vertebrate animals that are under the care of human beings so as to live and breed in a tame condition and depend on humankind for survival. They were

collected from various sources, namely, the electronic database on Malay proverbs and *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, as well as various books on Malay proverbs and idioms. The data cover a range of Malay figurative expressions such as *simpulan bahasa*, *perumpamaan*, *bidalan*, and *pepatah*. In total, the data comprised 259 instances of Malay figurative expressions, which use domesticated animals, such as cow, goat, horse, chicken, dog, cat, buffalo, pig and duck. All the instances of figurative expressions which contain the identified domesticated animal names together with their respective given meanings were identified and selected as data for the study. The inclusion of the 9 animals as data was based on a minimum number of occurrences identified as a criterion for consideration and selection as the data of the study, that is, having at least 5 occurrences in the databases and books. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of figurative expressions included as data of the study.

TABLE 1
Number of selected data according to animal

No.	Animals	Frequency
1.	Dog	52
2.	Chicken	49
3.	Buffalo	49
4.	Cat	31
5.	Goat	24
6.	Horse	21
7.	Duck	20
8.	Cow	8
9.	Pig	5
Total		259

As the nature of this study is mainly qualitative, it is not possible to provide a discussion of the analysis of all identified data. The discussion of the analysed data in this paper provides only representative examples of the 9 types of domesticated animals that were identified. For the different conceptual domains invoked in the data (appearance and behaviour), the discussion includes a schematic representation of the mapping of the salient source domains onto the respective meanings in the target domain.

As pointed out earlier, the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor (Lakoff & Turner 1989), other Idealised Cognitive Models (ICMs) such as the GENERIC-IS-SPECIFIC and resemblance metaphor (Grady, 1997), along with the principle of metaphorical highlighting and metaphorical utilisation (Kövecses 2002), are used as a framework in the analysis of different aspects of animal metaphors manifest in the language. The animal metaphors investigated in the Malay language are described and explained from the cognitive semantic perspective, particularly in the mapping of the aspect and information in the source domain to that of the target domain. The analysis focused on the mapping of ANIMALS ARE HUMANS underlying the Malay figurative expressions, which is derived from the GENERIC-IS-SPECIFIC metaphor. For example, the general metaphor that asserts HUMANS ARE ANIMALS involves ANIMALS as the source domain and HUMANS the

target domain. The analysis focuses on the information embedded in the source domain (i.e. ANIMALS) and how it is mapped onto the target domain (i.e. HUMANS) in Malay. As for the evaluation attached to the meaning of each animal metaphor in the identified Malay figurative expressions, the positive or negative evaluation of its meaning was determined based on the meaning conveyed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Animal Metaphors in Malay

Out of a total of 259 Malay figurative expressions, 224 (86.5%) were negative expressions, 20 (7.7%) were positive and the remaining 15 (5.8%) were neutral. The analysis revealed that the animal appearance and behaviour, as well as situations in which the animals are in, in the source domain, are particularly salient in conveying their respective meaning. Specifically, within the general domain of appearance, behaviour or characteristic of animals mapped onto those in the target domain, specific aspects of meaning related to human characteristic or condition are conveyed in the target domain. The interpretations of the different metaphorical expressions included in the study are done through the mapping of elements in the source domain onto their specific meanings in the target domain based on the G-I-S metaphor. The analysis of the examples of the expressions is given below, with specific schematic representations of the respective mappings.

Appearance/Characteristics

In Malay animal metaphors, in general, the appearance of the animals may refer to the appearance related to a condition or a particular characteristic of a person. In other words, in this expression, a certain APPEARANCE is mapped onto a certain characteristic of human beings, as discussed in the various examples that follow.

1. *Anak ayam kebasahan bulu*
 Chick wet feather
 (A disgusting person; to be in an uncomfortable state)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor <i>anak ayam</i> (chick)	→ a person
<i>kebasahan bulu</i> (wet feather)	→ be in a state of discomfort

Fig.1: Metaphorical schema of *anak ayam kebasahan bulu*

In this expression (1), the appearance of a wet chick, which is very unpleasant, is mapped onto the appearance of a human which is disgusting and in an unwarranted condition (a discomfort) through the G-I-S metaphor. Here, the image of a chick soaked with water is transferred to a negative image of a person to convey the negative meaning of ‘a disgusting’ person or one who is in an uncomfortable condition. Another example which uses appearance is in the following expression:

2. *Anjing kurap*
 Dog scabies
 (People who are being looked down upon because of their poverty)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor <i>anjing kurap</i> (dog scabies)	→ a person who is being looked down upon because of his poverty

Fig.2: Metaphorical schema of *anjing kurap*

Similarly, in 2, the Malay *simpulan bahasa* manifest the image of a dog that is infected with scabies is mapped onto the condition of a person who is being looked down upon because of his poverty. This mapping is motivated by the resemblance metaphor. In the Malay society, a dog that is infected with scabies is viewed as a very dirty and ugly animal and in general, will be frowned upon. Culturally in Malay, dog is not a highly regarded animal, unlike in the Western culture such as English, where dog is associated with ‘loyalty’ and ‘man’s best friend’. Based on this scenario, people associate the negative condition of *anjing kurap* with the condition or the characteristic of a person, which is not well regarded because of his poverty. The negative representation of dog in Malay contradicts Lakoff’s metaphorical schema about dogs (1989), i.e. dogs are loyal, dependable and dependent.

3. *Mutiara terkalung ke leher babi*
 Pearl on a pig’s neck
 (A person getting) something valuable but does not know its value)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor	
<i>mutiara</i> (pearl)	→ something valuable
<i>babi</i> (pig)	→ something that is lowly regarded

Fig.3: Metaphorical schema of *mutiara terkalung ke leher babi*

The above figurative expression (3) refers to a situation in which a pearl (something valuable) is put around a pig's neck (something lowly regarded). Through the G-I-S metaphor, the pig's situation is mapped onto the situation of a person who does not know the value of something valuable that he has. Metonymically, a body part of a pig (e.g. its neck) denotes something lowly regarded or of an insignificant value. The pearl, in contrast, is mapped onto something of a high value. However, when the pearl is put on a pig's neck, its value is downgraded and no longer regarded as a precious item. This is in line with the Malay cultural and religious values, which regards pig as an animal that is strictly prohibited for contact and consumption. Thus, in Malay, any expression related to this animal would convey some negative meanings.

Behaviour

The behaviour of the animal is ascribed a certain characteristic before it is attributed to the person. In the Malay figurative expressions, animals are shown as the doer of human actions (protagonist) through their behaviours. Besides that, they are viewed as the object of human actions. The discussion that follows focuses on the description of some instances of animal metaphors in

Malay which convey negative meanings related to the ascribed animal traits.

Cowardice

Cowardice is a negative sense ascribed to the following examples of figurative expressions.

4. *Jiwa kambing*

Soul goat
(A coward)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor	
<i>jiwa kambing</i> (soul goat)	→ a coward
[sensitive to and not liking water]	

Fig.4: Metaphorical schema of *jiwa kambing*

In 4, this Malay two-word idiom (*simpulan bahasa*) is used to describe a human characteristic, i.e. cowardice. Through the G-I-S, the sensitivity of goats to water and not liking it is mapped onto the characteristic of human beings, cowardice, which is a negative trait. Thus, when a person is said to have a goat's soul, it means that he is a coward. The following expression takes on the same meaning and manifests a certain animal behaviour.

5. *Anak kambing takkan menjadi anak harimau*

Kid never become cub
(A coward will remain a coward)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor	
<i>anak kambing</i> (kid)	→ a coward/weak person
<i>takkan menjadi</i> (never become)	→ remain
<i>anak harimau</i> (cub)	→ a brave person

Fig.5: Metaphorical schema of *anak kambing takkan menjadi anak harimau*

In expression 5, a kid is viewed as inferior compared to a cub. The image of cowardice found in the source domain (kid) is mapped onto the target domain (human) via the G-I-S. In this case, the general folk theory informs us that a tiger is superior to a goat in terms of its strength and characteristic. This is in line with the Great Chain hierarchical order of animals (Lakoff & Turner, 1989), in which a tiger is viewed as a very fierce animal that symbolises courage. This contrasts with the image of a kid which is viewed as helpless compared to a cub. Thus, the salient characteristic of a kid (negative) that is compared to a positive characteristic of a cub is mapped onto the weak trait of a person who by nature is a coward and will never be brave.

6. *Bagai kucing dibawakan lidi*
Like cat (be) bring stick
(Being very scared/frightened)

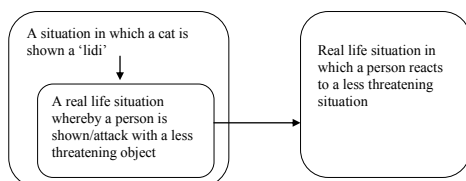


Fig.6: Metaphorical schema of *bagai kucing dibawakan lidi*

Expression 6 conveys the meaning related to a negative behaviour – cowardice via a situational animal metaphor. Through the G-I-S metaphor, the behavioural action of a cat, i.e., fleeing from a situation triggered by the presence of the *lidi* (soft middle vein of a coconut leaf) is mapped onto a situation of a person’s reaction towards some less threatening situation. The behavioural action of the cat in the given situation as well as the characteristic of the *lidi* is salient in conveying the negative meaning of the expression.

Stupidity

Stupidity is another aspect mapped onto domesticated animal behaviour. Below are some examples of Malay figurative expressions which convey meanings related to stupidity.

7. *Keldai hendak dijadikan kuda*
Donkey want become horse
(A stupid person wants to be seen as a wise person)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor	
<i>keldai</i> (donkey)	→ a stupid person
<i>dijadikan</i> (become)	→ is seen
<i>kuda</i> (horse)	→ a wise person

Fig.7: Metaphorical schema of *keldai hendak dijadikan kuda*

In Fig.7, the characteristics of the animals, donkey and horse, are mapped onto stupidity and wisdom, respectively, via the G-I-S metaphor. Here, the donkey

is compared to a horse, whereby the horse is viewed as a superior animal, in terms of its intelligence compared to the donkey, which is slow and inefficient. Interestingly, in English a donkey is regarded as lazy, which differs from the meaning of stupidity ascribed in Malay.

8. *Kuda kayu*
Horse wood
(A stupid person)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor <i>kuda kayu</i> (horse wood)	→ a stupid person

Fig.8: Metaphorical schema of *kuda kayu*

In the above Malay *simpulan bahasa* (8), a wooden horse is mapped onto the meaning of stupidity via resemblance metaphor. This meaning associated with a horse contrasts with that of a horse conveyed in the previous expression. In this light, the meaning of horse in Malay can be negative as well as positive. What is interesting here is that the negative meaning is ascribed to a wooden horse and not a live horse, which perhaps can be related to a Malay expression with a negative meaning *Jangan jadi seperti tunggul* (don't be like a dead wood, i.e. stupid). Thus, when a horse is a wooden horse, it embodies the characteristic of stupidity.

9. *Seperti kerbau dicucuk hidung*
Like buffalo (is) pierce nose
(A stupid person who always follows other people's wants)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor <i>kerbau</i> (buffalo) <i>dicucuk hidung</i> (pierce nose)	a person is controlled by somebody/ follow obediently

Fig.9: Metaphorical schema of *seperti kerbau dicucuk hidung*

In the above expression (9), through the G-I-S metaphor, the behavioural condition of a buffalo, with its nostrils tied to a rope for control purposes, is mapped onto the attribute of stupidity, i.e. obediently following another person's order, which is a negative trait. The Malay society attributes stupidity to this kind of behaviour. Generally, the behaviour of such animal is mapped onto a similar human behaviour acting in the same manner as the buffalo.

Stubbornness and laziness

Other examples of Malay figurative expressions that denote the meaning of stubbornness and laziness based on domesticated animal behaviour are provided as follows.

10. *Itik dimandikan takkan basah*
Duck (is) bathed never get wet
(A stubborn person will never listen to advice or teachings)

SOURCE	TARGET
Metaphor <i>itik</i> (duck) <i>dimandikan</i> (bathed)	→ a stubborn person → is given advice
<i>basah</i> (wet)	→ accept/listen to advice

Fig.10: Metaphorical schema of *itik dimandikan takkan basah*

In figurative expression 10, through the G-I-S metaphor, the characteristic of a duck that will not get wet when covered with water in the source domain is mapped onto the meaning of a stubborn person not listening to any given advice or teaching in the target domain. Our conventional knowledge of animals informs us that duck is a farm animal that can swim and it is endowed with the feature which can help it to do so – a waterproof feather. Thus, no matter how long it stays in water, it will never get wet. This kind of resistance is viewed as stubbornness and it is then mapped onto the human behaviour which refers to a stubborn person who will never listen to advice or teachings.

11. *Bagai kambing dimandikan pagi*

Like goat (is) bathed in the morning
(People who refuse to perform a task)

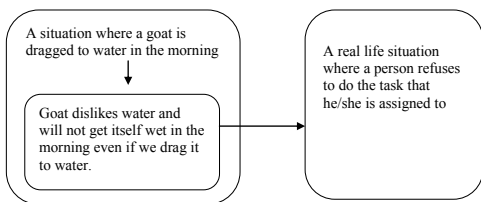


Fig.11: Metaphorical expression of *bagai kambing dimandikan pagi*

The above expression (11) manifests the negative behaviour of a goat, which is mapped onto an undesirable human characteristic. This is attained through the mapping of the elements in the source domain, i.e. the goat behaviour onto the target domain, the refusal of a person in performing a task. As mentioned earlier in the previous discussion, goat is an animal

that is known to be afraid of water or said to dislike water. Thus, it will surely refuse to follow along when it is dragged to water. The Malay society attributes laziness to this kind of behaviour. Therefore, if a person refuses to do a job, he is said to be like a goat refusing to be dragged to the water in the morning, a negative connotation.

12. *Lembu kenyang*

Full cow
(A person who is stubborn, lazy and not bothered)

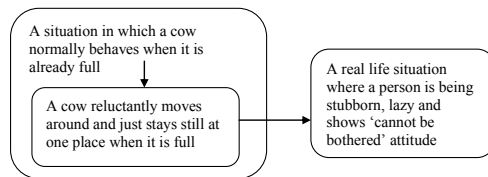


Fig.12: Metaphorical expression of *lembu kenyang*

Expression 12 conveys a negative meaning associated with human characteristic, i.e. laziness, stubbornness and uncaring. The negative characteristic related to the condition of a cow (a full stomach cow) in the source domain is mapped onto the human characteristic of laziness, uncaring in the target domain. The cow's behaviour, which contributes to the above expression is related to the behavioural condition when the cow, is full, i.e. reluctant to move around or have many movements and rather reluctant to follow the farmer's instruction after being fed. Based on this observation, the negative attribute is transferred to human characteristic or behaviour which denotes a person's stubbornness, laziness or uncaring attitude.

13. *Bagai itik pulang petang*
 Like duck return evening
 (Walking slowly)

SOURCE	TARGET
<i>itik pulang petang</i> (duck return evening) [the nature of a duck that walks slowly]	→ a person who walks slowly or performs task in a slow manner

Fig.13: Metaphorical schema of *bagai itik pulang petang*

In example 13, the behaviour of a walking duck is mapped onto a human behaviour, i.e. to describe the nature of walking, which is very slowly via the G-I-S metaphor. In this regard, humans ascribe a certain action to animals such as a duck walking slowly. Thus, a person who performs an action in a similar manner may take a very long time to accomplish a given task, which is undesirable. Thus, he or she can be described using the expression “like a duck returning in the evening”. In terms of evaluation assigned to its meaning, this can be said to be negative, a behaviour which is not encouraged.

CONCLUSION

This paper has provided some insights into the nature of human language through the working of metaphorical expressions utilising domesticated animals as the source domain in Malay and the mappings of certain aspects of APPEARANCE, BEHAVIOUR and CHARACTERISTIC. Due to the close contact between animal

and human, people naturally observe the appearance or condition of the animals and eventually transfer it to the appearance or condition or the characteristic of human beings, which not only shapes the way people think but also talk about their worlds. The analysis of the Malay data demonstrates that domesticated animals are commonly used in a derogatory sense, i.e. to convey negative meanings. This phenomenon is culturally and/or religiously related. The derogatory sense attached to the animals in the identified data reflects the essence of the basic Great Chain of Being metaphor, which purports an orderly hierarchical relationship, i.e., human beings occupied the highest level, followed by animals and so forth (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). The findings of the study provide further evidence to the systematic mapping or correspondences between the source and target domains and that humans are understood as animals. These mappings are mainly motivated by three metaphorical bases, namely, resemblance metaphor, the G-I-S metaphor and the Great Chain of Being metaphor. From the data, it would appear that dog, chicken and buffalo are the preponderance in the corpus of animal metaphors. These could be the case that they are most commonly seen animals or considered more significant in the culture of the Malay.

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Are Poetic Similes Cognitively Constrained? A Case of Malay Poetic Similes

Mohd Kasim, Z.

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the application of Cognitive Constraint Theory (CCT) to Malay poetic similes. Based on this theory, poetic structures like simile, zeugma and synaesthesia are in fact, governed by certain cognitive principles. These principles or “cognitive constraints”, as they are better known within this approach, ensure the interpretability of the poetic structures on the part of the reader. In this study, a corpus of 587 Malay similes from twentieth century poems were analysed using the methodological framework introduced by Yeshayahu Shen, the proponent of CCT. The study showed that while Cognitive Constraint Theory works at a high level of generality, a more detailed analysis considers the effects of culture, history and specific linguistic choices.

Keywords: Cognitive constraints, conceptual mapping, conceptual metaphor, Malay, poetic similes

INTRODUCTION

The study of literature has a long and venerable tradition, dating back to classical times (e.g. Aristotle’s *Poetics*). In recent decades, there has been a growing and fruitful interaction between literary studies and cognitive science whereby, insights from the study of human cognition have been applied to the investigation of the

relationship between literary texts and readers’ interpretations (e.g., Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Tsur, 1992; Steen, 1994). This has resulted in the birth of an interdisciplinary field known as cognitive stylistics (e.g., Semino & Culpeper, 2002), or cognitive poetics (e.g., Stockwell, 2002; Gavins, & Steen, 2003; Tsur, 1992, 2003). These studies have investigated the role played by the human cognitive system in the processing of poetic language. There have been several major approaches developed over the years that pertain to the structure and processing of poetic language.

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E-mail address:

zalina_mk@upm.edu.my (Mohd Kasim, Z.)

In the early 20th century, Russian Formalists made an influential claim that poetry ‘violates’ or ‘deviates’ from the norms of ordinary language in order to produce aesthetic and poetic effects (Mukařovský, 1970). Shklovsky, for example, claimed that the goal of poetic discourse is “to make the object ‘unfamiliar’, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged” (Shklovsky, 1965, p. 12, quoted in Shen, 2002, p. 212). Such view of poetic language has influenced much subsequent work in the stylistics tradition (Leech, 1969).

COGNITIVE CONSTRAINT THEORY

More recently, Shen has proposed a different view (Shen, 2002; 1997b; 1995; 2008), which claims that the deviations or violations of poetic language are in fact “constrained or regulated” (Shen, 1995, p. 257). According to Shen, although poetry essentially needs to be novel and creative (which is reflected in the violation of the normal patterns of language), it also needs to be comprehensible for readers. In other words, at some level, poetic texts have to “conform to certain communicative, and in particular cognitive (as well as linguistic) principles” (Shen, 2002, p. 213) in order to ensure the interpretability of poetic language.

In a series of ground-breaking studies, Shen (2002) developed a theory known as *Cognitive Constraints Theory*, which

attempts to account for regularities in the construction of poetic structures. The theory focuses particularly on traditional “figures of speech” and makes two complementary claims:

[1] *Some types of figures of speech ... used in poetic discourse exhibit general definable regularities regarding their linguistic structure across poetic contexts... certain structural options ... are used more frequently in poetic discourse than others, regardless of the specific context (poem, poet, school of poets, historical period, or even language).*

[2] *From a cognitive perspective, the more frequently used structural options represent more “basic” (e.g., simpler, more natural, easier to comprehend and recall) than their less frequently used counterparts.*

(Shen, 2002, p. 214)

In the first claim, Shen states that some typically poetic figures such as zeugma, synaesthesia and simile actually exhibit certain regularities pertaining to their linguistic structure. These regularities, according to Shen, are not due to “contextual factors”, such as the specific text from which the poetic forms are taken, i.e. the characteristics of the school of poets which produced them and the literary period to which the producer belongs (Shen, 1997b, p. 34). Instead, Shen argues, they result from

underlying cognitive principles, as spelt out in claim [2].

The second claim of the Cognitive Constraint Theory states that the more frequently used structures are considered more “basic” than the less frequently used. The notion on “basic” has been described in detail by Shen (1995, 1997b).

In providing evidence for his claim [1], Shen carried out a series of studies (Shen, 1987; 1989; 1992a; 1995; 1997a; 1997b; 1998), which examined four poetic figures, namely, simile, synaesthesia, oxymoron and zeugma. His analyses mainly involved data taken from a corpus of Hebrew poetry, though in some studies Shen also included English poetic data. The question now is whether the claims made by Cognitive Constraint Theory are also supported by poetic figures in other languages. While Hebrew is from the Afro-Asiatic language family, Malay is a member of the Malayo-Polynesian language family, which is a branch of the Austronesian language family. It is spoken by the Malay people who live in the Malay Peninsula, parts of the coast of Borneo, southern Thailand, Singapore, central eastern Sumatra and the Riau islands.

Shen mentions “language” as one of the contextual factors that do not influence the selective use of options in the poetic structure (Shen, 2002, p. 214). Therefore, this theory should be applicable to Malay poetic figures of speech. Taking into account the origins of Hebrew and Malay, the theory, as propounded by Shen, would predict that figures of speech in Malay poetry would exhibit the same regularities

that were found in Hebrew (and in Shen’s English data). Thus, it is the objective of this study to examine if the claims in Cognitive Constraint Theory can be applied to figurative expressions in Malay. In this case, the focus of the analysis will be on similes taken from Malay poems.

THE DATA

The similes analysed in this study were taken from 20th century Malay poems. A total of 587 similes were collected from 2,346 poems. The analysis of the poetic similes involved comparing the trends in similes based on different contextual factors. If the results are found to be consistent despite the different contextual factors, then a stronger case can be made for the underlying cognitive constraints as the factor that influences the tendencies in the similes. Shen mentions “text, poet, school or period” as some of the contextual factors that may influence the mappings in similes (Shen, 1997b, p. 35). The poems are written by different poets who have different educational backgrounds, and who uphold different poetic manifestoes. These characteristics are important as they could have some implications on the way the results of the analysis are interpreted.

Two contextual factors will be examined and discussed in this paper, namely, ‘historical periods’ and ‘individual poets’.

The poetic similes analysed in this study are all taken from 20th century Malay poems. A total of 2346 poems were collected. These poems come from the following anthologies and collections of poems:

- a. Kamaruzzaman A. Kadir. (ed.). (1989). *Puisi Sepanjang Zaman* (Poems of All Eras). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- b. Usman Awang. (1987). *Puisi-puisi pilihan sasterawan negara Usman Awang* (Selected Poems of Usman Awang, the National Laureate). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- c. Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar. (ed.). (1987). *Puisi-puisi Kebangsaan; 1913-1957* (National Poems: 1913-1957). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- d. Muhammad Haji Salleh. (1995). *Beyond the Archipelago: Monographs in International Studies*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- e. Chulan Chin & Talib Samat. (eds.). (1993). *Taman Bahasa Ibunda* (The Garden of Native Language). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- f. Ahmad Kamal Abdullah & Mohd. Hanafi Ibrahim. (eds.). (1989). *Puisi-puisi Melayu Berunsur Islam: 1933-1986* (Malay Islamic Poems: 1933-1986). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- g. Ahmad Kamal Abdullah & Ahmad Razali Haji Yusof. (eds.). (1990). *Puisi Baharu Melayu: 1961-1986* (Malay Contemporary Poems: 1961-1986). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- h. Masuri S.N. (1989). *Puisi-puisi Pilihan* (Selected Poems). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- i. Hasni Abas & Shamsuddin Jaafar. (eds.). (1995). *Puisi-puisi Kunjungan* (Poems by Travellers). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- j. Siti Zainon Ismail. (1984). *Puisi Putih Sang Kekasih* (The White Poetry of a Lover). Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- k. Matlin Dullah. (1988). *Siapakah Antara Kita* (Who is Among Us). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.
- l. T. Alias Taib. (1990). *Piramid*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.

Most of the books are anthologies and the reason for this is because they comprise of poems that have been written over the years, i.e. from the period before independence to the period after independence. They also consist of poems written by different poets who have different educational backgrounds and uphold different poetic manifestoes.

The collected data can be categorised into two main historical periods, as follows:

1. Pre-independence period (1900-1957)

These are the similes taken from the poems written prior to the Independence of Malaya, which came into effect on the 31st August 1957. A total of 961 poems written in the pre-independence period were gathered for the analysis.

2. Post-independence period

These are the similes taken from the poems written during the period after Independence, i.e. from 1st September 1957 until the present day. In total, 1385

poems written in the post-independence period were gathered for the analysis.

A closer examination of the data revealed that the difference between pre- and post-independence poems involves a number of factors such as the poets' goals, common themes and literary movements, which can be linked to distinctive poetic styles. The pre-independence period is generally associated with poetic structures that are much more accessible to readers while, the post-independence poems are much more creative and challenging (Mohd Kasim, 1997). The differences in the two periods may have some implications in the way similes are created, and this in some ways, makes a good testing ground for the application of CCT. The similes in the pre-independence period may tend to exhibit stronger tendencies for standard directionality because based on Shen's claim (1995), the standard ones are those that are cognitively basic and easier to understand (e.g., *Dalam cerahan udara pagi/ di sawang sinaran matahari timur/ 'Semangat Asia' timbul di Malai/ seperti bintang menghambur nur*; In the light of the morning air/ Under the web of the eastern sun/ The 'Asian Spirit' emerged from Malai/ Like a star). In these examples, the concept of star is used to describe the notion of 'Asian Spirit'. In contrast, the post-independence similes tend to have more non-standard structures given that there should be more innovative use of poetic language by the poets (e.g., *Belum juga lambaian tangan terbeku di tegak terik/ Menjadi abadi seperti tugu kelengangan*

kasih; Under the hot sun the wave is not yet frozen/ It is eternal like the monument of deserted love) (Masuri S.N. *Pisah*, Separation, 1965-1975).

The "individual poet" is the other contextual factor that is considered in the analysis of Malay poetic similes. The variations in the poetic styles between the poets could have some implications on the way the similes are created by each of the poets. If there are general cognitive principles regulating the patterns in the use of similes, then even the poets' individual differences will not significantly influence the general tendencies in the structure of the similes. For the purpose of this study, 5 poets with the highest number of poems in the data were identified: Usman Awang (75), Muhammad Haji Salleh (89), Kemala (64), Masuri S.N. (121) and T. Alias Taib (81)¹.

The approach used in Shen's studies was adopted in the analysis of Malay poetic similes. Following Shen (1995, 1997b), two types of analysis were conducted:

1. Textual analyses of poetic similes – these are relevant to the claim regarding the presence of regularities in the structure of poetic figures, including similes.
2. Analysis of contextual factors – this analysis examines if the tendencies exhibited in the poetic similes are influenced by any contextual factors (e.g., historical periods, school of thoughts, individual poets).

¹The numbers in brackets are the number of poems by each poet that are included in the data.

The textual analysis involved identifying the patterns of directionalities (both in terms of abstraction and in terms of salience) in Malay poetic similes. Where the level of abstraction is concerned, the main criterion for determining the concreteness of concepts was based on the extent to which the concept evoked by a given linguistic expression, i.e. the source or target, can be visualised or is generally perceivable through the senses (Shen, 1997b; Mohd Kasim, 2007). The analysis for the salience of concepts is carried out only on the similes, where the source and target concepts are either both concrete or both abstract. The analysis was done only on the 'closed' similes (i.e., the similes with an explicit ground² of comparison). The ground, in this case, provides the 'category' on the basis of which the salience of source and target is determined.

Shen (1995) noted that there are four types of mappings in similes (see Table 1).

Shen further classified the mappings listed in the table above into "standard" and "non-standard directionality". The distinction between the standard and non-standard can be linked to the second claim of the Cognitive Constraint Theory, which states that the more frequently used structures are considered as more "basic" than the less frequently used ones (Shen 1997b). The non-standard directionality comprises two types of violation: first degree and second degree violation. The

²The ground of comparison can be observed in closed similes (e.g., "John is brave like a lion"). In this case, "brave" is the ground of the comparison.

mappings in the former "deviate from the standard directionality, without, however, totally inverting it" (Shen, 1995, p. 265) and include the A-A mapping [scale of abstraction] and the NS-NS mapping [scale of salience]. The latter consists of mappings that are totally inverted compared to the standard directionality, and includes the A-C mapping [scale of abstraction] and the NS-S mapping [scale of salience].

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis in Terms of Abstraction and Salience

Table 2 shows the overall results of the analysis of all the similes on the basis of abstraction.

A very large proportion of similes in the Malay poetic data exhibit standard directionality (88.9 per cent, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, only 5.5 per cent of the similes represent first-degree violation and 5.6 per cent second-degree violation. These findings seem to support the claim in Cognitive Constraint Theory about the preference for a particular tendency in poetic figures. The results also support Shen's claim about the preference for standard directionality in similes.

From the total sample of poetic data, 213 similes were analysed for salience. Table 3 gives the overall results of the analysis in terms of salience.

The overall summary shows an extensive use of standard directionality (78 per cent, $p < 0.001$) in the Malay poetic similes compared to the non-standard ones. This result conforms to the claim made in

TABLE 1
Four different types of mapping in similes in relation to the scales* of abstraction and scales of salience (Shen 1995)

Scales of abstraction		Scales of salience	
concrete to abstract	(C-A)	salient to non-salient	(S-NS)
concrete to concrete	(C-C)	salient to salient	(S-S)
abstract to concrete	(A-C)	non-salient to salient	(NS-S)
abstract to abstract	(A-A)	non-salient to non-salient	(NS-NS)

*In investigating the kind of directionality exhibited in the similes, Shen treats both abstraction and salience as graded phenomena, via what he calls the “scale of abstraction” and “scale of salience”.

TABLE 2
Overall summary of simile analysis in terms of abstraction and types of directionality (standard order, first-degree and second-degree violation)

Directionalities	N	%
Standard directionality (C-A), (C-C)	522	88.9
First-degree violation (A-A)	32	5.5
Second-degree violation (A-C)	33	5.6
Total	587	100.0

TABLE 3
Overall summary of the simile analysis in terms of salience and types of directionality (standard order, first-degree and second-degree violation)

Directionalities	N	%
Standard directionality (S-NS), (S-S)	167	78.4
First-degree violation (NS-NS)	39	18.3
Second-degree violation (NS-S)	7	3.3
Total	213	100.0

the Cognitive Constraint Theory regarding the prominence of standard directionality in poetic figures.

Analysis Based on Contextual Factors

The two main historical periods that were identified in the data are the pre-independence period, which is before 1957, and the post-independence period, i.e. from 1958 onwards.

Out of 587 similes analysed, 131 similes (22.3 per cent) are from pre-independence

poems, while the remaining 456 similes (77.7 per cent) are from post-independence poems. The disproportionate number of poems collected from different historical periods has largely to do with the fact that there are fewer poems written in the period prior to independence.

Table 4 presents the overall summary of similes analysed in terms of abstraction in the two historical periods.

The overall results show that there is a significant preference for standard

directionality in both pre ($p < 0.001$)³ and post-independence ($p < 0.001$)⁴ similes. A closer look at the results however, reveals that there are some differences between the similes of the two periods. Similes with standard directionality are employed more frequently in the pre-independence poems than in the post-independence poems ($p < 0.01$)⁵. In contrast, similes with non-standard directionality appear to be used more frequently in the post-independence poems compared to the pre-independence ones.

To some extent, these discrepancies can be related to the different goals of poems and also poetic manifestoes in the two periods. The pre-independence poems were generally written with the purpose to raise awareness and patriotism among the people. They generally carry political messages, and therefore, it was pertinent at the time that the poems should be accessible to the general public. This might explain the preference for standard directionality in the pre-independence period.

After independence, poems are treated more as a form of expression; this can be observed in the growing of the "Obscure Poets" that upheld the slogan "Arts for art's sake" at the end of 1950's. Poets were able to be innovative and creative in their poems without having to worry if their works were interpreted differently by different readers (Annas Haji Ahmad, 1988). This might explain the increase in the use of

non-standard structures i.e. similes with the first-degree and second-degree violation, in the post-independence similes.

As far as the standard directionality is concerned, the results show a slight discrepancy between the pre-and post-independence similes (see Table 5).

There seems to be a relatively extensive use of the C-A mapping in pre-independence similes. In contrast, the C-C mapping is used slightly more frequently than C-A ($p < 0.05$)⁶ in post-independence similes. This difference may be related once again to the different poetic goals and also the themes that are commonly featured in the poems of the two periods. Pre-independence poems were generally written to make people aware of their predicament and to evoke patriotism. There was therefore a greater tendency to address issues relating to nationalism, the situation of the society, colonial policy and religion, which generally dealt with abstract ideas. In order to make sure people understand the message that they tried to convey, poets tended to rely more on concrete terms when talking about abstract concepts, hence the frequent use of similes with abstract target and concrete source in pre-independence poems.

Table 6 illustrates the results of analysis pertaining to the historical periods on the scale of salience.

The majority of the similes from both periods tend to follow the standard directionality. In contrast, there is no case of second-degree violation at all in pre-independence similes, and only 4 per cent of

³ $\chi^2 = 238.595$, $df = 2$

⁴ $\chi^2 = 582.750$, $df = 2$

⁵ $\chi^2 = 11.015$, $df = 1$

⁶ $\chi^2 = 4.256$, $df = 1$

TABLE 4

Overall summary of the analysis in terms of abstraction and types of directionality (standard order, first- and second- degree violation) according to historical periods

Directionalities	Pre-Independence		Post-Independence	
	n	%	n	%
Standard directionality (C-A), (C-C)	127	96.9	395	86.6
First-degree violation (A-A)	3	2.3	29	6.4
Second-degree violation (A-C)	1	0.8	32	7.0
Total	131	100.0	456	100.0

TABLE 5

The comparison of mappings of similes analysed in terms of abstraction according to historical periods

Mapping	Pre-Independence		Post-Independence	
	n	%	n	%
C – A	90	68.7	177	38.8
C – C	37	28.2	218	47.8
A – A	3	2.3	29	6.4
A – C	1	0.8	32	7.0
Total	131	100.0	456	100.0

TABLE 6

Overall summary of the analysis in terms of salience and types of directionality (standard order, 1st- and 2nd- degree violation) according to historical periods

Directionalities	Pre-Independence		Post-Independence	
	n	%	n	%
Standard directionality (S-NS), (S-S)	34	89.5	133	76.0
First-degree violation (NS-NS)	4	10.5	35	20.0
Second-degree violation (NS-S)	-	-	7	4.0
Total	38	100.0	175	100.0

the post-independence similes are accounted for by this directionality.

Despite the similar patterns of preference in both periods, there are in fact slight differences between the results. There is a greater tendency for standard directionality in pre-independence similes (89.5 per cent) compared to post-independence similes (76 per cent). In contrast, there is a greater tendency for the non-standard directionalities in post-independence similes

compared to the pre-independence ones. The tendencies in the directionalities in terms of salience can also be linked to the poetic goals at the time the similes were written. The preference for standard directionality in the similes from the pre-independence period appears to be consistent with the general view at the time that poems should be comprehensible to readers. Standard structures, which are cognitively natural, make it easier for the similes to be

interpreted and less likely to be ambiguous. After independence, when poems were appreciated more for their aestheticism and creativity, poets began to be more innovative in their poetic techniques. This explains the higher use of the first and second-degree violation of similes involving mapping of salience in the post-independence similes. Table 7 presents more detailed results of the analysis in terms of salience.

Similes with the S-NS mapping appeared to be used more frequently in the pre-independence period (84.2 per cent) compared to those in the post-independence period (57.7 per cent). In contrast, only 5.3 per cent of the pre-independence similes are accounted for by the S-S mapping, while 18.3 per cent of the post-independence similes are found with the same mapping.

In some ways, this discrepancy can be associated with the different goals of poems in the two periods. Pre-independence poems were generally used as the medium to raise people's awareness about their situation, and also to evoke patriotism. As far as the similes are concerned, in order to achieve such effect on readers, the sources should not only be familiar, but also contain strong connotations, which would potentially

construct better depictions and contribute more vivid interpretations of the target of similes. In other words, the source should be a better or more salient instance of the characteristics that is highlighted in the simile compared to the target. This could explain the more frequent use of S-NS in the pre-independence similes in the data.

After independence, poems are appreciated more as artistic expressions. Compared to the pre-independence similes, there appear to be more similes involving mapping of visual images in post-independence similes and in cases like this, usually both the target and sources are equally salient, hence the higher use of S-S in the post-independence similes.

Overall, it appears that it is the pre-independence data that mostly account for the differences between the overall findings in this research and that of Shen's.

Analysis Based on Individual Poets

The similes by five different poets were analysed in this study. Each poet came from different academic backgrounds; some received only secondary school education (e.g., Usman Awang, Masuri), while others

TABLE 7
Scale of salience according to historical periods

Directionality	Pre-independence		Post-independence	
	n	%	n	%
S – NS	32	84.2	101	57.7
S – S	2	5.3	32	18.3
NS – NS	4	10.5	35	20.0
NS – S	-	-	7	4.0
Total	38	100	175	100

attended universities (e.g., Muhammad Haji Salleh, Kemala). These poets have also been active in different time periods (i.e., pre- vs. post-independence periods). Taking into account these factors, plus personal techniques and preferences in writing, it is very likely that each poet exhibits an individual poetic style which may have potentially affected the way in which similes are created in their works.

As far as the analysis in terms of abstraction is concerned, standard directionality is the most frequently used directionality among all the five poets (see Table 8). More than 80 per cent of the similes in each case are accounted for by this directionality. In contrast, similes with reversed directionality or second-degree violation are rarely used by the poets. In fact, one of the poets (i.e. Alias) does not have any simile with second-degree violation.

Note that one of the poets (i.e. Masuri) shows a rather outstanding pattern of results compared to the others. There appears to be a rather frequent use of first-degree violation in Masuri’s similes. In particular, 14.8 per cent of his similes analysed in this study are accounted for by the first-degree violation whereas less than 10 per cent of the similes by other poets are found to be accounted for

by the same directionality.

Table 9 presents the results of each of the mapping of the similes by the five poets. Note that there is a similarity between Masuri’s standard and non-standard directionalities; both exhibit the same pattern where similes with abstract target concepts are used more frequently than the ones with concrete targets. An example of such a simile is shown below:

*Tuhan – kalau boleh aku memanggil-
Mu*

*dengan hati dan deru sehalus
bisikan wahyu*

Lord– if I could call You

with my heart and roar that are as
fine as the whisper of the revelation

(Masuri S. N, *Tuhanku*, ‘My Lord’,
1962)

In Table 10, C-A appears to be used more frequently in the similes by Kemala and Masuri, while C-C appears to be used more frequently in the similes by Usman, MHS and Alias. On the one hand, it is logical to attribute these tendencies to individual poetic styles. However, they could also be related to other factors such

TABLE 8
Overall result of analysis based on different poets (for the similes analysed on the scale of abstraction)

	Usman		MHS		Kemala		Masuri		Alias	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
Standard directionality	23	92.0	44	89.8	13	86.6	22	81.5	19	95.0
First-degree violation	1	4.0	3	6.1	1	6.7	4	14.8	1	5.0
Second-degree violation	1	4.0	2	4.1	1	6.7	1	3.7	-	-
Total	25	100.0	49	100.0	15	100.0	27	100.0	20	100.0

TABLE 9
Scale of abstraction based on different poets

Mapping	Usman		MHS		Kemala		Masuri		Alias	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
C – A	9	36.0	6	12.2	11	73.3	17	63.0	4	20.0
C – C	14	56.0	38	77.6	2	13.3	5	18.5	15	75.0
A – A	1	4.0	3	6.1	1	6.7	4	14.8	1	5.0
A – C	1	4.0	2	4.1	1	6.7	1	3.7	-	-
Total	25	100.0	49	100.0	15	100.0	27	100.0	20	100.0

TABLE 10
Overall result of the analysis based on different poets (for similes analysed on the scale of salience)

	Usman		MHS		Masuri		Alias	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Standard directionality	9	75	22	66.7	4	50.0	13	86.7
First-degree violation	3	25	10	30.3	4	50.0	1	6.7
Second-degree violation	-	-	1	3.0	-	-	1	6.7
Total	12	100.0	33	100.0	8	100.0	15	100.0

as the time when the poets were actively writing and also the themes and issues that the poets were particularly interested in. In Kemala's case, the observed tendency could be associated with his deep interest on the subject of Islamic mysticism (Mana Sikana, 1983, p. 65)⁷. Most of his poems in the data are about religion, and the frequent use of C-A mapping could partly be explained by the use of similes by Kemala in talking about abstract concepts from the RELIGION domain such as God, sins, conscience, faith and belief.

⁷Kemala is particularly renowned for his collection of Islamic poems. All of his poems are bound with spiritual elements and draw from the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad. Often in his poems, Kemala addresses issues that are complex and philosophical, and makes readers reflect again about the fundamentals of life in a quest for a much more meaningful and functional life (Mana Sikana, 1983, p. 65).

Both MHS and Alias show a higher percentage of C-C mappings than the C-A mapping and in some ways, this can be related to the themes of their poems in the corpus. A large proportion of MHS's poems in the corpus are parts of an anthology of "ceritera"⁸ (folklores), and in the poems, there are a lot of descriptions of the characters and descriptions which set the scenarios in the story. Often this is done via similes which usually involve mappings between concrete concepts, hence the frequent use of similes with C-C mapping such as *gugur bunga seungu pagi/ semerah tebing seputih awan dan seperang batang* (morning flowers fall/ as red as cliffs, as white as clouds, as brown as trunks) (Muhammad Haji Salleh, *Hari Terakhir Sebuah Hutan, The Final Days of a Forest*, 1995).

⁸There are 32 of them in total and they are based on local tales.

TABLE 11
Scale of salience based on different poets

Mapping	Usman		MHS		Masuri		Alias	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
S – NS	7	58.3	22	66.7	4	50.0	10	66.7
S – S	2	16.7	-	-	-	-	3	20.0
NS - NS	3	25.0	10	30.3	4	50.0	1	6.7
NS – S	-	-	1	3.0	-	-	1	6.7
Total	12	100.0	33	100.0	6	100.0	15	100.0

As for Alias, his writing was influenced by Williams Carlos Williams, one of the principal poets of the Imagist movement (Khoo, 2005). Some of the elements of imagism (which mainly involve concrete concepts) can be observed in his work; most of his poems in the data tend to revolve around people and ordinary objects⁹. This, in some ways, explains the frequent use of C-C than C-A mapping in the analysis of Alias's work).

Overall, as shown in Table 10, there seems to be convergence among all the four poets as far as the preference for directionality in terms of salience is concerned. The majority of the similes conform to standard directionality and very few similes display second-degree violation. In fact, two of the poets (Usman and Masuri) do not employ similes with second-degree violation in the data.

In Table 11, the results of mappings in terms of salience are further broken down into different mappings.

Notice that as far as standard directionalities are concerned, the S-S

⁹This can be observed from the titles of his poems such as: *Busur dan Panah* ('Bows and Arrows'), *Lumut* ('Moss'), *Genting* ('Mountain Pass'), *Lesung* ('Rice Mortar') (Alias, 1990).

mapping is less frequently used than the S-NS mapping in all the four poets' work. In fact, two of them (MHS and Masuri) do not employ this mapping in their similes.

Overall, the findings from this analysis show consistency across the contextual factors (historical periods and individual poets) in both analyses in terms of abstraction and analysis in terms of salience. More specifically, it appears that the preferences for certain directionalities are not affected by the different historical periods or by the different individual poets. So, the Malay data generally provides support for the claims made in CCT regarding the contextual factors.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis show that there are indeed preferences towards particular directionalities both in terms of abstraction and in terms of salience in the Malay poetic similes in the data. The preferences in these similes adhere to what Shen regards as standard and basic, and are generally not affected by the identified contextual factors. In other words, the preference for standard directionality and the lack of preference for the non-standard are found to be generally

consistent across historical periods as well as across the individual poets. These findings in many ways are important because they rule out two contextual factors that could potentially influence the tendencies in the Malay poetic data and thus, lend further support for Shen's claim about the role of cognitive constraints in the construction of poetic similes.

However, a closer scrutiny of the results shows that there are in fact small variations across the contextual factors. In the analysis based on historical periods for example, a particular directionality is used more frequently in one of the periods compared to the other. By taking into account the sub-factors that are related to the historical periods (i.e., literary movements, poetic manifestoes, themes employed in the poems), we can see how the discrepancies could occur across the time periods. There is also a slight discrepancy in the results of the individual poets, which could be attributed to their personal styles of writing.

These latter findings in many ways are important because they show an aspect of Cognitive Constraint Theory that Shen has not noted in his studies (Shen, 1995, 1997b). More specifically, the results in this study have shown that although contextual factors like historical periods and individual poets do not influence patterns of preference in poetic similes, they do affect the extent to which the cognitive constraints apply.

To conclude, the results of the findings confirm the claims made in CCT regarding regularities in figures of speech regardless of contexts such as historical periods,

language and individual poets. However, the abstraction/ salience analysis is carried out at a very high level of generality. It ignores cultural differences, the distinction between novelty and conventionality of the simile, and any elements related to the background of the data (e.g., history) and others. These issues need to be considered for a better understanding of the data and also as variables, that may affect how "natural" or comprehensible a particular simile actually is.

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Humour in Meetings: A Case Study of Power in the Malaysian Academic Context

Jariah Mohd Jan^{1*} and Nor Azikin Mohd Omar²

¹*Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

²*Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Gong Badak, 21300 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

The conceptualisation of humour as a means of communication is not new (Martineau, 1972, p. 101). Research on the social functions of humour has contributed valuable information not only on the positive psychological effect of humour, but also on the understanding of social interaction patterns and the dynamics of group structure (Martineau, 1972, p. 103). Studies from the West have indicated that humour is highly recognised as a powerful discourse to be used to wield power in workplace setting (Sollit-Morris, 1997; Holmes & Marra, 2002a; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Arfeen, 2009). This study investigates the functions of humour and the enactment of power amongst academics in asymmetrical relations. The parameters of this study are confined to the different status position of the participants who use humour to wield power during academic management meetings. Data for the study were collected from semi-formal meetings that were recorded in a local university in the state of Terengganu. The instances of humour elicited from the naturally-occurring discourse of the academic staff were categorised based on Hay's Taxonomy of Functions of Humour (1995), which mainly focuses on power in discourse. The findings revealed that the production of humour in academic management meetings is highly influenced by the status or position that one occupies.

Keywords: Humour, power, academic management meetings, workplace discourse, Malaysia

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E-mail addresses:

apdrjar@yahoo.com (Jariah Mohd Jan),

norazikin@unisza.edu.my (Nor Azikin Mohd Omar)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the functions of humour and the enactment of power by academicians of different status positions in semi-formal meetings. For the purpose of this study, the definition put forth by

Martineau (1972) is referred to identify the instances of humour while the theoretical framework of the study refers to Hay's function of humour taxonomy.

Humour is recognised as utterances that make the audience laugh. Martineau (1972, p. 114) states that "Humo[u]r is conceived generically to be any communicative instance which is perceived as humo[u]rous by any of the interacting parties." It has been recognised as an effective communication device that helps lighten the atmosphere (Miller, 1967; O'Quin & Aronoff, 1981; Lynch, 2010). Its ability to amuse is widely known and its usefulness leads to several positive functions, especially in mental and emotional relief (Spencer, 1960; Moran & Massam, 1997).

Humour is pervasive, thus, it is employed in most settings such as at hospitals (Coser, 1960), in schools (Powell & Andersen, 1985) and at workplaces (Taylor & Bain, 2003; Holmes, 2000a; Holmes, 2000b) to name a few. In a general setting where the situation is tense, humour can be a cure to alleviate stress, provide mental break and control the situation. Humour is also found to be useful in increasing attentiveness and acts as a communication tool between teachers and students (Powell & Andersen, 1985), as well as a 'survival' strategy to facilitate and overcome problems in teaching and learning (Woods, 1983).

In the workplace setting, humour is broadly used as a source to foster solidarity, fulfil free time and an ice breaker among people in different hierarchies (Holmes, 2000b), which Fairclough (2001, p. 36)

describes as unequal encounters. According to Fairclough (2001), an unequal encounter refers to interaction between non-powerful people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds with powerful people of higher status (Fairclough, 2001, p. 40).

Yet, apart from the positive functions, humour also possesses negative functions that are often deemed to disrupt the flow of work, slow down productivity and waste time (Porcu, 2005). In a workplace setting, humour can function as a boundary marker that is covertly used to assign colleagues who conform or deviate from shared social norms. Humour can be a double-edged sword where it functions to involve or stray participants from 'in group' members during discussions.

Revell (2007), who investigated functions of humour in business meetings, discovered that humour fosters solidarity among participants who constructed collaborative humour with converging speech styles. Meanwhile, speakers whose speech style is divergent from the 'in group' members were segregated from the team through humour. Revel's study concluded that humour not only signalled solidarity but also collusion, especially among those who have different shared norms.

Besides, humour can be employed to control over certain individual or group members' behaviour. In the workplace context, for instance, humour is used to perform directives whereby the superior tends to control the behaviour of his/ her subordinates and also to gain compliance (Holmes & Marra, 2002b). As such, conflict

may arise if there is opposition from subordinate. This demonstrates the negative functions of humour where it is used to control, thus, creating conflict and causing tension in situations involving social stratification. Discourse strategies used to express the conflict function of humour include irony, satire, sarcasm, caricature and parody (Stephenson, 1951).

At this juncture, the use of humour is seen to be effective in fulfilling various communicative goals. However, humour is also paradoxical and incongruent, for the challenge lies with the ability to comprehend the underlying implicit message. This is because failure to notice the speaker's intended meaning or misinterpreting the message leads to hearer being offensive. Thus, a basic knowledge of how humour functions will help interlocutors identify the intended meaning behind the humour directed to them.

The definition put forth by Martineau (1972, p. 114) is used to identify the instances of humour: "*Humo[u]r is conceived generically to be any communicative instance which is perceived as humo[u]rous by any interacting parties*". In other words, humour in this study is recognised as utterances that make the audience laugh. The intention of speakers to appear humorous is identified based on the context (Hay, 1995) in order to support the funniness of the utterances. According to Lynch (2005), understanding social context aids in comprehending humour since to understand humour, one has to be familiar with the social

contexts, which in this case are academic meetings. Hay (1995), in her study, develops a taxonomy that characterizes the functions of humour based on interactions between close friends. This framework assumes that every attempt at humour is an attempt to both express solidarity with the audience and construct a position of respect and status within the group (Hay, 1995, p. 97). The framework is deemed suitable for this study, which focuses on workplace setting for the following reasons:

- a. the taxonomy covers the functions of power which is the main concepts intended to be examined in the present study;
- b. the taxonomy provides a clear-cut view for the researcher to identify the functions of humour; and
- c. instances of humour in the present study subsume "inside jokes", which are jokes that only group members with a shared background knowledge understand (Norrick, 1993, p. 6). This is seen to be similar with the interpretation of the data from Hay (1995).

The instances of humour were categorised using Hay's Taxonomy of Functions of Humour (1995) that focuses on power. The analyses of the data in this study were also drawn on the work of Holmes (2000a) and Holmes and Marra (2002b) on subversive and repressive humour, which is essential in examining the manifestation of power in asymmetrical and symmetrical relationship at the workplace.

Hay's Functions of Humour (1995)

The first function identified by Hay is power and its functions are divided into four; namely 'conflict', 'control', 'bound' and 'tease'. Solidarity functions are also categorised into four which are 'to share', 'to highlight similarities or capitalise on shared meanings', 'to clarify and maintain boundaries' and 'to tease'. Lastly, the psychological category subsumes the functions 'to defend' and 'to cope'.

Hay uses the label "P" for humour which increases or reinforces the speaker's power and "S" for humour which maintains solidarity among speakers and interlocutors. An instance of humour is not restricted to only one type and can be dwelled into several functions all at once (ibid.:99).

In relation with the current study, the classification of the functions of humour will be limited to power functions only, as the main purpose of this study is to investigate power embedded in humour in academic settings.

Power

Humour that serves power functions is branched into four, as follows: fostering conflict, to control, to challenge and set boundaries and to tease by attacking or criticising in order to increase or maintain speakers' power.

a. Fostering Conflict

The type of humour in this category initiates or creates conflict among group members. Belittling, demeaning and uttering

aggressive messages are classified in this category.

b. To Control

Instances of humour which fall into control functions are humour that intends to influence the behaviour of the audience. Humour in this category is expected to arise in a workplace or in a situation which involves power differences among speakers. Hay (1995) states that most examples that demonstrate the attempt to dominate and influence the behaviour of the audience comes from boundP type of humour.

c. To Challenge and Set Boundaries (boundP)

According to Hay (2000, p. 107), humour can challenge existing boundaries, attempt to set new ones, create or maintain boundaries by making an example of someone present. As mentioned earlier in the clarifying and maintaining boundaries (boundS) function; humour in this category clarifies boundaries to exclude outsiders and those who deviate from social norms and shared values (Hay, 1995).

d. To Tease (P)

Teasing is associated with power when it is utilised to make a criticism for the purpose of attacking interlocutors. Commonly, teasing overlaps with the boundary category. The speaker who teases by manifesting power intends to maintain or increase his/her power in a conversation.

Repressive and Subversive Humour

Generally, past studies distinguished two types of humour that demonstrated power play among colleagues in asymmetrical and symmetrical interactions among colleagues (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Marra, 2007). The two types of humour, which function as tools to enact power in hierarchical context, are repressive and subversive humour.

According to Holmes (2000a), repressive humour, which is also known as coercive humour, is directed downward by one who is superior in ranking to those who are subordinates so as to reduce the face threat of a directive, challenge or criticism. By applying this type of humour, the superior appears less authoritarian while performing directives and acceptable since the superiors 'do power' is less explicit to reduce the emphasis on power differences. Hence, the relationship among people of different hierarchies is maintained since repressive humour reduces the possibilities of conflict because of the hedging effect it has.

While repressive humour is used to repress subordinates, subversive humour is a strategy employed by the subordinates to implicitly convey negative or critical message to their superiors. This way, the subordinates appear less defiant or rebellious in expressing disagreement. Holmes claimed that this type of humour is not so much a politeness device that attends to participants' positive or negative face needs, nor a repressive discourse device that disguises an underlying power relationship; instead, it functions as a critical

discourse device to challenge the existing authority structures (Holmes, 2000a, p. 177). Subversive humour provides the idea that power fluctuates and is not only exercised by people in the higher hierarchy but also by those people who are powerless.

WHY MEETINGS?

In many organisations, a meeting is a tool of communication to gather information for monitoring progress, reviewing organisation's work, setting plans and budgets and deciding matters related to policy (Jasnawati Jasmin, 2008), and it is proven that meetings contribute largely to the accomplishment of workplace objectives.

Meetings are also means for enacting and managing institutional power and relationship (Holmes & Marra, 2003). Sollit-Morris (1997, p. 82) stated that influence can be carried out by any person who is present in the meeting and does not restrict influence to those with authorised or a higher social status. Therefore, everyone has the opportunity to 'do power' by opposing opinions of others or standing up to present their views.

Generally, meetings are grouped into two categories. Boden (1994, as cited in Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009) distinguished the characteristics of formal and informal meetings. A formal meeting involves a large number of participants, a chairperson who allocates turns to the participants and fixes goals to be accomplished; meanwhile in an informal meeting, the conversational style is more casual and turns are self-selected (Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009).

Meetings were chosen in this study as they represented a natural setting in a specific workplace to be observed. Past research on humour which employed dependent measurement by rating laughter, jokes or cartoons (O'Quin & Aronoff, 1981, p. 350) has provided insufficient information on the linguistic aspects of humour. Besides, conventional methods such as questionnaires and interviews only provide general findings on humour without examining any real conversational data (Norrick, 1993); thus, they may not be adequate to describe the role of humour. Norrick further claimed that various forms of humour are best understood by explaining its integration in natural conversational contexts to shed light on the structure and point of both conversation and humour.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The data gathered for this study were obtained from four academic management meetings in an academic institution in the state of Terengganu in Malaysia. The meetings were audio-recorded unobtrusively in order to depict a natural flow of discourse and to allow the most natural behaviour of the participants in the discussions. A total duration of 382 minutes of natural occurring talk was recorded. The academic staff conversed primarily in English, but occasionally, they code-switched to Malay.

The researcher gained permission from the Dean of NAS to record the meetings and the consent form was approved by the Head of Department. Since the Dean and the Head of the Department had the power and

authorisation over the participants, seeking permission from all the participants was seen as not necessary.

At the first meeting, the chairperson informed all of the participants that they were being recorded for research purposes. However, there were some participants who came in late for the meetings who were unaware of the purpose of recording the meetings. Once the meeting ended, the researcher informed the late comers that they had been recorded and the purpose for the recording was also noted.

The learning institution, the faculty, the names of the participants, codes of subjects, and names of students involved in the study have been changed. Instead, pseudonyms are used to maintain the confidentiality of the data and the setting.

All the four meetings were transcribed using transcription notation from Jefferson (1978) and Jariah Mohd Jan (1999). The transcription presented the distribution of turns between speakers, occurrences of simultaneous speech, interruptions and the point when a previous speaker ceases to talk in relation to the next speaker's turn (Jariah Mohd Jan, 1999, p. 226).

All the meetings, with the exception of one, involving more than 10 participants were recorded. Consequently, not all utterances were intelligible for them to be transcribed as in the case when more than three speakers were talking all at the same time during the discussions. Thus, these aspects caused certain difficulties to the researcher to identify and transcribe the overlapping utterances. As such, these

sections were not transcribed. Nevertheless, for most parts, the utterances that were crucial and related to the current study were analyzable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the data revealed that **25 percent** of the recording contains instances of humour that illustrate power wielding between academics in the management meetings.

The elicited instances of humour were categorised into four functions based on Hay's (1995) taxonomy, with the exception of the solidarity and psychological functions. These functions were excluded since this study only focused on the aspect of power. Table 1 presents the tabulation of the occurrences of humour compiled from the recordings of the meetings with a total duration of 382 minutes.

TABLE 1
Functions of Humour that Illustrate Power according to Hay's Taxonomy (1995)

Power	N (%)
Tease	17 (36.17%)
Control	15 (31.91%)
Bound	10 (21.28%)
Conflict	5 (10.64%)
Total	47 (25%)

Table 1 presents the functions of humour that display authority produced in the respective meetings among the academicians. For the power category, teasing received the highest percentage (36.17%), while conflict occurred the least (10.64%) in all of the four meetings recorded.

Power

There is approximately 25 percent of humour used to boost power in the four meetings recorded. In particular, subversive and repressive humour was found utilised through the use of four functions of humour with the purpose of enacting power. The next section presents examples from the data for each of the functions of humour in relation to power, namely, tease, control, bound and conflict.

a. Tease

The occurrence of humour that functions to tease interlocutors in tandem with the assertion of power in all meetings recorded is 36.17 percent. Teasing received the highest percentage of humour in relation to exerting power. The data suggested that teasing, manifested with power, overlaps with boundary functions since it excludes those who deviate from shared opinions. Teasing which boosts speakers' power was also found by Hay (1995) in her study of gender and humour.

Example 1

Meeting 1: MM asks SL about the prizes for the best facilitator award of the TESL camp.

[...]

[1178] SM: so faci award should be / SL / ES and / AN cannot be in that committee right/ so sixteen thirteen only / because you're the leader/ leader cannot

- [1179] SL: it doesn't say
 [1180] SM: normally leader (cannot)
 @ (all laugh)
 [1181] MM: *apa yang dapat pun?*
 (what will we get?)
 [1182] SM: ha::: *dapat i pad*
 (get)
 [1183] SL: (i pack)
 @ (all laugh)

In Meeting 1, SL is the only senior lecturer, while SM and MM are junior colleagues. In Example 1, lines [1182-1183] present an instance of teasing with assertion of power by SL that is directed towards SM. In line [1178], MM initiates a sceptical comment about the prize that is provided for the winner of the best facilitator. Prior to the segment analysed, MM mentioned the *ipad* during the meeting and SM brings it up once again [line 1182] for the purpose of **ridiculing** MM. SL, who takes the turn just after SM's contribution, gains laughter from the team members with his comment directed towards SM. SL mimics the word *ipack* [line 1183] to appear amusing and also to criticise SM.

The participants laughed conspiratorially – which builds solidarity among them. However, the laughter also presents a form of authority enacted by SL. SL, who was previously **excluded** from the discussion group (see Example 1, lines [1178-1180]), re-asserts her power to gain control over the meeting. She (SL) is challenged by SM who states that leaders cannot be nominated for the best facilitator award for the TESL camp. The teasing towards SM indirectly puts SL in a position of power during the discussion.

b. Control

The occurrence of humour that functions to control the behaviour of the participants in the recordings of the total meetings was 31.91 percent, as illustrated in Table 1. The data suggested that humour in this category was commonly employed by one who is superior in ranking to his/ her subordinates, which is in tandem with Sollit-Morris' (1997), Holmes' (2000b) and Arfeen's (2009) findings.

Example 2

Meeting 1: SL explains the duty- time slot she has allocated for every facilitator involved in the TESL camp.

- [...]
 [380] SM: oh / i'm six / (of course
 the leader / only one /
 extra
 @ (SL smiles)
 [381] SL: *ni / <i'm six / MM's
 seven>*
 (this)
 @ <points to the
 schedule>
 [382] SM: (oh okay)
 @ (SL laughs)
 [383] SL: okay / okay /
 motivational talk / er /
 why i put you there you
 SM / because / because
 of merit demerit / and
 then / <just to fill
 In your six times>
 @ <laughs>

In Example 2, lines [380-383], the chairperson, SL, who is of a higher rank

in this context and also one of the leaders of the TESL camp project, is seen to exert her power to SM, which compels him to conform to her instructions. The smiles and laughter by SL (in lines 380 – 382) softens the demand she had made on SM and also to gain compliance so that he performs the task. In this particular instance, the use of laughter can be interpreted as a strategy by a superior to make a subordinate conform to the task she has assigned. It is used to soften the demand and is directed by a superior (SL) to a subordinate (SM) to ensure that SM conforms to SL's order. At the same time, SL appears less demanding by producing laughter, while performing directives to a person who is of a lower rank. The intention is to control the behaviour of a lower ranked academic staff. This is an instance of repressive humour as it minimises the face threatening act and softens speech acts such as directives and criticisms (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003).

c. Bound

The occurrence of humour that functions to create boundaries for those who have deviated from the social norms and shared values in the meetings recorded is 21.28 percent. It is found that with this type of humour, power fluctuates where it can be enacted by people regardless of the status they hold in a hierarchical environment.

Example 3

Meeting 3: AN asks whether the team needs an additional facilitator for the trip to the Syahbandar Esplanade Park.

[...]

[689] ES: one more / one more

[690] AN: so we need one more location?

[691] SL: no faci

[692] ZN: faci faci

[693] MM: okay (thank you AN) / oh the camera man can <follow>

@ (all laugh)

@ <looks at the researcher>

[694] AN: it's the camera (woman) @ (all laugh)

In Example 3, ES, AN and SL are senior lecturers, while MM and ZN are junior colleagues. Lines [689-694] present an evidence of how humour clarifies boundaries on a particular person who is perceived to have deviated from the on-going discussion. In line [690], AN misunderstands the information provided by the team members and thinks that ES is asking for one more facilitator for the trip to the Syahbandar Esplanade Park. AN's turn that appears as an offer to help contribute ideas for the trip [line 690] is consequently **ridiculed** by MM since he has posed a wrong question. Further, MM who sits beside AN directs an ironic *thank you* to AN [line 693], which in fact indicates a contrast to what he really means. The comment by MM invites chuckles and great laughter from the participants. Hence, the laughter creates a boundary between

AN and the other members because he has deviated from the discussion.

It is noted that the ironic remark produced by MM is an evidence of subversive humour [line 693]. Subversive humour is a type of humour which is directed by a subordinate to challenge and make a criticism levelled at colleagues who are of a higher rank. In this case, MM produces a humorous contribution to challenge AN's status in the meeting.

In line [694], AN, who has previously been ridiculed by MM and the participants, further initiates a contribution that acts as an effective strategy to challenge MM's attack on him. AN reasserts his power and control in the conversation by repairing MM's contribution who mistakenly refers to the researcher as a camera man. This presents AN's contribution to be perceived as humorous by the team members and it produces laughter from them.

The humour produced by AN boosts his power and creates a boundary between MM and the team members. This example shows evidence that power fluctuates and can be exercised to regain status and control over the conversation through the use of humour (Fairclough, 2001; Jariah Mohd. Jan, 2003).

d. Conflict

According to Hay (1995), humour in this category tends to create conflict between the speakers and interlocutors. The occurrence of conflict humour is 10.64 percent and it was found to be the least popular type of humour produced by the academicians. In particular, this type of humour was commonly directed

by colleagues in symmetrical relationship who also hold similar positions in the department.

Example 4

Meeting 2: The participants are discussing the answer written by a student in a particular exam as to whether the answer is acceptable or irrelevant.

[...]

[247] AN: i was active in sport both in school and in the university / in my School, i was selected as the head prefect in my final year / i was also the president of the girl's guide association

[248] ML: not relevant

[249] AN: but in the university i was the president of the tennis bla bla bla / i think it's perfect

[250] ML: no:::

[251] AN: because it's school / and then it's university / it talks about the experience

[252] ML: (...)

[253] TP: but it's not sports / because prefect / <prefect> / (...) / half a mark / @ <shakes head>

[254] AN: <kesian?> (pity?) @ <looks at TP>

- [255] TP: yeah (<*kesian*>) / yeah
 half / half
 (pity)
 @ <laughs>
 @ (all laugh)
 [256] ML: (for writing)
 @ (all laugh)
 [257] NZ: yeah

All the interlocutors in this excerpt (namely, AN, ML, TP and NZ) are senior lecturers. In Example 4, lines [247-257] show an instance of humour that has the potential to initiate a conflict between AN and the other participants. In line [247], AN attempts to defend the answer provided by his student and tries to convince the rest that the student's response is acceptable and related to the answer scheme. However, all the team members disagree and claim that the answer is irrelevant.

ML, who is a PhD holder, interrupts AN by firmly stating that the answer is irrelevant [line 248]. ML's opinion is supported by TP who comes to the decision that the answer is worth only half a mark, not because of the content but because the student has put some effort to write the answer [line 256]. Besides, the lexical item *kesian* (pity) [line 252-253] indicated is directed mockingly towards the particular student and provokes laughter from the team members.

TP and ML, who are senior lecturers just like AN, are exercising their power to challenge AN's opinion. The laughter from the colleagues is a response indicating that TP and ML's opinions are strongly supported by the participants. It is apparent that the laughter initiated by the team

members could lead to a conflict because of contradictions in opinions. AN was laughed at by his colleagues, indicating that he is being belittled.

The occurrence of laughter is also categorised into the boundary function, which divides AN from the social group because he has deviated from the agreed decision. As Hay (1995) stated, an instance of boundary humour that is exercised with power excludes those who deviate from social norms and shared values. This example illustrates that AN is excluded from the group and that is how conflict can be initiated.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that humour, manifested with power, has numerous functions. These functions included teasing team members, controlling the behaviour of the participants, creating boundaries for those straying away from the discussion during the course of the meeting and initiating conflict among the speakers and the interlocutors.

It was observed that repressive humour was used by the superiors while issuing directives or passing criticisms to the junior participants. It was utilised to signal mistakes of others and to control their contributions during the meetings. Through repressive humour, the team members of the higher ranking gain compliance by getting other participants to agree with their views and conform to their instructions. The use of repressive humour also helps to tone down directives thus minimising the face

threatening acts of the interlocutor. By applying this type of humour, the senior participants appear less authoritative while performing directives since the enactment of power play is less explicit. Thus, the researcher asserts that the use of repressive humour by the senior academicians in the Malaysian academic context functions primarily to maintain positive relationships with their colleagues.

Meanwhile, the junior staff in this study use subversive humour to implicitly oppose those of higher authority and also challenge those who deviate from the discussions. In other words, it helps them to implicitly reduce the power and dominance of the senior staff in the meetings. Subversive humour provides the idea that power fluctuates and it is also exercised by people with less power.

Although humour was not found to be employed at all times during the meetings (note that the findings indicated only 25 percent humour was used in the four meetings recorded), it is perceived as one of the components of workplace discourse that can be used to challenge a person's status in the Malaysian workplace context.

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Norms of Language Choice and Use in Relation to Listening and Speaking: The Realities of the Practice in the Malaysian Banking Sector

Chan Swee Heng* and Ain Nadzimah Abdullah

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Sociolinguists have pointed to the current linguistic development of the present era as being marked by a complex interplay of sociolinguistic concerns, among which are contradictions between global networks, local identities, (Barber, 1995; Castells, 2000), and also in norms in language choice and use. Economic and social globalization has created a strong demand for an international lingua franca, thus furthering English's presence as a global language (Crystal, 1997). However, local languages remain influential and exert a presence in a multilingual situation. This study attempts to relate the use of the global language to that of the local languages in the Malaysian banking sector which plays a dominant role as an economic powerhouse. Within this financial sector, the matrix of language as a medium of expression provides a setting for investigating situated norms of language choice and use among multilingual employees in the Malaysian banking sector. Data were collected via a survey questionnaire. Fishman's (1972) theoretical framework is adopted and extended to the workplace context in order to examine the intricacies of the norms of language choice and use in relation to specifically the listening and speaking skills. These two language skills have been prioritized by Malaysian employees as the most needed in the workplace (Abdullah *et al.*, 2010). The study gives focus to these two skills and the specific domains of use to illustrate the competing patterns of language choice in a multilingual Malaysian workplace.

Keywords: Language choice, domains of use, listening and speaking, multilingual, banks

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E-mail addresses:

shchan@upm.edu.my (Chan Swee Heng),

ain@upm.edu.my (Ain Nadzimah Abdullah)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

The roots of the present linguistic landscape in Malaysia could be traced back to the

British colonial times. The education scene then was one of accommodation and in some sense also of imperialistic dominance. While native schools were allowed (such as the Malay-, Chinese- and Tamil-medium schools), the British introduced the English-medium schools, which were set up mainly by missionaries to propagate their beliefs and systems. Pre-independence schools were of a medley resulting in differing emphases given to the development of languages. This development was very much left in the hands of various influential organizations giving them a free hand to determine language learning directions and status. Post-independence in Malaysia witnessed a major change in the education system as it became more formalized with a local flavour with the passing of legislation to govern its structure and development. In order to understand the present day use of the dominant languages in Malaysia – Bahasa Malaysia (henceforth BM), English, Chinese and Indian – some information about language development would situate language use.

Language choice and use in Malaysia is determined by a number of factors, among which, is the sociological make-up of her multi-ethnic and multilingual society. The three major ethnic groups are the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. Each of these groups speaks their own ethnic languages and also often uses English as well. The languages spoken by each ethnic group may transcend ethnic boundaries. For example, a Malay may speak other ethnic languages besides BM. Similarly, a

Chinese may speak other ethnic languages besides a Chinese language. However, BM is accorded the status and role of national and official language in the country. On the other hand, Mandarin and Tamil are the recognized vernacular languages which are used as mediums of instruction in vernacular primary schools. English has emerged and has been recognized as the second most important language in the country because of its role as an undisputed global language of the 21st century. As a result, English is learned by all in Malaysian schools. Thus, it could be said that the language policy in Malaysia is one that promotes multilingualism (Kärchner-Ober, 2011, p. 24).

Under the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, BM is “the national language” of the country, for “official uses”, that is to say, for “any purpose of the Government, whether Federal or State, and includes any purpose of a public authority” [Federal Constitution, Article 152, (1) & (6)]. The Constitution has thus elevated the status of BM, as well as defined the domains of its functions and use. In other words, the Constitution has provided both corpus and status planning for the language. In a similar vein, the Government has also done the same for the vernacular languages. The English language is emphasized in schools and reflects acquisition planning. These government-led policy initiatives were well implemented especially within school confines. However, the beyond school-confined language practices speak of changes that had mutated into a

fashion far diverse from that of the formal education practice. This may be evident in the workplace, where a covert language policy appears to have evolved. The covert language policy in a workplace situation appears to be determined by a myriad of operations that include the nature of business, staff, corporate ideology and other pragmatic issues. Any language choice and use decision is thus located in very complex and often unpredictable situations. In face of the dynamism of change and growth in a linguistic environment, research into the area of language use invites further participation and is invigorating. The study of language choice and use acts as a store of history and contributes to human knowledge; it is interesting in itself. From the investigative process, outcomes could provide unique views on a particular linguistic ecology that could speak of notable synergy in language practices and its sustainability.

SOME RELATED STUDIES

Government-led language policies are well-defined by Cooper (1990). However, it is clear that policies can also be institutionally led, as pointed by Poon (2000), who sees 'language policy as either a macro- or micro-sociological activity that involves deliberate and organized efforts to solve language problems' (p. 117). Using Cooper's seminal ideas as a pivot, Poon postulates that language policy derived from language planning can be viewed from four angles. The first relates to the normal government-led language policy that is closely tied to corpus planning. The other arises in the

absence of formal language planning. This is associated with acquisition planning. Non-government-led language policies deal with acquisition planning or corpus planning (2000, p. 125). Thus, there can be an explicit and official policy (dealing with status planning or corpus planning) or an implicit and unofficial policy that arises if it is institutionally-led, for example, in the workplace domain. While language planning is often government-led, language policy is not necessarily so. In fact, different language policies could operate in a wider range of situations. These situations may extend to the workplace and often exhibit particular norms of language use.

Spolsky (2009) uses the term language policy in a more encompassing manner. He says it refers to 'all the language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community or policy' (p. 9). In other words, language practices are situated in the ecology of a language and emphasize actual language use in different contexts and for various reasons, echoing Fishman's postulations. Spolsky prefers the term 'language management' rather than language policy to refer to specific actions undertaken to intervene in or influence language practices. He also points out that the domain of language management can be used to explain the state of multilingualism and social structure. In using the model, it could lead to the formulation of more precise hypothesis about language use which could contribute to a theory of language management. Moreover, language planning and policy decisions are power-related and

are always 'socially situated and continually evolving' (Ricento, 2000, p. 2). In view of these elaborations, language can be said to be a social institution that appears to be used for multiple purposes such as in politics, literature, economics, religion, and education.

Language planning and policy is further complicated when nations are multilingual. As a result of multilingualism, language disputes are often evident in communities around the world which have differences in opinions about language prioritization issues and problems. This is particularly so among developing nations who are still "finding their feet" in national and social spheres. Malaysia is one such example, where multilingualism is thriving, and as a result, the language policy of the nation must take into account this linguistic phenomenon to accommodate the language needs of the communities which would be responsible for language use. According to Crystal (2000), language diversity that could arise from multilingualism, in fact, is important for a number of reasons. We have to recognize that language ecology is diverse, and is closely linked to identity. In this study, identity is assumed to be of a corporate nature in data interpretation.

According to Grin (1996), the connection between language and economy is an aspect of sociolinguistic study that is seen as an emerging field. He identifies one of the key issues that could influence research as that of "language-based distributional inequality" and this applies to the economics of language, whereby economic variables

will have a part to play in determining the norms of language choice and use. Therefore, there can be a focus on language as a medium of trade with concepts of supply, demand and the market applying to language goods. He concluded that studying the relationship between economics or economic activity and language would lead to an essential understanding of language-related processes that would also have implications for language policy studies.

Linked to language policy and planning is also attitudinal change. In his work, Jenkins (2006) said that the use of English, as the language of globalization and also as a super-ordinate language, has given rise to a sense of inferiority among the non-native speakers of English. However, he believes that this sense of inferiority can diminish as the majority of speakers of other languages see themselves as at least equal alongside native speakers of English. This gradual development to minimize linguistic insecurity would take time but he affirms that it eventually could be overcome.

Similarly, Mufwene (2008) opines that language change is gradual and cumulative. The restructuring process is reflected in his case studies which demonstrated how the ecology of a language is able to influence its evolution. He compared language spread to a model from virology. He also elaborates on the metaphor of a flu epidemic that can be caught in the process of transmission and acquisition brought about through interactions. His reference links social dynamics in ecology such as population movement, contact and hybridism, to explain how languages evolve.

In terms of language practices, as part of social dynamics that influence a language policy, Chan *et al.* (2008) investigated norms of language use in the Malaysian workplace. They discussed pragmatic rationalizations that affect English language use, which is linked to the issue of advantages and rewards. Useful language practice is efficient and delivers products and services faster, better and cheaper. The production and delivery of goods and services is in synergy with social interactions and communication often determined by prior education experience. They concluded that a new economic-driven culture characterizes the 21st century Malaysian workplace, and this culture emphasizes and exerts new demands on employee skills (which includes communication skills), which in turn, places new demands on the provision of education. Similarly, Gill (2002) also states that Malaysians must be pragmatic in their quest to achieve global competitiveness in the context of education, community and the nation.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This paper locates language choice and use as a field of inquiry with a focus on the Malaysian banking workplace domain. The framework is grounded on Fishman's (1972) theory of language choice which uses domain analysis as a method of data collection. Domain analysis, in simple terms, refers to "*who speaks what language to whom and when*" (our italics). Fishman also asserted that "Proper usage indicates that only *one* of the theoretically co-available languages

or varieties *will* be chosen by particular classes or *interlocutors* on particular kinds of *occasions* to discuss particular kinds of *topics*" (1972, p. 15). This study analyzed language choice and patterns of language use in the banking domain from the social and socio-psychological perspectives that could lead to an illumination of a language policy in practice. However, only two skills (listening and speaking) were analyzed in this paper. These two language skills have been prioritized by Malaysian employees as the most needed in the workplace (Abdullah, Chan, & Talif, 2010). The aural-oral tradition normally provides the starting point of language learning, and therefore, the relevance placed on these two skills, especially, when speaking is a skill that is 'heard' and is prominently used at the frontline for business transactions.

METHODOLOGY

For this paper, the respondents were selected from the banking industry in the state of Selangor. Selangor was chosen as the research site as it houses most of the major financial institutions in the country. The number of respondents is 39, and they were from 8 different banking institutions. Undeniably, 39 is a small number, but it could still be considered as a fair number to give sufficient initial data for the analysis. In addition, the banking industry is not an open institution in which research can be conducted easily. Most of the professionals are extremely busy and would decline to participate in studies that they perceive as having little relevance to their work. As

such, personal contact was a determining approach taken in obtaining data for this study.

A questionnaire was designed and administered to obtain the relevant information. The questionnaire attempts to capture information. The questionnaire is organized accordingly in sections: a) attitude towards languages, and b) language use in banking in relation to frequency of use and skill ability. A five-point Likert scale was used to elucidate responses to the questions according to domains of use. The results were analyzed and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages.

To exploit domain use of language, contexts of language use had to be established. Fishman (1968) explains domains in the following way:

Domains are defined in terms of institutional contexts or socio-ecological co-occurrences. They attempt to designate the major clusters of interaction situations that occur in particular multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic... are ... related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations. (p. 176)

It is clear that language choice is a sociolinguistic phenomenon which refers to the selection of languages for different purposes in different contexts. The choice of languages may be conscious or unconscious, but it does not happen in a vacuum; rather, language operates in a context which is

situated in a speech community. Multilingual speech communities inevitably face conflict over language choice. Language choice and use in multilingual speech communities can take place at two levels: macro and micro. The next section discusses the findings obtained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An item total reliability index was calculated (Cronbach Alpha), which turned out to be very high (i.e., 0.98). Information on the racial composition of the respondents is as follows: Chinese (46.2%), Malays (38.5%), and Indian (15.4%). In terms of gender, 26.6% were male and 74.4% female. As for age, the respondents are of: 21-30 years (76.9%), 31-40 years (10.3%), and 41-50 years (12.8%). The data also revealed their job descriptions as: managerial (20.5%), executive (51.3%) and clerical (25.6%). Only 5.1% reported that the English language is their mother tongue, while 35.9% claimed BM as their mother tongue, and 43.6% the Chinese language. The respondents' educational background is as follows: certificate-level (23.1%), degree (64.1%), post-graduate (7.7%) and professional (5.1%). They were attached to various departments: sales and marketing (38.5%), finance (18%), credit and leasing (25.7%), and international banking (15.4%).

General Attitudes toward Languages

Nine questions were asked to ascertain the general attitude toward the different major languages used in Malaysia – Bahasa Malaysia, English, Chinese, and Indian.

The responses were categorized into those that refer to the affective, motivation and language maintenance. For the affective category, questions were asked as to whether the language is important, beautiful to speak, good for expressing emotions and thoughts. Generally, the respondents strongly agreed that English is a beautiful language to speak (69.2%), followed by BM (48.6%), and Chinese (54.3%). There is a similar pattern for the response to the language as being very important for Malaysia. The figures revealed this pattern [Agree (A) to Strongly Agree (SA)]: English (A=25.6%, SA=69.2%), BM (A=43.2%, SA=45.9%), Chinese (A=37.1%, SA=25.7%) and Indian (A=9.4%, SA=15.6%). It is obvious that the English language is considered to be very important, followed by BM, Chinese and Indian. It is interesting to note that the strongly agree (SA) data show English as the most prominent and the Indian language has the lowest rating. In addition, it seems that English is the language that the respondents felt was best for expressing emotions [English (A=20.5%, SA=74.4%), BM (A=27.0%, SA=37.8%), Chinese (A=22.9%, SA=34.3%) and Indian (A=12.5%, SA=9.4%)] and thoughts [English (A=10.3%, SA=79.5%), BM (A=35.1%, SA=45.9%), Chinese (A=17.1%, SA=37.1%) and Indian (A=9.4%, SA=6.3%)]. It appears that English has transcended cultural boundaries in the use of language in these two affective domains.

As for motivation, it is again English that dominates. The figures are as follows: using this language will allow me to have a

more comfortable life (English: A=10.3%, SA=89.7% BM: A= 27.0%, SA=40.5%; Chinese: A=25.7%, SA=40.0%; Indian: A=6.3%, SA=9.4%). In this domain, BM and Chinese were rated in almost a similar manner. This appears to suggest that both these languages have dominance in the relationship between language and motivation.

When asked whether learning the language was boring, the respondents felt that learning languages is generally boring. This is shown in the following figures: BM (A=33.3%, SA=27.8%), English language (A=21.1%, SA= 23.7%), Chinese (A=20.6%, SA=11.84%) and Indian (A=12.9%, SA=3.2%). Among the languages, the interest level for learning BM appears to be very low, whereas the interest level for English was relatively higher.

The next section focuses on the listening and speaking skills. The respondents believe that speaking the language correctly is not a priority. Data on the item of speaking accuracy revealed a strong sense of pragmatic competence. The following results were obtained for accuracy: English (A=15.4%, SA=12.8%), BM (A=5.4%, SA=16.2%), Chinese (A=2.9%, SA=11.4%) and Indian (A=12.5%, SA=9.4%). These figures are relatively low and thus appear to support the notion of pragmatic consideration over accuracy.

English was most prominently placed about wanting generational continuity in language use (A=23.1%, SA=71.8%). This was followed by BM (A=32.4%, SA=54.1%), Chinese (A=38.2%, SA=32.4%), and Indian

(A=25.0%, SA=18.8%). For the languages to be maintained by the Malaysian society, it could be said that English is placed as the most important for maintenance. BM is also highly emphasized, with the Chinese and Indian languages given less emphasis but with notable figures.

Language and Banking

It was reported that the language that is most frequently used in the banking sector is English, followed by BM, Chinese and Indian, in that order. Three questions were asked about language and career. They were: whether language will take one further in his career, if it will help one to get a job easily, and if one can earn more money if one is proficient in the language. From the data, it seems clear that English dominates the other languages in being the necessary language for career advancement (A=13.2%, SA=78.9%), ease of getting a job (A= 23.2%, SA=75.2%) and the potential to earn more money (A= 22.4%, SA=71.3%).

Frequency of Used Based on Sub-skills

In terms of the sub-skills, what stands out most as the most frequently used skill is listening. This appears to support research conducted at Universiti Putra Malaysia (Talif *et al.*, 2010), which investigated language use in the Malaysian workplace. The findings of the study also pointed out that listening is the most needed skill in the Malaysian workplace. Meanwhile, data for the present study showed that the least used skill is writing for all the languages being investigated: BM (44.5%), English (8.1%),

Chinese (68.8%) and Indian (93.5%), although the figures revealed that writing in BM is less frequent than writing in English. The two other languages were considered to be infrequently used for writing.

Language Choice and Use for Listening and Speaking in the Banking Workplace

The data are presented in percentages to reveal the relative proportions of the frequency of use for a particular language event or situation in terms of the three major languages (BM, English and Chinese) in the banking work domain. The number of participants who use the Indian language (less than 5%) for this work domain was extremely low; therefore, it was discounted for reporting in this section. The data for *agree* and *strongly agree* were also collapsed for ease of discussion in this section. The two language skills are also reported together as they are strongly associated in the manner of use.

Table 1 shows the listening and speaking activities that take place in the banking workplace. English is obviously the dominant language used in the listening and speaking activities. As reported by the participants, use of English was most often in the domains of meetings and using the telephone. The activities that had responses of 80 per cent and above were talking to clients, as well as conversing with peers and superiors. In the case of BM, it is clearly the second most often used language in the banking sector. However, the percentages showed a marked difference when compared to English. The highest percentage recorded

for the use of BM in the list of listening and speaking activities was 56.7% (social activities). Therefore, it seems that the proportion of English used for banking workplace activities is very high. Pragmatic competence in the English language ranks high among the languages in this work domain. Compared to English and BM, the Chinese language is not as regularly used. This is not surprising as the Chinese language is considered a vernacular and therefore not emphasized. However, it is not a language to be discounted as the data also revealed that there is noticeable use of the language in the workplace, particularly in social activities, talking to clients, training and conversing with peers.

Language Ability (Listening and Speaking) for Use in the Banking Workplace

Table 2 shows language ability for use in the banking workplace for specific workplace activities. It seems that the ability to use the English language for activities like problem-solving, greetings, giving directions and

giving training is rated high. Interestingly, the respondents also rated themselves as very highly (100%) for problem solving in the ability to use the English language. For BM, the lowly rated abilities were giving directions and giving instructions. In this sense, abilities could be linked to frequency of use. If this is the connection, then it could be that English is the preferred language for the functions identified. It may be that the workplace has conditioned the nature of language use as associated with specific work functions. Therefore, there is likelihood that giving directions and instructions are traditionally more grounded in the use of English rather than in BM.

On the other hand, handling questions and giving replies (83.3%) and greetings (72.3%) were two the functions that were most highly associated with the BM. The two functions seemed to be more social-cultural in association. BM appears to evidence its acceptance as the intra-national language for wider communication in Malaysia. It could also be the case that

TABLE 1
Listening and Speaking Activities in the Banking Workplace

Listening and Speaking Activities	Often to Very Often (%)		
	BM	English	Chinese
Training	43.6	92.4	20.6
Meetings	41.0	97.4	18.0
Talking to clients	48.6	84.9	30.6
Social activities	56.7	92.3	38.8
Conversing with peers	37.8	89.7	20.6
Conversing with superiors	29.7	87.2	14.7
Conversing with subordinates	25.1	94.9	19.6
Answering telephone calls	43.2	97.4	17.7
Presentations	32.4	92.3	11.7

a response given may be dependent on the first instance of language used by the initiator in the communication. The Chinese language appears to be quite well-grounded in use among bank employees judging by the response of a reasonable proportion of Chinese language users who were confident enough to say that they are able to use the language for a variety of functions. In particular, their responses (Agree to Strongly Agree) ranged from 37.2% to 42.9%. The functional abilities in English and Chinese were rather consistent while that in BM appeared to fluctuate more. This could mean that the setting of the banking workplace had a great influence on language use, i.e. the setting predominantly favours the use of the English language. It is also interesting to note that as a result of the setting, the dominant language (BM) learnt at school was not likely to experience a transfer to being the most dominant language in the workplace situation.

CONCLUSION

The language situation in Malaysia reflects a state of co-existence of languages and must be regarded as an asset rather than a liability. Since monolingualism among language users is the exception rather than the rule, and as has been acknowledged universally, a bilingual scenario of this nature is most desirable. In effect, mastering two languages or three has always been promoted by the educational management in Malaysia and ample opportunities have been given to students to acquire a second or a third language. As a result of historical developments, Malaysian students have been moulded to become multilinguals.

Multilingualism allows people to access two or more languages, giving a choice in using languages for different purposes in different contexts. Language choice may be constrained by several factors, and these include language attitude, interlocutor, setting and profession. Within the profession,

TABLE 2
Language Ability (Listening and Speaking) for Use in the Banking Workplace

Language ability	Agree to Strongly Agree (%)		
	BM	English	Chinese
Handling questions and giving replies	83.3	89.7	37.2
Giving information about bank services	66.6	89.7	40.0
Giving directions	48.6	92.3	37.2
Giving instructions	53.8	87.2	37.2
Persuading clients to buy products	63.9	84.6	37.2
Greetings	72.3	92.3	42.9
Reassuring clients	66.7	87.1	37.2
Giving training	61.1	90.1	37.2
Conduct meetings	63.9	87.1	37.2
Making oral presentations	66.7	87.1	37.2
Problem-solving	69.4	100.0	40.0

there are different domains of use and these domains are similarly influenced by the factors that affect language choice.

According to the Harvard Education Gazette, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures, Sommer (2011), is strongly putting the case that a multilingual society is a rich one, full of nuances and possibilities for expression impossible in just one language. A multilingual culture, she said, is also necessary so that differences can coexist in the world today. She also goes on to say that developing an appreciation for the limits of one's own language, as well as for other cultures, tongues, and people, is increasingly necessary in today's world because trade is not the only thing that is being globalized. She emphasizes that modern life, in effect is a multilingual space.

The data suggest that of the languages used in Malaysia, English has been clearly identified as having a distinct relative advantage over other languages and its status is confirmed by the emphasis given by workplace employees in the banking sector in this study. Its use pervades in all the domains of listening and speaking, ranging over 80% in frequency of use for the identified activities. Rewards are clearly economic, related to job opportunities and career advancement. Hence, the ability to use English proficiently is perceived by most employees as a necessity.

In terms of ability, all the incumbent employees believe that they have a very strong ability to use the English language to carry out the tasks demanded by the job. BM was rated second in the magnitude of

use with the Chinese language showing that it has a more significant placing than the Tamil language. This trend reflects the entrenchment of the use of the global language, English, with local languages thriving and competing in the multilingual environment.

However, it was surprising to note that many of the employees claimed that they were more able to use English than BM in the discharging of their workplace duties. Though BM is a language learnt at school, it appears to have suffered some dislodgement in the banking workplace. This could also likely lead to a state of language attrition due to lesser use and contact with the language learnt in school and used as a medium of instruction.

The sample size in this study is rather small to make broad generalizations about language choice and use in the banking sector. However, the consistency of the statistics on the language phenomenon does point to several implications. The most obvious is the operation of a covert language policy or language management that appears to be institutionally-led, a notion suggested by Poon (2000) and Spolsky (2009). Secondly, it appears impossible to stop the tide towards the creation of what Sommer notes as "multilingual space" in the modern world. It gives cognizance to the fact that modern life assumes and exudes a mood of language accommodation with realizations that there are limitations of one language to perform all societal functions in a community, and by extension to the workplace community. Thus, there

is the possibility of peaceful coexistence of different cultures and tongues in the community.

In face of language diversity and multilingualism, and a natural, relentless subversive march of one language to dominate over another or others, there are concerns expressed about the loss of languages and language types (Gupta, 2001). Studies of language change have recognised that language is a social construct related to human behaviour. As such, any language shift is seen to occur in the context of cultural change, which is a natural consequence over time. With change comes eventual acceptance, and as Gupta says, the change is not “to be deplored nor celebrated”. Rather, the situation acknowledges linguistic diversity and language rights. Language planners could give due consideration to the sustaining of the vitality of languages, coupled with an understanding of the social economic ecologies under which language continues to evolve from stage to stage.

Malaysia is in no way unique in using English as the dominant language in a workplace. In line with modernization, international recognition, and the desire for progress, the English language seems to be the logical language of choice, and likely a language for the educational authorities to promote for workplace needs. The national and official language, BM, together with the English language, seems to be best suited to accomplish this goal of economic and industrial development. English, as an ESP subject, will continue to have relevance for workplace preparation, as evident in the

language curriculum of many Malaysian universities. There is much to be done to ensure that these courses provide the needed experience to meet the functional needs in the workplace, and much thought has to be given to how these courses should be designed (refer to Fadhil Mansor, 2001, for an illustration of ESP design in a university language curriculum) to satisfy pragmatic competence without sacrificing linguistic competence. However, other languages will continue to play their roles as parts of the multilingual’s repertoire of languages which can be drawn upon constantly for the context of operation. This multilingual competency is a desired state and should be encouraged, given the robust realities of language choice and use.

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Grotesque Representations of Deviant Sexuality in Ian McEwan's Selected Short Stories

Nahid Shahbazi Moghadam* and Arbaayah Ali Termizi

Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Themes of sexuality, particularly in excessive and extraordinary forms, can readily merge into the grotesque to ameliorate their depiction and thematic impact. Ian McEwan's early fiction best exemplifies such inclinations. The psychologically violent and excessive world of McEwan's early fiction is basically conceived in the milieu of sex and through grotesque representations. In this relation, the present work selectively focuses on "Solid Geometry" from *First Love, last Rites* (1975) and "Reflections of a kept Ape" and "Dead as they Come" from *In between the Sheets* (1978) to illustrate the implication and range of the grotesque in McEwan's short fiction. The selected stories are discussed for their portrayal of the grotesque, as represented through transgressive partnership and deviant sexuality. The portrayal of sexuality in McEwan's early short fiction offers a variety of the grotesque types of narrative mingling the mode both with the fantastic and the caricature.

Keywords: Ian McEwan, grotesque, deviant sexuality, "Solid Geometry", "Reflections of a Kept Ape", "Dead as they Come"

INTRODUCTION

In 1970s, two collections of short stories by Ian McEwan introduced an author who simply shocked not only the average but also the prolific intelligent readers. These

stories are plentiful in representing a wide range of scatological images such as "bodily fluid, excrement, genitalia, unsavoury odours" (Malcolm, 2002, p. 40) and subject matters involving "acts of sexual abuse, sadistic torment and pure insanity" (Ryan, 1994, p. 2). Such images and subject matters are among those very much inclined to the mode of the grotesque. Obviously, the trend is more prevalent in McEwan's early works, including his two collections of short

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E-mail addresses:

nahid@live.com.my (Nahid Shahbazi Moghadam),

arbaayah@upm.edu.my (Arbaayah Ali Termizi)

* Corresponding author

stories, *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) and *In between the Sheet* (1979), as well as his first two novels, *The Cement Garden* (1979) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981). In this regard, the present work focuses on three of McEwan's short stories from both collections so as to discuss and interpret their portrayal of the grotesque. The aim is to show that some of his short fictions, as epitomized in the selected stories, convey inner conflicts and relationship pitfalls through a fundamental depiction of the grotesque in the context of sexual deviations and emotional failures.

BACKGROUND STUDY: MCEWAN'S EARLY FICTION

It is far from gross generalization to concisely describe Ian McEwan's collections of short stories with only one word, 'shocking,' in every sense of the word. The world we step in as we begin to read McEwan of the 70s is violent, excessive and extraordinary. Among his critics, Kiernan Ryan, considers him in his early career "as a writer obsessed with the perverse, the grotesque, the macabre" (1994, p. 2). Accordingly, he is of the opinion that McEwan displays "a more mature engagement with the wider world of history and society" as he leaves behind "the claustrophobic menace" of his early works (1994, p. 2). McEwan himself admits that his early fiction placed him "into too tight a corner" (quoted in Malcolm, 2002, p. 5), which implies his awareness of a self-limiting choice of subject matters. He refers to his short stories as "darkly comic" works, which deservedly earned him "the 'Ian

Macabre' tag" and caused him "an impasse" in early 80s (Jon Cook, 2009, p. 130).

Although McEwan later distanced himself from 'the claustrophobic menace' of his early fiction in favour of other topics of his interest such as women movement and environment, his short stories are significant not only in themselves but also for their impacts on his later works. As David Malcolm asserts, his short stories are in a sense sketch works from which characters and themes of his novels emerge (2002, p. 24). This, however, least recommends that his short stories be subordinated to his more popular later novels. In fact, his short stories are not only standing works of independent credibility but can also be considered as parts of critiques on the collections:

Each short story is ... a unique text ... and each requires and repays close individual analysis. Nevertheless, the stories do exist in the context of their collections, and those two collections do come from a particular period in the author's career and were published close together. It is tempting to see them not only as individual stories but also "as part of a unified group of texts" (Malcolm, 2002, p. 24).

The present work selectively focuses on selected short stories from both collections to illustrate the implications and range of the grotesque in McEwan's short fictions. Three stories are discussed in this study; "Solid Geometry" from *First Love, Last*

Rites and "Reflections of a Kept Ape" and "Dead As They Come" from *In between the Sheets*. A good deal of stories in both collections, especially in the first one, concentrates on adolescent life. The three selected stories are among those focusing on adult relationships, though "Reflection of a Kept Ape" involves an ape as a male partner. Our reading indicates that these stories enjoy the prevalence of the grotesque in a more profound manner than a mere portrayal of grotesqueries. They display a fundamental use of the grotesque depicted through various elements of the mode in the context of deviant sexuality.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SEXUALITY AND THE GROTESQUE

Among critics theorizing about the grotesque, Ewa Kuryluk most emphasizes that the mode has to be read "in the context of the erotic and heretic" if it is to be fully understood (1987, p. 316). Taking advantage of the viewpoints proposed by Wolfgang Kayser and Mikhail Bakhtin, she stipulates that the world of the grotesque encompasses both Kayserian "mental asylum" and Bakhtinian "carnivalistic monstrosities" since this world can be associated with any "anti-world" which functions as a subculture against the dominant culture (e.g., "the anti-world of femininity as opposed to the world controlled by men") (Kuryluk, 1987, p. 3). In line with Kuryluk's notion of anti-worlds, the stories under study here are considered as anti-worlds of appalling sexual inclinations against the ideal world of normal relationship; a subculture of failed partnership and female oppression.

Regarding body and acts of physical life in the study of the grotesque, Bakhtin's notion of the 'grotesque body' has been the source for many later discussions. The grotesque body, as Bakhtin defines, is "unfinished and open" and "exceeds its own limits in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation" (1965, p. 26). Bakhtin views the grotesque body from a communal perspective and believes that our modern era has actually "transferred" and narrowed the concept of the grotesque body to a "private and psychological" zone devoid of regenerative gay laughter (1965, p. 321). Even so, his notion of the grotesque body has been frequently employed by later critics in the study of modern and postmodern literature.

The concept has particularly been popular among feminist studies, which identify the grotesque body with the female one. Accordingly, Margaret Miles identifies the grotesque body as the female body which has her "individual configuration and boundaries" taken away through "menstruation, sexual intercourse, and pregnancy" (1997, p. 93). To her, the "central object of the grotesque figuration" involves sexual organs and activities (1997, pp. 92-93). Of course, she puts the most emphasis on female body and her sexual organs as she asserts that the essence of the grotesque is missing from the most prominent scholarly studies due to their ignorance of the central role of female body.

The attribution of a central role to female body in grotesque representations does not necessarily stand as a dichotomy between

so-called male and female grotesque. In fact, grotesque is generally depicted through the co-presence of both genders, as well as other categories of animate and even inanimate beings. As a remarkable feature of the grotesque, the blending of human and non-human or “categorical transgression”, as Dieter Meindl terms it, “comingles the animate and inanimate and conflates such classifications as plant, animal, human” (1996, p. 15). Hence, due to the very essence of the grotesque, the rejection of grotesque images of male sexuality is already out of question.

In this relation, Mary Russo reminds that her study entitled, *The Female Grotesque*, has no intention of excluding “male bodies or male subjectivities” from the grotesque (1994, p. 12). What Russo and some other feminist scholars of the grotesque mean to emphasize is the centrality of the female body in the making of the grotesque. Accordingly, Russo elaborates that “female grotesque is crucial to the identity-formation of both men and women as a space of risk and abjection” (1994, p. 12). It is thus no exaggeration to indicate that female body has come to function as a primordial image in the shaping of the grotesque. Concerning the stories discussed in the present study, the female body is depicted either in its centrality (e.g. “Dead as they come”) or in juxtaposition with the male body (e.g. “Reflections of a Kept ape” and “Solid Geometry”). As it is later dealt with in a separate entry for each story, bodies bear significance in the odd relationships developed through both scatological and excessively sexual representations.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: GROTESQUE IN MCEWAN’S SHORT FICTION

Violent, transgressive, and bizarre depictions of sexuality are readily palpable in their potential linkage with the grotesque. Much in association with the grotesque, the eccentric atmosphere of McEwan’s early fiction is mainly depicted in the milieu of sex. As already quoted, Ryan refers to McEwan of the 70s as a ‘chronicler’ of “sexual abuse, sadistic torment and pure insanity” (Ryan, 1994, p. 2). From a thematic perspective, McEwan’s short stories keenly deal with issues such as sadism, masochism, sexual molestation, perversion and sexual dissatisfaction. The sexuality portrayed in this fiction is simply beyond pornographic eroticism.

Within such a revolting anti-world of sex in these stories, the grotesque pervades in its most characteristic elements of the mode. The contradictory nature of the grotesque, which has been dealt with in almost all relevant scholarly studies, is well discernible in these tales. Philip Thomson’s well-condensed definition of the grotesque as “the unresolved clash of incompatibles in work and response” (1972, p. 27) can be traced in the mixture of dualities not only portrayed in the narratives themselves but also demonstrated in the response that they evoke. As Ryan points, McEwan’s best stories “oblige us to reflect on the mixed motives governing our own response as readers” (1994, p. 13). Reflecting on the same point, Jeannette Baxter concurs with Ryan by saying that McEwan’s early stories evoke “uncertainty of response” as “initial waves of shock, disgust and nausea give

way somehow to feelings of confusion and fascination, and laughter” (2009, p. 14).

The feeling of repulsion is intensified through detailed descriptions of appalling sexual acts such as the rape of a lifeless dummy or the intercourse between a woman and an ape as well as scatological imagery of vomiting and urinating over the corpse of the model, simian saliva and the stench of urination, or an inherited pickled penis. Such a shocking use of imagery helps to convey instances of degradation that occur along the storylines, culminating in identity destruction and alienation as well. These intense feelings not only are experienced by the characters but also plague the readers.

Regarding McEwan's use of shock effects, it may be noted that it is actually an art to shock contemporary readers. As Jack Slay wittily describes, we are the people who “live in a virtually unshockable society” (1996, p. 11), where no shock seems to go very deep. Authors such as Ian McEwan or Martin Amis accomplish to shock by “representing the debauchery beneath the civility, the grotesquerie beneath the banality... [for] the people of a bewildered age” (Slay, 1996, p. 5). McEwan's world of ‘darkly comic’ early stories is actually the world around us, the real world made strange or rather grotesque. Notwithstanding the novelty of his style in creating extreme shock and disgust in a detached manner, these stories are crafted in such a way that one cannot avoid associating them with the realities of the world around us. The storylines and characters, though in an extreme and defamiliarized manner, reflect

sensual and emotional whirlpools in modern man's life. Regarding the selected stories, it is worth mentioning that the three male characters inflicted with sexual deviance are all unnamed.¹ Referring to the second collection, Slay also notes that “a literature of shock” is mixed with “ideological study of relationships and society” (1996, p. 51).

“Reflections of a Kept Ape”

As the bestseller novelist, Sally Klee is suffering an impasse in her career, her two and half year old ape lover is mourning his downfall from a lover to a pet after eight blissful days of sharing her bed. The thematically odd story is embellished with a first-person narrative account of the ape, though the reader can still sense McEwan's unique matter-of-fact style in the background. As such, the ape manages to establish himself as a humanly intellectual simian, commenting about coffee effect on Balzac's writing and humming Lillibulero² “in the manner of Sterne's Uncle Toby” (Ian McEwan, 1997, p. 21).³

McEwan contextualizes a hard-to-believe storyline in a real-life setting. As Jack Slay compares, McEwan's style resembles Latin American magic realism in that “absurdities and unrealities” are conveyed through “the ordinary, the commonplace” (1996, p. 53). Such a blurred boundary between the realms of reality and unreality is what the grotesque expresses in its most genuine form of the mode. In other words, as discussed by many critics, the grotesque is by essence capable of creating “intellectual uncertainty [i.e.] the paradoxical confusion

of the fantastic and the verisimilar” (Chao, 2010, pp. 9-10). In this regard, Shun-Liang Chao defines the grotesque as “a corporeal, or flesh-made, metaphor which produces within itself (and within the reader/viewer’s response) intellectual uncertainty, emotional disharmony, and hermeneutic indeterminacy (2010, p. 14).

Accordingly, all these three foundational phenomena are experienced in the reading of this story. As already discussed, the readers’ response to early McEwan fiction is essentially that of simultaneous disgust and attraction. This story thus builds on the disharmonious mixture of fascination and repulsion it evokes. It strikingly starts on the note that “eaters of asparagus know the scent it lends the urine” (1997, p. 19). The narration proceeds with more instances of scatological imagery such the ape standing and urinating in reflection (1997, p. 19), the “weak tea” taste of his saliva (1997, p. 21), his useless search for “nits in her copious hair,” her “playful observations on the length, colour [and] texture” of his penis, and their sex position (1997, p. 26).

All the disgust is in a way compensated and fused with the inevitable magnetism of the narrative tone. The ape lover confusingly sounds both human and ape; he is desperately lonesome, hypocritically possessive and eloquently intellectual. In terms of the above-mentioned definition, the ape itself functions as the flesh-made metaphor of the grotesque to represent human fallen state. His intellect and emotion disturbingly resemble those of a human being, but he is physically an ape and blatantly reminds

his simian nature throughout the narration. As he contemplates leaving Sally Klee, he feels so passionately in love that he wonders “what life could be more exalted than the old [and] what new function rival that of Sally Klee’s ex-lover” (1997, p. 34). While he is contemplating this, his “*hands and feet* are on the fourth stair” (1997, p. 34, my italics). Like any oppressively arrogant lover, he is pretentious and possessive enough to boast that they “were lovers once, living almost as a man and wife” (1997, p. 19). And, during the brief partnership, he ponders “further promotion, from lover to husband” (1997, p. 25). Even finally “blighted by [his] own inadequacy,” he again beguiles himself by saying “How could I have failed to understand that during our silent meal. She needs *me*” (1997, p. 34, italic original).

The story is thus an extreme tale of repressed love and sexuality in which human is literally transfigured and degraded to the kinship of ape. He is an alien and is further alienated when the anti-world of ape-human partnership with Sally Klee collapses through her weariness of his “ways” and his “exacerbating her displeasure” (1997, p. 19). The comically narrated pretensions and possessiveness of the ape, as well as Sally Klee’s absolute barrenness of creative power after her bestseller novel, are incongruously mixed with gloom and loneliness of intellect and passion in grotesquely portrayed characterization. Kiernan Ryan’s following quotation well pinpoints the grotesque aspects which so delicately shape a short tale of great depth:

.. humour leaks from the vivid physical details of sexual congress, which lends the fusion of human and animal a sensuous realism surpassing the requirements of mere travesty. Such touches collapse the distance on which the preservation of comic detachment depends, and the humour of incongruity gives way to an embarrassed glimpse of repressed kinship (1994, p. 16).

"Solid Geometry"

A man obsessed with an inherited great-grandfather's forty-five volume diary gradually distances himself from his wife, Maisie, who in turn seeks refuge in Tarot pack, mysticism, and astrology "to get [her] head straight" (2006, p. 8).⁴ The gradual estrangement culminates in the husband's resentment of his wife and her desperate anger of his indifference. In a sudden rage for her unrequited passion, Maisie ruins the husband's other heirloom, which is a glass jar containing the pickled penis of a nineteenth-century criminal Captain Nicholls. He later makes Maisie disappear through "the plane without a surface" (Ian McEwan, 2006), a fictitious scientific rule which the diary discloses to him as a certain positioning of any object causing its absolute disappearance.

As Jack Slay asserts, the couple are stuck "in different intellectual worlds" (1996, p. 27). The man and his wife respectively epitomize senseless rationality and unfulfilled emotion in a growing conflict which leads to his selfish *removal* of her by

'the plane without a surface.' As basic to the blend of fantastic-grotesque, the so-called plane is intrinsically described in a make-believe manner. Accordingly, the details are provided "to make the whole thing sound probable" basically through an "account of the mathematical convention at which the revolution in geometry is announced, the pages of proofs that are alluded to, and the technical vocabulary that the narrator employs" (Malcolm, 2002, p. 31). While the injection of fantasy into the real creates the self-contradictory tension essential to the grotesque, it reinforces the grotesque to border on the realm of the fantastic.

As already noted, Thomson describes the grotesque as basically constituted by "the *unresolved* clash of incompatibles" (1972, p. 27, my italic). The previously discussed 'Reflections of a Kept Ape' is a genuine example of the mode in that the co-presentation of the real and unreal/ surreal is totally unresolved; it cannot be fully acknowledged whether the incidents are real or not. However, once the grotesque borders on either the fantastic or the caricature; the clash of incompatibles more relies on simultaneous representation of attraction and repulsion as well as horror and laughter. That is to say that the co-presentation of real and unreal is more loosened towards either the real or unreal/ surreal respectively in the grotesque-caricature and the fantastic-grotesque.

In "Solid Geometry," the fabricated mathematical-geometric rule is the main element which points the storyline into the realm of the fantastic. With the

blend of real and unreal bordering on the fantastic, simultaneous representation of incompatibles is best recognized in the tension between horror and laughter. As a matter of fact, John Ruskin's notion of "play with terror" (1875, p. 140) is well portrayed in this story through the man's cold blooded hostility in playing the game-like 'plane' in order to get rid of his wife. In general, their struggle which is at time ridiculously physical is mingled with the horrible fact that he gradually plans and finally accomplishes his bizarre removal of Maisie both from his life and the material world.

Ironic as it is, the husband ignores his wife as a real being who is capable of giving him love and emotion and instead honours the pickled penis of a dead man by treasuring it as "an object of great value" (2006, p. 13). Once Maisie smashes the glass jar containing the pickled penis, she metaphorically disturbs and destroys his image of an independent masculinity that is represented in the bizarre long lasting treasure "linking [his] life with *his*" (2006, p. 13 italic mine). This can be distinctly traced in his personified references to the pickled penis as Captain Nicholls himself. Here is the extract of his clearing the mess after the jar is broken:

Holding him by just one end, I tried to ease Capt. Nicholls on to a sheet of newspaper. ... Finally, with my eyes closed, I succeeded, and wrapping him carefully in the newspaper, I carried him into the garden and buried him under the

geraniums (2006, p. 14).

Subconsciously, the pickled penis and his grandfather eccentricity in having sex "about half-a-dozen times in his entire life" and only in his first year of marriage (2006, p. 4) come to signify for him the female marginality for a physically and emotionally independent man. He apparently draws such symbolization and takes it into his own life, intensifying his gradual indifference to Maisie. Although he is aware why she behaves hysterically at times, he willingly lets her suffer his lack of interest in their relationship. Early in the story he admits that "part of her problem was jealousy", which concerned his "great-grand-father's forty-five volume diary" (2006, p. 3). Detachedly scornful, he later reduces her motive for breaking the glass jar to a need for penis. Implicitly, he draws a contrast between their opposing attitudes to sex, which he uses to downgrade Maisie "because she wanted a penis" (2006, p. 19). Through the humiliation, he develops for her and his rejection of normal physical life, the husband further alienates both Maisie and himself into their extremities of emotion and rationality. This ends in a satiric tragedy for Maisie, who disappears in a way ironically foreshadowed in the nightmare of "flying this plane over a kind of desert" (2006, p. 3), and the feeling of "being screwed up like a piece of paper" (2006, p. 9).

"Dead as They Come"

A wealthy businessman in his mid-forties falls in love with an inanimate model whose

“perfect body played tender counterpoint with the shifting arabesques of sartorial artifice” (1997, p. 60). He eccentrically assumes ‘Helen’ to be the perfect partner until his driver seduces her into an affair in his absence. In his neurotic and self-deceiving narrative tone, the businessman relates the incidents from the purchase of the lifeless model and their first night together to the final rape and smothering of her for apparent estrangement and infidelity.

Similar to the narrator of “Solid Geometry,” the first person narrative account of the businessman takes a make-believe attitude, which helps to create the suspense between reality and unreality. Meanwhile, the story parallels the other two in its portrayal of absurdity. Just like ape-woman relationship, man-dummy partnership is obviously an absurdist parody of love⁵ which signifies failures of human relationship, pictured in “Solid Geometry.” According to Slay, “absurdist extremes” in “Dead as they come” and “Reflections of a Kept Ape” exceed “the unreal boundaries established in ‘Solid Geometry’” (1996, p. 53).

As viewed by the present study, absurdity prevails in all the three stories; whereas the levels of reality/unreality differ. While “Reflections of a Kept Ape” creates the essentially grotesque tension between reality and unreality, the other two tales take the grotesque to the edge of the fantastic and the caricature. “Solid Geometry” has already been discussed for its central event of fantastic dimensions. Regarding “Dead as they come,” although the whole matter

is a hard to believe one, there is practically nothing totally unreal and impossible about the story. The parodic love the businessman imaginatively conceives between himself and his ‘Helen’ is actually a caricature-like picture of ideal love, which takes the story to the border of the grotesque-caricature.

Nonetheless, the narrator makes an illusion out of reality basically by treating the dummy as a real woman. Unlike a typical story with an automaton motif, the man does not content himself by simply owning the dummy. According to Kenneth Gross, “animation fantasy” is potentially linked with “transgressive crossing of the living and the lifeless” (2006, p. 128). In this story, the crossing of such boundaries does take place as he literally contextualizes her presence into the real world, treating her as a real woman. Based on his account of the incidents, he takes her into a dynamic level of life and deceives himself to the extent that he imagines her betrayal of his love.

As a parodic love story, “Dead as they come” mingles the humour of the caricature-like imitation of a perfect partnership with the horrible reality of man’s loneliness as well as his sensual, emotional and intellectual depression. In his play with the absurd, the businessman denies real relationship and indulges in the substitution of real life with the lifeless, with the inanimate. It is not only the romantic context which lends the story a parodic touch of humour, but the murderer-like attitude of the businessman also creates an humorous atmosphere of parodic criminal confession. Ryan believes that the story is “decked out

with as much sex and violence as that title, with its strident double-entendre, might lead one to expect” (1994, p. 15). Hence, the satiric humour in the story is also intensified by his assumed horror of a murder.

By bringing life and lifelessness or animate and inanimate together, categorical transgression is observed not only at a metaphoric but also at a literal level. Metaphorically speaking, the dummy is in a verbal sense taken as a real human being, a woman. At a literal level, just as it happens in “Reflections of a kept Ape,” a human and a non-human are brought into one being through an excessive sexual relation. Along with such excesses of body life, his final agony for her murder displayed in a series of scatological images all signify his humiliating and isolating experience in taking pleasure in the body and love of a lifeless female model.

As a lonely man, he is ultimately alienated both within and without through his self-deceptive replacement of ‘Helen’ for a real woman. In fact, he cannot finally content himself with such a substitution and “remains isolated in a world of unlovable objects” (Slay, 1996, p. 57). By reducing and objectifying a female partner to a dummy, he also degrades both female and male sexuality. The story actually represents male sexuality in a way “to defamiliarize traditional ways of behaving and thinking” (Malcolm, 2002, p. 43).

CONCLUSION

Defamiliarization helps to see the world around us from a fresh perspective and is

aply inclined to the grotesque. Wolfgang Kayser, one of the leading theoretician of the grotesque, includes “the existing world made strange” among the aspects of the mode (1963, p. 161). As it is the case with most of McEwan’s short stories, particularly the ones discussed in this paper, he also “aims to make the familiar strange” (Malcolm, 2002, p. 41). Accordingly, McEwan pictures an excessive, exaggerated and violated anti-world of sexual partnership to highlight the reality of human failure in forming both emotional and physical relationship. Arrogance, if not male chauvinism, is at the core of the masculine gaze portrayed through these stories. Unfulfilled deviant sexuality, which leads to identity loss, degradation and alienation, is basically associated with a rejection of normal female body and physical body life.

As dealt with in the present study, the portrayal of the grotesque is remarkably affluent and vast-ranging in McEwan’s short stories. Basically depicted through images and incidents of a sexually chaotic world, the grotesque can be considered as a mode of representation in his short fiction. In some stories, the grotesque is merely exploited for the sake of a general impression of shock and disgust. However, in some others including those under study in this article, it is fundamentally employed through the representation of recurrent elements of the mode mingling the grotesque both with the fantastic and the caricature for a more impressive portrayal of excessive sexuality.

ENDNOTES

¹The male character of “Solid Geometry” is called ‘Albert’ in the screen adaptation, but no name is given to him in the short story.

²The signature tune (tune played to identify a radio station) of the BBC World Service. The music is by Henry Purcell and was written for a satirical 17th century song attacking Roman Catholics (taken from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2006 edition).

³All references made to “Reflections of a Kept Ape” and “Dead as they come” are taken from Random House’s edition of *In between the Sheets* (1997).

⁴All references made to “Solid Geometry” are taken from Vintage’s edition of *First Love, Last Rites* (2006).

⁵Jack Slay refers to this story as “a satirical look at the relations between men and women” (1996, p. 56), and David Malcolm calls it “a comic yet disturbing parody of romantic fiction” (2002, pp. 23,39).

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***Almayer's Folly*: Conrad's Investigation into Modern Man's Unpromising Fate**

Farhang Koohestanian* and Noritah Omar

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Almayer's Folly is Conrad's initial step in his long journey to trace the soul of modern man, overshadowed by rapid developments in science and technology intensifying particularly from the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite its positive aspects, modernity left man in such an uncertain state about everything including his own identity that his destruction seemed and it may still seem unavoidable. Twentieth-century man, stripped of his cloak of faith, relied far too much on his conscious ego as the modern truth. However, he soon realised that he could not have been more wrong as the consequences were devastating. Conrad depicts such a dubious state in his works, and unlike many of his contemporary counterparts, he comes up with a possible solution that may function as a modern salvation. For the reader, Conrad's works are a journey or a quest of Self-discovery through which his principal characters, like mythical heroes traverse ups and downs and at the end are either defeated (as in his earlier works) or return as conquerors (more obvious in his later works). *Almayer's Folly* is his very first work and the first step in his journey of individuation and may be regarded as the thesis of his dialectical method, in which Conrad vividly explores and portrays the unpleasant aspects of modernity and the reasons why modern man fails to establish an individual self.

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E-mail addresses:

f.koohestanian@gmail.com (Farhang Koohestanian),

nomar@upm.edu.my (Noritah Omar)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

At the time of its publication (1895), *Almayer's Folly* was first considered a Romance. Ian Watt suggests two reasons for the initial reception of the work as a Romance. First, "it contained a love story with a happy ending", and second, it "fitted

in with contemporary interest in exotic adventure” (1993, p. 49). By happy ending, Watt must be referring to the elopement of Nina and Dain; otherwise, what fate brings for Almayer is far from happy. Peters is in partial agreement with Watt. He agrees that to some extent this story is a Romance, but he does not recognize the ending as a happy one (he must be referring to Almayer’s destiny). As a result, in Peter’s opinion, since the novel does not have a happy ending, nor “is the love interest of the typical sort or the exotic setting romanticized”, Conrad is playing with the form of Romance”, which corresponds with what Ian Watt posits (Peters, 2006, p. 37). What makes Conrad’s works stand out is the way he attends to political and social issues in his writing. “Conrad sets an example”, holds Peters, “that he continues throughout much of his work as he focuses on issues that affect individual lives” (Peters, 2006, p. 38). He believes that Conrad entwines larger social, political and philosophical issues with the lives of individuals, “demonstrating the individual consequences of such issues, and always individual lives take precedence” (Ibid). Similarly, Matthews believes that in *Almayer’s Folly* “Conrad suggests again the failure of the imperial enterprise and of global capitalism which underlies it”, and the house symbolizes “the ultimate powerlessness of the colonizers in the alien habitat” (2004, p. 28). Andrea White, too, sees *Almayer’s Folly* as a reflection of Conrad’s “scepticism about the imperial venture generally and about the accompanying ‘fine words’ in particular, in

its refusal to depict the Europeans in Sambir heroically” (1996, p. 188).

DISCUSSION

In spite of all the arguments Conrad has been subject to, what this study shall attempt to show is that in *Almayer’s Folly* Conrad sets off a dialectic journey in which he explores a modern man’s concerns and worries, and by the end of this voyage that takes place in his later works, comes up with a solution which may lead mankind to real salvation. Conrad’s first novel takes place in Sambir, a small island in the Malayan Archipelago and starts with Almayer’s being startled from his “dream of splendid future” after his Malay wife calls him to dinner (Conrad, 1976, p. 3). The very first lines of the novel, in fact, foreshadow what is going to happen later: “the splendid future” is replaced by “the unpleasant realities of the present hour”. Conrad has been considered one of the forefathers of modernism, and this seems to be justified in the very first words of his very first work. Almayer, Lingard, the Dutch officials, figuratively speaking, represent the modern West with all its hopes for a splendid new era in the twentieth century, thanks to scientific and technological advancement, while the native residents of Sambir represent the ‘uncivilised’ East. Indeed, Conrad prophesies that the West would experience disillusionment early in the twentieth century after the outbreak of the First World War.

One major theme in *Almayer’s Folly*, the authors would like to argue, is the failure of the materialism the modern world was

pursuing. His loveless marriage, which merely took place out of his calculating character in the hope of taking control of Lingard's business and wealth, his hope of finding gold and returning to Europe as a rich man with Nina, and his belief that material wealth will make people turn a blind eye to Nina's Malay blood, all depict Almayer and the modern world's materialistic views. Indeed, Almayer believes his freedom lies in materialistic prosperity, separation from his dark-skinned wife and escape to Europe. Almayer's obsession with gold may be interpreted as a projection of an internal search for something valuable, which he fails to realize. Like alchemists, Almayer is in search of the elixir of life, thinking, wrongly of course, that by leaving with Nina rich and "witnessing her triumphs he would grow young again, he would forget the twenty-five years of heart-breaking struggle on this coast where he felt like a prisoner" (Conrad, 1976, p. 3). In addition, the readers will soon learn that his "honest exertions" are not so honest, as he resorts to different dishonest methods to realize his rags-to-riches ambition. This reveals on the one hand, the insincerity of his attempts, and on the other, his blindness to the shadow side of his psyche, his own dark aspects.

The story does not have a promising opening because all the imagery is so gloomy and sad. He is standing on the verandah of "his last failure of his life": his house dubbed by local people as 'Almayer's folly' which is "new but Decaying". The paradox used in the description of his house reminds one of the *fin de siècle* when the

new era was supposed to bring new hopes and achievements, but soon proved to be the opposite.

Young Almayer left home with "a light heart and a lighter pocket", but without the slightest doubt that he would "conquer the world" (Conrad, 1976, p. 5). His arrival in Macassar has been described as "an important epoch in his life, the beginning of a new existence for him" (Conrad, 1976, p. 4). Like a young traditional hero, with the same ambitions and desires, Almayer "clad all in white and modest-looking", is at the beginning of a journey from innocence to experience. The whiteness of his clothes may suggest his innocence and inexperience. However, by taking the wrong path not only causes Almayer to not gain the experience and conquer the world, but leads him to failure and a sad and lonely death.

As a matter of fact, with Almayer, Conrad begins his diagnosis and disclosure of blunders and errors of judgment made both at an individual and a collective level that have resulted in tragic and disastrous outcomes throughout history and have, consequently, distanced man from an ideal, real and truthful civilised state. There is no doubt that Almayer's series of misfortunes stem from these errors he makes one after another. Nevertheless, Conrad tries to show all these have their roots in one's lack of success to establish a healthy relationship with the unknown and perhaps, but not necessarily, darker side of one's psyche.

Taking on a Faustian barter by agreeing to marry captain Lingard's adopted daughter to inherit his prosperous business, Almayer

makes his first mistake. Lingard's proposal, through which he tries to convince Almayer of the deal, is of great significance. First of all, it represents the materialistic outlook of the West which grew even more enormously in the nineteenth century and saw everything in the accumulation of wealth. It was perhaps due to this rise in materialism and the consequent decline of spirituality that the new century which was supposed to be a giant leap forward to civility proved calamitously otherwise. Jung in "Approaching the Unconscious" states that a "sense of wider meaning to one's existence is what raises a man beyond mere getting and spending. If he lacks this sense, he is lost and miserable" (1978, p. 78). Therefore, his (the West's) lack of a spiritual dimension is a significant factor in Almayer's sense of being lost and in his unfortunate fate. Secondly, through Lingard's words, Conrad is criticising the way the West discriminates against whatever is non-Western and so exercise a false sense of superiority arising from technological and military progress.

The uniqueness of Conrad's art lies in the fact that his reprimand is not merely toward the West, but it is more universal. Although he depicts the way the West projects its misfortunes upon the East, Conrad simultaneously blames the East's prejudice, but perhaps to a smaller extent, toward the West. Indeed, he attempts to illustrate all the follies that have resulted in the widening chasm not only among the people of different countries, but also in an individual's psyche. From a Western perspective, Nina is considered a half-

caste girl who needs material wealth to compensate for her impure blood and be able to keep her head high. However, it is not only Westerners who look down on her mixed blood. Answering Lakamba's question about Dain's whereabouts, Babalatchi relates:

In Bulangi's clearing—the furthest one, away from the house. They went there that very night. The white man's daughter took him there. She told me so herself, speaking to me openly, for she is half white and has no decency... She is like a white woman and knows no shame.

(Conrad, 1976, p. 93)

It goes without saying that Conrad is criticising both the East and West for their fault-finding attitude toward each other, which has led to their separation. On the other hand, it is a criticism of rejecting the less familiar aspects of one's psyche, which can be of great benefit, by labelling them indecent attributes.

In the process of individuation, as defined by Jung, the person who has started the journey encounters different aspects of the unconscious psyche, and in order to pursue this journey, he has to come to terms with them. Mere suppression will not help, but will also actively impede progress so that the journey ends in dismal failure for the hero. Given that the self was one of Conrad's concerns and obsessions, it would not be unimaginable that Conrad put his protagonists in the midst of a situation

or situations through which they were exposed to their less visible corners. One of the differences between Conrad's choice of his settings and those of most novelists before him is that his aims, the nature of his interests in human nature and moral problems determine such settings (Hewitt, 1975, p. 6). The Eastern and African settings of his stories, in their unfamiliarity and mystery, provide an alternative or dream-like atmosphere in which the protagonists face aspects of their unconscious psyche and are put to test in such conditions to see how they respond to the voices heard from their own depths.

Almayer had begun the journey of self-discovery as soon as he decided to "conquer the world", and stepped on the jetty of Macassar. However, from his second but very significant step into unconscious, which was marrying a Malay woman, it became clear that he had no real intention of coming to terms with his hidden facets as no sooner was he contemplating accepting Lingard's proposal and becoming rich overnight than he showed his hatred of the idea of marrying a Malay woman by hoping that "she may mercifully die" (Conrad, 1976, p. 8). His "vague idea of shutting her up somewhere, anywhere, out of his gorgeous future" is in fact repressive behaviour through which he tries to conceal and deny the existence of such unfavourable parts in himself, and there also lies the irony that although he thinks it is "easy enough to dispose of a Malay woman, a slave", not only is she not silenced, but she plays a very important part in his destruction by managing Nina and Dain's escape.

The description of the setting at this stage when he is remembering the day he was offered such a proposal, and the present setting are also very telling and foreshadowing of the course of events. Conrad writes:

He remembered the narrow slanting deck of the brig, the silent sleeping coast, the smooth black surface of the sea with a great bar of gold laid on it by the rising moon. He remembered it all, and he remembered his feelings of mad exultation at the thought of that fortune thrown into his hands.

(Conrad, 1976, p. 9).

"The silent sleeping coast" and "the smooth black surface of the sea" are associated with the unconscious. "The great bar of gold" contrasted with the "smooth black surface" is in fact a ray of hope and the prize that meeting with one's darkness may bring. In his *A Dictionary of Symbols* Cirlot, quoting Jung, writes that gold is the "image of solar light and hence of the divine intelligence", and therefore, "gold is symbolic of all that is superior". In addition, gold is "also the essential element in the symbolism of the hidden or elusive treasure which is an illustration of the fruits of the spirit and of supreme illumination" (Cirlot, 1971, p. 120).

What has painted the bar of gold on the surface of the sea is the moon, which is associated with the feminine. According to Cirlot, "When patriarchy superseded

matriarchy, a feminine character came to be attributed to the moon” (p. 215). The moon is considered “the guide to the occult side of nature, opposed to the sun which is responsible for the life of the manifest world” (p. 216). Because of all the feminine associations the moon brings to mind, it can be concluded that the “fortune thrown into his hands” is in fact an opportunity to see his anima and other unconscious contents of his psyche. However, since Almayer only wishes to follow the material benefits of such encounter and represses the spiritual gain, the great bar of gold is soon replaced with “the intense darkness which, on the sun’s departure, had closed in upon the river, blotting out the outlines of the opposite shore” (Conrad, 1976, p. 9). Indeed, this darkness has been brought upon Almayer by himself who refuses to establish a healthy communication with his unknown parts, and his anima in particular.

Describing the nature of archetypes, Jung explains that since they are “relatively autonomous, they cannot be integrated simply by rational means, but require a dialectical procedure, a real coming to terms with them” (Jung, 1978, p. 4). However, in this novel, Conrad stresses Almayer’s lack of success to establish a sound relationship with the local people of his unconscious when he writes “Almayer looked vainly westward for a ray of light out of the gloom of his shattered hopes” (Conrad, 1976, p. 21). In other words, Almayer by looking at his westward consciousness fails to understand his unconscious East which is vital if he wants to reach wholeness and

escape the stagnation he is in. As stated earlier, in order for the individual to fulfil the process of individuation, he must be able to establish a balance between his conscious and unconscious contents. This may seem too formidable a challenge to rise above, since one has no choice but to face what are inevitably unfavourable corners of one’s psyche. However, it is the only way if the individual intends to reach the feeling of wholeness and integrity inside. Defining the process of individuation as “the conscious coming-to-terms with one’s own inner centre (psychic nucleus) or Self” von Franz argues that this “generally begins with a wounding of the personality and suffering that accompanies it” (1968, p. 169). Indeed, it functions as an alert despite the fact that it is mostly not taken as such. “On the contrary”, von Franz continues, “the ego accuses God or the economic situation or the boss or the marriage partner of being responsible for whatever is obstructing it” (Ibid). It goes without saying that Almayer, too, is in such condition and sees his marriage to a local woman and his life among the natives of the Malayan Archipelago as the only cause of his miserable state.

The two most important female characters upon whom Almayer’s fate depends are his wife and his daughter Nina. In Jung’s school of analytical psychology, they may represent the anima, which plays a significant role in the psychic integrity of an individual and as a result needs to be encountered appropriately. One of the positive aspects of the anima is that

“whenever a man’s logical mind is incapable of discerning facts that are hidden in his unconscious, the anima helps him to dig them out”; in addition, it plays a crucial role by “putting a man’s mind in tune with the right inner values and thereby opening the way into more profound inner depths” (vonFranz, 1968, p. 194).

Moreover, the incongruity between his hatred for his wife and his love towards Nina may be interpreted symbolically as a reaction to representations of the anima as a witch and as an angel. Although the personification of the anima in the form of a witch or a sorceress is frightening and undesirable, since it represents the unconscious aspects of one’s personality, it is essential not to turn a blind eye to it. As a result, Almayer’s marriage could have played a prominent role in linking him to his unconscious and considerably resourceful forces. His behaviour towards Nina, in contrast, is totally different. It is firstly because he sees her as someone who has at least half of his blood in her veins, and secondly and more importantly because Nina represents an innocent and more pleasant anima. However, his sending her away to Singapore to become civilised by being away from her mother and by getting western education so that once they return rich to the absolutely materialist and rationalist West, he is less troubled by their gaze upon his half-caste daughter whose wealth, he hopes, will veil her Asian breed. All these are another sign of his unwillingness to meet and accept his more primitive and basic being which at times has

unreleased energy necessary to push one forward in the path of individuation.

Clearly, the return of Nina is a kind of resurrection for Almayer, and the whole island is affected as “great changes were expected; annexation was talked of; the Arabs grew civil. Almayer began building his new house for the use of the future engineers, agents, or settlers of the new company. He spent every available guilder on it with a confiding heart” (Conrad, 1976, p. 24). His partial coming to terms with his anima results in seeing some bright side of his unconscious as the Arabs, who are always referred to by Almayer as uncivilised, “grew civil” in Almayer’s opinion.

In addition, the symbolic significance of the house must not be overlooked. In Jungian analytical psychology, a house can be the representative of the psyche. On the symbolism of the house, Cirlot (1971) writes:

In architectural symbolism, on the other hand, the house carries not only an overall symbolism but also particular associations attached to each of its component parts. Nevertheless, the house as a home arouses strong, spontaneous associations with the human body and human thought (or life, in other words), as has been confirmed empirically by psychoanalysts. Ania Teillard explains this by pointing out that, in dreams, we employ the image of the house as a representation of the different layers of the psyche (p. 153).

Almayer's resuming the building of his house may symbolize the urge of attending to one's psychic growth. However, from the beginning, his efforts are insincere since he sees his new house not for himself as it should be, but for the future engineers, etc. While discussing the symbols of transcendence, Henderson (1968) argues that the external changes in one's life pattern are to no avail "unless there has been some inner transcendence of old values in creating, not just investing, a new pattern of life" (151). Ironically enough, the very first time someone in Sambir sees the lights shining about the house is when the Dutch officers—and not engineers and traders—are investigating Dain's death. In fact, the lights were "the lanterns of the boats hung up by the seamen under the verandah where the two officers were holding a court of inquiry into the truth of the story" of Dain's tragic fate (Conrad, 1976, p. 105). Therefore, from the very beginning, due to the fact that these changes are more external than internal, one should not have high hopes in what will occur to Almayer in the end.

Almayer, instead of actively working on his relationship with his daughter, would rather remain passive and it is through this passivity that Nina is drawn closer and closer to her mother and taken farther away from his father. Nina spends more time with her mother in her riverside hut, "coming out as inscrutable as ever, but with a contemptuous look and a short word ready to answer any of his speeches" (Conrad, 1976, p. 23). Later in the novel, when Nina and Dain are about to elope, she explicitly complains about Almayer's indifference to

her situation:

"Can I not live my own life as you have lived yours? The path you would have wished me to follow has been closed to me by no fault of mine."

"You never told me," muttered Almayer.

"You never asked me," she answered, "and I thought you were like the others and did not care."

(Conrad, 1976, p. 138)

Not only is Almayer unable to communicate healthily with his daughter (the anima), his unwillingness to communicate with his internal forces represented in the local characters is portrayed in his wife's futile efforts to make Almayer trust the powerful locals such as Lakamba. Nevertheless, he deprives himself by not allying with Lakamba to search for gold mines. Conrad describes these supposed gold mines in terms that recall Jung's references to the exploration of the psyche as a daunting search to find sources of unused and positive energies which can help an individual to a great deal to know himself or herself. Conrad (1976) writes: "The coast population of Borneo believes implicitly in diamonds of fabulous value, in gold mines of enormous richness in the interior. And all those imaginings are heightened by the difficulty of penetrating far inland" (29).

Another reason Nina distances from Almayer is that she finds her father's side which is the representative of modern

time's materialism and pure rationalism hollow and meaningless, and therefore, she becomes "gradually more indifferent, more contemptuous of the white side of her descent represented by a feeble and traditionless father" (32). The growing disconnection of the rationalist West with its more primitive history has left it "traditionless". In other words, if consciousness and unconscious are disconnected and the contents of the latter are not taken into consideration due to the immature notion that man is all consciousness, what is left is a feeling of excruciating hollowness.

What makes this change of attitude significant is the synchronous appearance of Dain Maroola, a prince from Bali, who brings a new experience of hope and vigour. Almayer becomes more optimistic about finding the hidden gold with the help of Dain and returning to Europe as a rich man. Nevertheless, his relationship with Dain is simply business-oriented; he does not make the most of Dain's arrival in Sambir in order to know himself better as Dain may represent an aspect of the self. The Self, the inner most nucleus of the psyche, argues von Franz (1968), "does not always take the form of a wise old man or wise old woman. These paradoxical personifications are attempts to express something that is not entirely contained in time—something simultaneously young and old" (p. 209). Since it is Dain who revives hope in Almayer, who sees his dreams are about to come true, he may be interpreted as an aspect of Almayer's self. Dain is not only a prince, but also a very romantic, young,

and energetic person who has all the traits that are missing in Almayer. In addition, his being a prince from Bali gives a primitive colour to him as well, a resemblance with unconscious forces that have not mixed with the modern rational conscious forces. According to von Franz, "if a man devotes himself to the instruction of his own unconscious, it can bestow this gift, so that suddenly life, which has been stale and dull, turns into a rich unending inner adventure, full of creative possibilities" (p. 209). It goes without saying that Dain is the reason why Almayer's stale and stagnant life gives way to excitement and dynamism, despite its shortness.

Once again, Almayer makes a serious mistake as he does not take this opportunity to know his inner forces and sees it only as a chance to realise his materialist ambitions. He is so obsessed with the gold that he does not even take notice of the romantic relationship that has been formed between Dain and Nina, which symbolically shows Almayer's inattention to his unconscious contents. As a result of focusing his ideals on the conscious West and ignoring the spiritual benefits of the unconscious East, Almayer distances himself from Dain Maroola. Dain's connection with Mrs. Almayer and Nina represents the separation of Almayer's positive unconscious energies from him due to his not paying appropriate attention to them. The separation of them from Almayer and their getting united together can lead to disastrous endings.

When the unconscious contents are merely repressed, they grow enormous

and as a result they can have disastrous effects once they are manifested. The personification of the unconscious has a dual aspect of both good and evil, which makes this process very difficult. For instance, the shadow, apart from its darkness and primitiveness which have to be overcome, has some positive aspects that can help an individual grow if they are encountered and realised appropriately. Similarly, the anima and the animus have a dual nature, too. They can move the personality forward towards development, or they can inflict paralysis or physical death. In the same manner, the Self has both a light and dark aspect. "The dark side of the Self", argues von Franz (1968), "is the most dangerous thing of all, precisely because the Self is the greatest power in the psyche" (p. 234). Therefore, it can be concluded that Almayer's indifference to his unconscious contents leads to the manifestation of their negative and destructive sides. In other words, they gang up against him and their liaison is lethal, which in the end results in Almayer's both spiritual and physical death.

In Conrad's works the flaws and strengths of the protagonist are made clearer through the comparisons with other characters. In this work, for instance, Nina is juxtaposed with Almayer as what she does is in contrast to what Almayer does in relation to their interaction with other characters who represent different psychic forces. Taking Mrs. Almayer as an example, unlike Almayer, who simply wishes to deny her existence (thus denying his own anima), Nina establishes a healthy

relationship with her mother (representing her shadow) and benefits from the positive aspects of such a relationship, although she is not overcome by it. In addition, Dain Maroola, who plays the role of an aspect of the Self for Almayer, is mostly overlooked by Almayer as he seeks only material profit out of this relationship. However, Nina sees her animus in Dain, and consequently, feels that she has been reborn. She sees her encounter with Dain as an opportunity that gives her "a knowledge of a new existence" and a sense of completeness to her life. In fact, the fruitfulness of such a relationship with primitive forces "untrammelled by any influence of civilised self-discipline" is in line with Jung's theories suggesting that the depths of one's psyche is the source of useful energies that can lead the individual to psychic growth unless they are overlooked.

Another key comparison drawn between Almayer and Nina is in what they are after, or in other words in their objectives in life. The treasure Almayer is searching for is merely materialistic. First, he marries Lingard's step daughter to inherit his wealth. Then he tries to find a way to go after the gold he thinks, very naively of course, is his and he has been deprived of. In marked contrast, Nina is looking not for material, but spiritual wealth, "the treasure of love and passion", and she can find it by making a positive relationship with her unconscious forces. Compared to Almayer, she has had more experience seeing all kinds of people. In Singapore, she learns how hypocritical the westerners are hiding themselves behind a civilised mask. Her return to Macassar is

similar to a journey to her more primitive roots, to her unconscious. Experiencing both, she reaches a sort of maturity, which her father is unable to reach, and succeeds in escaping the stagnation.

As a matter of fact, the individual who fails to communicate with his inner depths, Jolande Jacobi (1968) argues, is "as much afraid of the feminine element in himself as he is of real women. At one moment he is fascinated by her, at another he tries to escape" (p. 345). Why he flees is because he does not wish to fall under her influence. This duality in action and behaviour can be seen in Almayer, too. The woman he tries to escape is his wife, who seems savage and barbaric to him, but the woman he is fascinated by is his daughter, Nina. However, although he is fascinated by Nina, when he gets the opportunity to escape from Macassar, he chooses not to, a decision which might have its roots in Almayer's fear of communicating with his inner depths. His opportunity to flee from Macassar with Nina and Dain symbolizes potential unity with his hidden aspects. Although he sees where he lives as a "wretched hole", and does not want to die there, because he is so arrogant, because he does not have the courage to confess that he has imperfections too, and because he is "deceived by the emotional estimate of his motives, unable to see the crookedness of his ways, the unreality of his aims, the futility of his regrets", ironically enough, he dies in a miserable state in that "wretched hole".

In marked contrast, Dain establishes a sound relationship far from a material one

with his anima, Nina, and this leads to a symbolic rebirth for him. The juxtaposition between Almayer and Dain is of great significance. There is a partial similarity between Almayer and Dain. They are both in a moment of crisis. Early in the story, the reader realizes, Almayer feels entangled in that island, but soon Nina's return brings back a ray of hope to him. Dain, likewise, after the clash with the Dutch, is in terrible condition and it is Nina who brings him back to life. Clearly, the contact with one's anima can be very fruitful as it can issue new blood in one's veins if one learns how to have a constant relationship with it, and there lies the difference between Almayer and Dain.

Nina is about to commence her journey to a new and unknown land and separate herself from the people she knows, but first she has to make her mind because it is not only a physical journey, but an odyssey to her psychic world, and naturally she has doubts whether to take on this journey or not. Nevertheless, eventually she becomes aware of the fact that in order to end her misery and have a happy life full of love she has to enter the darkness. This is in line with the notion of individuation which is not to be fulfilled unless one steps into one's darkness. However, it is easier said than done and one has to be extremely determined; otherwise, the doubts and concerns are so overwhelming that one may omit to proceed. Although she seems, at first, determined to venture the darkness, when the moment comes close she begins to have mixed feelings arising from the immensity of the decision she has to make.

Individuation is indeed a process filled with doubts and indecisions that have to be overcome.

The time of her flight to Dain is of high significance too. She waits for the sun to set so that she can, veiled by the dark, go to Dain without being noticed by the people. In addition, the night journey symbolizes a voyage to the sea of the unconscious filled with unknown and apparently threatening voices that may discourage and deter someone, who is not persistent enough, from entering such a realm. When the sun sets, Conrad (1976) continues, “the sudden darkness seemed to be full of menacing voices calling upon her to rush headlong into the unknown; to be true to her own impulses, to give herself up to the passion she had evoked and shared” (p. 107). One major difference between Nina and Almayer, which brings forth a divergence of fate for them, is that she listens wholeheartedly to the voices of her darkness, while Almayer keeps ignoring them.

Each character may represent a particular archetype to one character and another archetype toward a different character. Therefore, although Dain may be an aspect of the Self for Almayer, he is Nina’s animus, so in order to meet her animus, she has to venture into the darkness of her psyche, which has been symbolized in Dain’s hiding place “in the solitude of the secluded clearing, in the vast silence of the forest” (p. 107). According to Cirlot “Forest-symbolism is complex, but it is connected at all levels to the symbolism of the female principle or of the Great Mother”, and “since

the female principle is identified with the unconscious in man, it follows that the forest is also a symbol of the unconscious” (p. 112). Therefore, with its vastness and camouflaging ability, the forest has been an archetype of the unconscious where live many creatures, although one may be taken in by its apparent silence and stillness.

Throughout *Almayer’s Folly*, exposing the reader to the main characters’ thoughts and contemplations, Conrad establishes his central themes by enabling the reader to see for themselves how the characters’ beliefs and attitudes account for what happens to them in the end. About to leave home for ever, Nina remembers the days she spent between her parents, “those two beings so dissimilar, so antagonistic”, and how “she stood with mute heart wondering and angry at the fact of her own existence” (p. 110). Dissatisfaction with one’s existence and conditions is epidemic among Conrad’s major characters in general and in *Almayer’s Folly* in particular. Almayer is unhappy with the life he has had because he thinks he has wasted it among a bunch of savages who are far below him in humanity, rank, civility, etc. His wife is dissatisfied because she thinks she has been doomed to live with a coward. Nina’s dissatisfaction has its roots in seeing her youth wearing away unused.

As a matter of fact, her feeling of hopelessness and frustration parallels the modern disappointment that took place in the early twentieth century. In other words, these lines are a further critique on the materialistic view of the Western world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. Nina has found her father's dreams, representing Western materialist philosophy, too hollow and therefore she shows no sympathy towards them, but "the savage ravings of her mother chanced to strike a responsive chord, deep down somewhere in her despairing heart" (p. 110). This is due to the fact that by contacting her mother, representing less civilised and more barbaric aspects of the unconscious psyche, she benefits from deeper forces lying there waiting to be unearthed. It is through this connection with her deeper psyche that enables Nina to dream "dreams of her own with the persistent absorption of a captive thinking of liberty within the walls of his prison cell" (Ibid). It is the coming of Dain that enables Nina to find "the road to freedom by obeying the voice of the newborn impulses," and makes her believe that she can "read in his eyes the answer to all the questionings of her heart" (Ibid).

The climax of the story comes when Almayer finds Nina and Dain and wishes to dissuade her from leaving with Dain. In the conversation among the three, Conrad expresses his critique of the Western attitude that has led modern man to the extreme of insanity and chaos. Indeed, it stems from arrogance, prejudice, and projection. Almayer, who sees his European race superior, is unable to understand Nina's affection for Dain, whom he calls savage. However, this represents the West's projecting its own savagery upon the East considering the brutality of the two great wars in the twentieth century that took place in the modern and civilised

world. Jung (1968), in "Approaching the Unconscious", discussing the Freudian school's approach to the unconscious, states that it "presents the unconscious in a thoroughly depreciatory light, just as also it looks on primitive man as little better than a wild beast" (p. 16). Rejecting this outlook he continues: "Have the horrors of the World War really not opened our eyes? Are we still unable to see that man's conscious mind is even more devilish and perverse than the unconscious?" (pp. 16-17).

The biggest mistake one can make is not to listen to one's self. In other words, borrowing Jung's ideas, the only way to reach psychic wholeness is to look inside, and stop projection. Nina also points at the shallowness of Almayer's dreams, which represent the materialistic desires of the modern West:

You were speaking of gold then, but our ears were filled with the song of our love, and we did not hear you. Then I found that we could see through each other's eyes: that he saw things that nobody but myself and he could see. We entered a land where no one could follow us, and least of all you. Then, I began to live.

(Conrad, 1976, p. 130)

Stagnation versus vitality is a recurrent theme in some of Conrad's works which has been stressed in this particular novel as well by depicting Almayer's decay in Sambir versus Nina and Dain's flight from

Sambir. This is not only a physical but also a psychological matter as it is only after listening to “the voice of her new-born impulses” that Nina begins to live and move beyond stagnation. As von Franz (1968) argues one can avert a complete stagnation of the inner process of individuation only if one decides to take one’s fantasies and feelings seriously (p. 198). She states that this is the only way one can discover what one’s anima or animus figure means as an inner reality, and as a result the anima or animus functions as a messenger that conveys the messages of the Self (p. 198).

However, instead of listening to this guide from within, and using its direction and guidance, Almayer keeps making a relentless series of projections. After hearing Nina’s heartfelt confessions about how she feels for Dain, Almayer accuses Nina, “You want him as a tool for some incomprehensible ambition of yours” (Conrad, 1976, p. 131). Obviously, Almayer is blaming Nina for what he had in mind. His relationship with Dain was not a friendship, but it was totally business oriented on the side of Almayer because he saw Dain as a tool through which he could have fulfilled his lifelong ambition of becoming extremely wealthy. Or, when he calls Nina a deceitful person who “shall live a life of lies and deception”, and threatens to call out and surrender Dain to the Dutch, she answers back: “Call out you that cannot be true to your own countrymen. Only a few days ago you were selling the powder for their destruction; now you want to give up to them the man that yesterday you called

your friend” (Ibid). Almayer’s stepping into a loveless marriage in the hope of getting rid of his wife and inheriting Lingard’s wealth committed him to “a life of lies and deception” which he now projects onto Nina.

Jung’s emphasis on the concept of unconscious was due to the fact that he was well aware of its dangerous dual nature. However, he was, at the same time, familiar with the importance of human consciousness and therefore, the call for individual consciousness was Jung’s offer that could protect man against catastrophe, despite being a daunting task. Consciousness plays a very practical role in one’s life along with giving the possibility of meaning to life. Jaffe (1968) writes:

The evil witnessed in the world outside, in neighbors or neighboring peoples, can be made conscious as evil contents of our own psyche as well, and this insight would be the first step to a radical change in our attitude to our neighbors (p. 316).

Almayer’s incessant projections and fault-finding attitude towards others, especially the local and non-white residents of Sambir, have their roots in his inability in bringing into consciousness the evil contents of his psyche. This, on a broader scale, is what is happening in the world when countries keep shifting the blame on their neighbours and other countries. Almayer’s folly is turning a blind eye to his psychic contents, and this is explicitly depicted late

in the novel when he is left alone awaiting his death. The few who saw him in his last days were "impressed by the sight of that face that seemed to know nothing of what went on within: like the blank wall of a prison enclosing sin, regrets, and pain, and wasted life, in the cold indifference of mortar and stones" (Conrad, 1976, p. 138).

There comes a critical moment when he can free himself of his self-made prison of arrogance and negligence towards his hidden contents. As von Franz (1968) states, "Crossing a river is a frequent symbolic image for a fundamental change of attitude" (p. 211). If Almayer had accepted his calls from within, he would have had to join Nina and Dain in their voyage to Dain's land, which would have symbolized a basic and vital change in his psychic life. However, because he does not do so, he has to spend his remaining days stuck in Sambir and consequently die in loneliness.

Discussing neurosis, Jung (1968) suggests that two forms of concealments are very harmful to our psychic health, the second of which is the act of "withholding", which usually refers to emotions that are withheld. Almayer is a man who does not show his emotions although he has a wide and intense range of them deep within. At the moment of Dain and Nina's departure Almayer "looked at them embarking, and at the canoe growing smaller in the distance, with rage, despair, and regret in his heart, and on his face a peace as that of a carved image of oblivion" (Conrad, 1976, p. 141). This is an act of repression and withholding one's emotions that Jung finds dangerous

to one's psychic totality. When one fails to hear the voices from within, and keeps repressing the truest of feelings, one is doomed to find his personality split into pieces, as does Almayer, who begins having hallucinations—of a little girl who is most likely Nina's childhood—shortly after Nina leaves Sambir, and therefore, he takes refuge in opium as his last treatment to lessen his pain.

Almayer's attempt to forget Nina may signify two important points. First, it illustrates an act of denial and suppression on the side of Almayer, who refuses to assume responsibility for his own mistakes and uses projection as his only tool. Second, the futility of his effort implies that one can never dispose of the contents of the unconscious and they will grow immensely and may gather a huge destructive force if they are merely dumped. And consequently, they can cause irreparable damage to one's psychic health, which in *Almayer's Folly* has been symbolized in the disappearance of the slightest hope. As mentioned earlier, the story starts with Almayer's looking at the surface of the river where the setting sun has given a glowing gold tinge. If that was a ray of hope for Almayer, the lines describing his despair at Nina's boat disappearing illustrate the ripping apart of that hope. The disappearance of Nina's prau, indeed, represents Almayer's total disconnection with the hidden contents of his unconscious, a mistake with fatal consequences.

In conclusion, Almayer, who had one day stepped on the jetty of Macassar with high hopes and intention of "conquering the

world”, not only does not return to Europe as a conqueror, but he dies a miserable, lonely, and desperate death of an opium addict among strangers in a strange land. However, and more importantly, this is all because he remains a stranger to his own self. Indeed, to conquer the world without, Conrad has shown his reader that one has to first conquer the world within, failing to do which was Almayer’s folly.

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The Reconciliation Process in Post-Apartheid South Africa through Zakes Mda's *Madonna of Excelsior*

J. S. Hardev* and Manimangai Mani

Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

At the present moment in history, there is a renewed interest in defining and redefining nationhood in the processes of dealing with past and reconciliation. Discourses of past and reconciliation have emerged in recent years in nations struggling with the legacies of colonialism. These would include the injustices and oppression inflicted on those natives who could not defend their motherland from oppressors. One such country, South Africa faced forty-six years of atrocious colonization known as apartheid or racial segregation where the blacks and coloured were suppressed by the white colonial masters. Despite apartheid being abolished in 1994, Democratic South Africa is still plagued with social ills and there is still a widespread of racial discrimination between the whites and the blacks. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee was set up right after apartheid was abolished, to help facilitate a truth recovery process. Forgiveness has been forwarded yet redemption and reconciliation are somewhat elusive, as discrimination and instability still exist due to the stigma apartheid has left. This research paper "Apartheid and the Reconciliation Process in the Post-Apartheid South Africa" looks into the novel by Zakes Mda entitled *The Madonna of Excelsior*, which deals with the issues of the process of reconciliation between the present and the past. In this paper, we investigated if the masses are willing to forget the past in order to create a better future for the new generation of the new South Africa.

Keywords: Apartheid, colonialism, racism, reconciliation

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E-mail addresses:

hardevkaur@upm.edu.my (J. S. Hardev),

manimangai@upm.edu.my (Manimangai Mani)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

This statement can very well be considered as having political significance in the process of reconciliation. South Africa became a democratic country in 1994 after forty-six years of apartheid. With democracy, the

Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) was set up in order for South Africans to tell their stories of the past, which would allow for the process of reconciliation to take place. The setting up of the TRC to investigate crimes against humanity had both positive and negative effects. Many criticized the TRC for “[being] as little more than an archive of apartheid-era crimes, unable to ‘right the wrongs that had occurred’” (Giddens, 2006, p. 484), but there were some who felt that credit should go to the Commission, for healing did take place after apologies and forgiveness were given between the perpetrators and victims, as a victim declared, “[d]on’t we want peace for South Africa? How are we going to find peace if we don’t forgive? My husband was fighting for peace for all of South Africa. How can you correct a wrong with a wrong?” (Hayner, 2002, p. 3).

Thus, the process of reconciliation is imperative in order for South Africans to come to terms with humanity of those who inflicted pain, in order to foster reconciliation. South Africa’s past President Thabo Mbeki defined reconciliation as “the peaceful coexistence of a healed population from past injustices of apartheid, living in a non-racial, non-sexist society with sustainable quality livelihoods” (Boraine, 2001, p. 348). Erin Daly and Jeremy Serkin state that “[r]econciliation embodies the possibility of transforming war into peace, trauma into survival, hatred into forgiveness; it is the way human being connects with one another against all odds. It exemplifies the potential for strengthening humanities and

generosity of spirits that is also immanent in human nature” (2007, p. 4). Apologies and forgiveness need to be given for the society to ensure healing takes place for them to coexist peacefully.

The process of reconciliation is seen taking place in the novels by Zakes Mda. These novels depict the pain of apartheid and the scars that are left in the lives of the affected people. Despite all these, there are signs of sincere efforts made by the characters to end their enmity, for the sake of reconciliation. This paper examined if this writer ends his novels in a positive note where hatred and inequalities between the blacks and whites and fellow blacks are overcome and if the characters reconcile with themselves and others in order for the true ‘rainbow nation’ to emerge.

RECONCILIATION IN *MADONNA OF EXCELSIOR*

In *Madonna of Excelsior*, Mda shows how important it is to respect every individual as a citizen of South Africa, irrespective of colour, creed or race. This novel also shows how the characters overcome their identity crisis in their road to reconciliation. This novel focuses on two different eras: the period surrounding the trial of the nineteen people caught for going against the Immorality Act and the decade which led to the democracy of South Africa. The juxtaposition of these two eras depicts how the intolerance of the white against the blacks and coloureds began to change as South Africa moved towards democracy which created a multi-racial society. In

an era of violence and racial prejudices, Mda's novel presents a community slowly overcoming its past that was full of racial intolerance. In this novel, the coloured children who are involved in the Excelsior trial, who once were the shame of the community, became the symbols of the new 'Rainbow Nation'. *Madonna of Excelsior* also shows that remembering the past apartheid trauma must occur in order to bring about reconciliation. Niki Pule is seen as the Madonna of Excelsior, a character who will begin to heal the town of its racial division. Niki's role as Madonna is epitomized through her racially mixed children and through her being a model for Father Frans Claerhout, a well-known South African painter. Niki, the Madonna, represents the true 'Rainbow Nation' as she is the mother of different coloured children, Valiki, who is black, Popi, who is a mulatto and Tjaart, Popi's half brother, who is a white, and she tells Popi, "I care about all my children... [n]ot only those of my womb" (Mda, 2004, p. 128). This shakes the very foundation of apartheid South Africa by having coloured children who became the symbols of the multi racial society. However, identity crisis becomes another dilemma faced by these rainbow children. Popi's identity crisis is overcome when she dedicates her time to the politics of the town council. Her entry to the Movement, a political wing fighting for the rights of the blacks shows her determination to change the old system which has been suppressing the blacks for a long time. Mda highlights the fighting spirit of the black women

who seek a representation in the political institutions. Popi comments that "she was no longer going to be a bystander, or a side walker who minded her own business. A side walker who had done no wrong and would therefore not run away" (Mda, 2004, p. 152). By doing so, she wishes to eliminate the traces of the past apartheid. To Popi, only with the demise of the apartheid regime will South Africa be able to go through the process of reconciliation, which will lead to its better future. Popi's identity crisis is removed when she remembers the time when her mother used to take her to a white painter, Father Frans Martin Claerhout, also known as the 'Trinity' (Mda, 2004, p. 5). Niki used to go to the studio to pose nude in front of Father Claerhout, who painted her and many other women, in which she earned some income to bring up her children. Popi interprets a new nation from her understanding of the society, as it evolves from apartheid, by remembering the paintings. Almost every chapter of this novel describes these paintings with multi hued Madonnas, "a Madonna with blue flowing locks [...] a face of brown, yellow and white impasto" (Mda, 2004, p. 104). All these Madonnas are reincarnations of "Popi-and-Niki of the flesh" (Mda, 2004, p. 105). When Niki and Popi pose for Father Claerhout, Niki knows that "this is not the first time a white man has seen her naked" (Mda, 2004, p. 13). She remembered her rape ordeal by white men and the shameful incident where she had to strip naked in front of Stephanus Cronje, who saw her as a sexual object. To father Claerhout, his painting of the naked

nun with bare breasts and black nipples is a work of art. He does not take advantage of their being naked in the way other white men have done nor does he humiliate them. Instead, he allows their internal beauty to be exposed. This reveals the future of Popi, who realizes that beauty is skin deep and that the skin colour should not be used to judge her character. Popi views the paintings, which have been converted into post cards by Father Claerhout, in which he has drawn "Mother Mary with brown baby Jesus at a crossroad" (Mda, 2004, p. 217). Mwangi points out that:

The messiah is given a brown body [by Father Claerhout] to signify his relocation from foreign and mystical mythology to the gritty reality of the South African situation. It is people like Popi, who have been marginalized by both apartheid and post apartheid regimes, who would be the saviours of the new Republic

(Mwangi, 2009, p. 183).

The Trinity's idealist vision of a world where human identity is not limited by racial identity initiated Niki and Popi's healing. The Trinity's paintings of brown Madonnas and white Madonnas, whose "world has nothing to with the outside world of miscegenation, are carrying babies with slanting eyes. Babies that look grey at first glance, but have the colours of the rainbow if you look hard enough, God promises us through the rainbow that He will never

destroy the world again" (Mda, 2004, 92). Niki finds peace while posing for Father Claerhout.

This calmness is in contrast to her earlier vengeance towards Stephanus Cronje which resulted in his suicide, the birth of Popi and the Excelsior Trial, events which rupture the community. Popi, who is angry with her identity, seeks revenge against the township for continuously undermining her integrity. She is overflowing with feelings of vengeance, but, "no one told her that vengeance had a habit of bouncing against the wall, like a ricocheting bullet, and hitting the originator. Look what happened to Niki when she filled her loins with vengeance! It was because of that vengeance that Popi was not a prisoner of the perpetual doek on her head, of blue eyes and of hairy legs" (Mda, 2004, p. 137). Niki and Popi now realize that it is reconciliation, and not vengeance that will bring the society closer. Ultimately, Niki and Popi move beyond a sense of racial identity. Gandhi, who started the Satyagraha Movement, believes that patience is the best virtue to cultivate when faced by violence: "I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world" (Riso, Don, & Hudson, 1996, p. 379). Gandhi continues that: "[i]t is not that I do not get angry. I do not give vent to anger. I cultivate the quality of patience as angerlessness, and, generally speaking, I succeed.[...]. It is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice (Kripalani, 2004, p. 99).

Popi's reconciliation with her white half brother comes with her mother's constant reminder to her that it was not a wise idea to fight Tjaart. Popi later finds out that Tjaart is ill and is lying on his deathbed. Tjaart sends Johannes, who raped Niki during the apartheid days, to Popi and Niki to tell them that he wanted to see them "to make peace with Popi" (Mda, 2004, p. 251). Johannes too, seizes this chance to make peace and advises Niki that "[w]e can't live in the past forever. Bygones should be allowed to bygones" (Mda, 2004, p. 252). Lying on his deathbed, Tjaart realizes that he is slowly losing his power against the blacks in the post apartheid South Africa. A white acquaintance of Tjaart, Gys Uys, who visits him in the hospital, senses that Tjaart's illness is due to the hatred he has for the white apartheid regime which gave in to the demands of the black leaders who fought for the dismantling of apartheid and who wished to see reconciliation to take place. Gys Uys sympathizes with his condition:

We all know that we used these children to fight our wars. And then we discard them. All of a sudden they find that they live in a new world in which they do not belong... We have all the wealth and the influence and are now in cahoots with the new elite. Things like affirmative action do not affect us at all. But what about these young men who had to kill and be prepared to be killed on our behalf

(Mda, 2004, p. 248).

It is obvious that the realization of the older white generation, who feel that they have come to terms with the end of apartheid, has created a lot of anger in the younger white generation who still hate the blacks, as Reverend Bornman points out, "[w]e regret the past and yet are fearful of the future" (Mda, 2004, p. 249). It is undeniable that the past posed new challenges to the post apartheid South Africa where racial issues are far from being settled, yet if every individual is willing to forgive for a better South Africa, this process of reconciliation and redemption will take this society towards its goal. Tjaart, finally moving towards this process of reconciliation as he recognizes that his illness is due to his own anger and desire for vengeance for the end of apartheid and, is being destroyed by his own anger. He acknowledges that "his ancestors are telling him to make peace with [the blacks]" (Mda, 2004, p. 251). Tjaart begins the reconciliation process through an open acknowledgement of their relationship: "I wish you had known him Popi [...]. Our father [...] he was not a bad man" (Mda, 2004, p. 253). It is true that it will take a long time for Tjaart and Popi to reconcile but we do see forgiveness in Tjaart which will augur well for a better future of the new South Africa. Before Popi leaves, Tjaart gives her a depilatory cream and tells Popi "you are a lady, a beautiful lady" (Mda, 2004, p. 254). This declaration by Tjaart makes Popi's realize her inner beauty and her new positive self-image:

Lately Popi spent all her mornings looking at herself in the mirror,

admiring her blue eyes, and brushing her long golden-brown hair [...]. She wondered why she had been ashamed of it all these years, why she had never noticed its beauty. She brushed it and combed it over and over again[...]She had taken to wearing the isigqebhezana, the micro mini skirts of the new millennium, displaying her long yellow-coloured legs that bristled with golden-yellow hair[...]She would not shave her hairy legs. Her hairy arms. Even her armpits. She rejoiced in her hair and her hairiness

(Mda, 2004, p. 256).

Mda also portrays a white member of the Excelsior Town Council, Lizette de Vries, who acknowledges that social changes are necessary for South Africa. Lizette plays an important role in the reconciliation process as she becomes the newly elected Mayor of Excelsior. This is seen when Tjaart insisted that the Afrikaaner language be spoken in the council meetings, Lizette quickly responded, “[i]nstead of eliminating Afrikaans, we should rather say that our proceedings should be in Sesotho as well. We all speak Sesotho in Excelsior, don’t we?” (Mda, 2004, p. 171). Lizette’s role as a mediator goes beyond the politics of race and identity and she uses her energy towards the social transformation of Excelsior. She also becomes critical of Tjaart for the disrespect he shows towards

Popi when he comments on Popi’s unshaved legs, “[w]hat do you know of culture when you can’t even shave your legs?” (Mda, 2004, p. 187).

Lizette’s comment, “[y]ou can’t talk to a lady like that” (Mda, 2004, p. 187), shows that the time has come for the white male to show respect towards a black woman, as this encourages political partnership of the blacks and whites. By depicting women in the political arena in his novel, Mda stresses the importance of the post-apartheid era’s social and cultural transformation occurring in South Africa. Mda’s depiction of Valiki joining politics and his election as the first black mayor of Excelsior reveals that the blacks, who were marginalized during apartheid, are elected to higher posts in post apartheid South Africa. By elevating the blacks to higher social status, Mda suggests that the blacks are capable of leadership. In a country where the blacks were not allowed to vote, the transition period led to the first democratic elections. Valiki envisions South Africa belonging to both blacks and whites, “Next year we have a general election [...]. We shall be liberated and we shall be one people with the Afrikaans. That’s what the Movement stands for, One South African nation” (Mda, 2004, p. 47).

It is evident here that this novel functions as a means of transforming and changing the present; so that the process of reconciliation can take place for a better future of South Africa. If in the beginning of the novel, the characters are still seen dwelling in the past, all the characters realize dwelling in the past for too long will shatter the peace process

which is vital to South Africa. It also shows how the whites learn to respect the Other as they see this as the only way to achieve racial harmony. They realized that by respecting the blacks, they are helping the blacks to heal the wounds created by apartheid. In *The Madonna of Excelsior*, the blacks finally accept that their beauty lies in their coloured identity and that they too, have the rights to live in dignity. On the other hand, the whites start to respect the blacks, whom they earlier saw as the Other. They become conscious of that fact that it was a matter of time before the apartheid regime would collapse. Therefore, it is important to coexist with the blacks to ensure racial integration. The only way towards reconciliation is for everyone to respect each other, get rid of racial barriers and learn how to forgive for the sake of a peaceful South Africa. Therefore, forwarding forgiveness is also important for peaceful coexistence to occur. It was a dream of Valiki of *Madonna of Excelsior* to see an election that would liberate the blacks of South Africa and build a nation where racial barriers will be removed in order for a new South Africa to emerge. This dream came true for all black South Africans when South Africa held its first democratic elections in 1994 after forty-six years of apartheid. After casting his vote, Nelson Mandela said, “[t]his is for all South Africans, an unforgettable occasion. [...] It is the beginning of a new era. We have moved from an era of pessimism, division, limited opportunities, turmoil and conflict. We are starting a new era of hope, reconciliation and nation building” (ANC Today, 2010: para. 1). On 10 May

1994, Nelson Mandela became the first black president of South Africa and it was this election that witnessed South Africans coming together after more than forty-six years of segregation between the blacks and the whites. The elections of 1994 were the most important milestones in South African history. It was a time where the relationship between coloureds became possible as the nation resolved to overcome the differences dividing its population. Desmond Tutu’s dream of the Rainbow Nation was realized and against all odds, the parties concerned came together and decided to face the future as one united force. South Africa’s victory was celebrated across the world and, “[t]he pariah state had emerged like a butterfly from its chrysalis into the sunlight of international acceptance” (Sparks, 2003, p. 2). Unfortunately, the celebration was not meant to last long. Although violence subsided after the elections, a dissonant chorus of overdrawn black expectations and exaggerated white’s fears posed new challenges for the young democratic country as the new government had hardly any experience in running a country. After the elections, President Mandela’s assurance throughout the election campaign “of more jobs, more housing, better education and health services - still reverberated across the country” (Meredith, 2006, p. 655). One of the most important factors aiding the process of transition or the turbulent times in South Africa was the setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was to help re-negotiate the race relations of South Afrikaners.

Its purpose was to offer a platform on which perpetrators and victims could tell their stories and break their silence of the past while undergoing the process of reconciliation. Forgiveness was necessary, and in order to forgive and move on, people had to know first what exactly was to be forgiven. The nation was allowed to speak in its multitude of voices, breaking the silence, revealing the atrocities of the apartheid period, opening wounds inflicted by apartheid and simultaneously attempting to heal those wounds. Victims were encouraged to engage in narrating their past experiences as the beginning of healing process. In April 2004, South Africa organized her third democratic elections since the end of apartheid, and even if many of the problems that persisted during the apartheid government still occupied the current administration, democracy in South Africa could be considered to have consolidated itself. Ironically, despite this consolidation, South Africa is still engulfed in crime and violence. People are still living in abject poverty and fighting for recognition in a society that has been denied of equal opportunities by the oppressive white government. The country too, has to deal with illegal immigrants that contribute to a rise of unemployment and crime. Although South Africa has enjoyed economical and political stability, the injustice of social inequities still remain in the country and pose a threat to the future. Only when the needs of the poor and those who were suppressed are addressed that South Africa would have a real chance of overcoming

its violent past. It is through literature that these voices can be heard as literature can be considered a medium in which a society with all its good and evil can be assessed, and in which the marginalized are given a voice to speak about their anguish and ill treatment. Literature has also been used to address the social transformation of South Africa since the end of apartheid. Most often, it is not the silenced people themselves who take a stand and tell their respective stories, but acclaimed novelists who write about the apartheid past that disrupts the reconciliation process in South Africa. Imagination and creativity have been sidelined throughout history and it is these writers who bring these elements in their writings to make readers feel the pain that apartheid has brought. According to Fuentes, “[h]umankind will prevail and it will prevail because, in spite of the accidents of history, the novel tells us that art restores the life in us that was disregarded by the haste of history [and] [l]iterature makes real what history forgot (2006, par. 33). In South Africa, the past injustice has to be exposed for the purpose of current reconciliation.

Zakes Mda also takes the readers on a journey through the shifting psychological landscapes of its characters, white and coloured, who are desperately trying to adjust to present day South African realities, while still trapped in the old order. It is not only described the history of black-white relationship but also deals with the black anti-apartheid struggle and the corruption of the new black elite, thus providing an insight into the present. Tjaart Cronje, a

white character in this novel, also refuses to accept the changes taking place in the post-apartheid. Tjaart Cronje still feels that he is living in the apartheid era where the whites dictated to the blacks. In the Town Council meetings, we see that he still fights for the right to speak Afrikaans during their meetings. He enforces his cultural identity on others and is protective of his linguistic identity as an Afrikaans speaking person. He is still dominated by apartheid mentality that the Afrikaans are God-chosen people and that the blacks they rule are savages.

This belief is deeply ingrained in him and denies him of coming to terms with reality that the whites have lost their power over the blacks. In this novel, we also see Popi, a coloured girl facing identity crisis. If Tjaart is seen, still living in an illusionary world where his white identity is still supreme in the post-apartheid era, Popi is seen as still having identity crisis despite truly being in the post-apartheid world. Her racial identity as 'coloured' represented the shameful past of her mother, which becomes symbolic in the apartheid era where women were treated as sex objects. Black skin colour is still a social stigma in Tutu's rainbow nation.

It cannot be denied that the past plays a pivotal role in the present chaotic condition of South Africa. Despite this chaotic condition, this novel demonstrated a commitment towards the process of reconciliation. The characters also contribute to the process of reconciliation. For many years, South Africa has been caught up in conflict, war and social disparities as a result of apartheid.

Hence, in order to resolve this conflict, reconciliation was deemed necessary for victims of apartheid to heal and come to terms with their tormented past and to move forward in order to pave the way for a better future. In order to reconcile, one has to come to terms with humanity, which is part of the process of recovering from apartheid, and forging a new state in which blacks and whites can form equal partnership.

Equal partnership can also be realized if the society recognizes and understands the concept of coexistence. This would mean relinquishing 'white supremacy', hatred and vengeance which could lead to disharmony. In order to strive for harmony, it is important to accept that no one is perfect and that as humans, we do make mistakes and the only noble thing to do is to adopt the concept of forgiveness, which leads to reconciliation. For a nation to heal itself and restore the dignity of the black people of South Africa, reconciliation must take place.

The process of reconciliation has brought about positive attitudinal change among races that could lead to peaceful coexistence. It conceptualizes the process of reconciliation into three dimensions of attitude needed for the better future of South Africa. These dominant attitudes would be coming to terms with humanity. The next one would be accepting the coexistence of blacks and whites, followed by accepting the fact that humans err. It is important for all of South Africans to come to terms with humanity in order to secure a better future for all its people. The values of humility, love, compassion, tolerance, kindness are

much needed to ensure that society moves forward in its efforts towards healing. These values are needed to bring people together towards the common goal of progress and harmony, find solutions that are meaningful, just and beneficial to all towards rebuilding broken lives and shattered dreams.

Bakshi, Mangold and Weinert quoted Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: “[y]ou must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty” (Bakshi *et al.*, 2002). Bakshi quoted Parekh as saying, “Gandhi saw humanity as an indivisible, organic whole, tied together by the expectation that every man is responsible to and for others to be deeply concerned about how others lived” (Bakshi *et al.*, 2002). Humanity resides in mutual respect, tolerance and commitment of people to put up with one another that will allow for peaceful coexistence instead of hate and contempt that existed during the apartheid era. Love, tolerance, kindness and understanding are qualities which can replace the deep seated hatred of apartheid. It would be these qualities that would enable South Africans to move towards reconciliation.

This is a process through which society moves from a divided past to a shared future. In *Madonna of Excelsior*, Popi realizes that love and tolerance are the essence of humanity which creates an atmosphere where human learns to respect and understand one another. In order to love humanity, one has to love oneself. There must be reconciliation within before

one reconciles with others. Popi is at first faced with identity crisis due to her being a coloured child. It is the white friend of Popi, Lizette de Vries who entreats her to love herself and be proud of her beauty and identity.

With this rejuvenated self, Popi casts aside her anger and hatred for the whites and says, “[m]y shame went away with my anger” (Mda, 2004, p. 260) and she liberates herself from the entrapment of race and identity. She ends up treating her white half brother, Tjaart, with kindness. Tjaart realizes that with the collapse of apartheid, his superior white status collapses, too. He accepts the coloured Popi as his half-sister and treats her with kindness and helps her to accept her true identity. Popi and Tjaart are seen as the younger generation who represents the promise of a new nation. This then is a reconciliation that comes from love and kindness. Popi’s mother, Niki too never ceases to love her step-son Tjaart. Her unconditional love for him is seen throughout the novel when she says, “I care about all my children, Viliki, [...] [n]ot only those of my womb” (Mda, 2004, p. 133). Niki represents the true new South African woman whose love and kindness have no bounds.

The fact that she shows her unconditional love towards Tjaart suggests that she has forgiven those who have victimized her, as forgiveness is essential for reconciliation. Popi too, is seen as the younger generation who represents the promise of a new nation. She is committed to adapt to the post-apartheid era, even if it means tolerating her

black neighbour who has done her wrong. She feels that she has to come to terms with this situation if she wants to continue her new life. Her aim is to forget the past and to carry on with life which leads to integration in post-apartheid South Africa.

CONCLUSION

Countries torn by war and conflicts often pursue reconciliation as a means to bring about peace. In South Africa, during the apartheid regime, the blacks and whites were hostile towards each other. With the abolition of apartheid, these people who were foes agreed to coexist and compete peacefully rather than violently. This peaceful coexistence or interracial tolerance could be defined as the willingness of people of different races to trust each other, get along with each other and to reject racial stereotypes. It is time for the blacks and whites to treat everyone as equal by treating them with dignity and respect those who have been victimized. In doing so, these people come to interact with each other more in order to break down racial barriers. This will ultimately lead to greater understanding and acceptance of one another. Huyse, in his chapter "The Process of Reconciliation", states that "[w]hen the shooting stops, the first steps away from hatred, hostility and bitterness is the achievement of non-violent coexistence between the antagonist individuals and groups" (Huyse, 2003, p. 19). He further quotes Martin Luther King, "those who do not learn to live together as brothers are going to perish together as fools" (Huyse,

2003, p. 20). It is important to preach the doctrine or the virtues of interracial harmony to every South African as this will lead to mutual understanding and respect. Michael Battle reflects on the strong interdependence of human beings as he quoted Desmond Tutu, "[w]e say a person is a person through other persons. We don't come fully formed into the world [...]. We need other human beings in order to be human. We are made for togetherness, we are made for family, for fellowship, to exist in a tender network of interdependence" (Battle, 2009, p. 54).

To the South Africans, that is what coexistence or Ubuntu is. Ubuntu sees community rather than self-determination as the essential aspect of brotherhood. To coexist has always been difficult due to racial tensions that South Africans had to endure during apartheid. The issue of xenophobia and racial prejudice too has created a hostile environment, which is detrimental for the peace of South Africa and the characters in the novel *Madonna of Excelsior* accept that in order for reconciliation to take place, coexistence is vital, which paves the way to nation building. Popi is seen to have buried her feelings of racial prejudice in order for reconciliation to take place. She realizes that they have to treat everyone as equal despite their creed and colour. This will ensure a peaceful coexistence among the people of the new South Africa.

Coexistence among humans is needed for everyone to live in harmony. Lizette even reprimands Tjaart for displaying a racist attitude towards Popi as she reminds him not to talk disrespectfully to her during

their political meetings. Lizette's defence of Popi shows the solidarity between the different races in the struggle against racism. The one common factor in these novels is forgiveness as it is only through it that one begins to understand humanity and with forgiveness comes acceptance, tolerance, love and ultimately the forging of a common national identity.

Reconciliation is about acknowledging one's mistakes and being responsible for them. In South Africa, it was important to establish the TRC to facilitate the victims of the atrocities confront the perpetrators to bring about the process of reconciliation. Reconciliation requires that victims of the atrocities are heard as this will purge them of negative emotions that are destructive. Everyone should steer clear of vindictiveness as it is dangerous and capable of causing discord. Therefore, one has to learn how to forgive even though it can be extremely difficult. However, it becomes easier when the perpetrator is forgiven of the crime.

The victims of atrocities can control their emotions and can choose to forgive their oppressors. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Laureate and Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) said, "You can only be human in a human society. If you live with hate and revenge, you dehumanize not only yourself, but also your community. You must forgive to make your community whole" (Scott, 2010, par. 4). Through forgiveness, hatred and vengeance are replaced with compassion and understanding; this would then serve as a basis of morality, revealing a path for others to follow.

Forgiveness demands courage, responsibility and acceptance. It can eliminate the trouble of hate carried by victims as well as purge the oppressors of their collective guilt. This would then surely bring forward harmony.

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Hoda Barakat's *Tiller of the Waters* and *The Stone of Laughter*: A Reflection on Gender and Sexism in Times of Wars

Fatma H. Taher

*Faculty of Foreign Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology,
Motamyez District, 6th of October City, Egypt*

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at examining Hoda Barakat's exploration of the civil war in Lebanon and its effect on the self, the memory, and masculinity of the common man. Unlike War Literature, neither of the two novels at hand examines the sectarian division, or who to blame; it is rather the drama of the individual that shapes the two books. War here is shown to affect man's acceptance and understanding of himself, as much as of his country. Barakat willingly estranges herself and her protagonist to delve deep into the past and scrutinize the marginalized self. The different perspective, the new tone, as well as the wisdom gained through years of exposure to dangers, enable Barakat to probe into the disturbed self of the protagonist where she tries to replicate his suffering and sense of loss. Essentially written in Arabic, the two novels reveal the desolate condition of the protagonist and the city as a microcosm of the devastating state of the Arabs; peoples and countries. The emasculated protagonist stands both as a reflection of the defenseless, powerless, unmotivated Arabs, and an opposition to the over masculinized, enraged and therefore, aggressive Arabs who want a change of the status quo, no matter how destructive, or even how efficient. Hence the paper discusses issues that are "routinely forgotten and swept under the rug", an examination that highlights the Arab intellectuals' apprehension with all the tribulations of their communities.

Keywords: Arabic literature. gender, homosexuality, sexism, war, women authors

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E-mail address:

fatma_taher@yahoo.com (Fatma H. Taher)

INTRODUCTION

The intellectual's obligation as Edward Said defines it is "to insist on standards of truth about human misery and oppression regardless to party or national background" (1994, xii-xiii). This definition forms

the milestone of Barakat's works where she willingly estranges herself and her protagonist to delve deep into the past and scrutinize the marginalized self. The different perspective, the new tone, as well as the wisdom gained through years of exposure to danger enable Barakat to probe into the disturbed self of her protagonists where she replicates their sufferings and sense of loss. Hoda Barakat's narratives immensely focus on the issues of identity and the land to show great cultural consciousness of identity as residing in and belonging to the land (Ashour, 2003). Her books are woven from the lexicon of the civil war in Lebanon which created a rich and endlessly fertile soil for writers and thinkers of the whole region, but most particularly of Lebanon. Those writers captured the traumatic moment of war and registered all the drastic changes and the psychological damage, illustrating the issue from historical, social, anthropological and biological perspectives. The breaking of the traumatic civil war in Lebanon which started 1975, lasted for fourteen years and claimed the lives of up to 100,000 people, created great changes in the social structure, and people's psychologies. In such an atmosphere of intervening destruction, writing becomes the intellectuals' weapon for resistance. Barakat writes because she has "no power; no arms or soldiers. [I] belong to the dark dampness and the forgetfulness of those making history in the streets. ... under the boots stepping over [my] head, [I] still write as if I am empress or a dictator" (Barakat, 1995, v).

She presents the fate of the individual as an integrated part of the fate of a society built on contradictions and certain notions of masculinity, highly exposed after the war erupted to uncover the ugly reality. Her works reflect war, destruction and the change that overcame people's lives masterfully and inclusively.

Fadia Faqir believes that the seemingly disjointed, trivial scenes which constitute the body of Barakat's writing are purposefully woven to "block out the ugliness of war outside" (Faqir, 1995, vi). Yet, they represent the chaotic disconnections in the once metropolitan city of Beirut. The different, plentiful scenes of fantasies, day dreams, flash backs and hallucinations echo the devastated self of the individual in the middle of a country falling apart. The representation of the war as a nonsensical, farcical action is furthered through the discussions and representations that criticize a country built on divisions and a structure of submission, even on the personal individual level in a patriarchal society. Barakat's narratives are living examples of the Arab female intellectuals' preoccupation with the problems of their society, as opposed to what many male critics in the Arab patriarchal society prefer to believe. The detailed account she gives of people's life is an insider's experience.

Barakat's exploration of the civil war in Lebanon has always evoked several queries. Unlike War Literature, the two novels at hand concentrate on the drama of the individual in a war that affects man's masculinity, inducing debates of the

relationship between manhood, nationalism and violence, and highlighting issues like homosexuality as a sign of resistance, and as "one way to escape the draft" in many cases in history as Mike Kelly (2000, p. 1) argues. This in turn brings up issues of sexism and the cultural misconception that women are less patriotic than men.

DISCUSSION

War and Manhood

"Despite the diversity of gender and war separately, gender roles in war are very consistent across all known human society" (Cohn, 1987). The intersection of issues of masculinity and femininity with war came to the fore during the war in Lebanon to start a new "Lebanese novelistic discourse" as Yumna Al-'ID describes it (2003, p. 31) of which Barakat's works constitute a 'well-crafted' fine example. In *Tiller of the Waters* and *The Stone of Laughter*, Hoda Barakat uses war as a background for her narrative to highlight other issues aggravated by the war. She explores civil war in Lebanon and its effect on memory and masculinity of the common man. In a thoroughly comprehensive manner, the author avoids discussing sectarian divisions; instead she presents the drama of the individual. War in her works defines gender traits that associate men and manhood with war, while associating women with domestic works and peace which affects man's acceptance and understanding of himself as much as of his society. The Lebanese war divided the country and created two groups; those who

fight and those who don't. The latter, always thought of as sexually incompetent.

The two novels reflect great consciousness of the loss and disintegration, which hit Beirut and tortured its people during the civil war. Barakat shows great persistence and pre-occupation with the effects of violence on man's identity and mind. The collective sense of despair and alienation divulged explains the war-like behaviour among men in and outside the battlefield. In these two works "the deep ruptures within the self, between the self and others, the self and society, the self and reality at large" crystallize (Amyuni, 1999, p. 37). Sexual abnormalities among men in times of wars, is seen as a by-product of the graver effect of war; they simply need a secure refuge and see manhood, as exemplified for in warriors, void of all meanings and useful for nothing but killing. The protagonists in *Tiller of the Waters* and *The Stone of Laughter* favour solitude and marginalization and turn into gay or abnormal sexual tendencies to avoid violence.

Khalil in *The Stone of Laughter* and Niquila in *Tiller of the Waters* lose essence of their nature, their manhood, and their humanity at large when everything around them collapses and disintegrates. Their confusion and loss of vision echoes the Lebanese War and the collective hysteria that marginalizes them; "Khalil did not understand what the connection was, but he replied that he didn't think he was up to working in journalism since, in all honesty, he didn't understand what was going on

around him” (SOL, p. 29). This emptiness in the protagonist’s mind echoes that of the streets where “even the rats seemed familiar, unconcerned by the sound of footsteps near them. ... The nights on these streets were thick with packs of dogs, so many that one might fear the city was stricken with rabies. ... there were big dogs, a little like wolves in the way they looked, in the tense way they touched each other and worked along the streets, in the way the city ceased moving and seemed to be totally still ...” (SOL, pp. 29-30).

The personal and collective emptiness are inseparable. The parody and the direct relationship between the war and the individual’s drama are illustrated in the de-centred perspective through which Khalil views his life and his country: “Khalil thought a little ... The sea. It all goes to the sea ... all the days that wash over the city flow to the sea. ... over the years, the days have become many. All that the war had left behind it, all that it had burned and broken ... to the sea ... it was clear to him that the sea was: full. Overflowing with things from the city, with its decaying limbs ... then the sea returns them to us as vapors and rains ... then they come back and ... we clean with them and water our plants ... and they ... Khalil looked appalled ...” (SOL, p. 34). It is clear here that Khalil is involuntarily caught up in the vicious circle of the war. He is quite sure that he will never find comfort or be able to overcome the overwhelming feeling of desolation, despair and emptiness. That is why he escapes into the small emptiness of his room where he

finds comfort away from everything and everyone. Other times, he resorts to his dead intimate friend’s room where he would “[throw] himself across the bed, on top of Naji’s clothes which were still piled up on it ... took the edges of the bedcover in both hands and tugged them, with the clothes that were on top of them, over himself” (SOL, p. 62). Or, he would resort to the FM radio where he found people like him who escaped the city because they were people like him who escaped the city because they “knew neither how to get into its days nor its streets. They talked without speaking ... they talked to the broadcaster who kept on talking, who said nothing at all ...” (SOL, p. 65). His story is very simple, it does not contain any details; he simply bends over himself and escapes his fear and loneliness. His empty life consists of shadows of bodies that had been once alive, and of people who ceased to be like the destruction that engulfs the city as a whole. His structure of feelings is dramatized through his bent, crouched body and the images of the dislocated, fragmented people in the city of Beirut. Violence broke the chain that had long held the Lebanese society, and changed the meaning and value of things. The eruption of the anarchic violence, as a by-product of war, gave manhood a different dimension largely defined through the activities of the militia groups that “struggled to construct and defend institutional arrangements that would permit them not merely to survive but to manage the organizational, material and human demand of war making” (Picard, 2000, p. 293). It is only through these groups

that manhood could be fulfilled and the over-masculinizing effect of war is revealed. On the other hand, the emasculating or the feminizing effect, elaborately discussed by Barakat, can easily be depicted. The protagonists psychologically withdraw into themselves in search for the opposite part, the peaceful, meek one (the feminine?). The physical manifestation of the emasculating effect of war is shown in the protagonists' appearance; remarkably small, weak, and pale. They both compensate for this physical weakness, psychological loss and disturbed mentality through pervert relations, imagination or hallucination.

Wars, which Abou el Naga maintains, "have often paradoxical results: [as] they both destroy and allow for the appearance of new modes of relations" (2002, p. 87), affect both Khalil and his neighbour, who lost his father at an early age. However, because the latter enjoys all masculine qualities, he has always been wanted in the military groups, since his youth and strength would enrich the solidarity of the army. In times of wars, manhood meant fighting and combat in all the battlefields, social and psychological, rendering Khalil emasculated, inefficient and useless, always referring to himself as 'a widow', 'a wife' or a 'divorced woman' (SOL, 1995). Though Goldstein maintains that "no universal biological essence of 'sex' exists but rather a complex system of potentials that are activated by various internal and external influences" (cited in Prugl, 2003, p. 337), the way Khalil describes himself carries obvious negative and sexist connotations

and is an essential reason for his inner suffering and torment. His inability to fulfil the social criteria of 'manhood' results from being less aggressive, less competitive and physically weaker than his fellow mates. He, like Niqula in *Tiller of the Waters*, suffers reverse casualty of war, where "gender roles adapt individuals for war roles, and war roles provide the context within which individuals are socialized into gender roles" (as cited in Prugl, 2003, p. 338), rendering both victims of the war.

While Khalil suffers homosexual tendencies, Niqula in *Tiller of the Waters* metamorphoses into a hallucinating man due to his inability to identify his collapsing homeland. Images of internal devastation, division, and alienation designate his isolation and rejection from the outer world. The physical presence of barricades and road blocks deepen this feeling even more and create areas of disconnection all over the country and make movement and communication self endangering as much as they amplify the sense of loneliness and isolation. Therefore, he becomes more detached from the external world.

The protagonists' loss of reference is highly emphasized through Barakat's use of the poetic language and the stream of consciousness technique. In *Tiller of the Waters*, a sense of universality dominates the narrative though the protagonist is dislocated and dispersed. Niqula lost all connections with the present when the war broke. It consequently caused his loss of history and the heritage of his ancestors. He turned into a disoriented individual, losing

all sense of direction to echo the 'Waste Land' his city turns into. In his hiding place, the once upon a time, successful flourishing cloth shop, Niqula is caught in a state of desolation and marginalization, having nothing to live on or for, except his long gone, presently cherished past! At moments of great depression and despair, his only means of survival is to summon this past to the present collapsing all time frames and adding to the collective hysteria. His alienation and inner fragmentation turn into interior monologues and hallucinations.

The narrative shifts between the past and the present connected with the recurring image of cloth. In his hide, Niqula tries to find a substitute for his collapsing home land and lost love. He is too much taken into his memories in a desperate try to relate. Nevertheless, even his memories with Shamsa, his maid and beloved, seem to be unreal. She is more of a shadow that appears and disappears unexpectedly, than of a real human being. The continuous comparison and connection between her and stories about cloth history reflect his inner devastation, distortion and torment. The collision of many memories leaves him with actually no memory of the collapsing city. Even his father – the absent/present character - hangs on the surface of the events and the protagonist's psyche as a symbol of the glorious, integrated, valuable past, in contrast to the disintegrated present.

Barakat focuses on the protagonist's "Structure of feelings" rather than the events. However, both are inseparable. The disintegration and collapse that inflected

the city is reflected on the portrayal of the disintegrated self. Niqula loses all points of reference and all senses of direction when he loses "the history that his father has long been dictating him, all what he knew about valuable cloth, and the winds of the new times bring about new types made of synthetic and Nylon, where everything loses value and meaning. Even his city is not itself anymore; Beirut, a once upon a time heaven on earth, is now a 'Waste Land' suitable for nothing but wolves, wolf-dogs and for people who speak a different language and of course for abnormal, almost hallucinating people or emasculated men. The boundaries between Niqula and the world at large are undefined. He discontinues to be the same, as Beirut. In his hiding place, Niqula is caught in his state of desolation and marginalization. He has nothing to live for or on but his long gone, presently cherished past. His inner monologues, sometimes hallucinations, tell how alienated he feels how fragmented he and the city are due to the chaos created by the war. The highly poetic narration relates the character to his own world while the stream of consciousness where the collapsing of spatiotemporal order relates to the chaos of his reality. It shifts between the present and the past repeating the same obsession with cloth, its lusty meaning, value and nature. The feminizing effect of the war crystallizes here in his inability to face reality with all its ugliness. He tends to withdraw into himself in search for the docile, peaceful part, the feminine.

In Picard's opinion, there has always been this complicated tie between gender and war-like qualities, especially in patriarchal cultures which accentuate and magnify the slight difference between women and men in physical appearance, cognitive abilities and orientations. Such differences have always focused on gender segregation that associate men rather than women with war combat. The eruption of the disorganized, anarchic violence as a by-product of war, gave manhood a different dimension largely defined through the activities of the militia groups that "struggled to construct and defend institutional agreements that would permit them not merely to survive but to manage the organizational, material and human demands of war making" (Picard, 2003, p. 294). It was only through this militia that manhood could be fulfilled, and at the same time, they only included men who enjoyed all the male social constructs of manhood. Therefore, it is Youssef and Naji in *The Stone of Laughter*, who would join in, rather than Khalil, since they would enrich the solidarity of the army and 'the group'. Even their physical description renders Khalil feminized, While Naji and Youssef are tall and thin "in a particular way that suggested hardness and concealed strength, not weakness or shapelessness" (SOL, p. 81) would vomit when he thought that some living creatures once lived in that abandoned place. The detailed events in *The Stone of Laughter* present Khalil as the opposite of everything that his society considers 'male'. The introduction to the narrative reads "Khalil's legs were not long enough,

while Naji tossed his head, scattering the raindrops, Khalil panted behind him ..." (SOL, p. 3). The apparent weak, feminine physical description that associate Khalil with women and Naji with men, clearly prepare the readers for a detailed account of the relationship between Khalil and his patriarchal society, and separates him from the warriors' qualities, which he is not at all eager to acquire. He hates scenes of blood, death as a notion, and is over obsessed with order and cleanliness with great eagerness to be loved. He is reluctant to go to war, is aware of his weakness, though not of their connections and consequences in such a patriarchal society: "Khalil knew that a fear of blood to the extent of faintness, having short legs, a slight build, straight chestnut hair and large eyes, all these qualities do not make a man hermaphrodite or effeminate, or make him any less masculine, or ... queer ..." (SOL, p. 75). Khalil does not want to be dragged to war since he cannot endure trauma or master his fears. The warring forces of signification inside his mind reflect the war outside, and create emptiness around him, similar to that of the abandoned Beirut. His confused self and sexual abnormality is part of the outer chaos and turmoil. In the middle of all that, Khalil stands as a marginalized self, victimized twice; by war and by the inherited cultural assumptions about masculinity and femininity, which entail certain ordeals to show bravery, all of which are strange and irrational to him.

It is implied though the narrative that sexuality and sexual ability is relevant to war combat and violence. Naji, and later

on, Youssef, the two young masculine neighbours who dominate Khalil's fantasies, are strong warriors. The feminine physical and psychological description which relates Khalil to women and disqualify him as a man, brings up to mind the diverse theorization of war and gender, highlighting at the same time two major points: first the over masculinising, as well as the emasculating effect of wars, second the sexist suggestion that war and gender produce each other, and as a result the ultimate exclusion of women unless they are comfort givers in the times of wars. There should be a general summary of the novel or at least a description of the characters discussed in this paper so that the discussion is more coherent. Women are always seen as frail individuals who should be protected from violence. The long discussions between different characters in the narrative relate manhood and sexual ability to success at the battlefield. At the same time, when wars need aggression, they render those who do not participate as sexually disabled and feminized. In his constant search for sexual identity, Khalil changes at the end of the narrative, and due to constant pressures – inner and outer - he becomes more conscious of his soul's and body's need for love. He has yet to violate others' privacy to achieve personal glory, when he rapes his neighbour's daughter.

Gender, National Identity, and Over-Masculinity

Identity and land remain imperative in Barakat's narrative. However, the conceptualization of collective identity

through gender roles that affect nationalism is very significant here. The association between manhood and nationalism is quite clear. Gender is a social construct that shapes identity and affects all social perception and activities as much as the individual's socialization. Manhood sounds as a pre-requisite for nationalism and patriotism. Hence, the marginalization and the suffering that the protagonists endure; the masculine performance of other men during times of war disconnects them from society and buries them more into their shell of feelings, since it renders them less patriotic. This, in turn, completes the vicious circle and increases the detachment from their physical and psychological nature into rejecting all that would identify them with violence; including manhood. War violates their sense of self though it illuminates their inner contradictions.

Barakat "fore-grounded the relationship between gender and national identity ... Her words reflect a moment of crisis in national identity, where examining the basis of cultural coherence is of immediate practical concern" (Fayed, p. 152). It is very ironic, yet inevitable to note here, that the social constructions that define a warrior are partly created by women. The social structure and the cultural beliefs which identify gender roles in Lebanon shown in the two novels elaborate why Khalil in *The Stone of Laughter* is considered the opposite of everything that would make the 'male'. The tragedy of Khalil lies in the conflict between his nature and what his mother wanted him to be, on the one side, and the definition of

manhood as society puts it on the other. In his childhood, Khalil suffers and fails in identifying him with the historical heroes of Phoenicia, as his history teacher presents them. When he asks his mother for help, and a clue on how to treat “the enemy who wants to take our independence from us” his mother replies that they “would kill the men, but I would tell their leader that you were a little girl, one of my daughters, and when he saw you, he’d believe it and go away” (SOL, p. 110).

Here the association between manhood and nationalism is quite clear. Women do not take nationalism seriously, they are not required to defend their countries or fight for what they think is right. That is why the mother would willingly sacrifice her son’s masculinity and pretend that he is one of her “daughters”, who by nature would never have to fight for anything, to save his life.

The battlefield is one major realm where manhood could be fulfilled and patriotism could be proven, hence, the over masculinizing effect of war elaborated in the narratives. Youssef, the young chap in *The Stone of Laughter* who does not drive yet, is commanded by the militia to drive a car and bring their needs. A command which he can never refuse, and upon which he acts like a grown up, would take the car and go through roads which he is certain are “booby-trapped and will explode, and as the panting unease of the streets rises, its clamor rises, so Youssef is not able to hear the ticking timer of the bomb. He walks on the side-walk which prickles with cars like the teeth of a comb. He chooses one and

says that’s the one and speeds up so as to get past to it. It does not explode. Another one. No.” (SOL, p. 106). The tension is great, and despite his young age, Youssef is not afraid of death; he goes to the town centre, quite aware that a trapped car might explode. It is implied here that war produces the masculine and manhood which in turn reproduces and affects the continuity of war.

On the other hand, this bloody, violent scene and atmosphere deter many others, like Khalil, who psychologically withdraw into themselves searching for the opposite, the other part of his charter who would never have to join the war combat, and who needs protection and love, namely women. Khalil finds no logic behind the horrendous actions of the war. Here, Barakat provides a fascinating window into her protagonist’s soul aggravated by the war that shapes the human choice: to be or not to be; to be masculine and join the bloody war, or be peaceful and resort the feminine part in their creation and therefore, not BE from the perspective of their patriarchal society. Of these, her protagonists choose the latter. Khalil decides “that he would not understand and that he, Khalil, would return, because he was, in any case, not man enough to walk that path ...” (SOL, p. 102). He chooses to be at the margin of the war, maintaining social constructs which emphasize at the same time the aggression of war and the more competitive nature of men compared to women. He therefore stands as the reverse casualty of war combat. To emphasize Aou EL-Naga’s assumption of the paradoxical results of wars, which both destroys and

allows for the appearance of new moods of relations (2003, p. 87), war in Lebanon renders Khalil emasculated, inefficient and useless. The conceptualization of collective identity through gender roles that affect nationalism is very significant here. Manhood sounds as a pre-requisite for nationalism. The subject or the individual has no importance when compared to the collective or national. Therefore, he has to change himself to what suits the collective desire and what makes him fit into his society. When at the end, Khalil feels the need to redefine his gender, he literally rapes his neighbour. This does not only violate her rights, but his own nature. This incident can be taken as his first step towards defining himself with the pre-set definitions to join the general stream of battles. He wins his first fight to prove his manhood and redefines himself in accordance with the main stream of his gender, yet loses the true essence of his nature and turns into a 'laughing stone'. *The Stone of Laughter* refers to the frustration that the protagonist undergoes. The allegory, as Mona Fayed (1995), explains is between gold that was expected from the philosopher's stone, as medieval scientists saw it, and which failed. This is allegorical to the new Khalil who is far from being 'gold'. Ironically enough it is only when Khalil transforms into a stone capable of laughing at the expense of other's misery and tragedy that he is efficient according to the social measures and is capable of interacting with his surroundings. The old Khalil is wiped out and replaced by a more "belonging" individual from the collective point of view.

The change carries an undertone that only violent, inhumane individuals can survive in such a surrounding, and would be considered masculine. The rest are emasculated men who do not fit in their communities. However, it is worth noting that Khalil reaches this stage at his own expense. His old self that he used to enjoy dies in its try to fit in the society. This denotes that death is the only masculine factor in the city of Beirut. It is even the only fact there; people can choose to die either by adhering to their masculine nature and join the war, or they would choose to kill their natural potentials and transform to fit into their society. The fact that the transformation has to come after the violent action of rape is very crucial in highlighting the relationship between masculinity and violence and in illustrating Barakat's ideological stance of war and violence.

In Barakat's view, women in Beirut have always "enjoyed this sense of blessedness, while men, most of them, had to go through the war to earn a living or fulfill their manhood" (interview with Barakat, reference?). This view emphasizes the fact that war and weapons were male territory, out of which women stayed since they are incompetent according to social constructs. Men had to take sides, take up arms and go to battle for whatever they believe.

CONCLUSION

The subject of homosexuality has been "obscured in Modern Arabic Literature" (Lagrange, 2000, p. 169) since it is related to theological conceptions in relatively strict

societies. Everyone in the Arab society seems to develop “the will not to know”, as Murry and Roscoe call it (quoted in Lagrange, 2000, p. 192). Though many writers, in the process of “modernization” of their societies felt that it is their burden as well as their duty to denounce the defects and corruption of their societies, and to enlighten the minority through their literature, homosexuality is one of the issues long avoided, due to the cultural, religious and social restrictions. Sexual relationship implies the existence of a dominant and a submissive participant and works for a ‘healthier’ family life. Homosexuality, on the other hand, is considered ‘abnormal’ since both participants are presumably dominant! Writers of such societies would rather remain in the comfort zone of discussing the archetypes or social conditions and deliberations rather than homosexuality.

This opposes Edward Said aphorism on the obligation of the intellectual to enlighten regardless to social customs and taboos. Not too many literary or documentary works can inform us on male identity and social customs; the whole issue is either avoided or slightly referred to. Sexuality is “under-documented”; topics like sexual tendencies or sexual identity are hushed or strictly attacked in the press according to Lagrange due to the fact that it is a society governed by ‘Fiqh’ which does not acknowledge sexual identity. This, however, does not mean that reference to sexual identity or gender has disappeared; it is rather used for comic relief more than for a serious discussion. The whole matter of homosexuality is essentially

referred to in Arabic as “shoudhouz” or (sexual deviation), which explains the social outlook to the whole matter, and might as well explain the reason why it is avoided and disregarded: it does not represent the normal. The Arabic language and culture do not have an explanation to or an alternative of ‘same-sex attraction’, and therefore, they are not even considered as an identity. This explains the reason why homosexual characters are very scarce in Arabic literature. Their homosexuality has even to be concealed; hinted at rather than discussed. Nevertheless, gender has become a more frequently discussed issue especially in the field of Islamic Studies.

Barakat is one of few Arab writers who does not pretend to be blind about the existence of such relations in Arab societies. She chose to break the silence, refuses to discuss patterns, and moves on to discuss what has long been thought of as ‘moral failure’, a highly sensitive issue, less comfortable and remarkably ignored issue of man confronting his identity. She is even more daring than many Arab writers in discussing such an issue explicitly, and portraying homosexual characters. Yet, her protagonists pass through deep thorough suffering due to their ‘abnormal identity’. They are never ‘happy’ about it or because of it. Khalil suffers loss of self, and loss of self worth as a man in a warring society due to his traumatic same-sex attraction. She presents his homosexuality as longing for femininity or the feminine “blessedness” of not having to participate in the war! Khalil is not a happier being as a homosexual.

His inner suffering and lack of self esteem, as much as his persistent feeling of being excluded as abnormal, make him refuse his status. He therefore tries to prove himself normal by raping his neighbour's daughter. He discovered that neutrality or isolation in such times is impossible; he had to choose between being a victim or a torturer in the times of war, Khalil chose the latter. This rape incident, violent as it is, shows his ability 'to laugh'; and participate more efficiently in his society.

Barakat thus provides a fascinating window into the human soul affected by wars that shape the human choices: "to be or not to be" remains the question. If being implies taking part in a destructive form of wars, some, like Khalil in *The Stone of Laughter* would inevitably find no reason or logic behind the horrifying, devastating experience which the war provides, and would definitely chose 'not to be' though the former guaranteed a prestige based not only on their weapons, but also on their command of economic resources such as 'the water, the bread' and the rest of life necessities.

Both novels are marked by the stream of consciousness technique which is heavily introspective, narrated in the voices of protagonists whose inner lives are disturbed by the outside world, especially the fighting that they do not want to, or cannot participate in. We can point to a pattern in Barakat's novel where she always refers to the theme of isolation and alienation that seem to indicate that she has not yet exhausted the creative possibilities and problems of the

effects of violence, particularly war, on marginality, masculinity and memory. In *The Tiller of Waters*, images of internal division of alienation from himself illustrated through many events reflect his rejection and therefore, isolation from the external social world. This introversion and isolation is furthered by the protagonist's physical and psychological isolation being surrounded by war, death and destruction. Isolation is highly felt due to the physical presence of road blocks and barricades that have created areas of separation all over the country and made movement and communication even more difficult and self endangering. The divided individual in the two novels is as fragmented as the society that he is part of. Their inability to communicate and bridge the gap between each other as much as between themselves and the society reflects the total, more general fragmentation of the society.

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Caryl Phillips's Novels: A Reminder of a Forgotten Issue

Manimangai Mani* and Hardev Kaur Jujar Singh

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, colonization and the competition for power among the European races triggered the mass migration of many races in the world. However, it cannot be denied that the most affected race were the Blacks who were forced into slavery. The establishment of slavery is the biggest injustice of colonisation, where the Blacks were treated as commercial objects. Slavery turned into a lucrative business where it involved licensing and diplomatic controls between many European powers. Therefore, this phenomenon has borne many writings on human migrations and assimilation in their new homes. Most of these writings are the works of writers who themselves were affected by this movement across continents. Caryl Phillips is one of the writers who made this issue as a persistent theme in all his works. Phillips's works were never a mere narration on migrants and migrations. More than that, it is an attempt to retell an unfortunate incident in the chapters of the world history about the mass displacement of a particular race. Phillips, who was born in the Caribbean Islands and raised in England, often depicts the feelings of rootlessness and the nostalgia for a homeland in the characters in his novels. However, what seems like an affinity to lurk around a rich story material has a potent and hidden agenda. This paper will show that Phillips, a descendent of slaves, often harps on these long forgotten issues with a deliberate and definitive motive. A scrutinised study on his novels will show that it is indeed his wish to remind the world and the descendents of the Black slaves not to forget the past.

Keywords: Assimilation, history, migration, nostalgia, rootlessness

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E-mail addresses:

manimangai@upm.edu.my (Manimangai Mani),

hardevkaur@upm.edu.my (Hardev Kaur Jujar Singh)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

Edward Said, in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983), claims that writing is "the complex, and generally orderly, translation of many different forces into decipherable script, forces that all converge on the desire

to write, which is a choice made over the desire to speak, to dance or sculpt” (p. 129). This means that a literary piece is a medium that echoes the writer’s desires, views and messages to the world. Literary works, more often than not, is not merely an art work that was created to entertain. It is the voice of the author that articulates his social and political visions. Therefore, whenever a single theme dominates a writer’s work, the work is most likely influenced by certain related episodes or experiences during the writer’s younger days. As for Caryl Phillips, who is a postmodernist writer with multi-cultural background and wide travelling experiences, it has been easy for him to channel all his experiences into his writings. Phillips was born in St. Paul’s small village in St. Kitts, one of the Leeward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean. His parents moved to England when he was only twelve weeks old. He grew up in Leeds, Yorkshire in northern England. He schooled in Leeds until 1974 and then he continued in Birmingham until 1976. He went to Queen’s College, Oxford, from 1976 to 1979. He became the first student to go to Oxford in his King’s Norton Boys School’s 85 year old history. Phillips at first wanted to study Physiology, but he ended up graduating with Honours in 1979, with a degree in English literature and language. He was also a good athlete and seriously considered going into professional sports but his parents refused to allow him to adventure into it. They did not want him to be known as an ordinary Black who is only capable in sports and entertainment. Ever since his graduation, he

has been making his living through writing. Throughout the 1980s, he was living in both England and St. Kitts. In the 1990s, he started teaching in the United States. He has since been shuttling between London and Amherst, New York and Caribbean. He has been travelling on visiting professorship and reading tour throughout the world.

According to Said, in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983), “a desire - to write - that is ceaseless, varied, and highly unnatural and abstract, since ‘to write’ is a function never exhausted by the completion of a piece of writing” (p. 131). Phillips is a living proof to this statement. To date, Caryl Phillips has written nine novels, four non-fictions, two anthologies, four stage shows, radio plays and many more. The five novels that will be discussed in this paper were written in the time span of twenty years. His debut novel, *The Final Passage* was written in 1985, while the latest novel chosen for this research, *Dancing in the Dark* was written in 2005. The other three novels are *Higher Ground* (1989), *Cambridge* (1992), and *Crossing the River* (1993). In these twenty years, a single theme that dominates his novels is the enslavement of the Blacks in Caribbean islands, the Americas and Europe. Phillips has constantly harped on the same issue for the past twenty years. His sincerity and seriousness in depicting the plight of his race cannot be questioned because without sincerity it is impossible for a person to dwell so persistently on the same subject for the past twenty four years. Phillips, as the first Black generation in Britain, has had a vast experience, growing

up as the children of immigrants. Phillips quotes the following about his multifaceted identity in *The Guardian*, Saturday 11 December 2004:

I belong not only to the British tradition, I am also a writer of African origin and, for people of the African diaspora, "home" is a word that is often burdened with a complicated historical and geographical weight. This being the case, travel has been important for it has provided African diasporan people with a means of clarifying their own unique position in the world.

The experiences of displacement and assimilation with the dominant culture were faced not only by Phillips but also by all the Blacks who were involved in slavery and the mass movement of the Blacks from the African continent to the Americas, Caribbean Islands, and Europe. Phillips's parents left the island of St. Kitts in the hope of having a better life in the mother country, England. A few weeks after his parents arrived in England in 1958, the Notting Hill riots erupted and Phillips puts it as "into this climate of proprietorial paranoia that my parents had migrated" (Phillips, *A New World Order*, 2001, p. 244). Phillips's travel experiences proved highly productive in terms of creativity and had contributed immensely to his writings which were often based on historical and cultural aspects. Phillips's novels often have historical senses

which take the readers on time travel. T.S. Eliot defines historical sense as "a sense of the timeless, as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and not of the temporal together" (1963, p. 23). This definition that corresponds to the two definitions of time is present in all the five novels. Derek Walcott in his article, "The Muse of History", argues that obsession with history is not without dangers. Walcott further claims that it can lead to a creative impasse for it can produce "a literature of recrimination and despair, a literature of revenge written by the descendents of slaves or a literature of remorse written by the descendents of masters. Because this literature serves historical truth, it yellows into polemic or evaporates in pathos" (1976, p. 112). As for Phillips who belongs to the former group, history has given him a firm grip over his theme of slavery. He recognizes the truth in history and has taken it upon himself with the conviction that "it is dangerous to forget history", and to relive it through his writings.

RECORDING HISTORY

Phillips's writing involves the elements of the past and the present. T.S. Eliot, in his essay titled "Tradition and the Individual Talent", states that "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (1963, p. 23). Eliot sees writing as an organic process and emphasizes the interaction between the past and the present. Phillips's novels too carry the reflection of history. His novels often have the settings of the triangle slave trade route which is from West Africa,

Europe, Caribbean and the Americas. In an interview with Stephen Moss, Phillips stated the following:

All writers are territorial. They're like dogs marking their territory. The great task of being a writer is to discover what your territory is, and you do revisit similar themes in different ways. I think I'm very lucky to have found a patch of earth which resonates very powerfully with me because of my own personal life history, but also seems to resonate powerfully with the nature of the country.

(Moss, 2009)

The excerpt shows that Phillips's writings are closely connected to his own history and episodes that took place in his life. Gene Edward Veith, in *Post Modern Times* (2003), claims that postmodernist writers bring the marginal to the centre "by rewriting history in favour of those have been excluded from power, i.e., women, homosexuals, blacks, Native Americans and those victims of oppression." As a postmodernist writer, Phillips too gives a lot of importance to history in his novels. Phillips in an interview with Carol Margaret Davison states the following about his writing on history:

I think a writer really has a responsibility to at least acknowledge that he produced by very specific social circumstances.

We weren't, any of us – male, female, black, white, whatever – immaculate conceptions dropped out of nowhere without history. One shouldn't feel a guilt for one's history and one shouldn't feel ashamed of one's history, one should just take responsibility for it.

This is evident in Phillips's motive to record the history of the displaced people. Since Phillips has had the experience of both conditions, he employs them in his writing. In his debut novel, *The Final Passage* (1985), Phillips uses the title as the direct reference to the "Middle Passage" which marks the Atlantic Ocean. *The Final Passage* is an allusion to the middle passage of the slave trade. It is significant to the crossing of slaves from Africa to the New World plantations in the Caribbean. The main characters of this novel are Leila Franks who is a Mulatto and her husband Michael Preston, a very irresponsible man. This story is set in Baytown, St. Patrick, in the Caribbean. When Leila's mother leaves for England, Leila and Michael decide to follow suit. The ill-fated journey of Leila and Michael represents the experience of the "Windrush generation" where the first post-war West Indians arrived in England on the ship called SS Empire Windrush. In *Higher Ground* (1986), Phillips explores the life of Blacks in the African diasporic. In the first part, he shows the involvement of the Blacks in the slave trade and how the Blacks themselves helped to capture their fellow men through a nameless African

narrator. The second part is about Rudolph Leroy Williams, a member of the Black Panther movement. Phillips highlights the prejudiced treatment of the Black prisoners in jail. It is significant to note that 'Rudy' was the name of one of Malcolm X's gang members when he was a burglar. Here, Phillips is trying to make a connection with the life of the real Rudy through this character (Malcolm X, 1968, p. 231). The final part is the glimpses of the Nazi era where the character, Irina recollects her memories at the concentration camp where he exposes the cruelty of Nazi regime. While in *Cambridge* (1992), Phillips gives two different accounts of an incident that took place during slavery. The story is narrated in different genres as well, a diary of a slave owner's daughter named Emily Cartwright, the confession of a slave (Olumide) and finally is the report from a local newspaper. The entries in the diary will give a different perception on the slaves but the truth will be revealed through Olumide's confession in the end. Olumide is a learned slave who is moved from one continent to another. He is moved from his motherland, Africa, as a slave and is sent to America. From America he is sold to an Englishman and is taken to England. After completing his studies in Christianity in England, Olumide is set free by his master and he travels to Africa as a missionary. Unfortunately, during the voyage he becomes a victim of some slave traders and is put back into slavery where they sell him to a plantation in the Caribbean islands. Like the character Olumide, Phillips, a West Indian brought to Britain at a very young

age is a man twice removed from history and place. His ancestors were slaves who were brought to the West Indies by force. His long past ended abruptly at the moment his ancestors were torn from their West African homes (Smethurst, 2002, p. 10). Phillips captures this moment of desperate separation from motherland through the character of Olumide, who catches the last glimpse of Africa from the slave ship that was taking him to the Americas. Olumide states the following:

We fellow captives fixed our watery eyes upon the land in a state of mortal grief. Whether the affection for one's country is real or imagined, it is not an exaggeration to proclaim that at this moment instinct of nature suffused our being with overwhelming love for our land and family, whom we did not expect to see again. Our history was truly broken.

(Phillips, Cambridge, 1992, p. 137)

The above excerpt is truly a recording of history that gives the readers a glimpse of how every slave grabbed from Africa would have felt knowing that they will never return. According to Paul Sharrad in his article titled "Speaking the Unspeakable: London, Cambridge, and the Caribbean", Phillips's "ironic approach serves to make present the absences of history and to allow the unspeakable truths of slavery to become compellingly eloquent" (Sharrad, 1994, p. 203). Phillips is obviously trying to prove

the real situation during the slavery era when whatever said by the White master was considered to be the truth. As a matter of fact, slavery and the justification for that heinous action have been always biased. Phillips also attempts to record the history through the characters in *Crossing the River* (1993). The story spans through 250 years of slavery, with an African father's melancholic voice crying over selling his children. The first part is in the form of letters written by an ex-slave to his former owner, who failed to keep his promise. Nash Williams, a freed slave travels as a missionary to Liberia. He faces a lot of difficulties as his former master did not send the promised supply of goods and money to spread Christianity. Through this character, Phillips exposes the readers to the new nation of Liberia where the freed slaves were dumped. The other historical fact that Phillips uses here is the ship named "Mayflower of Liberia" which sailed in February 1826 from New York City to Sierra Leone with eighty-six freed slaves on board. The next part of the novel is James Hamilton's logbook, which is a journal from a real slave trader named John Newton titled *Journal of a Slave Trader* to show the records of sale of three children by an African father whose crops failed. He also used the journal of a slave ship, *Duke of York*, to set a basis for his story (Eckstein, 2001, p. 36). Through the letters written by Hamilton to his wife, Phillips exposes to the readers that Hamilton is an individual subjected to the forces of the historical period and power configuration. Hamilton is unable to reconcile his mission

as a slave trader and his Christian values. Phillips even reconstructs the Dodge City in the third chapter titled "West", where the runaway slave's lover Chester is murdered in the streets of Dodge by "three brave men with pistols smoking" (Phillips, *Crossing the River*, p. 85). Phillips is very descriptive of this town as how it was in the nineteenth century and metaphorically transposes slavery there because the blacks who live there at present have to struggle with the memory of slavery as they remain slaves to the reality of fragmented lives and disrupted communities (McInnis, 2005, p. 2). At the end of the nineteenth century, the story of Travis is told in the form of a diary through a white character, Joyce. She represents the souls of the fragmented people before and during the World War Two period. In *Dancing in the Dark* (2005), he writes the novel to commemorate the first black entertainer, Bert Williams where Harlem is used as the setting. By employing various methods to narrate the story, Phillips brings the readers to relive and experience the life of entertainers in Harlem. In Act 1 (1873-1903), the story is narrated by an omniscient voice but he has also used dialogues that are conventional with plays and poems. The second section of the story is titled Act 2 (1903-1911). It has an omniscient voice but at the same time, he incorporates a lot of newspaper reports about Bert Williams and George Walker. In the final act which covers the years from 1911 to 1922, the story is told in a narrative form and also by using newspaper clippings. This novel is a biography of a comedian Bert Williams

whom Phillips wants the world to remember him for his contributions to the world of entertainment. The readers have to follow the news clippings closely to learn the Whites' opinion regarding these two black performers.

Phillips records history by deconstructing history as all the novels have historical facts and events which had been deconstructed to put the different local narratives into context, giving history a fundamental role. The author has put in a lot of historical facts to reveal his message. Phillips often deconstructs history through the characters in his novels. This makes the novels more realistic in their settings and plots. This method enables Phillips to convey his message to the readers more effectively and successfully.

REPRESENTING THE SILENCED VOICES

Phillips's writing is also a representation of the Blacks' silenced voices. Early Black narratives, like poems by Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), a slave who learnt to read and write with her master's consent did not have the liberty to voice out the sufferings of her fellow Blacks openly and Phillips took the liberty to speak on behalf of the silenced people. The experiences of Phillips's parents as West Indian migrants living in the pre-dominantly white city of Leeds paved way for Phillips to speak for the marginalized people. Possessing British passports did not give them the priority of a British citizen as their skin colour hindered everything. Salman Rushdie has pointed out

the following in his essay titled, "Minority Literatures in a Multi-cultural Society" in *Displaced Persons*:

Being black in a predominantly white society has imposed upon many writers a kind of public responsibility, a kind of public project, which may be described as "giving voice".

(Rushdie, 1988, p. 37)

Even after slavery was abolished, the Blacks were never free of racial prejudice. Phillips believes that it is his personal responsibility to represent the silenced or the marginalized voices through his writings. This is supported by Gayathri Spivak's view that the silencing of the muted native subject, usually in the form of the 'subaltern' woman, has testified to the fact that "there is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject can speak" (Spivak, 1985, p. 122). Besides that, Ashcroft too claims that the silencing of the subaltern woman actually extends to the whole of the colonial world, and to the silencing and muting of all natives, male or female (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1989, p. 178). So, Phillips's writings indirectly act as giving voice to the silenced people. In short, Phillips's writings are the unheard voices of the enslaved Blacks. Homi Bhabha, in his essay "Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", claims that the subalterns' voices can be recovered in the narratives by symptomatic readings. He further states that the very technique that broadcasts the

dominance of the colonial discourse actually exposes its weaknesses that ultimately destroy itself from within. He restates the following:

It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitations or prohibitions within the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.

(Bhabha, 1994, p. 8)

He further claims that the subaltern people can speak and a native voice can be recovered. Therefore, Phillips revokes the silenced voices by narrating his stories using entries in the diaries, journals, advertisements and letters of the characters which eventually leads to the writing of a novel which defies the Aristotle's traditional linear narrative. This is evident in all the five novels where he does not allow his characters to speak.

According to Kreilkamp in his article titled "Caryl Phillips: The trauma of 'Broken History'", exile has been the personal condition Phillips, who in the words of commentator, "could qualify as one of his own characters" (Kreilkamp, 1997, p. 44). Phillips's approach in the novels is an attempt to come to terms with his own experiences. Phillips remaps people's mental images of the areas and to save

outsiders from the position of marginality. Phillips states the following about his experiences as a Black in *The Guardian*, Saturday 11 December 2004:

Like any black child in Britain who grew up in the 60s and 70s, it had long been clear to me that the full complexity of who I am - my plural self, if you like - was never going to be nourished in a country that seemed to revel in its ability to reduce identity to easily repeatable clichés. The first time one is called a "nigger" or told to "go back to where you come from", one's identity is traduced and a great violence is done to one's sense of self.

(Phillips, 2004)

According to Paul Smethurst in his article titled "Postmodern Blackness and Unbelonging", the history of black involvement in European culture is explicit, but Phillips interleaves history and fiction and uses postmodern narrative form to engage with issues of racism in his major novels. He further states the following:

The major theme in his novels is exile, marginalization, oppression and exploitation of black people, but increasingly, race and racism are explored through theories of non-essentialism in race, ethnicity and gender. The presence of such theories, and the novelistic form

and style through which they are explored, is the hallmark of Phillips's writing.

(Smethurst, 2002, p. 7)

Therefore, the main motive of Phillips's writing is to represent the silenced voices. The novels are written in polyphonic voices where a host of voices will be jostling for attention in all the five texts. The novels are written using many points of view with the White's points of view overshadowing the Black's point of view. Phillips wants to show that the Blacks are the enslaved race that has no voice of their own to fight for their rights. According to Paul Smethurst, it is the hallmark of Phillips's fiction to use multiple narrators who are usually more than one gender and more than one race or ethnicity, each of whom seems to connect across different times and spaces (Smethurst, 2002, p. 9).

In the *Higher Ground*, Phillips uses three juxtaposed segments, with each of them concentrating on individuals who suffer due to displacement and dealing with a transitional moment in their lives. Phillips acts as the voice of the silenced prisoners of the Black Panther movement in the 1960s. He does this by exposing the harsh treatment in prison which culminates the Black prisoners to insanity. He also becomes the voice of fellow Africans who helped to capture their own people for the sake of money and their dilemma being loathed by their own fellow Blacks. In *Cambridge*, Phillips relates the story by

using multiple voices to deliver the evils of slavery. Phillips voices out the feelings of a slave owner's daughter, Emily Cartwright, who records all the events in a diary. The recordings in the diary gives a one sided story to the readers where the Blacks are portrayed very negatively. Towards the end of the novel, Phillips furnishes the readers with the confession of Olumide. However, a local newspaper fabricates a different story, where Olumide is described as a barbarous slave. Here, Phillips takes the role of an informer to reveal the truth and show how sometimes learned slaves like Olumide have been forced into slavery by the Whites just because of his colour. In *Crossing the River*, the idea of "multi-tongued chorus" heard across two hundred and fifty years of history, and across the boundaries of race and gender, pulls together the various narrative strands into a single story of survival and communicable empathy. Phillips speaks not from one side, but from both sides of the river; one side representing freedom and the other is slavery. Phillips represents the voice of an African father who laments selling his three children and the ordeal of a runaway slave named Martha who is never free to voice her opinion. In the final part, Phillips speaks of the dilemma faced by a white woman who has an illegitimate Mulatto child. In an interview with Carol Margaret Davison for the *Ariel Journal*, Phillips himself admits that *Crossing the River* is a novel which is fragmentary in form and structure and polyphonic in its voices (2001, p. 94). Meanwhile, *Dancing in the Dark* has various voices, as well as letters, newspaper

articles and journals. The readers have to follow the news clippings closely to learn the Whites' opinion regarding these two black performers, Bert Williams and George Walker. This style of writing shows that the Blacks had no voice of their own or were silenced by the racial prejudice.

I believe the reason why Phillips prefers speaking in multiple voices in his novels is to give voice thus bringing to life the silenced group. This fate of silence often befalls the minority race in a certain country. As for Phillips, who grew up in England, feels that the Black people in Britain are unrepresented in the novels:

*White British writers have continued to write about Britain without seeing any black faces, and the responsibility to represent a multiracial Britain has continued to fall on the shoulders of non-white writers. The plays and novels of the vast majority of Britain's literary labourers are devoid of black faces and, until very recently, the same has been true of film and television. One notable exception is Alan Hollinghurst's novel, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (1988), which examines the complex relationship between race, class and sexuality across two generations. But even here, while one is grateful to see black characters represented, we are encouraged to view most of them through the prism of sexuality.*

(Davison, 2001, p. 95)

According to Phillips, the Black characters are often viewed negatively. They are never given the chance to give their points of view. This is why Phillips has taken it as his duty to give voice to the silenced and marginalized characters.

REMINDER OF THE FORGOTTEN ISSUE

Karl Marx wrote "the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." By reading these novels which were written by a descendent of slaves, one will understand how the Blacks were never free from racial prejudice despite slavery being abolished in the late 19th century. Phillips wants to remind the world and the descendents of the Blacks of the evils of slavery through his novels. He does this through the depiction of acts and misery of the characters in his novels. Martin Luther King, Jr., during his confinement in Birmingham city jail in 1963, answered the following to a group of clergymen who wrote and asked him to slow and moderate his movement accusing him of acting "unwise and untimely" in Birmingham, Alabama. He replied that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice". He further reinstated that "they need nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood." Phillips too does not want the world to forget what had happened to the Blacks. He still feels that justice has not been done to the Blacks scattered all over the world due to slavery. Indeed, it is puzzling to see a contemporary writer like Caryl

Phillips harping on a four hundred year old issue. When civil right's activist, Martin Luther King Jr. fought for equal rights of the Blacks in America, he emphasized that "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed" (King, 1967). By highlighting the past plight of the enslaved people subtly, Phillips is demanding for the rights of the Blacks which were denied by the colonisers.

He uses repetitions in his writing to expose the atrocities committed against the Blacks in the Americas and Caribbean. The themes in Phillips's plays and novels often overlap. Phillips's plays can be considered as the blueprint to his novels. His first play, *Strange Fruit* and the first novel, *The Final Passage*, has similar story lines that centre on a one-parent Caribbean family living in one of England's inner-city areas. Both depict the life of Caribbean migrant women who face the ruthlessness of the White English world, symbolised in both cases by snow that starts to fall as the two heroines reach the lowest point of their migratory experience. Leila, the Mulatto who makes a journey to England with her husband, Michael and son returns as a failure to her nameless island. She could not survive as a migrant in London. Similar themes also haunt the novel, *Higher Ground*, as this novel too focuses on Black characters who are involved in slavery and their descendents. *Cambridge* and the play, *The Shelter*, focus on one Black man and a White woman. Importance is given only to these two characters. *Crossing the River* and the play *The Prince of Africa* are historical

pieces that handle the triangular trade and the experience of the African diaspora. Both writings expose the slave trade and the traumatic journey of the slaves. *The Shelter* and *Crossing the River* span several centuries and deal with multiple story lines. *Dancing in the Dark* also talks about a West Indian migrant to America and his survival in the entertainment field. The repetition of themes like displacement, longingness for a homeland, oppression and similar character roles in the novels are reminders to the readers not to forget the past.

Since Caryl Phillips belongs to the younger generation of the Black-British authors who have the history of Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Americas and Europe as their past, his writings linger around the immeasurable individual sufferings and pain endured by his people. Phillips himself has said the said the following:

It is the same story rewritten in many ways. I feel it is my duty to tell the story and I can't stop telling it. As long as I feel I have something to say I have the obligation of saying it and I will keep on writing. When I have said it all, I hope I will be the first to admit it and just quit.

(Phillips, 1997)

The statement above shows that Phillips has taken it as his responsibility to remind people of their past, especially the descendents of slaves. Therefore, he feels that constant repetition of themes will keep

reminding the people the ordeals that their ancestors went through.

Besides using the overlapping themes in his literary works, Phillips also uses the setting of his novels to rekindle the memory of the Blacks. The settings always involve a time span which moves the setting of the novel from one era to the other. This change of time and space in the settings of the novels takes the readers back and forth of the slavery era. Ironically, *The Final Passage* is opened with the first part titled, "The End", where the main character, Leila burns all her belongings that remind her of her five months stay in London. It has the setting of a sugar cane plantation which is obviously a reminder of slavery and the disparity that the slaves faced. Michael and his friend Bradeth often spent their time in a bar called "Day to Dawn". The second part of the novel is titled "Home", followed by "England", "The Passage" and "Winter". All the sub-titles are insignificant to time and space. He juggles the readers from the present to the past using flash backs. In *Higher Ground*, Phillips again tells the story in three parts. The setting of "Heartland" is in Africa where readers are exposed to the slave trade and the conditions of the slave in the slave dungeons. "The Cargo Rap" is set in the prison which is told through letters written between January 1967 and August 1968 by a Black convict and finally "The Higher Ground" is narrated through an insane Jewish character. *Cambridge* is set in the 19th century and it centres around two characters, Emily and Cambridge. The first part is set in the Caribbean while the second part takes the readers from Africa

to England and back to Africa and finally ends in the Caribbean. There are also various settings involved in *Crossing the River* where 'The Pagan Coast' is set in Liberia. However, in the beginning and the ending of the novel, Phillips exposes the readers to the lamentations of a father who sold his children into slavery because his crops failed. The section 'Crossing the River' is set in the Atlantic where Phillips dedicates to the millions of Africans who crossed the Atlantic aboard the slave ships. The setting which focuses on the river banks and crossing of rivers shows the situation of the Blacks who were once free on their African banks and once crossed, they became slaves. This is to remind the readers of the ordeals of the Africans who crossed the Atlantic Ocean. *Dancing in the Dark* too is told in Acts 1 to 3 which has specific time span. Act 1 is from 1873-1903 where Phillips narrates the story using dialogues as such that is written in plays and poems while the second act covers the time span from 1903 to 1911. Bert Williams and George Walker are depicted through newspaper reports. The final act in the novel which covers the years from 1911-1922, Phillips narrates the story through newspaper clippings. This novel acts as a biography of comedian Bert Williams and George Walker, whom Phillips wants the world to remember their enormous contributions to the world of entertainment. The settings and the titles used in the novels certainly will rekindle the reader's memory on the issue of slavery. Phillips has successfully used this style of writing as a tool to remind the forgotten issue.

CONCLUSION

Unlike other contemporary writers, Phillips gives very much importance to his own identity and the displaced Blacks. He is not willing to forget the tragedy that befall his race four hundred years ago as the memories keep haunting the Blacks until today. The mass kidnappings and enslavement of the Africans was without any doubt a wicked criminal enterprise in the recorded human history. From the 1500s to the 1800s, twelve million Black slaves were brought against their will to the Western zone. During the voyage, about 2 million slaves died and their bodies were thrown into the Atlantic. This episode is comparable, if not worse than the Nazi holocaust, during the World War 2, whereby six million Jews were massacred by Adolf Hitler. The Jews did not hide their sufferings by hiding the holocaust like the issue of slavery. The Jews, with the help of Britain and America, were able to expose this crime against humanity. The oppressors were brought to the tribunals across the world and reparation for resettlement was given to the descendants of those who suffered. But, that is not the case of the Blacks. Unlike the Jews, the Blacks did not find sympathy from the White West. The Blacks, who were displaced from their motherland in the name of slavery and the opening of New World, were paid no compensation. The descendants had to live with the harsh memories of their forefathers as an inferior race. Forgetting slavery, for this writer is erasing history, which is legitimizing injustice done to humanity. So, it is not difficult to understand the

reason why writers like Caryl Phillips keeps “harping” on the issue which for some is nothing more than one of the dark episodes in the long and tangled history of mankind. It may be the case for an outsider who views it with the eye of a researcher but it is not so for those who were born out of it. It is not a scheduled accident or an isolated incident that happened to a community but it is a mass holocaust that befalls a race which the Europeans regarded as inferior. For Phillips, slavery is not merely a concept or a process. It is a thorny knot that was tied in their soul and passed from generation to generation. The Blacks could have forgiven those who implicated the untold agony on their soul – but they refuse to forget. They remember and try to keep remembering the plight and misery for it is the painful memory that gives them their identity as a race, and Caryl Phillips is not an exception.

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Interpreting Melville's *Typee*: A Victorian Age Journey to Understanding Savage and Civilized Societies

Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya* and Susan Taha#

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Herman Melville's novel, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*, is said to depict common travel writing themes such as confusion, discomfort, discovery and natural beauty. However, a more careful examination of the text reveals that there are strong social critiques of racism and imperialism and a struggle with what makes humans civilized beings or savages. The issue of cannibalism haunts the story, as do the abusive practices of colonial and whaling-ship officers, which provides the necessary suspense to carry the reader through the story to its end. Cannibalism as a cultural practice is explained according to the social and political context of contact with European aggression and devastation. By analysing the text using the concepts of hegemony and binary opposition, it is clear that Melville challenges the narrative that South Pacific natives were savage cannibals inferior to civilized Europeans. He shows that the apparent savage aggressiveness of the Typees and other South Pacific islanders, was not inherent to their culture but was provoked by attacks from outsiders, particularly Europeans and Americans.

Keywords: Barbaric, binary opposition, colonialism, hegemony, nature, culture

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E-mail addresses:

roselezam@gmail.com (Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya),

susantaha2012@gmail.com (Susan Taha)

* Corresponding author

Author's current Affiliation

English Department, College of Education, University of Diyala,
Baquba, Diyala, Iraq

INTRODUCTION

Herman Melville, an American novelist, short-story writer, essayist and poet, is best known for his novel *Moby Dick* and the posthumous novella *Billy Budd*. His novel, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (henceforth *Typee*), was a bestseller and made him something of a celebrity. But, it was not until the "Melville Revival" in the early 20th century did his work win

recognition when his novel *Moby Dick* was hailed as one of the literary masterpieces of both the American and world literature. This led to him being the first writer to have his works collected and published by the Library of America. Although Melville was a citizen of the United States of America, his writing concerned itself deeply with nations and themes of nationhood in the century of European and American empire-building (Kelley, 2006, p. 9).

His adventure stories in the South Seas helped him to see clearly the acts of colonizers against native cultures. In his narrative, *Typee*, Melville was supportive of the right of the islanders to speak their native languages and expressed his opposition to American annexation of those islands (ibid.). Measuring his perceptions against those of travellers prejudiced against native cultures, Melville drew on European models of contact with primitive people to challenge American racial and ethnic stereotypes and to contradict prevailing assumptions about what constitute “civilized” and “savage” societies. To further reinforce his views, Melville wrote a sequel to his first novel *Typee* called *Omoo*. This book takes the case against “civilization” even further by describing the disastrous effects of contact with “the white civilized man ... the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth” (Melville, 1846, p. 125). It is therefore the focus of this paper to highlight Melville’s intention to champion the rights of native societies by narrowing down onto the binary oppositions of civilized/ savage and cultured/ barbaric analysis, and examining

the hegemonic legitimization of imperialist power. In order to help understand Melville’s *Typee*, a short summary of the novel will assist the reader to comprehend it before certain concepts are introduced and an analysis of this novel is conducted.

SYNOPSIS OF *TYPEE*

Melville created a narrative character called Tommo to help portray his experiences as a sailor on a whaling ship called the *Dolly*, and his adventures living among the Typee people after escaping from harsh treatment on the *Dolly*. The lack of adequate food and water, along with abuse from a seemingly insane ship’s captain, compelled Melville (henceforth referred to as Tommo) to plot with a shipmate, Toby, to take their chances among the fierce cannibals living on Nuku Hiva, one of the Marquesas Islands, rather than continue to suffer on the ship.

Tommo and Toby imagined that they would find an abundance of food on Nuku Hiva and could hide in the forest, eating fruit and drinking clean water from nearby streams, until they could secure work on the next whaling ship that came into harbour. They discovered after they had escaped that food was only really available in the valleys inhabited by local islanders. Not wanting to be eaten by the famed cannibals, Tommo and Toby did their best to stay in the forest but eventually succumbed to hunger and a strange illness that crippled Tommo’s legs. They approached a community who were the fiercest and most cannibalistic of all, true “lovers of human flesh,” the Typee.

The Typees were surprisingly hospitable

and fed Tommo and Toby well. Their days and nights were marked by sleeping, eating and lounging around. Tommo befriended a chief who gave a glowing account of life on the island. The chief's son was assigned to be Tommo's caregiver, and he fed Tommo by hand and carried him on his back to bathe in a nearby lake. Tommo and a young woman called Fayaway developed an attraction for each other and spent many days and evenings in chaste company. He affirmed never having seen the remains of human victims that previous authors had claimed abounded on the altars (p. 21). The relics of sacrifice he did see were only fruit (p. 12). However, Toby, his companion, kept reading the signs differently and nursed fears of "being sacrificed by the ferocious islanders" (p. 13). Toby, and at times, Tommo, feared that they were being fattened for slaughter, and so Toby made his escape to get help from a ship in port on the other, pacified, side of the island.

Toby never came back. All alone, Tommo went back and forth between contentedness and anxiety, marvelling at the nobility of the Typees yet fearing they would suddenly eat him. Despite the attractions of a carefree island life, Tommo could not overcome his restlessness and anxiety. He felt that if he chose to stay in the islands, he would have to be tattooed, a practice that both attracted and repelled him. In any event, it would have marked his face indelibly, making it difficult, if not impossible, for him to go home again.

In time, Tommo's leg, though previously healed, becomes swollen and lame again,

causing him great distress. He fears that if he does not get medical help from a ship's doctor, the sickness may permanently cripple him, if not kill him. In addition, he feels that some of the Typees want to eat him as part of some pagan sacrifice. He wants for no food or comfort, but upon hearing that Toby may have returned with a small boat for him, Tommo manages to approach the shore. Although not Toby, a Polynesian sailor is there with gifts to try and barter Tommo's safe release. After a violent and emotional struggle, Tommo leaves his dear Fayaway and the Typees behind him and sets off to resume his life as a sailor until his return to America, which is chronicled in a subsequent novel, *Omoo*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BINARY OPPOSITIONS AND HEGEMONY

New insights into the meaning and significance of Melville's first book *Typee* can be discovered by the use of binary analysis, as originally developed by Claude Levi-Strauss, combined with Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. We argue that Melville developed a binary way of thinking about and describing the Western society and the societies of the South Pacific. At its most fundamental, this binary thinking is reduced to binary pairs. Many of Melville's commentaries and descriptions fall into one or other of these binary pairs and the text became quite clear when placed into these categories. Understanding the view Melville had of Western society (the civilized) and South Pacific Island society

(the savages) becomes clearer when the categorized text is then viewed in relation to the concept of hegemony. Hegemony, with its focus on the ideological legitimization of subjecting colonies and Other people to Western European power and domination, provides Melville with the basis for his critique of European imperialism.

SIMPLIFICATION THROUGH BINARY OPPOSITIONS

Claude Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, is best known for his development of structural anthropology. In his book, *The Raw and the Cooked* (1969), he explains how the structures of myths provide basic structures for understanding cultural relations. Lévi-Strauss had as his goal creating an inventory of mental patterns. He was trying to reduce the diversity of cultural behaviours and devised a small number of simple principles. One that emerged from his efforts and followed him is binary analysis, in which one principle presupposes its opposite. The most basic principle is positive and can only be understood in relation to a negative. These oppositions form the basic structure for all ideas and concepts in a culture (2009, p. 1). From this concept, we can derive such oppositions as nature/ culture, raw/ cooked, us/ them, savage/ civilized, and so on. There is certainly much about social life or literary texts that depict social life that can be analyzed and explained by using binary analysis. Melville's *Typee* is full of opposites that are showed clearly by Tommo, Melville's narrator, and his attitudes toward the local people.

CIVILIZED/SAVAGE

Most of the characterizations and descriptions which Melville uses for people and places throughout the novel, *Typee*, can be reduced to the binary opposition of civilized/savage. Civilized is most often used to characterize complex societies with central governments, armies, specialized classes of people, monumental architecture and road systems, a diverse economy and a highly refined form of the Arts (literature, fine arts, music, elaborate dress). Savage is most often used to characterize simple societies with no form of government, bands of armed men at best and people who are seemingly all the same in terms of occupation, dress and material wealth, and with no cultural arts. The two kinds of societies and the people within them are the opposites of each other. Melville plays with this sense of opposition in his descriptions of civilized Westerners and savage Typees. Seeing the degree to which Melville uses this binary opposition enables a clear understanding of his desire to ask questions on the basis of ethics and well-being concerning which society is actually the civilized one and which is actually quite savage.

There are several binary oppositions that are subsets or elaborations of the primary opposition, civilized/ savage. Listing them will help to see how his text easily falls into one or other category. Some examples of subsets of binary opposition are:

*Western/South Pacific islander;
sophisticated/crude; developed/
close to nature (culture/nature);*

literate/illiterate; cultured/uncultured; violent/peaceful; beautiful/ugly; clean/dirty; pure or pristine/contaminated; good/bad; cooked/raw; us/them or other; advanced/backward; enlightened/brutish.

The list goes on, but the above is sufficient for the purposes of analysis in this essay.

Typee as a story begins by Melville depicting the horrible conditions in which he and his shipmates are forced to labour as sailors on a whaling ship. The captain of the ship is characterized as a brutal and insane man. The food is shown to be far from adequate and the health of the crew very poor, with some languishing near death and no medical care or effort made to secure their health. The ship has been unsuccessful in hunting whales and filling its hull with oil, and there appears to be no stop to the effort despite the crew being on the edge of collapse. Water is in very short supply and of poor quality. In a word, conditions are *uncivilized*. Unbeknown to the reader, Melville is setting up his first binary opposite, with the ship and its captain being bad, dirty, unhealthy, evil, miserly, corrupt, greedy, and the like. Given this situation, Melville, personified through the narrating character, Tommo, deserts the ship with a companion, Toby, and prefers taking his life in his hands among the savage cannibals on the shore, rather than further risking death on the ship.

The squalid conditions on the ship are quickly portrayed as opposite via a description of the lush and beautiful environment on NukuHiva Island, in which Tommo and Toby are travelling. If the ship represents culture, then NukuHiva is nature, unspoilt by culture. Melville begins his narrative by describing the whaling ship, and what it represents is to be understood as being in direct contrast to his unfolding understanding of what the South Pacific islands and its peoples are. This is clearly shown through the protagonist's observation: "It is impossible that the inhabitants of such a lovely place as we saw carry anything else but good fellows" (p. 73). This was said about the beautiful valley of the *Typee* and the need for the characters to set aside their fear of cannibalism in order to find food among the people before perishing from hunger. One of the characters, Toby, exclaims, "Why, they are cannibals!" However, Tommo believes that "a more humane, gentlemanly, and amiable set of epicures do not probably exist in the Pacific" (p. 119).

Melville, through his narrator, further develops the oppositions between the *Typee* (as representatives of the South Pacific natives) and Western people. Melville is very sympathetic and admiring of the natives and very critical of his own Western culture. Who are the civilized and who are the savages becomes blurred, if not outright reversed. Much of the story is a play on this reversal of positions. Through the play on who is civilized and who is savage, Melville constructs an argument that life

and the environment in the South Pacific are preferable to Western society and its lands. He implies this view more strongly in the following examples from the text; when he speaks about the beauty and majesty of the breadfruit tree, a primary food source, Melville says, “The autumnal glens of our great American forests, glorious as they are, sink into nothing in comparison this tree” (p. 138). He then makes more comparisons between the Typee and American society in relation to various behaviours of the natives:

The minds of these simple savages, unoccupied by matters of greater moment, were capable of deriving the utmost delight from circumstances which would have passed unnoticed in more intelligent communities (p. 172).

A gentleman of Typee can bring up a numerous family of children and give them all a highly respectable cannibal education, with infinitely less toil and anxiety than he expends in the simple process of striking the light [a tiresome process of rubbing sticks together]; whilst to a poor European participant, who through the instrumentality of a Lucifer [match or flint] performs the same operation in one second, is put to his wits end to provide for his starving offspring that food which the children of a Polynesian father, without troubling their parent, pluck from the branches of every tree around them (p. 136).

I was seen to confess that, despite the disadvantages of his condition, the Polynesian savage, surrounded by all the luxurious provisions of nature, enjoyed an infinitely happier, though certainly a less intellectual existence, than the self-complacent European (p. 149).

Melville makes constant comparisons between the Typee and American society. Speaking of their propensity for climbing coconut trees, Melville says, “I have seen children, scarcely five years of age, fearlessly climbing the slender pole of a young coconut tree, and while hanging perhaps 50 feet from the ground, received the plaudits of their parents beneath, who clapped their hands, and encouraged them to mount still higher ... what, thought I, on first witnessing one of these exhibitions, would the nervous mothers of America and England say to a similar display of hardiness in any of their children? The Lacedemonian matrons might have approved of it, but most modern dames would have gone into hysterics at the sight” (p. 251); and “Among the permanent inmates of the house were several lovely damsels, who instead of reading novels, like more enlightened young ladies, substituted for these employments the manufacture of a fine species of tapa; but for the greater portion of the time were skipping from house to house, gadding and gossiping with their acquaintances” (p. 105).

Speaking of the way Typee select the coconuts they will consume, Melville says, “many of them reject the food altogether

except a particular period of its growth, which, incredible as it may appear, they seem to me to be able to ascertain within an hour or two. Others are still more capricious in their tastes; and after gathering together a heap of the nuts of all ages, and ingeniously tapping them, will sip first from one and then from another, as fastidiously as some delicate wine-bibber experimenting glass in hand among his dusty demijohns of different vintages” (p. 250). This passage indicates that Melville considers the islanders to be sophisticated, and the only difference from Europeans is that they drink coconut juice instead of wine.

In a primitive state of society, the enjoyments of life, if you are simple, are spread over a great extent, and are unalloyed; but civilization, for every advantage she imparts, holds 100 evils in reserve - the heart burnings, the jealousies, the social rivalries, the family dissensions, and the thousand self-inflicted discomforts of a refined life, which make up in units the swelling aggregate of human misery, are unknown among these unsophisticated people ... The term “Savage” is, I conceive, often misapplied (pp. 149–150).

Another set of binary oppositions seen in *Typee* involves the story of when the Typee people went fishing with nets. Here, Melville illustrates two oppositions, raw/cooked and generous/greedy with the Typee being the first and Westerners or Americans

being the second. In the story many, but not all, the Typee went fishing, and did so about once a month Melville tells us in the story. The fish caught are however divided in such a way that everyone in the valley gets a share of the fish, even if they did nothing to catch them. Tommo marvels at the generosity of the Typee and how they do not care if a person eating the fish worked for his or her share or not. Tommo is equally surprised at the fact that the Typee do not cook the fish prior to eating it but simply eat the fish raw, including the intestines. He describes his beloved Fayaway delicately eating the small fish, head and all. He cannot see how fish can be eaten so naturally, uncooked, but discovers the fish to be delicious raw. This shows the nobility and close-to-nature tendencies of the Typee in contrast to Tommo, himself a Westerner and American corrupted by civilization with its need for cooked food and a “don’t eat if you don’t work” philosophy.

CULTURED/ BARBARIC

Speaking of a nose flute, Melville says “this is a favorite recreation with the females, and one in which Fayaway greatly excelled. Awkward as such an instrument may appear, it was, in Fayaway’s delicate little hands, one of the most graceful I have ever seen. A [European] young lady, in the act of tormenting a guitar strung about her neck by a couple of yards of blue ribbon, is not half so engaging” (p. 265).

When I remembered that these islanders derived no advantage from dress, but appeared in all

the naked simplicity of nature, I could not avoid comparing them with a fine gentleman and dandies who promenade such unexceptional figures in our frequented thoroughfares. Stripped of the cunning artificers of the tailor ... what a sorry set come round-shouldered, spindle-shanked, craned-neck varlets would civilized men appear! Stuffed hats, padded breasts, and scientifically cut pantaloons will avail them [Typee men] nothing, and the effect would be truly deplorable [because they are muscular and well-proportioned to begin with] (pp. 213-14).

Melville does not seem to think that people can blend traits and create a hybrid between binary opposites. His own struggle with being a European, yet wanting to be a member of the Typee, is partial evidence. Other evidence is shown by his attitude toward the royal family of Hawaii. Speaking of King Kamehameha III, Melville says his “gracious Majesty” is a “fat, lazy, Negro looking blockhead, with as little character as power. He has lost all noble traits of the barbarian, without acquiring the redeeming graces of a civilized; and, although member of the Hawaiian Temperance Society is a most inveterate dram drinker. The “blood royal” is an extremely sick, depraved fluid; formed principally of raw fish ... and European sweetmeats, and is charged with a variety of eruptive humours, which are developed in sundry blotches and pimples

on the August face of “majesty itself” (pp. 222–223).

He continues to make the case that making a hybrid of the Western, Christian, civilized man out of native islanders would simply make their lives worse. “Better will it be for them forever to remain the happy and innocent heathens and barbarians that they now are, than, like the wretched inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, to enjoy the mere name of Christians without experiencing any of the vital operations of true religion, whilst, at the same time, they are made the victims of the worst devices and evils of civilized life” (p. 215).

HEGEMONY AND COLONIALISM

Just as Levi-Strauss used structuralism as a theory and binary analysis as a technique to understand culture and society, Antonio Gramsci used Marxism as a theory and the concept of hegemony to understand social inequalities, power and the underlying ideology that justifies domination. Hegemony is a term that refers to the dominance of one state over others in a confederation. The concept was further developed and is usually understood to mean domination by consent of the people or a country (Gramsci, 1994, p. 67). Gramsci developed this term and made it popular in the 1930s in his book, *The Prison Notebooks*. Essentially, hegemony is the power and authority of the elite class to convince those below them that the interests of the elite are the interests of everyone (Ashcroft *et al.*, 2007, pp. 106–107).

Hegemony entails creating an ideology that justifies exploitation, an ideology that is considered a natural fact of the world. This is the key to understanding Melville's view of Western society and South Pacific society. Western society, in the heat of the Industrial Revolution, needed whale oil just as it needed coal, cotton, timber and other raw materials from around the world. An ideology of Western superiority of a natural right to take and dominate was needed to explain away the atrocities occurring in places such as the South Pacific and Polynesia (not to mention India, China, Africa and the American West). By using binary labels that natives were savage heathens, cannibals even and therefore in need of conversion to Christianity and cultural uplifting, hegemonic rule was enabled. Melville, through playing on who really is the savage and who really is the civilized in *Typee*, powerfully critiques Western hegemony before hegemony was recognised as a concept.

The West's claim that the South Pacific islanders are savages and naturally violent is contested by Melville. He argues that their violent reputation, and even cannibalism, is the result of being provoked, of the aggression by enemies, particularly Westerners. Melville essentially argues that the very quality, savageness, that separates civilized Westerners from savage natives such as the *Typee*, and which justifies hegemonic and imperial domination, is in fact provoked by Western aggression and exploitation. The following are examples of this critique:

When the inhabitants of some sequestered island first describe the big canoe of the European rolling through the blue waters toward their shores, they rush down to the beach in crowds, and with open arms stand ready to embrace the strangers. Fatal embrace! They hold to their bosoms the vipers whose stay is destined to poison all their joys; and the instinctive feeling of love within their breasts is soon converted into the bitterest hate (p. 37).

On arriving at their destination, they burn, slaughter, and destroy, according to the tenor of unwritten instructions, and sailing away from the scene of devastation, call upon all Christendom to applaud their courage and justice (p. 137).

Who can wonder at the deadly hatred of Typees to all foreigners after such unprovoked atrocities? (p. 37).

This was said after describing how the *Typees* defeated the French and their helpers from other valleys, and how the French burned all of the houses and fields upon their retreat.

How often is the term savages incorrectly applied! None really deserving of it where ever yet discovered by voyagers or by

travellers. They have discovered heathens and barbarians, whom by cruelties they have exasperated into savages (p. 38).

These are examples showing how Melville makes the claim that the savage is in fact to be found in the West. The so-called civilized is in fact the barbarian, with a thirst for blood and a desire for killing and destruction. Melville turns the binary opposite that ideologically justifies Western aggression and exploitation upside down. He shows that intrusions by Western imperialism provoke violence in South Pacific islanders. He then shows that Western civilized man is in fact the savage barbarian, not the South Pacific islander. He goes further in his critique and suggests that native islanders are not only better off without Western intrusion, but that they are simply more civilized and better than Western people. The following examples demonstrate this well.

May not the savage be the happier man of the two? (For lack of 1000 wants and removed from half harassing cares) (p. 41).

What has he to desire at the hands of civilization? She may “cultivate his mind,” – may “elevate his thoughts,” – these I believe are the established phrases – but will he be the happier? Let the one smiling and Populist Hawaiian Islands with their now diseased, starving, and dying natives, answer the question (p. 149).

The lack of many evils found in European civilization is because in Typee “to sum up all in one word – no money! That “root of all evil” was not to be found in the valley (p. 151).

[They] go about their daily life without need of courts of law or police or contracts with lawyers. And despite this lack of law enforcing institutions he says “everything went on in the valley with a harmony and smoothness unparalleled, I will venture to assert, and the most select, Brookline, and pious associations of mortals in Christendom. How are we to explain this enigma? These islanders were heathens! Savages! Cannibals! And how they came today, without the aid of established law, to exhibit ... that social order which is the greatest blessing and highest price of the social state? (p. 235)

In the darkest night they slept securely, all their worldly wealth around them, and houses the doors of which were never fast. The disquieting ideas of theft or assassination never disturbed them. Each islander reposed beneath his own palmetto thatching, or set under his own breadfruit tree, with none to molest or alarm him. There was not a padlock in the valley, nor anything that answers the purpose

of one: still there was no community of goods (p. 236).

Speaking of the treatment of women, Melville says, "nowhere are the ladies more assiduously courted; nowhere are they better appreciated as the contributors to our highest enjoyments; I know where they aren't more sensible underpowered. Are different from their condition among the many rude nations, where the women are made to perform all the work ... [while] the gentle sex in the valley of Typee were exempted from toil, if toil it might be called, even in that tropical climate, they never distilled one drop of perspiration (p. 239).

Melville implies that Europeans misunderstand native culture and label it as "savage", while he actually views the natives as being entirely civilized. Melville constantly encourages his readers to be more open-minded by appreciating that Polynesian natives are, in many ways, superior human beings to those who live in civilized cities. The natives treat each other kindly, honestly and with generosity. They are seen as more peaceful and loving than Europeans. In fact, it is the Europeans and the Americans who truly display brutality and savagery as they colonize the native world.

CONCLUSION

Melville seems strongly to have believed that contact with the European and American world had a negative effect on native cultures. He opens his book by suggesting that it would be better for natives to remain

on "undiscovered" islands. Throughout the text, he illustrates the terrible effects of European contact by discussing the influence of missionaries, colonists and merchantmen. Melville argues repeatedly that native culture is superior to most of what is found in "civilization". Although the so-called "civilized" people condemn natives as "heathens", who engage in barbarism, natives are actually nothing of the kind. The Typees, for example, treat each other with far more civility than people do in urban cities. The Typees generously share their food with one another. They do not lie, cheat or steal. Furthermore, no sections of society are left starving and destitute because of debt or poverty, as is so frequently the case in Europe and the United States. Although the Typees live a less intellectual existence, their lifestyle is one of bliss and relative peacefulness in a kind valley. It seems the natives could teach Europeans many things about how to be less barbaric, Melville feels, but ironically it is the Europeans who call them savages. There is a further irony in the focus on cannibalism as a marker of savagery among the people of the South Pacific and as a reason to subjugate and destroy them. Westerners, in their own predominantly Christian practice of taking communion during mass or during religious services, engage it seems in ritual cannibalism. In front of a Christian congregation, the priest turns bread and wine into the flesh and blood of their God, Jesus Christ. And then, they eat his flesh and drink his blood. Cannibalism is usually wrapped around

ritual, and whether done in darkest Africa, on a remote island in the Pacific or in Rome, it is all the same: consuming the body and spirit of some being or entity or person that the consumer wants to remember and benefit from in some special way. But the Western powers used hegemonic ideology such as claiming the South Pacific islanders were heathen cannibals and therefore deserving of domination, to justify their actions.

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Stream of Consciousness in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*

Zanyar Kareem Abdul*, Rohimmi Noor and Rosli Talif

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Stream of consciousness is a narrative technique that is commonly seen as a product of the modernist era. It is a literary technique characterized by introspection, self-awareness, and openness to the unconscious. Associated primarily with Joyce and Woolf, the technique is a way of representing the whole mind of an individual, not just conscious thoughts. It is based on the psychological theory that human minds are made of many layers of awareness. McCabe is a prominent contemporary Irish writer who has a penchant for the technique and its employment in novels. This article examines the psyche and behaviour of the main character, Francie Brady, in the novel, *The Butcher Boy*. McCabe uses a crucial tool, the stream of consciousness to let the psyche of a child talk and show readers what the character desires to convey. He is creative in attracting readers' attention to the mind of his characters. McCabe's use of the technique may be different from others because there is no separation between the dialogues and the thoughts, albeit with little use of punctuation in addition to shifting from one story to another. Elements that are used in depicting stream of consciousness are narration, use of punctuation, familial and societal issues, obsession, and madness, trauma and conduct disorder.

Keywords: Stream of consciousness, obsession, madness, trauma

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E-mail addresses:

zanyarkareem@yahoo.com (Zanyar Kareem Abdul),

rohimmii@upm.edu.my (Rohimmi Noor),

rtalif@upm.edu.my (Rosli Talif)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

Patrick McCabe, a creative Irish playwright, was born in 1955. Most of his stories deal with children's worlds and their adventures during their childhood. He is a winner of the *Irish Times*, Irish Literature Prize for Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1992, apart from being well known for his portrayal of youthful, psychotic Francie Brady in *The Butcher Boy* (1992).

The Butcher Boy is set in the early 1960s in a small Irish town. A young boy, Francie Brady, is the protagonist and the focal character in the novel, along with his close friend, Joe. Francie tells his story with an angry voice and shows his animosity towards Nugent's family, especially to her son, Philip. This leads to a disastrous moment at the end of the novel, with the death of Nugent. Francie has a hidden hatred towards Nugent's family, especially from the moment Francie hears that his family is called pigs. This becomes a serious obsession for Francie, which increases his anger towards the Nugent family. It is within a dysfunctional family that he spends his life; a drunken father, Benny, who always hurts his wife verbally and physically until she is admitted to a hospital for mental illness, besides being sexually abused by a priest. All these affected Francie's psyche.

McCabe uses a crucial tool, the stream of consciousness to let the psyche of a child talk and show readers what the character desires to convey. He is creative in attracting readers' attention to the mind of his characters. His use of the technique may be different from others because there is no separation between the dialogues and the thoughts, with little use of punctuation in addition to shifting from one story to another.

Elements that are used in depicting stream of consciousness are narration, use of punctuation, familial and societal issues, obsession, and madness, trauma and conduct disorder. Francie's stream of consciousness is described as a negative one, which may be

seen as madness within the novel. One can detect it through the manner of his narration and behaviour with his surroundings such as family, friends and the people in town.

METHODOLOGY

As a product of a quantitative research, this paper refers to the school of psychology that considers stream of consciousness as a significant tool in analysing human psyche. The discussion of the theory is based on James's *The Principle of Psychology* (1890) and Freud's *General Psychological Theory* (1997). These fundamental books are the primary sources for this research. An in-depth analysis of stream of consciousness as a literary approach is influenced by Dujardin's *Les Lauriers Sont Coupés* (1888), focusing on his definition of the technique and Steinberg's *Stream of Consciousness Technique in the Modern Novel* (1979). In short, stream of consciousness attempts to convey exactly what is going on in a character's mind — conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings and impressions — without any sense of the author's presence.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper investigates how stream of consciousness is used in McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*, with whatever inherent problem its use entails. Current research on stream of consciousness shows its effective role in modern novels, as it is an important factor for analysing the psyche of the characters, which leads readers to enter a character's mind.

Stream of consciousness is the pivotal technique throughout the novel, which calls for psychoanalytic discussions, examples, and criticisms. Without doubt, stream of consciousness also appears in other novels; however, the concern in this paper is specifically with its use in *The Butcher Boy*. What is different about this paper is that it provides analyses not only on thematic issues in the novel but also the literary devices focussing on the use of the stream of consciousness as a unique narrative technique.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether stream of consciousness is a viable technique in depicting the psyche and behaviour of the main character in the novel. In doing so, one can see the significance of stream of consciousness as it relates to personality of the main character.

One of McCabe's achievements in *The Butcher Boy* is how he accurately enters the depth of a child's psyche and behaviour through his character's personality. Sadly though, McCabe presents the reader with a rather pathetic vision of Irish children's world in this novel.

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

The novel opens with Francie, the narrator, recalling a time "When I was a young lad twenty or thirty or forty years ago I lived in a small town where they were all after me on account of what I had done on Mrs Nugent" (*The Butcher Boy*, p. 1). These opening lines are significant as they introduce an

interior monologue that creates an idea in the reader's mind across the length of the story. Moreover, the novel is often narrated in the first-person point of view which can be regarded as a stream of consciousness. Yet, sometimes it switches to the third-person narrator, which is a sign of using interior monologue, although for some critics, stream of consciousness and interior monologue can be used interchangeably. The following passage, which is in first-person narrator, shows Francie's own stream of consciousness in dwelling on Mrs Nugent:

I could see the neighbour's curtain twitching whistle whistle hello there Mr Neighbour, it's me Francie with my special delivery for Mrs Nugent. Then away she went from the window so I knocked on Mrs Nugent's door and out she came wearing her blue housecoat. Hello Mrs Nugent I said is Mr Nugent in I have a message for him from Mr Leddy (pp. 194-195).

This passage is a good example of stream of consciousness, but the readers may not be able to analyse it by associating it with what is inside Francie's mind due to several reasons. Firstly, there is no separation between the dialogue and the thoughts, which makes it difficult for readers to follow the flow of the thoughts of the character. Secondly, Francie's mind is considered as being in a chaotic state; too many utterances come in succession without

a clear explanation. Thirdly, it is perhaps, due to the weakness in the development of Francie's psyche as he refuses to grow up. This implies a failure of the *bildungsroman* literary tradition, and, according to Kirwan (2011), the novel intentionally fails and Francie does not show any progress in the course of the narrative.

The overall narration of the story is "fragmentary, repetitive and disjointed, while the text consists of an almost constant, polyphonic flow of commentary, self-correction, wit and mimicry" (Wallace, 1998, p. 159), as it is seen in the following quotation from the novel: "I could hear a plane droning far away. One time we were standing behind the houses shading our eyes from the sun and Joe says: Did you see the plane Francie? I said I did...I was thinking about Mr Nugent standing there crying her eyes out" (2). McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998) is another novel which has attracted much criticism for its confusing narrative form, especially when readers who look to build a traditional linear narrative structure are faced with some lines at the beginning of the novel which are irreverent and flamboyant, as in the following example: "I was a High-Class Escort Girl although I am afraid that I don't get too many clients these days!" (p. 1).

The Butcher Boy refers to the misdeed that Francie commits towards the Nugent's family due to Francie's mother's death and the loss of Joe, his best friend. Francie enters Nugent's house aggressively, saying "You did two bad things ... You made me turn back on my ma and you took Joe away from me"

(p. 195). Francie's obsession with Nugent's family is stated at the very start of the story, "what is the use in crying now Nugent it was you caused all the trouble" (p. 2). The violence greatly increases in Francie's psyche, which sets itself into an imaginary world that Booth calls "a confusion of distance" (Booth, 1961, p. 311).

It is noteworthy that McCabe's narrative structure can be difficult to follow as there is no clear distinction between the paragraphs and the stream of the characters that created the non-stop effect of the story. There is minimal use of punctuation and the flow of ideas is without any distinction between them.

USE OF PUNCTUATION

Generally, there is minimal use of punctuations in stream of consciousness novels. This presents some difficulty in understanding the story. McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* is an apparent example of those in which he rarely uses punctuation in the novel, which makes the dialogues and the thoughts difficult to be distinguished. Thus, this is the main castigation that McCabe has been faced with in modern novel criticism.

Her mouth was hanging open and she was crying again pointing to the broken mirror and the writing on the black-board I mean wall. I looked at Philip he was white as a ghost too what was wrong with him now, hadn't he got the prize for the pig poo what more did he want? But Mr. Nugent said he was in charge

now. I'll deal with this! he said in his Maltan Ready Rubbed Voice. Philip and Mrs Nugent went down stairs and there was only me and him. He looked good Mr Nugent you had to say that for him (p. 63).

The above paragraph, with little punctuation, is a good example of stream of consciousness because the dialogue and the thoughts are mixed up all together. Francie's current state of psyche reaches an unstable moment where his ideas overflow.

Francie likes Joe, his best friend, whom he spends most of his time with, and they enjoy childhood together, including some adventurous activities. However, after a desperate moment, Joe leaves Francie and befriends Phillip's friends and family. Francie always dwells on Joe's betrayal of their friendship — receiving a goldfish from Phillip, at which point Francie voices up again: "But what did Joe have to take it for? Why why why? Why he didn't say Phillip, You can keep your goldfish?" His obsessive hostility ends once Mrs Nugent is killed. Jordan describes Francie's personality as an "unaccommodated man. He is somebody who refuses to learn the rules of disappointment. He refuses to civilise his feelings because that would do his feelings an injustice" (Falsetto, p. 51).

Joe has an impact on Francie's life, he keeps advising Francie to be a good lad and follows him; but Francie does not obey. Therefore, in the midst of each story there is a flashback to his memory and his early time with Joe and their happy time in town. This

reaches a peak when Joe decides completely to separate with him as he asks Francie, "what do you want? No he didn't. He said: what do you want" (p. 189). This is regarded as one the most hurtful moments to Francie: "He asked me again: What do you want me for? Are you deaf or something?" Francie gets confused at this embarrassing moment he is in, and he repeats words in long non-stop sentences without punctuation, symbolising this confusion:

I never thought Joe would ask that I never thought he would have to ask that but he did didn't he and when I heard him say it that was when I started to feel myself draining away and I couldn't stop it the more I tried the worse it got I could have floated to the ceiling like a fag paper please Joe come with me that was all I wanted to say dumb people have holes in the pit of their stomachs and that's the way I was now the dumbest person in the whole world who had no words left for anything at all (pp. 189-190).

OBSESSION

Obsession is a core theme in the novel. Francie's obsessed mind with a hatred of Philip is more or less obvious as readers come to the end of the novel. Francie brings a clear image of pigs and what they do — "PHILIP IS A PIG" and "they do poo" which describes Nugent's family and how dirty they are. This obsession makes Francie's promise to Joe forgettable and he teases and

increases his hatred of the Nugent family more and more as if nothing is there to focus on except Nugent's family in Francie's head —“come on! Pig! Pig! Pig!”

Even in the beginning of the novel, this appears while Francie speaks about his activity with Joe, his best friend, when all of a sudden Francie's mind uncontrollably shifts to Nugent's family without any indication in advance: “I was thinking how right ma was – Mrs Nugent all smiles when she met us how are you getting on Mrs and young Francis are you both well? It was hard to believe that all the time what she was really saying was: *Ah hello Mrs Pig how are you and look Philip do you see what's coming now – The Pig Family!*” (p. 5).

There is an issue of reality and dream which is the same for Francie; reality and dream are terrible as both focus on the life of the Nugent family: “I woke up in the middle of the night. I had been dreaming about Mrs Nugent. She was out in the scullery baking scones. The house is full of baking smells. She called in: Is anybody ready for some scones” (p. 73). Dreams, in a psychological sense, are for the fulfilment of wishes and desires. Here, for Francie, dreams also become reality — the reality of hatred towards Nugent's family.

Escaping from those horrific surroundings is another issue for Francie. Most of the protagonist's phantasmic reveries are located on the river, which, for Francie, is an ideal place where he can flee from those hardships inflicted by society (Kirwan, 2001, p. 5). Francie talks eagerly in the novel of how enjoyable it is being by the river: “It was a hide me and Joe made

... you could see plenty from inside but no one could see you” (p. 1). The river might be an effective place for the protagonists, such as Francie, where it might be the only place to rethink and recall the old memories more easily and quickly to his mind and continue the story in the form of stream of consciousness. However, Francie fantasizes about a pastoral life as a kind of independence. Despite that, the shocking incidents and darker images in the novel undercut the escapism that Francie has been dwelling on.

This augments psychological issues in Francie's life in terms of the development of his personality and understanding his surroundings. Gauthier (2003) notes that Francie has more responsibilities in his desperate community, especially having grown up with a suicidal mother and an alcoholic father. As a result, he is left on his own, rather than being given care. Instead, he becomes the caregiver to his parents. A parent who is unable to overcome a bad current situation leads to a disaster in the end (p. 197). Early in the novel, his mother, who beats him for stealing Philip's comics, pathetically turns back to Francie saying:

She said there was nobody in the world meant more to her than me. Then she put her arms around me and said it was her nerves it was them was to blame for everything. It wasn't always like this for your father and she said. Then she looked into my eyes and said: Francie – you would never let me down would you? (p. 4)

Gauthier (2003) asserts that Francie's psychological crisis also has to do with his community (p. 198). It is his community which does not let him develop his personality throughout the novel, as Smyth (qtd. in Gauthier, 2003) found that:

Such a community, so at odds with the official pastoral ideology of modern Ireland, finds a hero it deserves in Francie Brady, for as well as being the agent of evil and resentful revenge, Francie is also a scapegoat for this community, the empty, innocent vessel into which all its repressions and vices are poured. (p. 82)

Unlike Joe, who is welcomed by the community after he continues his studies in "another house of a hundred windows" (p. 97), especially revealing the friendship between him and Philip, the Nugents and Purcells, Francie expresses his most terrible time and frustration towards his community — a community where there are other levels of living: "she said she knew the kind of us long before she went to England and she might have known not to let her son anywhere near the likes of me what else would you expect from a house where the father's never in, hanging around the pubs from morning to night, he's no better than a pig" (p. 4). This angers Francie, as it is an indication of the Nugent's high social status and their disgust with the Bradys.

Apart from this hatred of Nugent's family, historical context is another concern

in Francie's psyche as shown by the mention of several well-known past leaders in Ireland such as Daniel O'Connell, whom Francie does not recognise in Irish history: "I didn't know anything about him except he was something to do with the English and all that" (p. 37). Francie is young in age, yet he is quite open-minded in dealing with some big famous figures such as priests and political leaders. He observes, criticises, and blames them for the failure of his country, which has caused chaos in his psychological world. There is a lot of questioning which proves to be too much for the stream of consciousness of a child. Francie adopts a vivid cultural hatred as Baker observes: "Mrs. Nugent's words take Francie's life over until the pig and the butcher become one" (*Times Literary Supplement*, 24 April 1993).

One of the characters who psychologically damages Francie is J. Leddy. In addition, there are Mrs. Connolly and two other women, with a sense of humour in the novel, who are also harmful to Francie. Leddy wants to shoot a piglet in front of Francie's eyes, which makes him imagine an image of killing and using a bolt in an easy way. A sense of guilt is apparent in Francie once he kills the piglet: "And what does he do only stick it into the babe pig's head and bit-dunk! Right into his skull goes the bolt and such a squeal. Then down on the concrete plop and not a squeak out of him all you could see was him saying you said you'd mind me and you didn't" (p. 123).

Gauthier confirms that Francie is neither a pig nor a butcher, but in some ways he is obliged to become both (p. 198). This

brings up a sensitive issue in Francie's life — his being is simple and innocent yet the disturbing surroundings create an unstable psychological state in which he desires to become a part of Nugent's family — a state of psychical obsession where he feels the guilt especially when he does not keep his mother's promise and finds her dead when he returns to town.

It does seem that readers are led to feel the depth of Francie's aggressiveness and sense of alienation. Gauthier notes that the brutality of the murder of Mrs Nugent is not an action without a mind; there is logic. Nugent is killed the same way as the piglet and "PIGS" was written on the wall with her blood (p. 208). When the psychical issues are too much in one's mind, human beings try to avoid them in the same way Francie does — in a way, patience is gone and brutality appears.

FAMILIAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES

Francie takes pleasure in disturbing Nugent's family, as he thinks about planning and making fun of them most of the times. This can vividly be seen when the "Pig Toll Tax" announcement is made where none of the "Nooge's" as he calls her family, can get passed unless they pay the toll. Although this is a comical scene in the novel, it exposes Francie's psyche towards Nugent's family. The death of Nugent and a reference to *The Butcher Boy* are detected in the beginning of the novel, where it is written like verses of poetry, and where the narrator shifts from first person to third person:

*He went upstairs and the door he
broke*

He found her hanging from a rope

*He took his knife and he cut her
down*

*And in her pocket these words he
found.* (p. 19)

Francie claims that he is disturbed by anything related to Nugent's family, as if there are voices everywhere from Nugent's family, such as from Phillip or Buttsy, Mrs Nugent's brother. It is Francie's stream of consciousness that recalls his enemy and competes with him. In *Paddy Clarke HaHa* by Roddy Doyle, where its main character's obsession with his parental relations and the loss of his friends is a major theme, here the same desperate situation full of terror is being repeated in Francie's life.

Psychologically, Francie has already made his decision that there would be a bloody ending for Nugent's family, whose name ironically is derived from the name of the sweet candy, nougat, by telling Philip for the second time the story of *The Butcher Boy*. He explains how a woman is hanged from a rope in the story "because this butcher boy told her lies," without Philip understanding what is meant by that. The impulse to commit a murder is due to his mother's death, non-existent father, and the loss of Joe's friendship: "he cursed at me now look what you've done look what you had to go and do! I'm sorry Joe I said and I knew that was that. Joe was going to leave me and I'd be left with nobody no

ma nothing" (p. 49). These cause a chaotic psyche within Francie without any solution. Although he promises Joe, he still continues his adventurous life: "I swore on my life that was the end of it and it would have been too, only for Nugent" (p. 49).

Francie has been raised in an atmosphere of inhumanity and brutality, the cycle of wildness that crescendos with the murder of Mrs Nugent. Jordan states that "...the relationship between Francie and Joe is all the more important because Francie loses his mother and father...children have no language, no expression for certain enormous tragedies like the death of a parent. Of course, it is a loss, and they are desperately sad but they can't really express it" (Jaehne 4). However, when a mate betrays them, they have their own language and seek justice. Francie's anger is at that point where he will do everything to demolish whoever and whatever that takes Joe away from him. While he is powerless to avenge the loss of his father because of alcoholism, or his mother from suicide, this time he knows that there is something he can do – he can kill Mrs Nugent.

MADNESS, TRAUMA AND CONDUCT DISORDER

McWilliams (2010), in her article titled, *Madness and the Mother Ireland in the Fiction of Patrick McCabe*, claims that *The Butcher Boy* includes the theme of Mother Ireland, and that Francie's behaviour manifests similar characterisation which is almost Joycean in nature. In McCabe's novels, "male protagonists are often trapped

in a pathological relationship with Mother Ireland, which causes a great deal of suffering to both the men and women who inhabit the fiction" (McWilliams 397). For example, when Francie goes to Dublin, Francie buys a picture for his mother of "an old woman in red shawl rocking by the fireside" with "A mother's love's a blessing no matter where you roam" written on it (*The Butcher Boy*, p. 41).

When Francie returns home, he realises that the manic state of his mother has led her to commit suicide. As a result, he looks for an imaginary mother, which takes the form of the personality of Mrs Nugent. It should be noted that this replacement can never be convenient; it is rather a psychological fulfilment for a young child like Francie, and, to McWilliams:

[...] a key development in the main character's psychosis emerges in a scene where Francie breaks into the Nugent's house and is shown hallucinating in Mrs Nugent's bedroom, imagining himself suckling like a piglet at her breast. He accidentally knocks and smashes the mirror on the dressing room table, doing further injury to the symbol of Irish art identified by Stephen Dedalus as 'the cracked looking glass of a servant' in the opening chapter of Ulysses (p. 397).

McWilliams sees a lot of similarities between Dedalus and Francie as these two lost strangers try to find their own way and

escape in the current society, because in McCabe's fiction, "the past is a nightmare from which his characters are trying to awake" (McWilliam, 2010, p. 399). Francie further explains about his home bitterness: "we'd just there for hours sometimes just staring into the firegrate only there never was a fire ma never bothered to light one and I was not sure how to go about it. I said what fire do we want its just as good sitting here staring into the ashes" (pp. 4-5).

Another scene which clearly denotes Francie's chaotic state of mind is when he is back on the death of his mother. Francie finds Benny, his father, surrounded by stinky tin fish and some flies, "the back door was open and the sink was full of pilchard tins ... The flies were buzzing around them. There was curdled milk and books thrown round all over the place" (p. 43). This awful scene perhaps serves to prepare the readers for something distressing to follow such as the death of Benny on the chair beside the fire. Again, Francie gets frustrated stating "no matter what I did Jeyes Fluid or anything there was still a bit of stink and flies about" (p. 120, emphasis added). Here, as Kirwan confirms, "flies" symbolise a "decaying social order, the protagonist's mental decline, and/or haunting relationship to paternity and heritage" (p. 16).

Some critics, indeed, have an Oedipal explanation for Francie. As his mother commits suicide, he fantasises Mrs Nugent to be his replacement mother and dreams of her offering her breast, "she slowly unbuttoned her blouse and took out her breast. Then she said: This is for you

Francie" (p. 64). The conflict between his real, dead mother and the fantasised mother necessitates him to murder Mrs Nugent, as Eldred (2005) states, "the reason for the killer's desire to inflict pain is both the loss of and desire for the mother, and Francie's motives for murder prove similar" (p. 106).

On the other hand, Posh (2003) goes beyond the behavioural aspect of Francie's attitude to his violent and unstable family, which she claims is based on "biological and or chemical causes" (p. 178). In addition, a psychological problem in troubled boys is sometimes due to Conduct Disorder. Conduct Disorder features anger towards people and animals, destruction of property, cheating or theft, and serious violation of rules (Garbarino, 1999, p. 52), as Francie can be noticed to be doing so throughout the story because of the lost of those close and valuable to him.

Kellerman in *Savage Spawn: Reflections on Violent Children* (1999) describes "a small subset of murderous adolescents whose crimes result from psychosis. These youngsters exhibit the same symptoms as do adult psychotic murderers — paranoia, command hallucinations ... and delusions" (p. 36). Francie's hallucinations are clearly shown in the novel, especially the moment Francie hallucinates Mrs Nugent's offering to feed him. Bernheim and Lewine (1979) bring a clearer definition of complex disorder, "schizophrenia, which refers to characteristically disturbed ways of thinking, feeling and relating that develop in biologically predisposed individuals under certain personal and environmental

circumstances” (p. 21). This shows a vivid similarity between Brady and his son, Francie, indicating that both share a mental illness. In other words, Francie’s family group is characterised by trauma, loss and abuse. These all refer to his psyche, from the point of psychosis, which affects Francie’s stream in narrating the story.

The conversation between Francie and Roche denotes another sign of Francie’s schizophrenic state in which readers do not know when Roche is in the conversation or when he exits: “I don’t know why the fuck I did it for he didn’t ask me anything but I started into telling him everything ...what do you think of that, doc, all that old days being finished? ... He lowered his voice and I had to strain to hear what he said. He said yes, yes that’s good but I could tell by the sound of it that he didn’t believe me” (pp. 105-106). Here, Francie’s narrative is quite confusing because he appears to be unable to distinguish his thoughts from his actions, thus leading Bernheim and Lewine to state that there is incapability for schizophrenics in differentiating “between thinking about an action and actually doing it” (p. 25). Fantasy and reality, in that sense, are mixed up and become inextricably intertwined.

Furthermore, another symptom to consider in this analysis of Francie’s state of mind is his delusional state. Delusions, according to Bernheim and Lewine, are “false ideas that are not correctable by reasoning” (p. 41). People with delusions may have negative thinking about those who are around them, thinking that people might plot against them or harm them. In the case of Francie, he feels threatened

because he loses many people close to him, and at the same time, in his later conversation with Mrs Connolly, Francie has the misconception that Mrs Connolly considers Francie a pig too. Francie’s psyche is quite complex, as one can perceive from his stream of consciousness, displaying signs of trauma, delusions, hallucinations, and schizophrenia. The actual causes of these psychological issues are the death of his mother, and effectively, the loss of a father, Joe, and his uncle. The moment Francie’s mother commits suicide, Francie imagines that Philip sleeps happily in Mrs Nugent’s hugs. This inequity drives Francie to exact revenge and finally murder Mrs Nugent.

The aforementioned terms such as trauma, schizophrenia, and conduct disorder can all be seen as a form of madness manifested by Francie. Thus, Wallace (1998), in her article *Running amuck: manic logic in McCabe’s The Butcher Boy*, concentrates on “manic logic,” in the novel, in which “function” can be comprehended in two senses: exploring the devices that McCabe applies in the text and the role of madness as long as the story goes on in terms of characterisation and plot (p. 142). The symbol of “manic logic” is the pigs for Francie, as he states continuously back and forth about the pig imagery and applies the image to Mrs Nugent’s family. Besides his envious attitude towards the Nugent family, losing his friendship with Joe also significantly influences Francie’s life.

It is noteworthy that the sense of madness can be interpreted as the process of breakdown. Francie’s narration, behavioural

aspects, schizophrenia, etc. are all apparent examples in the novel that, as Bolger (1992) confirms, *The Butcher Boy* is a “a powerful and deeply shocking novel where the seemingly innocent logic of a child imperceptibly turns into the manic logic of an unhinged mind” (p. 47).

CONCLUSION

McCabe addresses the psychical issues of his characters very well in a way that allows readers to share the pitiable violent moments with Francie Brady. The depiction of stream of consciousness in the novel is well established through non-breaking dialogues and thoughts of the characters, which show McCabe’s unique treatment of the technique.

Francie’s issue with the narration of the text has made critics voice out about the difficulty that exists in following his story, to the extent that even his little punctuation does not distinguish the confusion between his thoughts and his dialogues.

Being obsessed with family and society has led Francie to a chaotic state that results in his madness and trauma. This is a core focus in the novel that shapes the personality of Francie. Francie’s bitter life starts with the death of his mother, losing his father and, most traumatically, losing his best friend, Joe. Besides all these, the psychological concern with the Nugent family aggravates his chaotic psyche and brings tragedy to the story and into Francie’s life. In the end, Francie realises how his being is lost and lonely in the community.

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Exposing Social Constructions in Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* through Metareligion

Abdolrazagh Babaei* and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

Bokononism is a fictional religion Vonnegut brings into his narrative, *Cat's Cradle* (1963), to create a self-conscious novel known as metafiction. This innovative mode of writing narratives, along with providing a critique of their own methods of construction, deals with the external real world to examine some established structures of the human society like religion. By exposing the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, Vonnegut's novel gives readers an opportunity to think about the possible fictionality of the world structures outside the literary fictional text. The novel tries to reorder the world perception of readers through rearranging the values and conventions of the fiction he produced. Vonnegut's fourth novel, *Cat's Cradle*, is the first mature work which, in its use of metafiction, presents ideas about the nature of truth, dealing as it does with science and religion as its main topics. A novel telling the story of its writing shifts its metafictional focus on writing process to social concern of the novelist by means of those very metafictional strategies. What the study refers to as *metareligion* is an ideological product of metafictional writing which Vonnegut introduces in his novel. The same as metafiction that "self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact", Vonnegut's *metareligion* exposes the metaphor of its own duplicity and simulacrum not pretend any longer to pass for the reality of what human being keep as a sacred religion. As a metafictional novel, *Cat's Cradle* aims at leading readers to question whether the world systems in general and religion in particular could be as constructed as the novels they are reading.

Keywords: *Cat's Cradle*, Grand narratives,
Metafiction, Metareligion, Self-consciousness.

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E-mail addresses:

abdolrazzaqbabaei@gmail.com (Abdolrazagh Babaei),

roselezam@gmail.com (Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya)

* Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

In Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction (1985), Patricia

Waugh defines the term metafiction, first coined by American critic William Gass in 1970. To her “metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (p. 2). By employing a selection of metafictional strategies metafiction “[...] not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text (p. 2). Metafiction seeks the solution to this never ending dispute in turning inwards to examine the fundamental structures of its narrative fiction, in order to study the relationship between fictional and social structures.

Although the term was coined in the second half of the 20th century, it is a concept that is not new to literature or an offspring of postmodernism. The fiction described can already be found in much older works such as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and massively in Laurence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Today, metafiction is also common in other creative genres and is primarily associated with postmodernism, which developed during the 1960s. Self-reflexive narrators appear significantly in the works of postmodern writers such as Vladimir Nabokov, John Fowles, B. S. Johnson, Donald Barthelme, John Barth, Jorge Luis Borges, and Julian Barnes (Knuth, 2005, p. 1). The prevalence of metafiction in the 20th century also relates to some social and cultural aspects of the age.

To Waugh “The present increased awareness of ‘meta’ levels of discourse and experience is partly a consequence of an increased social and cultural self-consciousness” (p. 12). The impact of the world outside the text, therefore, would find footsteps in the creative product, for the fiction, as an instance here, and the culture out of which that fiction arises are in a mutual interaction in showing the level of self-consciousness.

Vonnegut, like other practitioners of metafiction by questioning the traditional frames of narrative writing, offers analogous models for understanding the world as human-made constructions. In Vonnegut’s novel *Cat’s Cradle*, violating the traditional form of biographic writing by an intruding author who plays the role of a professional biographer, brings readers a new insight into the artificial nature of such stories to which Waugh refers to as ‘artifice, a web of interdependent semiotic systems’(p. 9). In fact, the explicit use of metafictional technique, as Waugh describes it, stems from the modernist questioning of consciousness and reality. Waugh comments that “contemporary metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history is provisional: no longer a world of external verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures” (p. 7).

This paper aims to display the way writers of metafiction in general and Vonnegut in particular bring an understanding of the construction of grand narratives of religion and art in the world outside novels. The understanding lays bare the truth that “we are

all trapped in our systems for measuring and understanding the world” and metafiction comes to regulate our system of measuring (Forrest, 1973, p. 4).

Todd Davis, in his book *Kurt Vonnegut's Crusade*, illustrates how the American novelist (Vonnegut) manages to keep his status as one of the figureheads in postmodern literature while remaining socially conscious and humane. Against the postmodernist call for autonomous literature, Davis admires Vonnegut as “our leading literary pragmatist” (Davis, 2006, p. 9). By the way, as one of the most prominent techniques in writing postmodern novels, metafiction tries not to hold a mirror up to human nature or reality; instead, it avoids this traditional mimetic illusion by putting a mirror up to the art of novel writing itself. In *Metafiction* Mark Currie quotes that John Barth defines metafiction as a “novel that imitates a novel rather than the real world” (Currie, 1995, p. 161). While some critics used to relate metafiction only to the creative process with the purpose of showing how narratives create worlds independent from reality and consequently expose themselves and reality as human constructs, others like Linda Hutcheon (in *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*) claims that metafiction does have a social side as it obviously establishes links with reality. Her emphasis on the social role of metafiction to the extent that she argues, “If self-reflecting texts can actually lure the reader into participating in the creation of a novelistic universe, perhaps he can also be seduced into action--even direct political action” (p. 155).

In drama, the “alienation effect” or “*verfremdung*” of Bertolt Brecht has also close aesthetic goals with slightly different political and social tendencies. Hutcheon compares metafiction with Brecht's theory in her essay “Postmodern Paratextuality and History” and concludes that they “can have the effect of interrupting any illusion, of making the reader into an aware collaborator, not a passive consumer” (p. 8). Alienating devices like masks, visible stage machinery, glaring lights, and various metadramatic techniques help Brecht to flaunt the pretentious nature of his drama. They create an ‘alienation’ effect within the audience in a way that the stage turned to a social motivator instead of a dramatic art scene. The key distinction of metafiction and *the alienation effect* as introduced by Brecht is that the former does not intend to detach the reader completely by focusing on political and social end that the latter has especially planned for. Metafiction does not aim to sacrifice the pleasure of literature for the sake of social propaganda; rather, it serves a conscious interaction of fiction with the external realities.

As self-consciousness plays a fundamental role in metafiction, the representation of the external world realities shares high degrees of awareness and observation. The focal point of difference in such kind of writing with other modes is the efforts of metafictional writers to bring readers into an unbiased challenge of comparing and recognizing the dividing line between the real and the constructed. The impact of the world outside the text, therefore, would find footsteps in the

creative product, for the fiction and the culture out of which that fiction arises are in a mutual interaction in showing the level of self-consciousness. Hutcheon appreciates metafiction for the revolutionary newness of its demands on a reader by its self-consciousness in the way that, in her words, it makes the reader “read with his imagination and ordering faculties alert and at work” (1980, p. 82).

Metafiction then reflects its self-reflexiveness that is speaking to us powerfully about real political and historical realities. Hutcheon again makes use of a quotation from McCaffery and continues: “It has thus become a kind of model for the contemporary writer, being self-conscious about its literary heritage and about the limits of mimesis...but yet managing to reconnect its readers to the world outside the page” (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 5). The self-consciousness of the literary text that passes the limits of mimesis connects readers to the realities of the world outside and remains as the central discussion here. In *Cat’s Cradle*, metafiction, as a formal juxtaposition of fiction and reality, presents a religion with a fictional sphere that brings into the core of all the debates in the novel the necessity of consciousness.

Vonnegut wants to make writing an “act of good citizenship or an attempt, at any rate, to be a good citizen” (Davis, 2006, p. 5). Vonnegut deconstructs and demystifies the “grand narratives” of the American culture while offering provisional narratives—*petites histoires*—that may serve as tools for daily living. The consciousness finds

practical underpinnings in the stories of Vonnegut as a postmodern novelist. Vonnegut tries his best to transmit his social consciousness to his readers by the help of provisional narratives.

CONSTRUCTED WORLDS IN *CAT’S CRADLE*

Kurt Vonnegut is perhaps the most popular and widely read American novelist of the past century, who was continually challenging narrative strategies/ tactics in his work. From the early unsuccessful novels of the 1950s, with his first and second novels *Player Piano* (1952) and *The Sirens of Titan* (1959), respectively, to his rise in popularity in the late 1960s, with his masterpiece *Slaughterhouse Five*, he never ceased to use innovative techniques to improve his writing. Among the many critics who have studied the works and ideas of Vonnegut, Jerome Klinkowitz summarizes him thus, “Vonnegut’s real intent is to reorder our perception of the world, to revalue our basis for meaning” (p. 51).

To reorder the world perception of readers, he needed to rearrange the values and conventions of the fiction he produced. The way people see and understand the realities of the world is the focal point in both the fictional and non-fictional works of Vonnegut. He specifically examined the potential of fiction to devise an acceptable literary method of presenting his ideas which he willingly calls part of his commitment and responsibility to his readers. This sense of duty directs Vonnegut to change the way people perceive

reality through his incomparable way that opposes the conventional style of "old-fashioned storytellers". They used to "make people believe that life had leading characters, minor characters, significant details, insignificant details, that it had lessons to be learned, tests to be passed, and a beginning, a middle, and an end" (Vonnegut, 1973. p. 209).

While Vonnegut used a variety of literary techniques in his early novels, he tried to develop a method that would allow him to surpass the restrictions of literary conventions, i.e. realism. The most viable literary innovation that Vonnegut follows is that of offering a new perspective of reality by presenting moral and social concerns in the form of amusing fictional worlds governed by metafictional strategies. In short, metafiction and metafictional strategies display the status of fiction in a way to rearrange and refresh the perspectives of reality in and outside the fictional world for readers. Exposing the conventions of realism, metafiction helps fiction to carry thematic points without didactic authorial intrusion.

Vonnegut's fourth novel, *Cat's Cradle*, is the first mature work which, in its use of metafiction, presents ideas about the nature of truth, dealing as it does with science and religion as its main topics. The authorial concerns of Vonnegut also find a new perspective by exposing the challenges to writing in the novel. After years of experimenting with self-conscious writing in his early novels, Vonnegut takes a considerable deviation from conventional

novel writing and tries to approach the kind of metafiction which may deal with the themes and reality of the outside world. No matter what label critics use for his writing, he pushes forward and gives priority to pursuing his ideals for responsible literature. The point is that Vonnegut usually tends to blend the exploration of his main idea with a fictional context that reserves an aesthetic balance for the self-conscious narrative with all its violating mediums. Though the balance of aesthetic and thematic concerns is a distinguished talent Vonnegut enjoys in the novel, the priority of ideas is difficult to be concealed.

Cat's Cradle (1963) opened up a new path for Vonnegut by choosing to fictionalize his writing career to find answers to the questions he was challenged with in *Mother Night*, about the harm a writer may do to his readers. A novel telling the story of its writing, *Cat's Cradle* is supposed to be what the author calls *foma* or harmless untruths. Mingling an intricate literary device, metafiction, with moralistic themes leads to fiction appreciated by both ordinary readers and rigid critics. It is in *Cat's Cradle* that Vonnegut, for the first time, offers a deliberate view of constructedness by subverting the conventions of fiction and self-conscious narration. The novel, presenting ideas through metafiction, traces the story of John or "Jonah" as he asks the reader to call him. John is the narrator of the novel who seeks to write a book called "The Day the World Ended"; it is about what important Americans were doing on the day of the Hiroshima bombing, 6 August 1945.

As John, the narrator, examines the background for his book, he becomes interested in Dr Felix Hoenikker, the father of the atomic bomb. It is in fact John's familiarity with the story of the fictional character, Dr Felix Hoenikker, and his interactions with his family, that push the plot of *Cat's Cradle* forward. He finally makes contact with Dr. Hoenikker's family as he travels to the fictional Caribbean island of San Lorenzo, which is ruled by a dictator called "Papa" Monzano. On San Lorenzo, all Dr. Hoenikker's siblings gather in the final stage of the story and John realizes that each of the Hoenikker children has a crystal of ice-nine, a new mass destruction weapon.

All the natives of San Lorenzo practise the new religion of Bokononism, which helps them to tolerate their poverty. While the religion is outlawed by the state, everyone on the island, including the governor "Papa" Monzano, is a Bokononist. The religion openly admits that its teaching is based on lies. There are special terms coined by the founder of the religion, which are used frequently through the novel and imply a critical view of the nature of religion and religious beliefs in the society. John's survival of the initial disaster caused by the new weapon gives him time to live through the final chapter "The Day the World Ended", which is in fact the completion of his diaries, discovered to be the text of the novel *Cat's Cradle*.

Following *foma*, while being aware of its artificial nature, is a lesson given by the fictive religion of the novel and shows to the reader the innovative strategies

of metafiction with the same goals. The significant experience in the novel takes place around an invented religion, Bokononism, which is totally based on "shameless lies", according to its founder. The novel seems to be about several topics; however, what makes it metafiction is traceable by focusing on the presentation of the fictional religion, its thematic results, its principles' impact, and the analogy with the rest of the events.

METARELIGION

In *Cat's Cradle*, Vonnegut's use of the invented religion *Bokononism* works as a lens to unmask the truths under the veil of fabricated realities. Hanuman in his article, "Hope and Despair: A Carnavalesque Study of Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*", offers a carnivalesque interpretation of the novel which deals with the challenges human has with religion and science. Vonnegut, "using the carnival features of parody and the dehumanization projected through war," unveils the untold realities through literary devices (p. 2).

Bokononism is a religion that promotes both metafictional doctrines and Vonnegut's ideal, desiring of "artists as agents of change" (Allen, 1988, p. 5). Basically founded on *foma*, harmless untruths, the religion enjoys qualities that receive Vonnegut's praise and criticism. The same as the metafiction that reveals its artefact, the novel exposes religion by articulating *Bokononism*. The religion that the novel presents discloses its constructedness from within and through the novel to the extent

that even their followers are fully aware it consists of lies. The exhibition of such a human-made religion deserves to be labelled *metareligion* by the study, after the name metafiction. *Metareligion*, then, may be defined as a religion that self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact following the definition of metafiction.

Cat's Cradle raises *Bokononism*, passing from three layers of storytelling as a part of the metafictional strategy of a narrative within a narrative. John the narrator, in the first layer, is assigned to do a story in San Lorenzo where he meets the only scholarly book ever written about the island - *San Lorenzo: The Land, the History, the People*. Throughout the novel, John refers to this book, as the second layer of the narrative within a narrative, by quoting from The Books of *Bokonon*, *Bokononist* poems or *Calypso*, and the principles of the religion. The Books of *Bokonon*, with no recognized copy, is the third layer of narrative, the *Bokononism* story.

As bringing metafiction into the narrative of the religion displays its artefacts, the doctrines of *Bokononism* foreground the merits and demerits of the religion in particular, and all human religions in general. The novel draws the reader's attention to the artificiality of the new religion by saying, "They aren't printed. They're made by hand." Such a religion could not have a complete copy "since *Bokonon* is adding things every day" (*Cat's Cradle*, p. 128). *Cat's Cradle* implies the same as all existing religions that *Bokononism* relies on no

established foundation and follows the interests of their authors. "Drawing on the traditional metaphor of the world as book", here, the novel portrays the religion as a book including a self-conscious narrative (Waugh, 1984, p. 3).

Young Lionel Boyd Johnson, known later as *Bokonon*, has been a carouser interested in the "outward trappings of organized religion", stepping in San Lorenzo, with "a self-educated, idealistic Marine deserter named Earl McCabe" (*Cat's Cradle*, pp. 73-75). They dreamed of making San Lorenzo a Utopia, therefore McCabe "overhauled" the economy and the laws and Johnson "designed" a new religion (p. 90). The novel provides a biography of the two major personalities of the island and the new religion to establish the next steps for introducing *Bokononism* in detail.

The novel obviously displays what kind of product *Bokononism* is by linking the act of overhauling the economy and law with designing a new religion. This is almost the same as the warning of the novel's narrator John when he informs the reader of the nature of his story and all other stories people may believe in. John's warning is that all the true things he is about to tell us are in fact shameless lies. It is also the first sentence in *The Books of Bokonon*, recast in the form of the narrator's advice about all religions, "anyone unable to understand how a useful religion can be founded on lies will not understand this book either. So be it" (*Cat's Cradle*, p. 4).

The design of the new religion is founded on pure lies, on a floating axis

acknowledging its own fallibility, its own constructedness. By the way, it satisfies the needs of its followers by concealing the bitter realities they do not like to know about. Praise of the new religion in the novel is in fact a criticism of religions outside the realm of narration, for neglecting the mental delight of their followers. What is supposed to be the main duty of religion, satisfaction, is provided by *Bokononism*, which turns into a model very much resembling Christianity, a caricature of which is offered through another character, the Christian minister, Dr. Vox Humana, who is also, metaphorically, a caricaturist in the novel. Awarded by “the Western Hemisphere University of the Bible of Little Rock, Arkansas”, Humana’s system of values is revealed in the motto he prepared for the university and is very close to the “Dynamic Tension” of *Bokonon*. The presence of clearly defined evil, Papa Monza and his power, which haunts the prophet *Bokonon*, makes the religion very attractive, the same as Jesus Christ and the brutal Romans of his age. *The motto of the University was “MAKE RELIGION LIVE!”* (*Cat’s Cradle*, p. 135).

Against the absolutism of worldly belief systems, *Bokononists* used to whisper, “Busy, busy, busy” whenever they thought of how complicated and unpredictable the machinery of life really is (*Cat’s Cradle*, p. 46). The religion does not prevent its followers from discovering the limits of their *karass* (people with the same inclinations) or the nature of the work the God Almighty has had them do; rather it offers a parable on the folly of pretending to discover, to understand (*Cat’s Cradle*, p.

3). It encourages the narrator of the novel to convert to *Bokoninism* and changes the course of his book that was to be Christian. In addition, the invented religion of the novel has the basic tenet of all religions in its proposing utopian ends. In a famous *Calypsos* (the religion’s equivalent of prayer) that Castle’s book quotes from *Bokonon*, there is obvious celebration of the fallacy:

*I wanted all things
To seem to make some sense,
So we all could be happy, yes,
Instead of tense.
And I made up lies
So that they all fit nice,
And I made this sad world
A par-a-dise.*

(*Cat’s Cradle*, p. 90)

The fictional religion of the novel, which is based on convenient lies while directing the reader to the self-conscious status of reading narratives, carries a warning to fulfil the social responsibility of Vonnegut as an artist. The novel brings ideas for examination, the same as objects in the research laboratory of Dr Hoenikker. Religion, like “Every one of those exhibits explains itself” in the metafictional laboratory of Vonnegut, for “They’re designed so as-not-to be mystifying” (*Cat’s Cradle*, p. 25).

Reading *Cat’s Cradle* as a metafiction, with a variation of techniques and strategies, calls attention to the fictionality of the narrative. This situation, by means of

metafictional displacement, increases the reader's awareness of the realities of our own world, which are discussed in one way or another in the novel. While autobiography and referring to historical events give authenticity to classic realism by sustaining Coleridge's notion of the willing suspension of disbelief, *Cat's Cradle* moves in exactly the opposite direction by stating that "Nothing in this book is true" (p. 4). By drawing the reader's attention to the status of the novel as an artefact, Vonnegut leads his readers to the border line of fiction and reality to illuminate that, in contrast to common expectations, novels could take part in the process of bringing changes into societies by giving awareness about the issues people regard as truth.

Such truths, coated in the form of ideologies, are the focal point in the novel, which has received diverse labels from the critics reviewing Vonnegut's novels. To Waugh, they are 'subjectivity', whereas Todd Davis speaks of grand narratives. Patricia Waugh, the main theoretician of the study, labels them as the "subjectivity in the world outside novels", which is pursued by metafiction through its self-exploration. To her, such a pursuit takes place by "drawing on the traditional metaphor of the world as book, but often recasting it in terms of contemporary philosophical, linguistic, or literary theory" (Waugh, 1984, p. 3). Todd Davis, on the other hand, refers to the ideologies in Vonnegut's novels as "America's grand narratives" on which the nature of his metafiction exhibits "the most basic tenet of Lyotard's celebrated definition

of postmodernity: an incredulity toward grand narratives" (Davis, 2006, p. 43 & 59).

CONCLUSION

Cat's Cradle is, more than anything, about the grand narrative that may be most central to American culture - *religion* (Davis, 2006, p. 84). Vonnegut espouses his main focus with other grand narratives of American culture, especially the narrative of scientific progress and power manipulated in the form of metafiction. Known as 'reflexive' or 'self-conscious' fiction, *Cat's Cradle* exposes its constructedness through metafictional techniques like frame-breaking, a story within a story, play, and the intrusion of an intruding writer, John, who plays the role of a genuine writer. It is the first time that foregrounding the act of writing or what Sukenick calls "the truth of the page" or showing that there is a writer sitting there writing the story, appears in a Vonnegut novel (quoted in McHale, 1987, p. 198).

While Vonnegut's fourth novel stands on the first step of Vonnegut's metafictional experience, the strategies it uses nurture an acceptable status among the pioneers of the genre. The intruding voice of the author, in the words of a narrator, John, in chapter one of the novel, leaves readers with an ambiguous connection between Jonah, as the double and fictitious author of the book in chapter 34 *Vin-dit*. Jonah, here, submits that the screwy name on the pedestal is his last name, declares the fictionality of the fiction.

The self-consciousness of the act of writing in the novel shifts to thematic

reflection on the ideological spheres of religion and power. The plot of the novel displays the interaction of these two areas in the form of a system that is defined theoretically by *Bokonon* as 'Dynamic Tension'. It is a priceless equilibrium between good and evil, which are religion and power on San Lorenzo Island. *Bokonon*, bosom friend of Corporal McCabe, the ruler, had come to be an outlaw in order to give the religious life of the people more zest more tang (*Cat's Cradle*, pp, 95-121). The novel is successful in explaining the complicated web of power entangled in the physical and spiritual lives of the inhabitants of the fictional Island of San Lorenzo.

Meanwhile, exposing the artificiality of the novel forces the reader to recognize the reality of reading the novel as it admits its situation. *Cat's Cradle* transfers the reader from a 'willing suspension of disbelief' to an active and conscious consideration of the truths of life, in the same way they are conscious of 'the truth of the page'. This time, the page is part of 'the world as book' in a modern representation of the sphere they live in.

Selecting the relation between religion and power shows that as Vonnegut describes the writer figure in his fifth novel, *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965), he himself is the only one who talks about what simple big ideas may do to us. In *Cat's Cradle*, he practically shows us what tremendous misunderstandings may do to us through his metafiction as an expression of the artificial and complicated nature of many of the belief systems of our world. The novel says and

shows that the character in the novel playing a cat's cradle, a child's game, is only playing with strings.

The followers of *Bokononism* must believe the religion's doctrines. Thus, they believe the lies, and all the while they are aware of the falsity of their beliefs. This is the sharpest part of Vonnegut's criticizing religion, which is discussed in detail under the title of *metareligion*. Such a strategy could also be explained with postmodern terminology, as Todd Davis refers to in his book, *Kurt Vonnegut's Crusade; or How a Postmodern Harlequin Preached a New Kind of Humanism*. Davis believes that "the nature of Vonnegut's postmodernism exhibits the most basic tenet of Lyotard's celebrated definition of postmodernity: an incredulity toward grand narratives" (p. 41). Discussing the morality in *Cat's Cradle* and the postmodernism of the work, he states that "Vonnegut demystifies and decenters the grand Narratives of America while beginning to offer inevitably provisional answers, the only kind there are to the question of a postmodern condition" (p. 58).

Though religion is the first narrative of importance in the grand narratives of American culture in *Cat's Cradle*, it is the exposure of fundamental basis of social beliefs that comes into consideration for the study. Selecting religion as a significant and touchable sample helps the novel to extend its sphere to a vast range of topics not only in the setting of contemporary debates, but on a historical representation of believers and ideologies. What people find as an established mode of belief may be

regarded as fictional as the invented religion of the novel.

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UPM-MTDC Technology Centre
Universiti Putra Malaysia
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