

ISSN 2518-2471

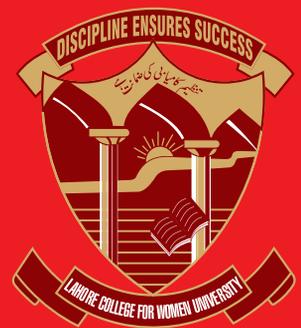
Volume 2

December (2017)

RESEARCH JOURNAL OF

LANGUAGE
&
LITERATURE

(RJLL)



Department of English
LAHORE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN UNIVERSITY

Research Journal of Language and Literature

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Editorial

There has been a newfound interest in recent times in the research done in the third world countries with western academia manifesting genuine interest in counter point of views and alternative perspectives. This has led to much debate on the role of voice in literary and critical communities. On local level a growing number of academicians are in need of a platform where they can share their body of work and intellectually engage with the members of their community. Unfortunately till to date there has been a dearth of research journals especially in the field of literary research in Pakistan with the result that scholars have little body of work to look up to or engage with. It is high time that an academic and professional community devoted to meeting the information needs, research agendas and trends of the future is created. *RJLL* is not just relevant to our academic community in particular and to learned societies in general but can also fill the void which is created because of the absence of a professionally marketable venue for such body of work. It would provide an opportunity for our own academicians to engage with the international debates going on in the field of literature and language, extending or challenging existing arguments and above all making a niche for themselves in the international research community. *RJLL* seeks to share current research on contemporary literature with special emphasis on Post-modern, and Postcolonial literature. We are interested in new perspectives and emerging voices and research that contribute to the existing body of literary theory. Research journal of Language and Literature (*RJLL*) also reviews recent research in key areas of the broad field of Applied Linguistics. This journal provides cutting-edge and timely articles on language learning and pedagogy, second or foreign language acquisition and psycholinguistics and addresses to researchers and educators interested in Applied Linguistics.

Editorial Team

RJLL

Teaching Language Learning Strategies to English as Second Language (ESL) Learners

Fareeha Javed

Abstract

Trends in teaching and learning of English as second language (ESL) have undergone a great transformation during the last century. The focus of ESL teachers is turning towards empowering their students to become independent learners beyond the classroom. Language educators have started realising the close link between language learning and content instruction. This concern has led to the adoption of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) instruction and cognitive academic language learning approach (CALLA) to improve the teaching and learning of ESL at all levels. During the last three decades, a number of practical models and theories have been developed that create connections between ESL learning and curriculum concepts. Teaching strategies being used in ESL classrooms have also developed over time and are rendered more importance in success in ESL teaching and learning. The current essay focuses on the topic of teaching and learning strategies used in ESL classrooms.

Keywords: English as second language (ESL), teaching and learning strategies, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), cognitive academic language learning approach (CALLA)

There has been a shift in the trends in teaching and learning of English as Second Language (ESL) during the last century. The focus of English language teachers is turning towards empowering their students to become independent learners beyond the classroom (Troncale 8). Language educators have also awakened to the close link between language learning and content instruction (Lessow-Hurley 12). This concern has led to the adoption of content and language integrated learning instruction (CLIL) in English. It is widely believed today that CLIL helps in improving the teaching and learning of ESL at all levels (Madrid and Sanchez 110).

Teaching and learning context has also gained the attention of English language researchers and teachers. Context is considered to be one of the pivotal factors in learning another language (Chapman and Pyvis 293). During the last three decades, a number of practical models and theories have been developed that create connections between ESL learning and curriculum concepts (Haworth 4). Teaching strategies being used in ESL classrooms have also developed over time and are rendered more importance in success in ESL teaching and learning (Haworth 28). Throughout the world there has been a shift in the educational theories and practices towards becoming learner-centred during the post-modern age. Successful learning largely depends now on providing for the learning needs and interests of the learners (Gujjar et al. 39).

Topic Identification and Rationale

Oxford (406) highlights the role good language learning strategies play in the success of language learners. Cohen (2) also supports the effectiveness of language learning strategies in learning a second language. The strategies range from metacognitive and

cognitive learning strategies to performance and affective strategies. According to Chamot (16), students of any level can use learning strategies for learning a second language. The difference lies only in the way these strategies are used.

Search Procedure and Range of Sources

The search procedure included library and internet search. Information was collected from books, journal articles, newspaper articles, presentations and conference papers written and presented by various international language researchers and experts. All the three types of source materials as listed by Mutch (94) were used for this research, namely human, textual and electronic sources. The main search engine used was Google. The databases used were Google Scholar, A+ Education, ERIC via EBSCO host, Education Research Complete and Scopus. Keywords and phrases used were: English as Second language; integrated content and language instruction; cognitive academic language learning approach; cognitive academic learning proficiency; language learning strategies.

There were two major limitations faced during searching for relevant literature. First, major literature on learning strategies and CALLA has been written by Chamot. Second, no significant literature could be found specifically targeting language learning strategies instruction in higher education. Therefore, the current essay has been based on the best relevant international literature on learning strategies available through the accessible research sources.

Identification and Discussion of Relevant Theories and Research

The concept of integration of language and content in an ESL classroom is a modern

trend which demands the language practitioners to shun the traditional ESL teaching practices (Rodríguez Torras 126). In a content and language integrated class, language is taught through content/curriculum. Cummins (qtd. in Baker 169) and Reyes and Vallone (20), describe this distinction as: basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS takes place in the presence of contextual supports and props for language delivery in a “context embedded situation”. Whereas, CALP occurs in "context reduced" academic situations and in the presence of high order thinking skills in the curriculum (Reyes and Vallone 20).

Language Learning Strategies

Patricia et al. (148) posit that teachers find certain instructional strategies quite effective while the ESL teaching and learning is taking place. Brown defines strategies as “specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling or manipulating certain information” (113). Chamot states that learning strategies are “the techniques or procedures that facilitate a learning task” (25). She further explains that “learning strategies are directed towards a goal and, as mental procedures, are not directly observable, though some learning strategies may result in specific behaviours” (p.25).

Learning strategies are steps which can either be thoughts or actions, taken by language learners to assist and monitor their own learning. Strategies used by students include ways to understand, remember and recall information and evaluate themselves at the completion of the task. Teaching students learning strategies is an effective way of enhancing their ESL learning (Chamot and O’Malley 261; Chamot and Kupper

248; Cohen 1; Chamot 18; Chamot and Robbins; Chamot). Oxford and Crookall (405) report that CALLA has provided an effective framework for teaching language learning strategies to ESL students at all levels including higher education. Chamot and O'Malley (229) posit that in CALLA, ESL learners are instructed how to apply learning strategies derived from a cognitive model of learning. These learning strategies aid ESL learners in comprehension and retention of both language skills and concepts embedded in the content/curriculum realms.

Chamot (67) points out two major reasons that make learning strategies hold a significant place in ESL learning. First, in gaining an insight into the cognitive, social and affective processes involved in language learning. Second, in helping weak ESL learners become better language learners. Chamot further highlights two major goals in language learning strategy research: to identify and compare the learning strategies used by successful language learners and provide learning strategies instruction to less successful ESL learners to help them to be more successful in language learning. Chamot reports that English language teachers' training in teaching language learning strategies is neglected. She stresses the need for developing effective procedures to help ESL teachers make learning strategies an integral part of their teaching practice. Hence, learning strategies instruction plays a pivotal role in enhancing ESL learning.

Components of CALLA

Chamot and O'Malley point out three components of CALLA: English language development integrated with content subjects, a curriculum correlated with mainstream content areas, and instruction in the use of language learning strategies (231).

The Content-based Curriculum

According to Chamot and O'Malley (236) and Chamot (67), one of the major purposes of CALLA is to provide a descriptive framework for helping ESL students to learn English language through CLIL curriculum. It does not only help in developing academic language skills but it also attracts more student interest than those English language classes where focus is given to language only.

English Language Development

Chamot and O'Malley (260) state that the second component of CALLA is to develop the academic language skills of ESL learners. Cummins (qtd. in Chamot, 236) indicates two dimensions that help in better describing the language learning demands of ESL learners. The first dimension is concerned with the application of non-verbal contextual cues which assist English language learners in comprehension, while the second is concerned with the complexity of the cognitive demands of language comprehension where context cues have been reduced. Non-verbal contextual cues include concrete objects, gestures, facial expressions and visual aids. Whereas, contextual cues reduced language tasks include vocabulary, grammar drills, and following directions. Hence, cognitively demanding tasks invoke "higher level reasoning and integrative language skills" (Chamot and O'Malley 237). Chamot and O' Malley (237) combined the two dimensions to classify language use task into four categories: Easy and contextualised (cognitively undemanding), difficult but contextualised (context embedded), context reduced but easy, and context reduced and difficult.

Learning Strategy Instruction

According to Chamot and O'Malley (261), in CALLA model, learning strategies instruction is used for CLIL. Learning strategy instruction is a cognitive approach to teaching which helps ESL learners in learning conscious processes and techniques which enhance the comprehension, acquisition and retention of new skills and concepts learned in the CLIL focused ESL classroom. Rubin (qtd. in Rucynski et al. 53) stresses that using a variety of learning strategies aids language learners to develop the traits required for effective language learning. Learning strategies have been categorised into three types which help teachers to identify the ways to integrate strategy instruction into ESL teaching. The categories are: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social/affective strategies (Chamot and O' Malley 229; Chamot and Kupper 248).

Metacognitive strategies help ESL learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning tasks for the achievement of their ESL learning goals. These are self-regulatory strategies which help an ESL learner reflect on their own thinking and learning and identify their own approaches and abilities for successful ESL learning. On the other hand, cognitive strategies help students to manipulate the learning tasks themselves and accomplish them successfully. Cognitive strategies work in alliance with the metacognitive strategies. Some of the most significant cognitive strategies are: elaboration of prior knowledge, making inferences, imagery and linguistic transfer. Social/affective strategies are used to complete a learning and comprehension task. For the affective use of social/affective strategy, English Language learners need to either interact/cooperate with their peers/teacher, ask questions for clarification or use positive

self-talk/self-dialogue to assist them in successful ESL learning (Chamot and O'Malley 265; Chamot and Kupper 248).

Explicit and Integrated Language Learning Strategies Instruction

Chamot stresses that a number of aspects are associated with explicit language learning strategies instruction. It involves “the development of students’ awareness of the strategies they use, teacher modelling of strategic thinking, student practice with new strategies, student self-evaluation of the strategies used, and practice in transferring strategies to new tasks” (19). She reports after her research on explicit use of language learning strategies that most of the second language context researchers agree on the explicit being an important aspect in learning strategy instruction. Snow and Briton (qtd. in Haworth 18) identify the need of explicit strategy training along with language development and content-area instruction as integral parts of CALLA.

On the other hand, Chamot (18) reports that there is very little consensus of researchers on the decision to make strategies instruction either an integrated part of language curriculum or teach them separately. Chamot stresses on the need of creating an ideal situation of strategies instruction in which all the teachers in an institution could teach learning strategies. This practice helps students to transfer learning strategies learned in one subject class to another.

Models of Language Learning Strategies Instruction

Although there are a number of models being used for language learning strategies instruction, Chamot (19) identifies three significant models of strategy instruction which are currently in use: CALLA, Styles and Strategies-Based Instruction (SSBI)

and the Gremfell and Harris model. All the three models focus on developing ESL learners' knowledge about their own thinking and strategic processes for language learning and encouraging them to adopt such strategies which help them enhance their English language learning and proficiency. Chamot (19) stresses on the need for language learning strategies researchers to determine the most effective model and type of instruction which helps ESL learners to improve their language proficiency and achievement.

Comparing the three models, Chamot (17) explains that the CALLA model is recursive in nature and provides teachers and learners with the option to revisit an instructional phase whenever required during a learning process. It helps students to reflect on their use of strategies before applying them to other tasks. SSBI which was developed by Cohen (qtd. in Chamot 18) focuses on teachers to take up a variety of roles to help and guide students to learn the most appropriate strategies related to their learning styles. On the contrary, the Grenfell and Harris model stresses on the students to work through a six-step cycle and then begin a fresh cycle. It helps students to become familiar with new language learning strategies and make independent plans for their own language development.

Implications

According to Oxford (410), there exists a noticeable difference between the students who have received a formal instruction in language learning strategies and those who have not received it. The students trained in language learning strategies find it easy to determine which strategies to apply to their learning. Oxford further elaborates that

some strategies are effective only for specific tasks. Cohen (2) states that classroom teacher bears the responsibility of encouraging ESL learners to learn language learning strategies and apply them to their English language learning. The teacher's encouraging attitude enhances ESL learners' learning of language learning strategies. Chamot (68) explains that language learning strategies instruction accelerates students' language acquisition and learning. To sum up, language learning strategies instruction in ESL classes promises a number of advantages for language learners which enhance their language learning.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed the literature available on language learning strategies instruction of ESL students. Language learning strategies are vital to the acquisition of ESL and help to enhance language learning and make it more effective and efficient. Current trends and research in learning strategies call for including language learning strategies instruction training as a part of teachers' training programmes. Teachers also need to awaken to the importance of language learning strategies for the achievement of teaching and learning goals. The literature studied points out the importance of language learning strategies and the weaknesses and strengths of existing language learning strategies. Hence, effective and planned instruction of language learning strategies in CLIL focused classrooms of ESL learners at all educational levels will result in effective and efficient teaching and learning.

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An Analysis of Gender Politics in *Isis* (1999)

Madiha Aftab

Abstract

This study analyses gender politics in Nawal el Sadawi's play *Isis* through the lens of mirror theory of Jaques Lacan. Mirror theory pertains to the psychosis of the human subject in which subject is in an intense and alternatively adulatory or abusive relationship with the imago or the perfect image, that the subject sees in the mirror. The text abounds in psychoanalytic motifs like hysteria, paranoia, castration and incest that are indicative of the characters' psychosis. Moreover characters are designed as foils to one and other to cement the idea of the fragmented self in which both masculine and feminine halves constitute a single whole. This psychoanalytic approach to the text solves a conundrum present in most critical appreciations of the play: namely the diminished stature of the character of Isis especially after the balance of power shifts to the feminine order.

Keywords: Jaques Lacan, mirror theory, gender politics, image, other, Egyptian mythology.

The gender conflict between the characters in the play arises from their desire of the Other, where the other is the perfect image reflected in the mirror. The desire to be like the other and to become a complete unified self is inevitably doomed as the self in desiring the perfect image sees itself as unfinished and ultimately it is the obsessive adulation for the image that results in the disintegration of the self or psychosis. Lorenzo Chiesa says about psychosis in Lacan: “the most succinct definition of a psychotic in Lacan’s first theory of subject would be someone who is stuck at the mirror stage” (26). Chiesa further explains: “The mirror-stage establishes a structural psychic dialectic between the subject and the other that serves as a model for the entirety of the subject’s many chronologically successive identifications: the ego is nothing but their sum total at a given point in time” (Ibid). Thus ego is a psychic construct external to the subject and perceived in the specular image. The ego is hence essentially eternally regenerating itself in any and all relationships of a human subject. In the psychotic individual, however, the gaze of the subject has fixated on a single image and the obsession with the desired image results in the unraveling of the subject and his alienation from his self. All characters of the play Ra, Seth and Isis manifest themselves to be psychotic in their speech and actions in the play due to their fixation on their respective images.

In mirror theory Lacan demonstrates the human subject’s preoccupation with self since very early stage of its development. The human infant acquires the ability to speak and understand nouns including his own name around the same time he learns to recognize its image in the mirror. The image reflected in the mirror is thus structured like a language that splits meaning among the signified and the signifier, as

like language the ego or the idealized self is split into the image seen in the mirror and the subject. The subject desires the completeness it sees in the mirror and in comparison to it finds itself lacking. This quest for completeness which begins with this feeling of loss and of realizing one's deficiency then continues throughout the individual's life. In *Ecritis*, Lacan says: "the mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation" (78). These feelings of insufficiency with the self and anticipation of completion are the cause of the characters' psychosis in this play. A textual analysis of the dialogues in the play identifies this psychosis.

An analysis of Ra's language exposes his unconscious. Ra says in the first scene to Seth: "Gone is the era of women; the era of manliness, courage, power and fear has begun... our sister Isis must realize this truth and forget the past and old epoch. (*Isis* 35). Ra's speech is a discursive enterprise whereby he seeks to oust feminine discourse by the use of rhetoric. In the above quotation Ra announces a self projected image of a desired self in which all feminine qualities are shunned in deference to superior masculine qualities like "power", "courage" and "fear" in the above extract. Such a notion of self is an ingenious falsity imposed and invented in discourse by Ra. Ra in his speech also says: "Now we are in the era of supreme men, the era of masculinity, the era of strong men rulers. Gone is the period of women and weak men" (*Isis* 29). Ra's speech is rife with a constant returns to the feminine, psychologically he cannot take his gaze away from the ideal feminine image in the mirror. His paranoia with women is manifested when he asks Seth that how the people received the news of his victory over the goddess Nut. Seth replies: "with happiness, joy and welcome", to this

Ra immediately repartees: “Except women of course” (*Isis* 30). The constant paranoia of women or the female in Ra’s speech and jokes implies the truth that women are a constant presence in his consciousness as will be seen in further excerpts from Ra’s language. Ra says: “However life without women becomes boring and it is easy to control them and conform them to our will and law. Besides it is much less complicated than enabling men to become pregnant and give birth” (*Isis* 92). Interestingly this speech is given by Ra at the end of the episode in which his wife has been caught in bed with a slave, the use of the adjective “boring” by Ra for a naturally traumatic experience further highlights the tragedy and the depth of his psychic masking of his alienated self. In the above speeches Ra masks his fixation with the image i.e Nut, Isis or all females by objectifying himself. This intersubjectivity in which the subject reinvents itself in order to escape the reflected perfection it perceives in the mirror is a defense mechanism to escape self disintegration by Ra. The unavoidable consequence of such an effort however is that the individual is conscious of his own escapism and thus the moment he realises this objectification of his own self his ego disintegrates.

In his conversation with Seth towards the end of the first scene Ra constantly employs rhetoric and plays with word connotations to declare the feminine and by extension Nut inferior to him. Ra says about Nut: “your mother Nut ascended to the position of sky goddess unexpectedly. She lacked reason and her brain could not understand sacred divinity. This was the reason of her defeat and downfall from the throne” (*Isis* 32). Here Ra suggests that reason more than compassion is necessary for a person in position of power, also the use of adjectives like “unexpectedly” with

“defeat” and “downfall” to imply the inevitability of Nut’s defeat by Ra since he, as the representative of reason was the apt and expected choice as a god. Ra like other proponents of the masculine discourse in the play is obsessed with self image. He constantly inquires Seth about whether his indictments have been announced to the general public: “have you announced this to the people?”, to this Seth answers: “yes, yes we announced all with megaphones”, this answers does not suffice for Ra as he further inquires: “And hornpipes?” (*Isis* 30). Seth placates Ra by augmenting his need for projecting a desired self image, and assures that he has announced all Ra’s principles and orders with horn pipes and has also instructed the scribe Tut to write them down. Ra’s last speech at the end of scene one demonstrates his heightened paranoia to the extent of hysteria: “Yes sun.... I am Ra, the sun god... I am the only god who has won and conquered the sky... The sun.... I am the only one... and there is no one but me. Me... me” (*Isis* 40). The stage directions and settings enhance this jubilation of Ra on being able to project his desired self image to the people: “*His voice echoes on the horizon, and the sun disc glows and fills the sky. Ra sees his face reflected in the disc of the sun. He laughs than guffaws while repeating with the echo of the sound*” (*Isis* 40). Later in the text Ra’s ego is disintegrated completely, as indicated by his hysterical laughter and repetition in language. Lacan maintained that ego was not an agency separate to the unconscious rather it was the manifestation of the unconscious in language. Consequently human subjectivity for Lacan was a combination of language, culture and the desires of the unconscious. Thus in effect human self was reducible to what it desired most. Ra appears only twice in the play, after first act he appears in the second scene of

second act, and in this appearance the reader finds Ra a hysterical figure diminished in his very act of diminishing women and the feminine. Ra on finding a man in the bed of his wife, leaves his wife alone; however prescribes the punishment of castration for the Ethiopian slave he caught in her bed. His feelings on his wife's infidelity are focused on the slave only: "I want to see him before me, a body with no virility. Exactly like the body of a woman" (*Isis* 91). The wife then is the mirror image within which Ra sees his disintegrated masculinity reflected back at him and as any threat or fault in the mirror image is a threat to his own self identity. Ra seeks to alter the self instead of the image with which he identifies himself when he prescribes castration for the slave and leaves his wife's infidelity unaddressed. Ra defines his masculinity through the feminine. Curtailing the desire of women through castration as recommended by the High Priest is not acceptable to Ra, as he says: "I am afraid that the men's desire will vanish with the loss of the women's desire" (*Isis* 91). Here is the most profound image-subject relationship between Ra and the feminine gender as a whole: Ra who wants to live in an illusion of wholeness by projecting his self as that which is capable of subjugating a perfect self. The perfect self here idealized and idolized is the feminine self, his wife and any other woman who he believes he can conquer due to the un-castrated state of his own self. Manhood as a concept is perceptible in biological terms and refers to the fragmented state of the individual's psyche. As implicit in this definition of manhood is the concept of gaze. Most debate on Lacan's mirror theory contests that even if the mirror is capable of reflecting the image of the subject it can never reflect the gaze with which the subject is looking at the image. So even in the perfectly projected image of the

mirror something essential to the self, the gaze is lost. Here Ra believes the best form of torture for the transgressing slave is to expose him to the ostracizing feminine gaze as he says: “Now *look at yourself*, slave, are you a man? Are you able to touch a woman, let alone gaze higher, at one of the divine women of the god!” (*Isis* 91, emphasis added). Meaning that for his identification as a man a man needs to be able to look at a woman with the confidence of being able to subjugate her sexually. Ra’s obsession with his self image points out this lack in his image and focuses his desire for a perfect self on his phallus alone so the most agonizing punishment he can imagine for the slave is taking away his identity, namely the phallus.

Seth is also a proponent of the male chauvinistic discourse in the play. He is obsessed with Isis and is caught in a dialectic of desire, he cannot give up his efforts to possess Isis and he wishes to possess her precisely because she is unattainable. This according to Lacan is the very essence of desire and desiring that it is essentially a longing for identification that ends in loss. Seth speaks of the nature of his attraction for Isis to The Army Chief: “The tragedy of my life! To be born into this life with a strong woman next to me. I do not know the source of her power. I love her because she is tougher than me. I can never attain her; on the contrary she attains me” (*Isis* 65). The masculine strength of Seth fails him in the face of Isis’s psychological strength that she drives from her unified Self as he relates to The Army Chief his experience of trying to rape Isis: “In her arms, I am transformed from a dangerous wolf desiring to hold her, just before he swallows her, to a sweet lamb crying like a baby on her bosom, and asking for punishment or forgiveness” (*Isis* 65). Isis’s power over Seth is the same that

the image has for the subject. Isis for him is the big other, with whom the infant has both a relationship of adulation and grievance. Seth speaks of his aggravation with Isis in these words: “She disarmed me of my dearest possessions- my honor and my virility” (*Isis* 66). Despite this realization of Isis’s corrosive effect on his self identity, Seth is unwilling to leave her to face the wrath of Ra as he does not want her dead: “I do not want anyone to touch her!” (*Isis* 67). Seth is exhausted of reconciling himself with his image, namely Isis, as towards the end of the scene four of first act he denounces every face, since all faces could potentially be a mirror image: “I do not want to see anyone’s face, I mean no one including the god Ra” (*Isis* 67). Later in scene five Seth reaffirms his subject image relation with Isis: “I see only your face in all women” (*Isis* 77).

Isis’s relationship is similarly problematic with both men in this love rather image obsessed triangle. Osiris is her gaze while Seth is her image. Osiris in the songs in the play is referred as the “heart of Isis” (*Isis* 41,85, 87,88 and 97) alternatively Osiris is also referred to as “the love of Isis” (*Isis* 43). Interestingly, in all these songs functioning as the Greek chorus in voicing the opinion of the community about individual, characters do not refer to Isis as “the heart of Osiris” or the “love of Osiris”. Isis therefore like Seth desires the perfection she sees in her first husband Osiris who is the god of love and kindness. Osiris is all goodness and image of spiritual perfection. He is therefore the gaze with which the subject looks at the image in the mirror while the image in the mirror is Seth not Osiris. Osiris is lost to Isis (in death) like the gaze that is lost to the infant as he looks at the image reflected in the mirror. Interestingly it is Seth who kills Osiris; Seth being the image is a natural destroyer of the gaze.

Isis says to Maat: “In contrast to Osiris who inspires the most beautiful things: love, justice, clemency, beauty and virtue, Seth inspires the most ugly in me: anger wickedness and hatred. He cheats me of virtue and *projects* onto me his vices. *The malicious traits of his face reflect themselves on my face*” (*Isis* 47 my italics). Osiris throughout his presence on stage is a benign influence to the extent of being an inanimate prop on stage that is used as a mere catalyst to initiate the conflict between Seth and Isis. In the entire extent of the play it is not Osiris but Seth who is able to evoke any response from Isis. For instance before her encounter and hostile conversation with Seth in act one scene five, there is no indication in the text that Isis wants to re marry. However to Seth’s incessant insistence to Isis to become his wife and his outraged apprehension: “Are you in love with another man, Isis?” (*Isis* 74), Isis remain silent and replies that there is no one but Osiris in her heart. Seth refuses to believe her and vows: “Do you think I will not know him? I will find him? And he will be punished! This time I will cut his body to pieces and each part will be dispersed to a different locale” (*Isis* 75). It is this confession of his earlier outrageous murder of Osiris and his challenge to render her choice meaningless that forces Isis to respond to the challenge of Seth by remarrying with the Sailor who brought her Syrian dates. Isis’s unconscious recognizes Seth as the image in the mirror. She says: “I do not like to see him because he makes me hate myself and my angry face in the mirror. I also hate my body when it agitates with desire of revenge... I loathe him like death. I wish I could grab his neck in my fingers and squeeze, squeeze, and squeeze until he takes his last breath.”(*Isis* 47-48).

Unlike Seth who acted on the impulse of adulation for the reflected image Isis

acts on the other impulse of aggression for the reflected image. In Lacanian terminology it is a manifestation of *jouissance*, which is the opposite of desire. *Jouissance* was Lacan's reworking of the Freudian notion of death drive or *thanatos*. *Jouissance* is an emotional response to desire when the human subject finds itself propelled towards that which it cannot have (Seth cannot have Isis and Isis cannot have Osiris) as their respective egos have given up the image in order to contemplate itself in the other.

In the last scene where Seth is castrated after he commits murder of The Army Chief we encounter not only a castrated Seth but also a castrated Isis. However the castration of Isis is not as literal as that of Seth, yet from Isis the active participant of discourse and action, she, after Seth's defeat from Horus, assumes passivity. The disintegration of the projected self image (Seth) results in the fragmentation of the subject's (Isis's) own identity as well. The reverting back of Isis to Mother Nut's principles "forgive when you are capable" (Isis 117) which shows a complete elimination of her earlier martial spirit where she bemoans her generous treatment of Seth: "I responded to his harmfulness with clemency. I was loyal to the principles of my mother Nut, but it seems she was mistaken. I should have responded to his wickedness with wickedness" (Isis 48). This metamorphosis in Isis is after Seth's Castration reaffirms the premise that without Seth to support her identity Isis's self is fragmented too. Had the play ended on the note of Seth's murder by Horus, Isis's response would have conclusively given the reader an inkling of her unconscious, still the dissipation of her spirit indicates that the loss of Seth's phallus is a loss to her own identity. Ra's actions of not castrating his wife show this understanding on his part that his identity will be halved by harming his

wife, he also says in the text that the loss of women's desire will also result in the loss of men's desire. Desire being the essence of subjectivity in Lacan then results in the loss of the Self for these characters which then accounts for the abrupt ending of the text that on one glance looks like the deconstruction of the feminine discourse constructed by Isis in the rest of the play.

The discourse of the mirror image theory of Lacan when taken as the theoretical framework of the play has thus explained the hitherto incongruent ending of the play by suggesting that the self and the notion of subjectivity in the perspective of masculine and feminine genders is unresolved in the play because each subject is incomplete without its image. If an aesthetic impulse were to be followed by Sadaawi then Isis should have been the one to decapitate Seth and assume the position of the ruler herself, however this course of action would entail a merging of Isis with Seth in her following his Phallus by assuming his identity temporarily in acting like Seth. This is what Isis shirks away from. Even for winning from Seth she cannot partake of his self at the cost of the dissolution of her own; it is her survival instinct and defence mechanism towards the end that she insulates herself from annihilation by reverting to mother Nut and her principles of mercy.

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Remapping London: Islam in Aboulela's Fiction

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Abstract

This paper discusses the representations of Islam in Leila Aboulela's fiction with reference to topography in her work. She has presented the mosque as the centre of London in *Minaret* (2005), made a dance studio the venue of Islamic zikr meeting in *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015), and shown Kassim praying at the end of a "dark alley" in "The Boy in the Kebab Shop", from the collection of short stories *Coloured Lights* (2001). She has not changed the map of London, but rather presented it from a different angle, and has modelled her fiction on this perspective. This article discusses this representation of London and its effect on the characters and the ways in which this topography helps them to dissolve their stereotypes.

Keywords: Islam, remapping London, Islamophobia, negotiations.

“I couldn't even imagine Ramadan in London, London in Ramadan.”

(*Minaret* 30).

In Leila Aboulela's fiction religion is a conscious decision made by the characters. It is not a way of life chosen for the characters by their parents, rather it is a choice made by their own selves. The element of choice becomes more pronounced as the character moves from a Muslim country to a secular country. Najwa, in *Minaret* (2005), and Natasha, in *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015), take the West as a symbol for modernity and Islam as a symbol for backwardness. For them Europe was better than Africa. They overcome the stereotypes that they had been following about the West and about Islam through an apprehension of Islam. In “The Boy in the Kebab Shop”, from the collection of short stories *Coloured Lights* (2001), Kassim gets inspired to accept Islam in his Judo classes, whereas he becomes a practicing Muslim through contact with Basheer who is the owner of the kebab shop where he works. In Aboulela's fiction land becomes a boundless space that cannot be labelled as religious or secular. Definitions break and land develops a mysterious identity that is hidden from its inhabitants. This article discusses the topography in Aboulela's fiction: her two novels *Minaret* and *The Kindness of Enemies* and her short story “The Boy in the Kebab Shop”. This essay studies the relationship between land and Islam in Aboulela's fiction. It discusses the role that land plays in the practice of Islam. How it helps the characters in following and understanding Islam and the effect that this relationship has on characters' ideologies and how it breaks stereotypes for the characters.

Minaret is a story of how Najwa rediscovers Islam in London after losing her

family and indulging in an illicit relationship with her university friend, Anwar. *The Kindness of Enemies* is narrated by Natasha who witnesses the arrest of Osama Raja as a suspect for terrorist activities ten years after the 9/11 attacks. Burglary in her own home and an accusation by her head of department for not reporting Osama as a terrorist suspect leave her feeling alienated in Scotland after living there for twenty years. “The Boy in the Kebab Shop”, from Aboulela’s collection of short stories *Coloured Lights*, is about the meeting of Kassim and Dina. Both intend to marry the other, but it is only after Dina sees Kassim praying that she realizes that to be with him she would have to become a practicing Muslim herself. The story ends with Dina trying to decide between a religious life with Kassim and a secular one with her mother.

Leila Aboulela’s fiction explicitly deals with Islam and its effect on Muslims, particularly on women, and her fiction has been widely discussed regarding Islam and identity. For Example, Eva Hunter, Renata Pepicelli, and Muhammad Abdullah discuss Aboulela’s novels from feminist perspectives and study the impact of Islam in the characters’ lives. In her discussion on *Minaret* in her chapter “Recent Literary Representation of British Muslims” Claire Chambers studies cognitive remapping of London. She studies the ways that Islam and its practices influence Najwa’s life. Chambers’ study of *Minaret* is close to the topic taken up by this article, as this research will analyse Islam through remapping of London in Aboulela’s fiction. Her study is focused on religion as an ideology and identity, and its differences from the British values rather than on remapping of Britain, whereas this article will centre on geography and its meaning in lives of characters. Carla Rodriguez Gonzalez talks about cartography

in Leila Aboulela's two novels, *Minaret* and *The Translator* and two short stories, "The Visitors" and "The Boy in the Kebab Shop". Her study concerns the presentation of Western cities, London and Aberdeen, and the Sudanese city, Khartoum, and how it questions the image of unproblematic urban associations, and marginalization faced by the characters.

While researching Aboulela's works it was found that most of the studies are done on the relation between religion and identity and Islam and feminism. Also, there is little research done on her most recent novel, *The Kindness of Enemies* which is also taken up by this article. Claire Cambers comes close to discussing mapping in the fiction, however, she has taken up cognitive remapping and does not discuss the actual topography in Aboulela's works. Carla Rodriguez Gonzalez has discussed the cities regarding their treatment of migrants. This article studies the role that land plays in the lives of the characters in their practice of their religion, and how it helps them to overcome stereotypes. By discussing topography this article studies that aspect of Aboulela's fiction that the writer herself chose as the first image of her novel *Minaret*, that is, an image of a mosque as the centre of London. It contributes greatly in the story lines as well as the themes of her works.

Aboulela's characters attach certain identities to their homelands and other countries and live with these paradigms until their independent experiences teach them otherwise. In *Minaret* London is primarily secular for Najwa and the people around her. Islam is synonymous with anti-modern and to be Western is to be modern. It is an ideal state of being. The West allows freedom to its citizens. A freedom that is unattainable

in a Muslim country, like Sudan. In London Najwa compares the absence of societal pressure on numerous occasions to how it would have been different in Sudan. When Omar decides to go to a disco after their father's arrest, when she sits alone in a restaurant after Uncle Saleh's visit, and when she is publicly holding hands with Anwar, she notes how in London she is free from the cultural restrictions that would've resulted in slander in Sudan. Then this freedom turns to sexual freedom and becomes a tool for exploitation, as Anwar makes Najwa aware of her freedom to have sex with him, calling it the broadminded thing to do, and uses this relationship to get Najwa's money to do his PhD. Being in a relationship with Anwar defines being "Western" as allowing yourself to have sex outside of marriage – which is not allowed in Islam. Najwa finds temporary solace from guilt by thinking that she was closer to being a Londoner because she was having sex with Anwar:

He talked about the West, about the magazines I read – *Cosmo* and *Marie Claire*. ‘Tell me,’ he said, ‘how many twenty-five-year-old girls in London are virgins?’ That was when I laughed and felt a little better. [...] He was right, I was in the majority now, I was a true Londoner now. [...] ‘I know you’re Westernized, I know you’re modern,’ he said, ‘that’s what I like about you – your independence’ (*Minaret* 176).

Here West equals independence which becomes restraint for Najwa because of her need to show Anwar that she is not bound to Sudanese customs and can question them and analyse them. When Anwar calls Najwa independent he comments on her ability to think differently about sexuality from what she was taught in Sudan. He had said earlier:

“Like every other Arab girl [...] you’ve been brainwashed about the importance of virginity. [...] Arab society is hypocritical [...] with different standards for men and women” (*Minaret* 175). Anwar sees Najwa as a sex object, he uses her to fulfil his sexual needs without an offer of marriage or even emotional support or physical security, and his complements are mostly aimed at making her comfortable about their sexual relationship. This use of the word "independent" does not mean that Anwar believes her to be able to think for herself or act for herself, it denotes his approval of Najwa for her acceptance of their sexual relationship. Thus, Najwa is repeatedly made aware of her similarity to Londoners, of the need to forego the hypocrisy of Sudan, and the freedom that was to be availed from the West.

However, she lost her freedom unknowingly due to the grandness of the notion of freedom itself. Anwar often exploited this idea to gain power over Najwa. When the guilt became unbearable for her she finally decided to adopt Islam. While justifying her decision of visiting the mosque she says: “In the mosque I feel like I’m in Khartoum again. It’s the atmosphere,” (*Minaret* 244). When Najwa starts practicing it in London Islam is still something separate from London. She still hasn’t started associating London with Islam. It is through Ali that Najwa begins to associate the two. She is amazed at the fact that someone so British could follow Islam. When she compares him to Anwar she begins to take Islam as an individual choice rather than as that of a society. “I had got the impression from Anwar that the English were all secular and liberal. Ali was nothing like that, yet he was completely English and had never set foot outside Britain” (*Minaret* 241). Her impression of the West was shaped by the stereotypes that she was

fed by Anwar. His own impression of England is such because of the connection he has drawn between secularism and progress: “[Anwar] believed it was backward to have faith in anything supernatural” (*Minaret* 241). Her encounter with Ali makes her see above territorial labels that she had given to Islam. Instead of relating Islam primarily with Khartoum, she begins to consider it as a part of London as well. The mosque does not only connect her to Khartoum anymore, it connects her to people from different parts of the world, Indian, Senegalese, and those born and raised in London.

Detaching herself from Anwar she redefines freedom for herself. This freedom is not the chaotic idea that had been idealized by her family and friends in Khartoum, that resulted in problems like Omar’s drug dealing. Eva Hunter notes that Najwa gives up the freedom that is “typical of this Modern time” (Hunter 94). She later criticizes Aboulela for making Najwa chose to surrender, as “Islam means to surrender” (Hunter 94). However, it does not hold the same meaning for Najwa as:

The notion of liberty in Western thought, since the time of Hobbe’s *Leviathan*, has meant a freedom from external constraints and the right of individual self-determination. [...] [I]n Sufi tradition, freedom has been compared to ‘perfect slavery’, which indicates [...] that the institution was often used as a metaphor for understanding ‘the relationship between Allah the “master” and his human “slaves”’. Aboulela provocatively challenges Western perceptions of what freedom entails. (Chambers 185)

Najwa goes back to the kind of freedom where she had some guide to direct her in her

decision making. After losing her parents, she turns to Allah. She indeed surrenders to Him and tries to become a “perfect slave” whose Master is pleased with her. With this she chooses to determine her conditions of choice of subjection. Thus, for her, “true freedom is not the freedom of choice. True freedom is freedom to [...] change the conditions of choice” (Zizek 00:17:05-00:17:12).

When Najwa's definition of freedom changes, she becomes free of the stereotypes that associated Islam with oppression and placed it far from the European ideal of freedom. The city that she had repeatedly associated with freedom and modernity finally lives up to its character, however, that was only possible when Najwa took control of the meaning of freedom itself. Thus, Islam becomes the centre of Najwa's freedom, and with it the mosque becomes the centre of London. Hence, against the stereotypes about London as a secular city that Najwa grew up with, London becomes a city with a mosque as its centre. Islam becomes the centre of the most modern city. It becomes the centre of modernity and the centre of her actual freedom.

Similarly, Aboulela has given a dual identity to two places – the kebab shop, and the judo club—in her short story “The Boy in the Kebab Shop”. Kassim had faced incidents as a child that made him feel different from his peers. In the judo club Kassim met other kids who made him aware of his religious difference from his cousins and school friends. His Judo classes were held “in the city, away from his suburban home” (CL 58). Aboulela gives this as the reason for his independence in these classes from his secular mother and cousins. Without them he was free to explore the side of his identity that he had inherited from his father, and that which made him different from his mother

and his cousins. Although his father had taken him to the children's mosque school "a total of five times", he has had a secular upbringing. Then it is the kebab shop where he works. Aboulela gives this place greater role in Kassim's religious life than the mosque. Despite Kassim's regular attendance in the Reverts class, Kassim is indebted to Basheer, the kebab shop's owner, for helping him become a practicing Muslim.

Foucault notes that "we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another" (Foucault 3). However, Aboulela creates heterotopias "which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault 3). The Judo lesson is an open class for anyone who wishes to learn the art. For Kassim it becomes a class where he learns about his faith that he had been born into but had always lived apart from. The kebab shop is a place that invites people to fulfil their physical needs, for Kassim it also caters his spiritual growth along with providing him with the necessary physical requirements. It serves as a mosque for Dina and Kassim that calls them to Islam. For Kassim the shop is important because it encourages him to practice his faith. For Dina, it is because this is where she confronts the choice between a secular life and a religious one. Her walk through the staff-only door and through the small dark alley is described in detail. Dina enjoys this walk and sees things that ordinary customers do not see when they visit the shop. It is dark and thus Dina's walk is slow and cautious. She takes note of everything that she sees, enjoying the intimacy. However, when she sees Kassim praying she is shocked. She sees a side of Kassim that

she had known but never really acknowledged. This encounter makes her face the depth of Kassim's personality.

With this secret passage in the kebab shop and the judo lessons, Aboulela contests the homogeneity of a place. She gives them a depth that is visible to only a few though not unattainable: Kassim's mother and cousins did not have a convenient access to the Judo lessons, and the small room in the kebab shop is behind a restricted "For Staff Only" door. It presents Islam as a lifestyle that can easily mix with culture. It does not have to be removed, isolated, and pronounced like a mosque. It can exist as a heterotopia where identities overlap and give profundity to one another.

Land in *the Kindness of Enemies* is a source of identity, freedom, culture and religion. People's relation to land is highlighted in the jihad led by Imam Shamil against the Russians, and by Natasha's alienation in Scotland after spending twenty years trying to fit in the land. However, Aboulela simultaneously draws attention to the core of identity of people that is independent of land. Thus, the novel is a commentary on the importance of land in formation of one's identity, and a lesson on the need to think above one's associations to places and their influences on their lives.

Natasha is ambiguous about her identity and wishes to merge with the West that is different from the Sudan that she left behind to be with her mother and Tony—the man who lived in the house with English alphabets along the railings that spoke of prosperity. After trying for twenty years to make people overlook her skin colour and her Muslim name, she realises the fallacy of her efforts when she faces the criticism from her boss after Osama Raja's arrest. She is still trying to overcome her anxiety when

she meets Malak in London who convinces her to go to a zikr meeting. It was held in a North London dance studio. “Floor-to-ceiling mirrors, cushions on the sprung hardwood floor, a barre all the way round” (*KoE* 216). It is a setting that is completely different from that of the mosques that is connected to the Muslims. In Natasha’s thesis Muslims had a glorious past, but her perception of their present was the opposite. Natasha related Islam to Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussain and wanted to distance herself from it.

When Islam is mistaken as a culture then it starts to incorporate symbols and metaphors that solidify a paradigm in minds of a community. Such symbols include beards, hijabs, and mosques. As Aboulela describes this scene through Natasha’s eyes: “I looked out of the window and saw the girl in the hijab who had come with Oz to my talk on Monday. [...] Behind her two bearded men walked in the same direction. This was a higher than usual rate of Muslim sighting for our small town. It was Friday of course and they were heading to the mosque” (*KoE* 139). So, beards denote Muslims, Muslims pray, and mosque is the place for the Muslims’ prayers. This shows how characters in the novel attribute certain qualities to land. It was a natural deduction and only highlights the involuntary reflexes of people to associate certain people with certain places. Being a Muslim in Britain also means being of a heritage that is ignorant of the development that was going on around them. Natasha narrates:

Many of the young Muslims I taught throughout the years couldn’t wait to bury their dark, badly dressed immigrant parents who never understood what was happening around them or even took an interest, who walked down high streets as if they were still in a village, who obsessed about

halal meat and arranged marriages and were so impractical, so arrogant as to imagine that their children would stay loyal. (*KoE* 6)

Thus, the cycle of a Muslim's identity includes backwardness, resistance to development, beards, hijab, and mosque. In a city where such stereotypes prosper, Aboulela decides to hold a zikr meeting in a dance studio.

The zikr meeting in the dance studio breaks away from these identifications. It denotes the necessity for a person to look beyond the surface and to consider the core. It expands the stereotypical radius of Islam's reach to development. Natasha had consciously separated herself from religion and had refused to think of it as an option for her because she considered it as a risk to her professional development and her desire to be taken as a British national. For her Islam was related to the past and the glory of Islam and its heroes was historical, not modern. The dance studio and the professional people attending and leading the zikr creates a different picture of Islam than Natasha's beliefs. Here, Aboulela shows how Islam adapts to the different requirements of people. There is no hesitation in Malak or any of the members of the meeting in holding the gathering in the dance studio because the essence of the meeting does not change. Islam becomes the centre of the mosque, rather than the mosque the centre of Islam. Aboulela shows the vanity of relating Islam to a particular form of architecture. As J.P. Gulraj quotes Dalpat: "If the Lord lives in the pipal tree, who lives in the babul then?" (104). She wants the readers to free themselves of the superficial rituals that people have made a part of the Islamic beliefs. As Rohal asks: "Now tell me, he that sleeps inside the Kaba shrine, on which side should he stretch his legs?" (Gulraj 103-104).

This essay shows that Leila Aboulela has used topography as a symbol to represent Islam's association to people and its role in their lives. According to Aboulela, land itself is neither religious nor secular, but the individuals living on it that can use it for their preferred purposes; Najwa used the isolation in London to start a religious life, Kassim used the kebab shop to be in Basheer's company who could help him strengthen his faith. In *Minaret* remapping of London shows that Najwa is disillusioned about the stereotypes that she was fed by her family and friends about Islam and about London, while in *The Kindness of Enemies* it proves as the first step towards Natasha's re-education about Islam and the West. Both learn the fallacy of appearances, and the need to understand religion, land, and modernity. This study of the three texts shows that Islam is only one dimension in the personality of an individual rather than the only quality that can define a Muslim. By having the characters practice Islam in the West Aboulela shows that Islam is not a monolith that resists change or is inadaptable to educational or industrial progress, but rather it is a lifestyle that can be incorporated in other cultures and can be followed with all professional careers. So, mainly through topography Aboulela invites readers to have an open view about Islam and its teachings, and about different countries, and not go by stereotypical labels that rob from them their actual values that add richness to them.

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Vernacular Shakespeare in India and Agha Hashar Kashmiri's *Safed Khoon* (2004)

Sarah Abdullah, Khadija Shaukat

Abstract

Looking back at Shakespeare in India before partition, one finds a dichotomy between the literary or academic Shakespeare and the vernacular one. Though works such as Gauri Vishwanathan's have engaged with the politics that went into producing the academic Shakespeare as one of the codes of the British empire in India, the vernacular Shakespeare has not been processed much: either from the outside, from its difference from the original Shakespeare, or from within where differences in indigenous cultures and their resultant economies as well as artistic motivations determined the nature and level of engagement with the original. This paper looks at one such Urdu adaptation *Safed Khoon* by Agha Hashar Kashmiri looking at the process through which it subjected Shakespeare's original *King Lear* to the process of erasure and overwriting refusing to let it work as a complicit of the colonial project.

Keywords: vernacular Shakespeare, adaptation, Indian theatre, Urdu drama, colonialism

Shakespeare came to India with colonialism. The Anglicists in their desire to produce a class modeled on the British gentry that could act as their ally against the locals, asserted for an English education in the classroom. This led to the introduction of English literature as a subject to be taught in colleges in the beginning of the nineteenth century in India with teachers like Henry Derozio and D. L. Richardson focusing on the literary and performative aspects of Shakespeare's plays. During this era a single volume of Shakespearean plays came to be regarded more educating than a whole shelf filled with Indian and Arabic literary texts. Shakespeare's inclusion in the classroom by the British kept the indigenous works out in order to cultivate a class that was "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (qtd. in Singh 450). Gauri Viswanathan has pointed the difference in which Shakespeare was put to use in the English classroom and its counterpart in India by examining the nature of questions on which the students were tested. Where the students in England were asked to comment on the grammar or some such aspect of the Bard's writing the latter were asked to answer questions that demanded critical engagement with his writing and the culture and society that shaped it. In 1855 English and English literature's inclusion in civil service examination in India could get candidates 1000 points, the same as Mathematics. Even scholarly engagement with indigenous works used Shakespeare as a yardstick for measuring the literary merit of the work; as early as the eighteenth century we find evidence of Sir William Jones labeling the most acclaimed playwright of the subcontinent Kalidaas as the Shakespeare of India ignoring the fact that Kalidaas wrote hundreds of years before Shakespeare and his art emerged from a completely different

consciousness, cultural milieu and artistic tradition. The implicit superiority of the colonizer's culture that informed such titles was later on assimilated by the colonized to the effect that local dramatists such as Agha Hashar Kashmiri till date are titled as the "Shakespeare of Urdu" by scholars and academics alike.

Tridevi and Bartholomeusz in tracing the effects of the Education Act of 1835 on the reception of the British literature point to the dichotomy it created between the English-educated elites and the natives educated in vernacular language, "it had its consequences on the reception of Shakespeare too: there developed two mutually exclusive streams- of an 'academic' literary Shakespeare led by Anglicized Indians and a popular Shakespeare on stage, transformed and transmuted in translation." (15) Academic readings of Shakespeare in both England and India portrayed him as a transcendentalist and humanist figure which was in keeping with the colonial agenda of legitimizing the rule of British over the colonized eventually turning the colonial project into a cultural one. In the government-funded classroom it was an easy task but when Shakespeare began to be performed on the Indian stage things began to take a different turn. The kind of passive acceptance that was demanded of the Indian native could not work for long. With the failure of the Anglicist methods and the revival of the orientalist administrative policies in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the local engagement with Shakespeare became dialogic. Translations of Shakespeare began to be done as early as 1852 in Bengali and Marathi and were mainly popularized by the Parsee theatre that took many liberties with the original works melding them into plots that were suited to the tastes of the Indian masses. Although the native Indian was still subjected to

epistemic violence, it did unfix the passive position of the locals in addition to opening up spaces where the instability of the colonial codes manifested themselves. Hence the colonial efforts at universalizing Shakespeare did not become undifferentiated and monolithic in its effect.

The English Shakespeare taught in college classrooms was Indianized to varying degrees when translated into vernacular languages with varying effects. To determine the engagement of a local translator with Shakespeare one needs to re-examine the process by which individual translations and adaptations came into being, the nature of the cultural forces that motivated them and the availability as well as limitations of the methods that transformed them into finished literary products. Many of the vernacular translations/adaptations (I am going to use the two terms interchangeably as theatres in that time did not make a distinction between the two. In fact, many translations were adaptations as they did not faithfully adhere to the original in terms of plot, characters or dialogue) subjected Shakespeare's plays to the process of erasure and overwriting, refusing to engage with them as expressions of a superior society and culture and thereby countered the oriental gaze that subjected them to the position of inferiority.

According to "Beyond Dichotomies: Translation/Transculturation and the Colonial Difference" by Walter D. Mignolo and Freya Schiwy the issue of translation is not simply a linguistic one. As they say, "It is our assumption that translation is more than a syntactic and semantic transaction between two languages. It also involves historical and geopolitical configurations: historical, because a given language has not only a grammatical logic but also a historical memory engrained in it, and thus forms

the subjectivity of its speakers.” (Mignolo 251-252) .They describe the process not as “translation” but as “transculturation” whereby our own cultural sensibilities and experiences are transferred into the colonizer’s narrative thereby debunking all claims of its fixity and immutability as a symbol of western cultural authority.

In “Beyond Dichotomies: Communicative Action and Cultural Hegemony” Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze also questions the generalizing and totalizing narratives presented by the west. He challenges Europe’s “normative” position in the world of culture and literature which declares everything that deviates from that position as abnormal or aberrant. According to him the strict dichotomies between cultures must be abolished as only by their abolition can we put an end to Europe’s cultural hegemony. As he says, “What is lacking is adequate attention to histories of specific peoples and the contradictions that such histories reveal about precipitous claims to normativity and universality.” (Eze 62) In a similar vein South-Asian renditions of Shakespearean plays, which subject his works to modification and cultural transformation, disintegrate the supposed cultural superiority of Shakespeare.

The Indian playwrights, in adapting Shakespeare, subverted the power of the original texts as complicit of the colonial project and rewrote them to cater to the Indian taste for the exotica as in the case of Agha Hashar’s adaptation of *King Lear* by the title of *Safed Khoon*. Since texts also create their context this and other adaptations then can be read as the way Shakespeare was dethroned from the pedestal on which it was set by the colonizer and made to feed the industrial interests of the Parsee theatre companies that performed Urdu adaptations of his plays. To look into the colonial Shakespeare then,

one needs to revert to historical readings as they, in Loomba and Orkin's words, allow for "a new kind of literary criticism, where history does not just provide a background to the study of texts, but forms an essential part of textual meaning; conversely, texts or representations are seen as fundamental to the creation of history and culture." (3)

Nandi Bhatia in her article "Shakespeare and the Codes of Empire in India" links the Dramatic Performances Censorship Act of 1876 with the rise of vernacular Shakespeare in India but claims that vernacular adaptations of Shakespeare in performance, under the guise of accepting the master-discourse, acted as sites of resistance. Citing the example of the 1848 native production of *Othello* at the Sans Souci Theatre in Calcutta where a native boy performed the role of the moor, they claim that the play raised "the possibility of undoing the 'master discourse' not in entirely oppositional terms but through partial displacement and subversion of the fixedness of the English text via both the speech and racial difference of the native that act against authorized colonial versions" (109). She also argues that many playwrights intentionally adapted Shakespeare in order to escape government policing; one such instance being Harishchandra's *Durlabh Bandhu* (1880) that used the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* to show ways in which the Indian native can outwit his colonial master and thereby counter the "growing encroachment of British authority" (113). Her argument allows for possible readings of Shakespearean plays as a site of resistance to the very master whose cultural legacy the play sets out to appropriate.

The Urdu adaptations of Shakespearean plays were mostly staged by the Parsee theatre which was apolitical and completely commercial. According to Poonam Trivedi

and Minami Ryuta “in India beginning around 1860, popular troupes in and around Bombay performing in Gujarati, Marathi and Urdu languages melded Shakespeare’s plots and characters so thoroughly into local cultural images that the audiences were often unaware that a “foreign” play was being staged.” (27). Shakespeare’s Urdu adaptations were a far cry from the original plays and were done to simply keep up with competing theatrical companies. Hence *Safed Khoon* (2004) was thrice staged by the title of “King Lear” and was only later published under its present title. Most companies in Bombay and elsewhere were owned by Parsees who were quite successful in the entertainment industry. In fact the growing influence of the middle-class mercantile class in Bombay at that time was swiftly turning a new urban space where indigenous communities like those of Parsees and Gujaratis had come to exert civic as well as commercial control. Kathryn Hansen for that matter shows how theatre in Bombay during the late nineteenth century had become a site where changing relationships between classes and cultures could be observed both in the production and reception of the plays that were performed there. Pointing out the rivalry between the old theatres on Grant Road and the new ones built near Victoria Terminus by the Parsee companies (who firmly wanted to establish themselves in the heart of the city, one that was already marked by Victorian-styled public buildings constructed by the British) she delineates the way the new theatre came to signify an ambivalent space for the people:

Enclosed in the European-style playhouse, the Parsi theatre presented new solutions to the problems of boundaries and visibility. The building’s design symbolised status and order.... Through its internal

compartmentalisation it could separate groups by assigned seating within the pit or orchestra, galleries, and boxes. Yet its location within a densely populated area, criss-crossed by the commerce of multiple groups, also made it available and connected to the world outside. The space of theatre was inscribed at times with different, even opposed, meanings. Sometimes it tended to enclosure and separation, working in the interests of class differentiation. At others it yielded to openness and excess, merging into the liminal space of its surroundings. (45)

Parsee theatre had by then become popular for adapting canonical works of Shakespeare to cater to the public appetite for sensationalism and farcical entertainment. A hybrid Shakespeare emerged out of these adaptations that were culturally suitable to be performed in front of the local spectators. In “Signs Taken for Wonders” Bhabha points out the relationship between the English subject of authority and its Indian object of submission. In 1817 when the various missionaries in India tried to convert the Hindus by giving them the Bible to read the Hindus did accept it readily since it was one of the first printed books they had seen. However the Bible had to be translated into a language understandable by the people and in that process they only picked and chose those elements from it that did not clash with their own religious beliefs. For instance they said that they were ready to agree to all the other customs of Christians but not to the Sacrament, because the Europeans ate cow flesh, and the cows were sacred to them. According to Bhabha “when the natives demand an Indianized Gospel, they are using the powers of hybridity to resist baptism.” (160) Similarly, the hybrid Shakespeare

resisted all efforts at redefining the Indian literary taste. The loose adaptations estranged Shakespeare from the English language and culture and thereby destabilized the authority of the original.

Shakespeare's adaptations in Urdu hence manifested subversive potential by exposing the artificiality of those cultural codes that were used by the British to exercise power on their Indian subjugates. The adaptations never really reaffirmed but reduced and challenged the power of the original. When new outlooks and new forms of knowledge entered the existing dominant discourse to produce adaptations that were completely different, an ambivalent third space was created that neither solely belonged to the British nor the Indians which to use Bhabha's expression terrorized "authority with the ruse of recognition" (157) and unsettled the "mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power". (154) Shakespeare in the vernacular languages tapped into a space that could not be solely claimed by the colonizer and thereby undermined colonial cultural hegemony. The Indian Shakespeare in effect did not reflect the sublimity with which the colonizer had invested the original Shakespeare and hence failed to affect people's consciousness the way it was meant to do by the British.

Before getting into a headlong discussion into the ways Urdu adaptations of Shakespeare functioned in the society we need to first go into the history of Urdu drama and the Parsee theatre that flourished it. Dr. Abdul Aleem links the origin of Urdu drama to the arrival of British merchants in Bombay who staged plays in their houses to entertain themselves. In 1750, the English constructed a make-shift theatre that staged plays for the English gentry till 1835. A decade later a new theatre was built by the

name of Bombay Theatre where initial Urdu plays were staged. Most plays produced at that time were adaptations that paid more attention to the public taste than adherence to the original text. In fact not all who were adapting these plays had read the original text or had command over the English language, an interesting case being Agha Hashar Kashmiri who was adept in Arabic, Urdu and Persian but had little familiarity with English. Since at that time learning English was considered to be a form of betrayal to their own culture, most Muslims made it a point to not educate their children in the language of their colonizer master. Their antipathy towards the adaptation of the English culture is evident from one of the incidents where Agha Hashar Kashmiri after getting an English haircut was dragged to a nearby tailor's shop by his father who had his head shaved. In fact Kashmiri was an active member of Anjuman-e-Hamaiyat-e-Islam and regularly made speeches against the English missionaries in its processions. However, by the time Kashmiri started writing Shakespeare had transformed from a literary force into a commercial one. The Parsee theatre of Bombay in this regard was the first modern theatre and played its part in popularizing Shakespeare among the masses. Its success rested on the way it tapped into the new cosmopolitan, cultural and economic currents. The Parsee theatre had its own methods of engaging with Shakespearean plays as it showed little desire to portray the psychological dilemmas of Shakespearean characters or delve into the existential concerns of the original plays.

Most probably after the passing of such acts as Performances Censorship Act in 1876 and Vernacular Press Act in 1879, playwrights needed avenues that were safe from government policing and hence turned to appropriations. Many vernacular translations

were produced in the 1870's and 1880's that were simply interested in keeping the melodramatic elements and the sensationalism these plays offered. Kashmiri's play *Safed Khoon* played also by the title of *King Lear* and published in 1906 is one such example. In *Safed Khoon* the interpolation of songs and a quite extended comic subplot takes away the more serious aspects of the original tragedy. In fact Parsee theatre since it was in Scandal's words a "direct ancestor to the song-dance-action stereotype of the Hindi cinema" (398) was mostly apolitical and mainly for entertainment purposes. However the evolution of theatre itself in Bombay had by then become an important physical space reflecting the shifting cultural and social structures of the city. Theatre in Bombay at that time was then swiftly changing into a new cultural space and like all transitional times allowed for it to play multiple roles even differing ones and without being aware of it destabilized the cultural codes on which rested the superior and unchallenged position of the British. Speaking of the content of the plays, Shakespeare in Urdu language was completely Indianized. No more was it a tool to instruct the natives into higher morality and civility. More than that it debunked the universality of Shakespeare and heightened cultural differences instead of washing them out or to use Flemming Brahm's words revealed the "ethnocentrically sealed world" (65) in which they were staged. Shakespeare thus was transformed more into a commercial brand which was a far cry from the fetishization of him as an icon of cultural hegemony that the British had initially hoped for.

In his article "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Difference" Bhabha favours the process of hybridization as it allows for a more dialogic as opposed to a more rigid

view of cultures. He says about hybridization that, “such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force,” and thereby dismisses all claims of the western culture’s superiority. (208) When we view their art as susceptible to molding and transformation on our end according to our cultural sensibility and artistic traditions we simultaneously deny any “hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures” (208) viewing their cultural authority as not something fixed, unchangeable and sacred but as something malleable that can be shaped by us as we see fit. As Bhabha says, “the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity...even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew.” (208) The free mixing of elements of Shakespearean drama with indigenous traditions and customs to create a new hybridized form of theatre on the part of playwrights like Kashmiri, consciously or unconsciously, diminished Shakespeare’s authority as a monolithic superior discourse and showed an implicit refusal to see him as “an amalgam of universal value, morality, truth and rationality.” (Singh and Shahani 128)

Focusing on *Safed Khoon* primarily one can clearly observe that Kashmiri does not try to stay completely true to the original in any way whatsoever. It won’t be an exaggeration to say that this rendering of Shakespeare is nothing but an amalgamation of various bits and pieces inspired from Shakespearean drama to create something new. His version contains a lot of elimination and addition of themes that were in turn present and lacking in Shakespeare’s original. It would not be wrong to say that he took Shakespeare and erased all those elements that would have been incompatible with

the Indian culture or unacceptable for the people. For instance the religious theme that was an imperative though not explicit part of Shakespeare's *King Lear* didn't take the forefront in his play. Christian readings of *King Lear* well into the 1950's were quite a norm in western-centric scholarship. Gauri Viswanathan too brings attention to the ulterior motives behind introducing the Indian people to English literary texts in the following words:

If not in quite the same colorful terms,... missionaries pointed out that though the government claimed it taught no Christianity, a great deal was actually taught, for English education was so replete with Christian references that much more of scriptural teaching was imparted than generally admitted. The Rev. William Keane attempted to persuade officials that Shakespeare, though by no means a good standard, is full of religion; it is full of the common sense principles which none but Christian men can recognize. (80)

The original *King Lear* could be easily read as a Christian allegory where Cordelia was presented as an almost Christ-like figure, someone who embodied attributes of grace, benevolence and forgiveness that hold immense importance in Christian theology. As Jessica Vanden Berg discusses in her article that *King Lear* appeared to be redeemed and saved by her sacrifice towards the end just like Christ became a source of salvation for his people. A lot of emphasis is also paid in the Christian faith on the consequences of sin and how man has to bear some punishment of his sins in this mortal world as well. Lear's death in the original can be seen as a part of that punishment. However

the change of the ending in Kashmiri's play enables the character of Lear (Khaqaan) to escape death going against the Christian idea of sins and their penance. While the British intended to firmly embed and imprint Shakespeare and his Christian values into the minds of the people the colonized here subverted these values through an overwriting of the end and disrupting any attempt to do a philosophic or religious reading of the play. The most major change was the change of the ending from a tragic to a happy one in order to satisfy the Indian audience's desire for happy endings and resolutions. In his version King Lear (Khaqaan) and Cordelia (Zara) never die and the whole festive mood of celebration at the end almost seems to be mimicking the ending of a Shakespearean comedy rather than a tragedy.

Most adaptations produced by Parsee theatres played freely with the original plots of Shakespeare's plays. There was an addition of numerous song sequences, all merry in mood, to satiate the appetite of an Indian audience for song and dance. These interpolations were quite a necessity at times. For instance, beginning the play with a song allowed for the spectators to settle in their seats before they could be introduced to the main action. Also there was an addition of sub-plots which were mostly comedic though rather than providing just comic relief from the more tragic moments of the play they ended up overpowering the serious narrative at times and disrupting the entire mood of the play. All these are quite evident in Kashmiri's adaptation where the more serious scenes are almost farcical in their content reminiscent of Shakespearean comedies like *Merry Wives of Windsor* for instance when Baghlol accidentally ends up beating Pharak thinking he's Gul Khairu hiding instead. *Safed Khoon* hence can be viewed as a farce with songs interpolated with dance and a fully developed comic subplot.

The play however is not just a free mixing of elements of a Shakespearean comedy and tragedy but of several of Shakespeare's plays creating a hodgepodge of sorts. For instance Mahpara's (Goneril's) speech of seeking aid from evil forces to remove all kindness from within her is highly reminiscent of Lady Macbeth's similar speech and Zara's (Cordelia's) speech while begging for mercy from the murderers vaguely reminds one of Portia begging for mercy in *The Merchant of Venice*. Kashmiri also uses several expressions and terms unique to Urdu language ("Yeh kis khait ki mooli hai") in his play that would have only made sense to an audience familiar to them, distancing his version even further from Shakespeare. His characters also appear to lack the proper character development Shakespeare is so renowned for. The characters of the play especially the characters found only in the comic portions of the play are more similar to the stereotypical characters found in old Roman comedies than the ones found in Shakespeare's plays. For instance, the use of a cunning female servant (Gul Dum) who plays tricks on the dim-witted master (Baghlol) and also of lecherous old men (Karak, Pharak) who constantly flirts with the beautiful servant in order to provoke laughter. It is safe then to say that Kashmiri incorporated not only various Shakespearean plays but various theatrical traditions as well. In fact the play was completely Indianized with even the names of the characters in Urdu to efface any European markers of identity, the same being done to the classical and biblical allusions so that any Christian reading of the adaptation would turn out be an exercise in futility. Since any adaptation is also a phenomena involving cultural translatability, many of the similes and metaphors are reconstructed to resonate with the Indian audiences. For instance as Kaleem Raza Khan says the famous line of Lear "Come not between the dragon and his wrath" was translated

as, “Do not come between the drawn arrow and the bow” (152) keeping in mind the fact that the locals might not be familiar with the western mythical fire-breathing reptile.

Kashmiri’s rendition of Shakespeare sets itself apart from post-colonial adaptations of him today as they display a certain degree of political awareness lacking in his work and use Shakespeare more or less as a tool to actively comment upon their own cultural and contemporary issues. For instance the movie *Kaliyattam* made by the South Indian director Jaya raj Rajasekharan Nair. The movie was a remake of Shakespeare’s play *Othello* in which the race issue was replaced by that of caste, an issue that has held great importance in the Hindu religious community. Another example is Indian academic and writer Shishir Kurup’s version of the play *The Merchant of Venice* which replaces the Christian-Jew conflict at the centre of it with a Hindu-Muslim conflict which is more relevant in a South-Asian context and has been an important issue of debate ever since the separation of the two states of India and Pakistan in 1947. Though these texts are important in the way they appropriate Shakespeare for addressing contemporary national, religious and social problems a trajectory tracing the Indianization of Shakespeare since its inception in India can lead one to a more reflexive engagement with the history of Shakespeare in colonial India and thereby address the question of colonialism from a experiential point of view rather than a purely discursive one. As Cartelli puts it:

Only history, not a change in discursive preferences or models, will make colonial disappear from view, though not even history is liable to check or monitor its continued circulation in the political unconscious where it may continue to operate long after the material effects of colonization have ceased to resonate. (14)

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Gender Diaspora: Suffering of Women in Nadeem Aslam's Novels

Zakia Nasir

Abstract

This research attempts to establish through the episteme of feminism a correlation between the gender-based phenomenon of power and how it results in discrimination, displacement and oppression of women. The selected novels by Nadeem Aslam, *Season of the Rainbirds*, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, and *The Wasted Vigil* encompass themes of female exploitation, othering and patriarchal hegemony, analyzed through global gendered discriminative power dynamics. This study intends to analyze the concerns, which affect women through the trajectories of gendered power. It aims to delineate the conflicts faced by women in androcentric cultures at the micro and macro levels to determine how power affects the lives of women.

Keywords: androcentric, gender discrimination, trajectory of power, othering, oppression.

This essay will explore through the lens of feminism the phenomenon of power exercised through gendered use and how it results in the silencing, displacement, oppression, sex discrimination and inequality of women. Displacement in this paper's context is used as a symbol of physical, emotional and mental upheaval. It also relates the colonial legacy of authority to the postcolonial societies, which is used as power to oppress women.

Before exploring the dynamics of power invested in male dominated patriarchal societies it would be proper to define the term. According to Dahl (210) power is an important social phenomenon. Power can be defined in terms of a relation of authority with people. In the context of the selected texts the reference of power is the gendered concept of the power holder. The male in the postcolonial context is analogous to the white man with his related power apparatuses in Imperialism/Colonialism. Because the colonial ruler was the white male and the native had to submit to the commands of the colonialist, his own suppressed manhood resulted in aggression. Fanon states that we should see colonialism as straightforward oppression, domination and violence only, to which the male especially were subjected. (92) Consequently the postcolonial male has assumed the position of perpetrator and subjugator.

The social victims of power in the third world postcolonial societies are women. They are subjected to cultural/ patriarchal hegemony, social oppression and persecution in many ways. Mohanty in *Feminism without Borders* (2003, P.17) writes about postcolonial third world feminism and the formulation of feminist concerns. According to Mohanty, they are not just gender based, but cultural, geographical and historical based. The significance of the effects of colonialism which symbolize authority and

power in the south Asian context, and the consequent setting up of postcolonial societies created through political strife, war, ideological conflicts, partition and migration, have resulted in women being social, physical and mental subjects of the trajectories of power. The infliction of suffering through discrimination against women is much visible as a gendered act in Aslam's novels *Season of the Rainbirds*, *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *The Wasted Vigil*.

The use of gendered power in the South Asian region has resulted from politico-religious reasons too. The execution of force and power by extremist, mostly male and the condition of strife inside Afghanistan has resulted in displacement, symbolic of exclusion and alienation in *The Wasted Vigil*. Women are the main victims of the phenomenon of power. Post colonial feminist theorist have given new dimensions to this phenomenon as they examine and explore the reasons and causes that lead to the positioning of women as subjects of power, hegemonized and exploited, displaced and marginalized.

The purpose of this paper is to see through the episteme of feminism that how feminist concerns emerge from women being subjected to the gendered use of power in the novels *Season of the Rainbirds* (1993) and *The Wasted Vigil* (2008). Also to explore how women are positioned as marginalized and persecuted entities through gender discrimination in the particular context of displacement and diaspora in *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004). Seen through global perspective, the adjustment of women in the new social forms that are constructed after the above displacements is subject to questions of integration and assimilation as Brah has pointed out in *Cartographies of Diaspora*

(49) They become doubly displaced and diasporic, being denied recognition and self-actualization as individuals in these new social forms that they adopt as portrayed in the novels under discussion. The predicament of women as subjects of power in the postcolonial patriarchal societies disturbs Aslam. He perceives gendered significations of power through persecution and patriarchal hegemony in the societies, as portrayed in the texts under discussion. This creates physical, psychological and social dilemmas for women, and in the case of diasporic women results in isolation and marginalization.

The choice of the selected novels presents an interesting case study of the gendered use of power. The *Maps for Lost Lovers* represents British multicultural society and its female diasporic characters with a feminist perspective of their displacement, exclusion and suffering. *Season of the Rainbirds* situated in Pakistan portrays physical and social marginalization and persecution of women, through feudal hegemonies, which is a reconstruction of colonial gendered power. In this context feudal and patriarchal hegemonies have given rise to many forms of ethnic ostracization, cultural persecution and social discrimination. Use of force and power over women is aimed at their silencing creating socially and emotionally exploited, displaced, diasporic identities within the community. Barlas (2002. p.12) points out that patriarchy is a “politics of sexual differentiation”. Elizabeth Massih faces not only gender discrimination; she is also socially exposed to marginalization and ethnic segregation under the powerful influence of cultural bias, hence becoming a displaced entity as a “chodhi.” (P.39) Historical and cultural practices impact upon women's lives, according to their geographical and socio cultural, ethnic norms. Elizabeth Massih belonging from the outskirts of the

towns' poor dwelling represents how the socially isolated and disdained live on the peripheries of society, their existence marginalized, displaced and diasporic in their own home place. Mujeeb Ali assuming his position of hegemonic patriarchal power pushes past her into the house uninvited (p.103) "his colossus form" overshadowing her slender form, examining her openly from head to toe. His derisive "Are you the maid", exposes his scorn for her as a low class servant, and the vestiges of power he holds are evident from his, and "Of course you aren't." His intimidating, "Don't you have a stole?" explicates not only the cultural demand of covering one's head before a stranger, but also signifies the demand for show of respect to a man holding a position of power in the society. (p.104) Elizabeth being dragged and mauled in the streets by men for her affair with DC Azhar represents the power of socio-cultural and religio-political forces in an endocentric society.

Zebun an ex prostitute socially stigmatized is a marginalized female character that suffers ostracism due to social taboos and cultural censure engineered by men in *Season of the Rainbirds*. She has a life which contrasts to Mohanty's feminist vision of a world where women with men are free to choose whom they love, whom they set up house with, a creative life where pleasure rather than just duty and drudgery are the choices. Where women, she says, are free to exercise their right of free and imaginative exploration of mind. (2003, p.3)

The worst affected by the disturbing phenomenon of power as portrayed by Nadeem Aslam are women. *The Wasted Vigil* minutely explores through the lens of feminism, excesses of power against women in Afghanistan, as a gendered act causing

displacement on physical and emotional levels. Women there are not only petty subjects of a retrogressive hegemonic regime; they are abject targets of extremist religio-political macho forces. They are physically and emotionally subjected to excesses of power, conceived by fundamentalist as unholy symbols of evil. "During the Taliban era if a woman went to the market and showed an inch of flesh, she would have been flogged or raped" Amnesty International (2003). Social and emotional displacement has resulted in psychological displacement too, as in the case of Qatrina:

She had to wear the burka while they were killing her. Afterwards while she lay on the ground, a man had gathered the hem of the burka and tied it into a knot and dragged her away as he would a bundle, and he grinned at his own ingenuity the while, as did the spectators. Blood was draining steadily out of the embroidered eye grille. (*WV*.p.135)

The displacement consciousness is more than active in the case of women. Firstly as cultural aliens, marginalized and unadjusted. Secondly when their own community socially rejects their claims for recognition as identities and ostracizes them for any act considered aberrant against their own cultural or religious norms as in the case of Qatrina, Dunya and Zameen in *The Wasted Vigil*. Cultural and religious forces sometimes create macho/gendered hegemony, making women displaced identities like the women in *Maps*, *Seasons* and *Wasted Vigil*.

Mohanty argued that:

[B]eing a woman has political consequences in the world we live in; that there can be unjust and unfair effects on women depending on our

economic and social marginality or/privilege. It would require recognizing that sexism, racism, misogyny, and heterosexism underlie and fuel social and political institutions of rule and thus often lead to hatred of women and supposedly justified violence against women (*Feminism 3*).

These problems continue to plague south Asian women in the multicultural west also, where their being positioned as part of the diaspora community creates further complexities as citizens of a secular, multicultural, progressive society of which they are denied participation by their retrogressive males. In the context of the *Maps* honor killings depicted in the text can be quoted as examples.

The gendered perspective of feminism shows how female oppression a tradition from the patriarchal colonial times and feudal hegemonies continue to be practiced in the present postcolonial era, leading to the fragmentation of women on different levels. According to Mohanty in *Feminism without Borders* (61), the colonizers created radically and sexually sequestered class systems, which aided their ruling process. They patronized hegemonic masculinities, which replicated the state rule, transforming existing patriarchies and caste /class based hierarchies. These hegemonic hierarchies not only continue to work in postcolonial societies, but also in societies which profess claims of multiculturalists' liberation and assimilation in the contemporary hegemonies of the west. The status of diaspora women especially as a result of forced displacement engendered by male execution of power, poses singular problems of assimilation. Third world women's problems become complex, as most of them belong from semi educated poor working class backgrounds. Mohanty contends in *Third World Women and the*

Politics of Feminism (18) that “Colonization without exception implies a relationship of structural domination and a suppression which is often violent.” Women in postcolonial societies have historically been subjects of power and authority, of the colonized male. "Suffering negation of identity" as individuals they continue to be denied a voice. It has to be understood that because colonized men were rendered voiceless and powerless in the public sphere, they exercised their suppressed malehood on the women at home intensifying patriarchal hegemony in the colonized lands. As Loomba puts it in *Colonialism/Post colonialism* (168) “they seized upon the home and the woman as emblems of their culture and nationality. The outside world could be all westernized but the domestic sphere retained its cultural purity.”

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (112) Fanon suggests that women like the colonized men become split subjects in patriarchal societies. Like colonized subjects who are watched upon by the colonizer, they are conscious of being watched by men. But what is important to understand is that “the ideology and practices of male domination are historically, geographically and culturally variable” according to Loomba (24.) Thus it is not just colonialism but the difference in the historical and cultural practices that impact upon women's lives, according to their geographical and socio cultural norms. The women of south Asian origin have a totally different narrative of the dynamics of power through colonial and then postcolonial hegemony. As it is pointed out by Mohanty (64) “[t]he homogeneity of women as a group is produced not on the basis of biological and anthropological universals---but on the historically specific material reality of groups of women.” Their mental makeup and emotional state is subjected to the pressures from

their own society too, which this paper has tried to trace out. The female characters in the selected novels are representative of the south Asian hegemonized voiceless women. The trauma of homelessness, the awkwardness of social and cultural imperatives and impositions, taboos and economic constraints become doubly pertinent for diasporic women who live a life of double oppression; first as second-rate citizens and then as diasporic entities denied freedom from male oppression.

Pilcher and Whelehan in *Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (87) present a gendered perception of the status of women. They state that feminism and multiculturalism can be posited as oppositional in the context of androcentric cultures as women are victimized by the androcentric modes of culture. Even under the umbrella of multiculturalism they continue to negate the very ideals of equality, tolerant co-existence, respect and regard for ethnicity and minority. Okin in *The Return of Feminist Liberalism* (3) attributes these problems to unequal structures of society and practices of the family life, as well as the parallel nonexistent empowerment of women in relation to men in the public and private spheres. All possible efforts are made to silence female expressiveness either by their native community, or being always positioned as an outsider, even in the very household they are married into.

The third world woman exists as the non visible other half of the subject “Other” in the colonial discourse. Viewed as the most non-affective part of the colonial world she had no role to play in a society fraught with religious, ideological, socio political imperatives exercised by patriarchal pressures. Her journey to the consciousness of the self is thwarted by imperatives of culture, religion and tradition whether she lives in

her native land or as a diasporic inhabitant of the west. This view of female oppression and patriarchal hegemony symbolizing power is presented in the texts under discussion. Women are the most obvious victims of the whole scenario. Chanda, Suraya, Mahjabin and Kaukab in the *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Asghari, Zebun, Elizabeth Massih and Suraya in the *Seasons of the Rainbirds* and Qatrina, Zameen, Dunya and Laura in *The Wasted Vigil*, all are troubled through the dynamics of power wielded through the assuming of power by the male member in the society. Masculinity in the androcentric culture means that a man has to show his egoism in his relationship with woman; he must be domineering, hostile, overpowering and brutal. Cruelty on women through exercise of power is an exact reflection of this type of manliness. Mahjabin's husband in the *Maps for Lost Lovers* is an example of a person who prefers to resort to exercise of power through physical and mental torture in his relationship with his wife. These types leave a significantly negative impression on women's lives and establish a link between the way violence in the public sphere comes to be transferred into the private sphere as explicated by Talbot (110).

In the *Maps* the diasporic immigrants are torn between the East and West, struggling to retain their sanity, to retain some normalcy in their strained lives as the marginalized other. The pressure keeps on mounting on the female displaced characters, as they are forced to be recipients of all those frustrations that their men have to face as immigrants from a colonized society. Thus we see that Chanda's murder was a result more of cultural imperatives rather than religious ones, the brothers notwithstanding the insult and embarrassment loaded upon them by their sister's act of living in sin with

Jugnu had to resort to the culturally right thing to do. They had tried to find out ways to escape the social censure. When both her marriages in Pakistan had failed she had come back to England. Chanda had been asked by her brothers and father to consider wearing an all-enveloping burqa. Her brothers' professed awkwardness and felt insulted as people looked at her on street corners; the look in those people's eyes reducing them to shame. To retrieve their honor in their cultural context, killing was a must! Thus they took upon themselves to wield the power of male ego in the form of murder. (P.176)

The diasporic men replicate the colonial white in their stance and appearance. But contrarily enforce embargos on their females, oppressing them to the point of murdering them like Chanda, who is a victim of honor killing exercised by patriarchal and family force. This is their way of showing power, their way of telling the women not to amalgamate in western ways creating an ambivalent maladjusted existence for them forever. Hooks in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (34) observes that there are divisions created among women based on race, religion, culture, nationality, region, sexual orientation and language. Spivak (56) in her profound argument in *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers* states that the route to the attainment of self-realization and development by these women is intertwined with re-negotiation and understanding of those diverse forces which might be cultural or economic and play a pertinent role in shaping and limiting their experience in their peculiar contexts.

Immigration by people to the land of the colonizer, for greener pastures has made them displaced identities. Previously ethnic and national differences formed the basis of communities, in Britain, which according to Karla (11) "have shifted to religious

and cultural differences". The gendered view of the scenario is that Muslim women are the worst victims of this dictum as they are enjoined to stay away from liberalism and individualism, in their native land and also as displaced and diasporic beings. It is important to trace how as Karla observes that one of the most pertinent changes that has occurred in the Muslim diaspora is a shift from National to religious identification, which gives a clue to the pressures Muslim diasporic women face.

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Research Journal of Language and Literature is an annually published HEC funded journal.

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Printed by: Leo Plus Communications

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