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East West Journal of Humanities

The Relevance of Bernard Shaw to Our Times

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The Enchantress of Florence: Fabulous Blather

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Second Language Acquisition and Grammar Instruction

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Resisting Colonial Discourse: Edward Said and Speaking Truth to Power

The Sundarbans Forest Systems: Patterns of Colonial Control and Social Response to Capitalist Enterprises, c.1830-1905

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Potential Benefits and Pitfalls of IT Outsourcing from the Viewpoint of Developed Countries: Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh

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Editorial

This is the first issue of the *East West Journal of Humanities*, but it is emerging, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the *East West Journal*, because EWUCRT has decided that the university will now publish two journals: this one and the *East West Journal of the Social Sciences and Business*. A consequence of these changes is that our present issue contains two contributions that were meant to be published in our predecessor journal. Since they were accepted, referred, vetted and edited for the *East West Journal* we have decided to publish them in this inaugural issue. They are: "Government and Housing for the Poor; Policy and Implementation in Bangladesh" by Mahbubur Rahman & "Potential Benefits and Pitfalls of IT Outsourcing from the Viewpoint of Developed Countries: Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh" by Mohammad Zakir Hossain and Sarker, Shaila Rahman.

I should add that Editorial Board of the current issue consists of Dr. Shahriar Haq and the current editor. The Editorial Board has now been reconstituted and will consist of the following members in the future:

Professor Fakrul Alam, Honorary Adviser, Department of English, East West University
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Professor Kaiser Haq, Department of English, University of Dhaka
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Dr. Shahriar Haq, Department of English, East West University

We welcome your contributions and suggestions. We intend to make ours the leading journal on the liberal arts in this region and look forward to your participation in our venture.

I would like to conclude by thanking my Teaching Assistant, Farid Ahmed, for his help.

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BOOK REVIEW

Gary Day. *Literary Criticism: A New History*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008. 344 pages. 185

The Relevance of Bernard Shaw to Our Times

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Abstract

Contrary to general assumptions, Bernanrd Shaw's writing have contemporary relevance. His views on cruelty to animals, censorship, democracy, medical profession, women's status etc., are all live issues even today. His plea for compassion for all creatures is timely because of the mass slaughter of animals and birds. He disapproved censorship since it delays enlightenment. His comparison of democracy to a balloon, stampede and auction is appropriate now. His expose of the medical profession anticipates its unethical practices. He championed women's cause before 'feminism' became known. Shaw was far ahead of his times. Hence his ideas have continued relevance to us.

These prefaces of mine are no more out of date than the Gospels, or Utopia, *or* Tom Jones, *or* Little Dorrit, *or even the plays of Aristophanes and Euripides and the Socratian dialogues of Plato*

-George Bernard Shaw (1938)

1. Introduction

Bernard Shaw was a one-man university like Aristotle in his day; he mastered and assimilated many branches of knowledge including music, drama, literature, religion, political science, philosophy, psychology, and biology. He was, in fact a 20th century Socrates. In his search for the wise man, Socrates unwittingly exposed the shallowness, incoherence and illogicality of other people's knowledge and thinking. His mode of discourse was dialogue through which he questioned every belief and institution and concluded: "an unexamined life is not worth

living." The mode of discourse in Shaw's time was public speaking, pamphleteering, and play-writing. In all these he was masterly. Through his persuasive oratory and ready wit, he fought relentlessly against the cruelty, inhumanity, unfairness, and purposelessness of many an institution and convention. Through his pains-taking industry he gathered masses of material, through his sharp intellect he analyzed the problems, through his mastery of the written and spoken word he gave lucid expositions of the important issues of the contemporary world. His monumental works, *An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928) and *Everybody's Political What's What* (1944) and the collected *Prefaces* (1938) are a treasure trove of ideas, arguments and analyses. They are characterized by thorough research and incontrovertible arguments. These expository works of Shaw deserve a score of doctoral degrees from any respectable university in the world.

It is generally assumed that Shaw's themes were topical and hence his plays and other writings have no continued relevance. However, he touched upon a wide range of topics which have a bearing on our lives even today. His views on cruelty to animals, censorship, democracy, medical profession, status of women and other subjects are live issues six decades after his passing.

2. Concern for animals

First, let us look at Shaw's concern for animals. He was a strict vegetarian by deliberate choice. He had a 'sense of kinship with animals' (*Prefaces* 140). He condemns cruelty to animals whether for sport, fashion, education, scientific investigation, or medical research. He laments the 'callous extermination of our fellow creatures' (257). On the use of animals for research, he says: "We connive at the most abominable tortures in the hope of discovering some magical cure for our diseases by them" (182). Recent events have shown that we have scant regard for species other than our own. They can be exterminated in large numbers and the creatures are dumb and powerless to protest and retaliate. In the last few years, millions of poultry are being culled because they are suspected to have bird flu; pigs are being killed in large numbers as they are believed to have encephalitis; cows in their hundreds were slaughtered in the United Kingdom a few years ago because of suspected foot and mouth disease. A group of leading film actors was reported to have killed *cinkara* deer in Rajasthan, India, for sport. A tigress was murdered in the Hyderabad zoo a few years ago, maybe for commercial gain. The culprits are rich and influential people and can escape punishment for their crimes against animals. While compassionate noises are occasionally made when stray dogs are caught, or monkeys are used for research,

or other animals are trained for circus feats, there is hardly a murmur when there is systematic annihilation of animals. The argument is that those animals are infected and so they are a hazard to human health. AIDS and the most recent swine flu are scares created periodically by giant pharmaceutical companies, governments, and the media, which plunder the gullible public world-wide. Maneka Gandhi argues that several of these diseases cannot be communicated to human beings at all and that profiteering triggers the panic. Assuming for argument's sake that these animals or birds are infected, how did they get the infection? Wasn't a human agency responsible for feeding and protecting them? If a number of people in a village are found to suffer from a contagious disease, are we going to kill all the villagers mercilessly? If large numbers of human beings are killed, we call it 'genocide.' If large numbers of birds, beasts, or fish are killed willfully, we haven't got a word to describe such mass slaughter. The fact is that we do not have a holistic reverence for life. If we did, we could have prevented the ecological disaster that is looming large. Shaw's plea for 'widening the range of fellow feeling' (*Prefaces 141*) to include all living creatures is a timely and necessary admonition to all of us. In this context, it is salutary to remember that Shaw had visualized that his funeral would be attended not by mourning men and women but by herds of oxen, sheep, swine, flocks of poultry and a small traveling aquarium of live fish in honor of the man who had the same respect for all species.

3. Censorship

Another issue of great importance today is freedom of expression of an author, an artist, or the press. There are disturbing signs of mounting intolerance of others' views in several parts of the world. We have seen authors being hounded out for their writings. Shaw is forthright in stating that "the attempt to suppress art is not wholly successful; we might as well try to suppress oxygen" (95). Censorship and persecution will only delay 'the general march of enlightenment' (411). In India, a state government sued *The Hindu* because the newspaper dared to criticize its policies some years back. That newspaper had enough resources to fight its case legally and otherwise. But there is another kind of censorship which Shaw calls 'mob censorship' which is much in evidence. The Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Pune, was attacked and its library ransacked by a mob because an American scholar obtained material for his book in which he made comments on Shivaji which were not acceptable to them. Exhibitions of M.F. Hussain's paintings have met with mob violence. Some films with unconventional views were not allowed to be shot or screened by agitators. The level of tolerance, the willingness to

listen to an opposite point of view with an open mind is becoming rarer by the day. Every person or organized group is jealous of his/its privileges and rights while he/it is insensitive to the privileges and rights of other fellow-citizens. The legislators, the bar, the bench and the media are easily annoyed by criticism of even the mildest and fairest kind. Privilege motions in legislatures, contempt proceedings in courts, and damage suits indicate the sensitivity of people in different positions. Another phenomenon of modern times which is euphemistically called 'media management' amounts to projecting and publicizing a preferred point of view and deliberately suppressing other points of view. The nexus between the media, big business, and the ruling class leads to a dangerous form of censorship. For instance, support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq was achieved through deft media management, although an overwhelming majority of people all over the world opposed the invasion. It was reported that President Bush summoned the top brass of the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* to his oval office to warn them against the publication of a report which was damaging to the U.S. government. The TV channels through the simple expedient of repeating the same story *ad infinitum* often distort the news. The capacity of the media to make the worse appear the better reason is immense. Recently, the owner of a newspaper in Hyderabad, India was investigated for illegal financial deals and tax evasion in his several businesses. Immediately there was a hue and cry that it was an attack on the freedom of the press. Some newspapers and political parties joined the chorus of protest, but the court drew a line between freedom of the press and illegal financial deals in other businesses by the same person. Shaw points out in his preface to *The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet* in which he discusses censorship by the Lord Chamberlain that the works of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Carlyle, Ruskin, Butler and others "would not have been published as they were all immoral and heretical in the very highest degree, and gave pain to many worthy and pious people" (411-412). Mohammed, Jesus, Galileo, Luther and Washington said and did things which were against the prevailing morality. An enlightened censorship by 'experts in morals, philosophy, religion, or politics, will lead to 'stagnant mediocrity' (422). Enlightened censors may examine plays, films, books, or art-works, and object to them and thus unwittingly promote the *status quo*.

4. Democracy

Bernard Shaw's views on democracy merit serious attention to anyone committed to improve the functioning of democratic institutions. Unfortunately, democracy even in the land of Abraham Lincoln, whose definition of democracy in his

Gettysburg address has become justly famous, is now a government controlled by financiers, industrialists, the militory–industrial comlex instead of being a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. As if to underscore this point, there was a popular adage until recently that what is good for GM is good for America. The U.S. presidential election in 2000 exposed the inefficiency of the U.S. electoral system. Doubts are cast over its fairness and legitimacy. The American senators and representatives are under the powerful influence of vested interests. There are 35,000 registered lobbyists in Washington D.C. alone, averaging 60 lobbyists per congressman. The lobbyists influence the legislators to vote for or against, to promote or prevent particular legislation to suit their clients. The confessions of Jack Abramoff, a corporate lobbyist, of his illegal activities such as bribery, fraud and tax evasion should be a matter of grave concern. The lobbyists in the U.S. spend $25 million per congressman per year to get political advantage. They have created a "culture in which there is no distinction between what is legal and what is unethical" (Younge). A Republican congressman, Randy Cunningham, confessed that he had taken $2.4 million in bribe and evaded $1 million taxes. Ethics are a dispensable luxury for many legislators. The recent scandal in the British House of Commons, which prides itself as the mother of parliaments, revealed that members of different parties had no qualms in claiming tax payers' money for their personal expenses and luxuries. The elections in India in 2009 have brought many millionaires to the Parliament. Also, there are many members with criminal records. To cap it all, hardly a week after taking his oath, a member was arrested for murder. The criminal activities of members of Parliament, or of state legislatures, include human trafficking with fake passports, taking cash for asking questions, money laundering, bigamy, tax evasion, etc.

Shaw correctly identifies that the political problem in democracy is "how to select our rulers and prevent them from abusing their authority in their own interests or those of their class or religion" (*Prefaces* 327). His play, ***The Apple Cart***, exposes how the parliamentary system is run by a private company, Breakages Limited, 'the biggest industrial corporation in the country,' owned by a member of the cabinet. Writing in 1930, Shaw states that the voters have 'no real choice of representatives' (328). What choice does a voter have when one candidate is an abettor of murder and his opponent a murderer; when a candidate steals electric power for his industries and his rival steals water for his farm? This happens across parties. The occasional name-calling by different political parties is only a case of the pot calling the kettle black. If some honest, public-spirited persons get elected it is more a matter of chance than willful choice. The ironic fact is that most political parties which swear by democracy do not really believe

in it, nor do they practice it. If elected, they maintain a facade of democracy. Again, politicians of all hues say that they want to serve the people. Is politics the only way to serve the people? Cannot someone remain an honest civil servant, police officer, or actor and do a lot of good to the people? Does one have to join a political party just when elections are due?

In the preface to *The Apple Cart* Shaw likens Democracy to "a big balloon filled with gas or hot air, and sent up so that you shall be kept looking up at the sky whilst other people are picking your pockets. When the balloon comes down to earth every five years or so you are invited to get into the basket if you can throw out one of the people who are sitting tightly in it….the balloon goes up again with much the same lot in it and leaves you where you were before….the balloon as an image of Democracy corresponds to the parliamentary facts" (329-330). Another comparison that Shaw makes is that most general elections are 'stampedes,' a description which fits our situation very well. There are stampedes for party tickets, stampedes while filing nomination papers, stampedes during canvassing, stampedes during polling, stampedes to celebrate victory, stampedes all the way. These stampedes occur across party lines and cause a lot of inconvenience to the public and resentment amongst the multitudes. Quite a few people lose their lives and many are injured during these jamborees .Quoting Dean Inge, Shaw says that "general elections have become public auctions at which the contending parties bid against one another for our votes by each promising us a larger share than the other of the plunder of the minority" (332-333). Parties in recent Indian elections tried to outbid each other by promising, free electric power, color TV sets, cheap rice, cash deposits, etc. Hence the analogy of the auction is very apt. Party tickets are often given to those who have money with the excuse of 'winnability.' The candidates for election literally buy their tickets, buy the votes through cash or kind, buy the legislators to form pressure groups, and finally buy cabinet berths. All this in the name of the party which in India has the word, "people" she a part of its title: Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Lok Janshakti Party, Praja Rajyam, etc. Shaw recognizes that 'government by the people,' if literally interpreted, is impossible. We cannot have a nation of Prime Ministers. Some of our Chief Ministers have attempted even that by forming omnibus cabinets to please as many as possible. The smaller the states and the ruling party's strength, the larger (that is, disproportionately) the cabinet. Everybody must be kept in good humor. In India, there are instances of only three members of a party in a coalition where all three end up as ministers. The prime minister is praised for his 'coalition skills' and for providing a 'stable' government. There is intense lobbying for

ministerships. Can't an M.P. or M.L.A. serve the people without being a minister? Oh, no! The simple fact is that there is much more money in a ministership than in an ordinary membership of a legislature. Money gives power, power gives money. It is a circle, vicious or otherwise. King Magnus in Shaw's *The Apple Car*t threatens to abdicate and contest the election as a commoner and form a government. This is nothing new in independent India. Many former maharajahs and maharanis joined one or the other political party, contested and won elections. Some became ministers; one became a chief minister. The elected ministers in Shaw's play pretend that what they do is sanctioned by 'the will of the people,' an oft-repeated political cliche. They seek to serve an ultimatum to the King to forgo his veto which they see as a threat to their power. But the King says that the veto is the only safeguard against 'the tyranny of popular ignorance and popular poverty' (Plays 1026). The real problem is not between democracy and tyranny, but between opportunism and integrity: Proteus, the Prime Minister, confesses: "I am Prime Minister for the same reason that all Prime Ministers have been Prime Ministers: because I am good for nothing else" (1021). How many of our ministers have the honesty and courage to make similar confessions? Ministers who lose elections are like fish out of water.

5. Medical profession

Bernard Shaw's clinical analyses of the medical profession are more valid today than perhaps in his day. He makes a blanket condemnation of the so-called noble profession: "it not only advocates and practices the most revolting cruelties in the pursuit of knowledge, and justifies them on grounds which would equally justify practicing the same cruelties on yourself or your children" (*Prefaces* 237-238). Shaw complains that it is difficult to prove anything against them. "The only evidence that can decide a case of malpractice is expert evidence; that is, the evidence of other doctors; and every doctor will allow a colleague to decimate a whole countryside sooner than violate the bond of professional etiquet by giving him away. And the doctors stand by one another at all costs" (247). That is a fine example of espirit de corps! It is indeed rare to find a doctor being punished for wrong diagnosis, for administering wrong drugs, for wrong surgical procedures, etc. If a patient dies, he is said to have died of natural causes; if he recovers, the doctor claims the credit. "In surgery all operations are recorded as successful, if the patient can be brought out of the hospital or nursing home alive though the subsequent history of the case may be such as would make an honest surgeon vow never to recommend or perform the operation again" (242) A number of

operations, Shaw feels, are quite unnecessary. There is a fashion in surgeries as there is a fashion in miniskirts. Caesarean section was once fashionable in the U.S. Tonsils, appendices, and uvulas were removed as such removal was fashionable for the public and very profitable for the surgeon. Plastic surgery and cosmetic dentistry are in vogue now. Shaw says " the psychology of fashion becomes pathology….fashions, after all, are induced epidemics, proving that epidemics can be induced by tradesmen, and therefore by doctors" (270). It is unfortunate that the medical profession thrives on disease. Shaw declares: "Of all the anti-social vested interests the worst is the vested interest in ill-health" (280). He was up in arms against the system of private medical practice as it obtained in 1906 when he wrote *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The Labour Party came to power four decades later and introduced the National Health Service in England.

The healthcare situation in India is pathetic. Medical treatment and health services are going out of reach of the bulk of the people, especially the middle and lower classes. Corporate hospitals which made an entry into the field in a big way run their establishments on avowed business principles. They are out to make profits and declare dividends to their share holders. Some of these corporate hospitals are located far away from the city and are not easily accessible to the common people. If a person goes to a doctor with even a minor complaint such as a headache, stomach pain or common cold, a battery of expensive tests and scans are ordered; four or five medicines are prescribed for the same ailment for a week. If these medicines fail to work, a new set of medicines is recommended. Our faith in the doctor's infallibility is such that we don't question him. Our own people discourage us from arguing with a doctor because they are afraid that the doctor may harm the patient instead of curing him. The number of scans and tests conducted and the number of drugs prescribed leaves a clear impression that there is a nexus between the pathology laboratories, the scanning centers, the pharmaceutical companies and the medical profession.

In the USA, there was a recent report on how the faculty at Harvard Medical School have pecuniary ties with many big drug companies which pay large amounts as consulting and speaking fees. The drug industry's bad reputation and its links with the Harvard Medical faculty are a cause for worry among the students (Wilson). The U.S government is waking up to this colossal fraud which endangers public health. Drug "manufacturers have repeatedly used consulting payments in illegal schemes to persuade doctors to prescribe drugs or devices in inappropriate and unapproved ways" (Harris). Legal action against such practices has been initiated a few months ago. No wonder the costs of

hospitalization reach astronomical figures! Corporate hospitals at times receive a number of concessions from the government like allotment of land at a low price, waiver of customs duty on imported equipment. In return, they promise to treat a certain percentage of poor patients. But they may occasionally fudge their records and bestow their attention and resources on affluent patients. Another reprehensible practice is that these hospitals provide shelter to rich and influential persons who are involved in crimes. Such criminals go straight to the corporate hospital instead of the prison. They stay in five star hospitals as long as they wish and the doctors are willing to certify that they are under treatment and hence cannot be disturbed or discharged. There are also instances of doctors performing surgery on the wrong side or the wrong organ causing irreversible damage to the patient. The Supreme Court of India recently ordered a well-known hospital in Hyderabad to pay Rs.one crore as compensation to a patient who suffered permanent disability due to wrong treatment.

6. Status of women

In the second half of the 20th century, the feminist movement spread in many parts of the world. Shaw was a feminist long before the term, 'feminism,' became familiar and fashionable. In his innumerable writings he championed the cause of women. Shaw's plays on Cleopatra, Joan of Arc and Catherine II encompassing different epochs of history show women as intelligent, wise, practical, and human. Cleopatra in Shaw's characterization in *Caesar and Cleopatra* is not a Circe, but an intelligent and determined teenage girl who graduates to the queenship of Egypt. She learns statecraft quickly; she captivates two of the greatest Romans of her day–Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Another teenage girl who made an inerasable mark on European history is Joan of Arc. In *Saint Joan*, Shaw shattered the romantic image of the Maid. Shaw's Joan is guided by her common sense in all her activities. She declares: "I do not want to be thought of as a woman. I will not dress as a woman, I do not care for the things women care for….I dream of leading a charge, and placing the big guns" (*Plays* 977). Shaw shows Joan confronting the Dauphin, leading the French army at Orleans, facing her trial with defiance, and going to the stake with fortitude. In the 'Epilogue', she is projected as a saint, putting all her critics and foes to shame. This village girl took on a number of entrenched interests such as the French military establishment, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Feudal society. These are clearly brought out in the play. In *Great Catherine*, Shaw's focus is not on the intellectual accomplishments, diplomatic triumphs, and political

conquests of the Russian empress, but on Catherine the woman. In the play, she fancies a visiting British Captain, Edstaston, and tickles and tortures him. Shaw hints at her imperial indiscretions and royal debaucheries and pulls her down from the pedestal. Her human weaknesses in the context of her failed marriage put her on par with other ordinary women. There is nothing imperial or 'great' in Catherine the Great as far as her amorous adventures are concerned. She is jealous, cruel, and vindictive and without the trappings and grace of a cultured empress who presided over Russia for 34 years and cut a "magnificent figure" in 18th century Europe.

Shaw's women characters, historical or fictional, do not fit the popular stereotypes such as earth mother, docile housewife, or fashionable companion. Candida and Ann Whitefield are two women in Shaw's plays who do not exactly suit the prevailing notions of womanly woman and ladylike lady. Shaw started the process of de-romanticizing women from the beginning of his career. His second novel, *The Irrational Knot*, written in 1880, depicts the New Woman who thinks and acts on her own. Marian Lind, a self-willed woman, marries Cyril Connolly, an American electrical engineer, and soon discovers that her husband cares more for his profession than for her. She tells her cousin" I want to be a wife, not a fragile ornament kept in a glass case. He would as soon think of submitting any project of his to the judgment of a doll as to mine" (202). Shaw wrote this dialogue six years before he had heard of Henrik Ibsen' play, A *Doll's House*, and read it in English translation. Shaw had specifically used the words, 'doll' and 'fragile ornament' referring to the position of women in Victorian society. If Marian Lind is a 'fragile ornament' to be handled with great care, Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* is taken as sturdy material for a phonetic experiment by Professor Henry Higgins to win a bet with Colonel Pickering. Higgins is too engrossed in and excited over the success of his experiment to care for the future of a transformed Eliza, the young woman. Cyril Connolly and Professor Higgins in their different ways didn't care for women as women, a point Shaw drives home. The treatment meted out to Marian Lind by her husband and to Eliza Doolittle by her teacher are extreme attitudes, neither of which takes cognizance of the woman. Shaw condemns both these attitudes and thereby upholds the individuality and dignity of women. Shaw is not content with presenting women as unwomanly and with portraying the New Woman who asserts her independence and fights for her rights. In his scheme of things, woman has a higher and nobler purpose. Although there are suggestions of this higher purpose even in Shaw's early writings, its fullest expression may be found in his *magnum opus, Man and Superman*. Here he turns the conventional view that man is the

hunter and woman the quarry upside down. In Shaw's view, man is an instrument for realizing the grand design of the Life Force. Ann Whitefield had chosen Jack Tanner without his knowledge to be the father of the Superman who is omnipotent, omniscient and infallible. Ann is Everywoman. Joan of Arc is another manifestation of the Life Force as Shaw sees her. The quintessential male feminist that was Shaw pulled woman from the pedestal, but he accorded her the status of the Life Force which would eventually produce a superior race.

7. Conclusion

In the foregoing pages, only a few topics on which Bernard Shaw's opinions are still valid are discussed. But there are many other issues on which his views shed light. A cursory glance at the index to his *Prefaces* reveals the astonishing range of his interests. From Adam and Eve to Atoms and Electrons, from the Abbey Theatre to the Zetetical Society, from aeronautics to x-rays, he has written on a vast variety of topics with the knowledge of an expert and the acumen of a judge. Many of the problems such as slum landlordism (*Widowers' Houses*), prostitution (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*), divorce (*Getting Married*), children's rights *(Misalliance)* and anti-romantic view of war (*Arms and the Man*) which he had dealt with in his plays, prefaces, and other works, have a validity even today . To be able to write with authority on topics of his period and yet make his writings surprisingly relevant to future generations is the mark of a genius which Bernard Shaw undoubtedly was. He was far ahead of his times and his claim that his prefaces, and one might add, his entire canon, will last as long as the Gospels and Socrates' dialogues, is no idle boast, but plain statement of a fact.

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Dilemma of a Widow as a Ruler in *The Duchess of Malfi*

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Abstract

The Duchess of Malfi is a revenge tragedy, but Webster has used the form for much more than just its entertaining value. He has utilized it as a vehicle for the exploration of some themes relevant to the society of his time. Women and questions concerning feminine nature are used to signify troubling social and political issues of the day. The play deals, in different ways, with issues of political instability and constructs a rhetoric of femininity and feminine nature which complements the political aspects of the drama. It moves around a female protagonist, and her predicament shows how the themes of the play are constructed by Webster's thinking about social issues of his day. Ironically, he was making points about women's rights at a time when only men were allowed to act on the stage. This article tries to analyse the relationship between Jacobean society and a widow, the norms surrounding marriage, the freedom of women, and the state of patriarchy in England.

The Duchess of Malfi is generally considered Webster's greatest achievement. Hammond says that in the Duchess, "we are given one of the greatest of tragic heroines, [someone] who tries to establish a good, Christian life in the context of the deranged hostility of her brother Ferdinand and the less unstable, but equally cruel, machinations of the Cardinal" (294). Webster based his plot on a true story[1] set in Italy. He kept the Italian setting, like Shakespeare and other playwrights of his time would often do, as a politically-acceptable foreign locale where he would be able to explore ideas of inequality, injustice, and

corruption, without causing outrage. Like many playwrights of the time Webster had a legal background, and this served to make him more aware of the inequalities of the law involving a widow. He had a sensitive awareness of these inequalities and the play illustrates the ridiculous views taken by the community about the issue.

Webster's Duchess is not frail. The Duchess says, "We are forced to woo, because none dare woo us" (I.i. 442). In this line we can see that Webster has emphasised the Duchess's commanding character. Of course, Shakespeare has created stronger women than Ophelia, but when we think of his portrayal of tragic women, we think either of Ophelia, who asks her father what she should think, or of Lady Macbeth, who initiates evil deeds but is too weak to finish what she started. Webster's Duchess, on the other hand, is a strong woman with a dignity that Shakespeare's tragic women just do not seem to have. She is true to her husband and retains her dignity, even at the moment of her death. Like the classical Medea and Shakespeare's Desdemona, the Duchess leaves her family, but unlike these celebrated heroines, the Duchess takes dignified and noble decisions in her attempt to save both her husband and children.

Among the most memorable lines of the play is this one: "I am Duchess of Malfi still" (IV.ii.142). The Duchess's reaffirmation of her position can be perceived as a sign of her strength and resolve. Robert Ornstein says, "Her [Duchess's] self possession in the face of death is a spiritual victory rather than a glorious defeat" (1975:140). Ornstein almost compares the Duchess with Shakespeare's Cleopatra, inferring that, in death, she will be able to transcend her worldly life. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the fact that we do not learn her true name at any point of the play. The Duchess is denied an identity even when she is seemingly a symbol of absolute virtue. Her moral victory then, is somewhat vitiated.

Whereas it was quite common for a male figure of power to marry below his status, it was quite unacceptable for a noble female to conduct herself in that way. Thus, even when married to her, Antonio can never be her equal in power. Powerful women, being considered by some to be unnatural and dangerous, provoked much controversy at that time, a pertinent example being Queen Elizabeth Tudor. The Duchess's desperate insistence on marrying Antonio, her second husband, is an action which shows that she has her own desires, and a more dominant will than anybody around her. Webster has given her all the qualities that Antonio, her spouse, lacks, qualities which were not thought to be desirable in a widow of that era; she plots, schemes and has a bold and impetuous nature.

Bosola and Duke Ferdinand represent the kind of unbridled Machiavellian ambition with which the English were fascinated. Although the Duchess, Ferdinand, and the Cardinal were Spanish rulers occupying parts of a divided Italy, the setting allows Webster to exploit Renaissance Italy's murderous corruption. The works of the ancient Roman writer Seneca, dark and bloody adaptations of Greek tragedy, were also a major influence on Webster and his contemporaries. Yet, ***The Duchess of Malfi*** is a play about breaking conventions. The Duchess woos and marries her household steward, an inversion of tight Jacobean male/female roles and class restrictions. She proclaims her unconventional behavior thus: "I am going into a wilderness, / Where I shall find nor path, nor friendly clew / To be my guide" (I.i. 359-361). Ferdinand speaks offensively toward his sister, even calling her a "lusty widow" (I.i. 340). Leech points out that "incest is merely implied in ***The Duchess of Malfi*** because the queer nature of the play does not allow it to become an absolute. Evidence supports the idea that Webster would like his audience to view Ferdinand's rage against his sister's remarriage stemming from a feeling of incest that even he himself may not recognize" (57)

The Renaissance was a time of individualism, and saw men and women moving away from the communal structure of medieval society. The Duchess's assertion of herself shows both the heroism and limitations of her character, notable especially for a widow whose position in patriarchal society is tenuous. Her public role as a political figure is violated by her desire for a life of her own, reminding the audience of Queen Elizabeth's decision to remain unmarried, in deference to her country. The lady-in-waiting Cariola's assessment of the Duchess's marriage indicates the Jacobean response to her actions:

> CARIOLA: Whether the spirit of greatness, or of woman
> Reign most in her, I know not, but it shows
> A fearful madness; I owe her much of pity. (I.i. 488-490)

Women rulers and the circumstances they had to deal with are very much unlike what men rulers had to encounter. Women had to worry about society's propensities, their own feelings, and the welfare of their people. It was much more difficult to be a widow in power than to be a man in power. The choices women rulers made could not be only for them, and one wrong decision could bring disaster. It is in such a context that we should judge the Duchess's actions and her resolve when she says,

DUCHESS: Shall this move me? If all my royal kindred
Lay in my way unto this marriage,
I'd make them my low footsteps: and even now,
Even in this hate, as men in some great battles,
By apprehending danger, have achiev'd
Almost impossible actions? I have heard soldiers say so.
So I, through frights, and threat'nings, will assay
This dangerous venture: let old wives report
I wink'd and chose a husband. (I.i. 341-349)

John Webster's Duchess is certainly a very complex figure. Although it could be alleged that she brought her misfortunes upon herself by presuming to choose her own husband, as Cariola says at the end of the first act, the play's sympathies are for her. *The Duchess of Malfi* was judged by some readers as a cautionary tale, by others as an inspirational one, and by most she was seen as a woman to be pitied, for as Steen says, "all may be attributed to the great love she had for the person she had chosen to be her husband." (76).

Queen Elizabeth I ruled over England alone. She never married; instead she chose to claim that she was married to her country. By taking this position, Elizabeth retained her authority and became famous. In the process, she endeared herself to her people and chose the path to immortality. In contrast, the Duchess, choosing love, chooses her downfall.

The position of women was contradictory and constantly shifting in the early Jacobean period. Single women were seen as having a handicap that could only be remedied through the process of marriage. There was only one honorable and acceptable position for single women in the Catholic faith: the nun. Then she had some power over herself. In the Protestant faith, the only honorable position for a woman was marriage and, to a lesser degree, widowhood. These views made a woman's position ambivalent. A single woman was subject to the rule of her father. Names such as "old maid" and "spinster" were used to denigrate her status and encourage her to marry. Her chastity was often questioned. Jankowski says, "as a single, unmarried woman, she could not own or sell property, draw up her will or initiate law suits" (24). Every possible device was used by society to pressure a single woman into marriage.

Widows were viewed as anomalies by the patriarchal societies of the 16th and 17th centuries. Jankowski says: "A widow was considered an ungoverned woman who challenged and threatened societal norms of the period" (35). A

widow had legal rights that single and married women did not have. As, Jankowski attests, "A widow never directly inherited land, though she could hold it for a minor son. She had the legal right to control her properties in her own or her children's interests" (35). She could draw up her own will. A widow was free to choose her next husband, while a never-married woman usually had her prospective husband chosen for her. The knowledge that with remarriage come the losses of these legal rights caused many women to decide against remarriage. Since the widow was often seen as "ungoverned" and "threatening" to current social norms, social pressure was put on the widow to remarry or be considered sexually promiscuous and even risk being called a whore. Never-married and widowed women were discriminated against and made to feel inferior to married women.

For many people during the Jacobean period, powerful women were considered unnatural and dangerous. Jankowski says: "The image of female dominance is an image of social disorder" (55). In the patriarchal society of the time everyone looked towards a male figure as the center of supreme power. Powerful women were therefore often denigrated and seen as dysfunctional. Despite having experienced three reigning women monarchs during this period–Mary Stuart, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth Tudor–most people felt uneasy at the thought of having women rulers. Desmet says: "reading the play from the perspective of the controversy over women underscores the fact that a patriarchal culture seeks to define the female ruler out of existence" (86).

Todd, in an essay on the treatment of the widow stereotype in Renaissance comedies, sums up the view of widows in that society quite well:

> A married woman was legally and personally subject to her husband. A widow was free from such control. Even if she was poor, she was her own woman and could run her life as she saw fit... But the independent woman was also an anomaly. English patriarchal society required that, like the state, the household should be headed by a man. The woman heading her own household contradicted the patriarchal theory; the ungoverned woman was a threat to social order. (55)

But in *The Duchess of Malfi*, unlike in Renaissance comedies, people do not want the Duchess to remarry; her brothers seem allied against the social order, suggesting that the Duchess should avoid remarriage, and that it "is the entrance into some prison," (I.i. 325) a statement that becomes a reality in Act-IV. Scene-i. The Duchess is neither an ordinary nor virtuous widow; she is

something altogether different, and we can agree with Robert Ornstein when he says: "In temperament she is a heroine of Shakespearean romantic comedy, graceful, witty, wanton and innocent at the same time, who woos and wins her husband in spite of himself. She capriciously ignores the challenge of an aristocratic life, but the challenge of death - the supreme challenge in Jacobean tragedy - she accepts boldly and triumphantly." (1968:71)

In *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments*, Arthur Kinney has pointed out the social significance of a widow in Renaissance England, where "virtuous" widows, who remained chaste and kept mourning, might be contrasted with "ordinary" widows, whose previous marriages had awakened sexual desire and whose morals were subsequently highly suspect. Webster himself had spoken against such views in other published works. As the number of widows rose in disease-ridden London, it created social concern regarding loose or uncontrolled women.

DUCHESS: Why might not I marry?
I have not gone about, in this, to create
Any new world, or custom. (III. ii, 110-112)

However, Webster chose to portray a duchess, and not some London bawd, one whose story was based loosely on the facts of a sensational murder case in Italy. As a noblewoman, although a nameless one, the Duchess of Malfi occupies a position of power. She would be responsible for overseeing her tenants, determining land use, settling disputes, and managing her personal household. She would maintain her own household autonomously, but could not be trusted to arrange her own marriage. As Webster's heroines put the situation

DUCHESS: The birds, that live i' th' field
On the wild benefit of nature, live
Happier than we; for they may choose their mates.
(III. iv. 18-20)

The Duchess poses a threat to the gender hierarchy. She is a noble ruler in her public life. Callaghan says, "From the moment of her assertion of sexual independence, the Duchess moves with dignity and inexorably towards a ritual chastisement worthy of a flagrant breach of public order" (68). In her private life she is virtuous and true to her self. She marries for love rather than for class distinction. The important fact of the play is that the Duchess goes against the social order of her times and the patriarchal rule of her brothers. For this she is punished. Ferdinand expresses his murderous thoughts to the Cardinal thus:

FERDINAND: So; I will only study to seem
The thing I am not. I could kill her now,
In you, or in myself, for I do think
It is some sin in us, heaven doth revenge
By her. (II. v. 62-66)

Part of the emotional power behind the play lies in the Duchess's ability to articulate her situation with eloquence and reason in the face of inhuman tortures and madness. When Bosola insists that she must remain alive the Duchess tells him: "That's the greatest torture souls feel in hell - / In hell: that they must live, and cannot die." (IV.i. 70-71). The Duchess is the center of an insane world, a world gone horribly wrong. Relationships of kinship are betrayed when Ferdinand first imprisons and then murders his own twin. Her brothers betray her—the Cardinal for her money and Ferdinand in a psychopathic display of power and control.

The theme of female emotion and female autonomy as a powerful destabilizing agent comes through the play quite clearly, although Webster does not universally condemn the individual woman in it. In the play, the leading female character chooses her lover, but in doing so, brings about tragedy.

As a study of an emancipated widow, *The Duchess of Malfi* reflects the great social and political transitions evident in Jacobean England. Jardine points out that the Duchess is a "completely isolated character, utterly alone in the world, associated with no female companions of her own rank" (204). The Duchess of Malfi doubtlessly felt the pressures, both positive and negative, associated with widowhood, and there is evidence that she experienced some difficulty in reconciling the two. She is clearly aware of her rights as a widow, yet she still allows herself to be constrained by the traditional patriarchal elements of her society. On the one hand she asserts her freedom by marrying Antonio against the wishes of her brothers; yet on the other, she allows Ferdinand and the Cardinal to attack her virtue, and then adds the self-defeating comments in which she likens herself to a diamond whose value increases each time it is passed through another man's hand. By sexualizing herself and allowing the innuendoes about the lustiness of widows, she allows herself to be degraded. This sort of incongruous behavior continues throughout the play as the Duchess time and again seemingly reconfirms her brothers's assumptions about her.

The Duchess's premature death is a glaring example of the way Webster deviates from the conventional structure of a typical tragedy. The tragic protagonist dies a full act before the play is completed, and without the death of the Duchess's tormentors, the catharsis drags itself out into Act V, resulting in the blood bath that follows. Lueke says, "it may be then possible to judge the play, finally, only by removing our lens from the individual character and scene by focusing on the whole."(288)

Though John Webster explored the dilemma of a widow nearly 400 years ago, the struggles are not entirely alien to our society. Today women must reconcile the pressures of family and work, much as the Duchess had to maintain her relationships with her brothers, her husband, and her subjects in Amalfi. Furthermore, Antonio's struggle for self-definition is a universal one. Upon his marriage to the Duchess, he found himself in a social setting for which he was totally unprepared. This is not different from the way many of us feel today. The Duchess's marriage was not seen as admirable in Jacobean England. The audience would have seen the Duchess's marriage as an indulgence; she had put her own needs above the needs of the state and above decorum. Her status as a member of the nobility, they believed, had placed certain responsibilities upon her. To jeopardize her reputation in a marriage not condoned by society meant jeopardizing her ability to rule. But Webster presents his duchess as a widow who could easily be mistaken as a modern feminist. Her disregard for unfair social and political traditions, which perpetrated oppression and were controlled by men, for the sake of love makes her a heroine from the perspective of modern values. However, we must note that though she may appear completely innocent to us the Duchess did not live today; she came from a period that our modern culture has little notion of, or if it does, sees that period as unjust and repressive.

Note:

1. The story of the *Duchess of Malfi* was told by Matteo Bandello as his twenty-sixth novella: this is a clear, circumstantial account, by an author who may have been the Delio who tried to help Antonio shortly before his assassination in Milan in October 1513. The Italian account was then translated and augmented to four times its length by Belleforest in his second volume of *Histoires Tragiques* (1565). Now the tale was embellished with long speeches and made an occasion for recommending traditional moral attitudes, and in this form William Painter rendered it in English, with only minor alterations of emphasis, for the second

volume of his *Palace of Pleasure* (1567). It was this version what Webster used. Webster accepted the main outline of Painter's story, but modified, reshaped, and elaborated it to sustain a wider interest and lead to a wider conclusion. The most obvious change is the recasting of several agents of the Duchess' brothers as one person, Bosola. This at once simplified the narrative and complicated the characterization.
See Brown, John Russell, ed. Introduction, *The Duchess of Malfi*, The Revels Plays, Manchester University Press, 1986, p-xxvii

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"Kubla Khan": A Poem of Sexual Ambiguity

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Abstract

The poem "Kubla Khan" is quite inexplicable. It is full of ambiguity and seemingly bizarre implications. Many critics have seen it as a poem full of ethereal music, but, I find it a mysterious reflection on human sexuality. In it Coleridge makes reference to what Freud would have called "dream work," basically thoughts surfacing as things and thinking being dramatized: the thoughts being pulled from the subconscious and made significant. Had it not been for the opium, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" would have remained a fantasy, dreamt and lost. Certainly, the poem is a most intricate work, full of the poet's desire to portray grandeur synaesthetically. "Kubla Khan" is, also, among other things, a poem full of ironic reflections on the legendary architectural feat of the Mughals.

Coleridge's poem meanders between the objective and subjective worlds. We can say that Coleridge's verse is most notably aimed at portraying a defined image rather than the aura of sensation itself. Romantic attitudes are apparent in the poem as well. Coleridge presents a solipsistic work full of wonder, in contrast to his counterparts - Blake, for example, who strongly sought a lost innocence of vision, and Wordsworth, who wanted to reunite with the natural world.

The poem, a great lyrical masterpiece, presents a spectacular vision of the grandeur and majesty that Kubla Khan enjoyed in his secluded world. It is as mystical and interesting as the story behind its creation. It does not tell a story; rather, it displays the splendor of the place where the palace was built. Highly

romantic images have been interwoven in the poem to suggest the stateliness of the historic Mongol Emperor Kubla Khan (now spelled as Kublai Khan) and to understand his powerful decree, which perhaps, without premeditated aim, resonates with the most erotic and sensual overtone. But, the true power of the poem is felt only because of its combination of both 'holiness' and tranquil beauty and at the same time its wild turbulence and intense emotions.

The opening stanza presents a peaceful and a beautiful setting where Kubla Khan wanted to build a palace with a vault forming its roof. Coleridge tells us that Kubla Khan had ordained that his palace be built in 'Xanadu', a place that in its vagueness and fancifulness becomes almost mystical. Careful study of the poem shows that 'Xanadu' is based on the imaginary city in the book titled *Pilgrimage* by Samuel Purchas, which Coleridge was reading while inebriated because of his opium addiction. Hence, in the very opening of the poem there is an element of romanticism which is reinforced through the dreamlike expressions. 'Dome' used in concert with 'Decree' not only beautifies the line but focuses on the grandeur of the stately command that has been passed. The effect of the line, of course, depends a lot on the hard consonantal sound of 'D'.

'Dome' in the Mughal period was an architectural design, which reflected the traditional Muslim architectural generosity of spirit. However, the word can be interpreted in many other ways, because of the ambiguity of the poem's subject. 'Dome' as defined in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is a mansion and a round vault forming the roof of a building and having an elliptical or polygonal base. This definition of 'Dome' and the structure of the poem direct us to the mysterious depth of the poem, and make us encounter the convoluted sexual aspect of the poem. One is reminded here of the fact that the word 'Dome' used to be associated with the elliptical shape of woman's breasts in the 18th century. Some critics indeed note the connotation of the image but, intentionally or perhaps unintentionally they have missed the profound mockery of the Mughal architectural feats in the poem.

To gain an insight into the element of mockery in "Kubla Khan", some background on the evolution of the Mughal Empire is needed. Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, ruled from 1260-294. In the 1250s, Genghis's grandson Hulegu Khan, operating from the Mongol base in Persia, destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. Destroying the cult of the Assassins, he moved into Palestine and headed towards Egypt. The Great Khan Mongke having died, however, he hastened to return for the election, while the force that remained in Palestine was destroyed by the Mamluks

under Saif ad-Din Qutuz in 1261 at Ayn Jalut. Ultimately, South Asia was able to withstand the advance of the Mongols. At that period, Northern India was under the rule of the Delhi sultanate. Though the Mongol raids took them to the Punjab and though they invaded Delhi itself (unsuccessfully), the Sultans, mostly notably Ghiyasuddin Balban, were able to keep them at bay and roll them back. The English journalist and historian John Keay, in his book *India: A History* credited the successful combination of the Indian elephant phalanx and maneuverable central Asian cavalry operated by the rulers of Northern India with the success of Indian resistance. Ironically, and 300 years later, Babar, a Timurid scion who claimed descent from Genghis Khan, would go on to conquer northern India and found the Mughal Empire. This embryonic empire quickly established its office with grandeur and style by building magnificent edifices that not only stood tall but were also distinguished from their counterparts aesthetically. It is their aesthetic beauty that received objective ridicule from Coleridge through this poem Kubla Khan.

Following John Livingston Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* scholars have usually identified 'Alph' the sacred river mentioned coleridges poems with a conflation of the Alpheus and the Nile. However, in *Coleridge's Imagination: Essayes in Memory of Pete Laver,* John Beer (220-2) believes that the shortening to 'Alph' by Coleridge was not accidental. This river ran down through canyons and 'caverns' to the sea and the walls of the palace wall enclosed ten miles of 'fertile ground'. The title of the river is from the imagination of the poet, since such a river did not exist in real life. Notice the process of the river running:

> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea.

A mysterious journey, indeed, undetermined by most of mankind. The phrase 'sunless sea', suggests two differing meanings. One could be the 'red sea' which has no life in it and can not bear any either. Second, it could have a sexual implication. It could imply the female genital which too runs occasional rivulets, where no life can be found and no sun would rise. The metaphors, imageries and nouns, adjectives, and the alliterative emphasis lead the reader to the mystical core of the poem.

Coleridge has also used botanical imagery to convey his ideas. In his much talked about preface to this poem, he indicated the exact page in Purchas's book

Pilgrimage which he was reading before sinking into that dream in which he claimed to have composed 'Kubla Khan'. Like so many critics before and after him, Geoffrey Yarlott quotes the relevant sentence from Purchas:

> "In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant Springs, delightfull Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, & in the middest there of a 'sumptuous house of pleasure', which may be removed from place to place." (147)

Yarlott comments that Coleridge appears to have intentionally customized the attractiveness implicit in Purchas's original description. The substitution of 'bright' and 'sinuous' for 'pleasure' and 'delight' produces sinister, almost reptilian associations, recalling perhaps *The Ancient Mariner* or this description of the 'thing unblest' from *Christabel*, where snake joins 'bright' and 'green' (the only color details found in Kubla's garden) in a cluster of positive malignancy:

> When Lo! I saw a *bright green snake*
> *Coiled* around its wings and neck
> Green as the herbs on which it couched."
> (Yarlott, 1967, 135, emphasis added).

> Coleridge presents thoughts which are scarcely acceptable for people with a critical attitude towards the Quest for Certitude. The 'sunny spots of greenery', for example, must in any unprejudiced reading of the poem form an attractive feature of the garden, even though, at the time the poem was written, it seemed like a deliberate echo of Coleridge's description of the gratification opium affords (a spot of enchantment, a green spot of fountains, & flowers & trees) (Yarlott, 136).

Coleridge strings thoughts that one might dread to interpret because they are too sexual to be inferred overtly or because they are linked with the consequence of opium. Images such as 'fertile ground', 'towers', 'girdled round', 'sinuous rills', 'incense bearing trees', 'hills / Enfolding', and 'sunny spots of greenery', all connote sexuality, which one might overlook, if not careful and focused. 'Fertile ground' suggests two meanings; one could be the fruitfulness and productiveness of the vast space of earth or soil on which Kubla Khan ordained his palace to be built. The second, on the other hand, could make us to think of the woman's genital as a source of birth, where the 'towers', like figures we know of, could be the hairs that protect (girdle/d) the genital from exposure. The word 'girdle' also suggests a round barrier or ring but also something to offer protection, and this could well be associated with

the secret place of a woman. The association becomes even stronger as one begins to discuss the poem in depth. 'Caverns' means an underground hollow; now is he referring to a cave or the 'hill/s' that are 'enfold/ing'? Has anyone seen any hill enfolding when 'forest' stand tall protruding the thicket of density? Surely, no one has because it is not there in the very nature or surface of the earth. What Coleridge was trying to suggest was something very clandestine, and he was gesturing at places where our mind cannot easily reach in wanting to create an ambiguous dreamscape. By the word 'sunless' he perhaps meant a place where the sun never sets. Where could such a place possibly be? Perhaps, it is the place where the very elements of romanticism and erotic glamour are directing us to.

For sure, he was talking of a place where the river called 'Alph' ran which is sacred, deserving veneration or respect, and something holy. It runs through the caves and underground hollows which are immeasurable to man and exists without the benefit of the sun. In other words, he is talking of caves that are never lit by any sunrays. The references could also be to a volcano that has deep hollows in it from where lava runs down. Often, they make us wonder whether Coleridge was portraying Mother Nature in its original form or if he was talking about a woman and her genitals. When he talks of a 'sunless sea' the idea does not really end with that image but carries us back. So it is something else to which Coleridge is referring here. Note that the 'gardens' are 'bright' and wanting to be cultivated and there is much hope in them as the 'incense bearing trees' keep guard round the productive zone. What could these 'incense bearing trees' refer to? The answer is the aromatic gum producing a sweet smell as the burning lava flood the trees nearby. I am calling the hot fluid lava, but it could have two other implications too, one in the case of volcanic eruption, and the second in the case of a woman's discharge when in deep sexual orgasm.

In the second stanza, when Coleridge refers to and describes the cave as 'savage' as well as 'holy and enchanted' he is seemingly mixing contrasting adjectives. The question may come up in one's mind as to what he meant by 'savage', 'holy' and 'enchanted'. It is not what one might think them to be; volcanic discharge streaming down the curving hills slanting on its run. Then what else could it be? Is it the discharge from the abyss (deep romantic chasm) genital of the woman slave kept by Kubla Khan? Don't forget that whatever Coleridge referred to was also thought of to be 'holy and enchanted'. Could 'holy' and 'enchanted' at the same time be a virgin slave's menstrual discharge? Now it is 'savage' because it is hot. Here, the pleasure and agitation of the

narrator finds expression as it is his perception that the fluid slanting down the hills is 'savage' and 'enchanting'. He was perhaps carried away by the excitement of the sort of eroticism he was or had been experiencing in his half-conscious state, which if Freud was to call anything would certainly call a 'dream work'. A psychoanalytic investigation of Coleridge's description leads me to conclude that besides the pleasure felt in the organ, another factor is at work (often unconscious) namely a memory - the picture of sexual intercourse observed in human beings or animals, which he had dreamt in a subliminal state. The immediate next line is erotic as it suggests Khan's sexual organ paying visits to the slave's genital while she wails and utters faint sounds of moaning.

> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

Notice the word 'haunting' is associated with Kubla Khan's genital. 'Haunted' has a gothic connotation and gestures at another romantic element in this poem. The picture portrayed is that of Kubla Khan's royal grandeur evidenced in his command to build a palace with a vault and his sexual predilections as indicated in the picture of the sexual act between him and his slave. The resulting effect is a sexual orgasm that has been described in a beautiful analogy presented through ornamenting lines that can be said to be among English Literature's richest metaphoric semblance. One wonders why Coleridge used savage imagery to describe Kubla Khan as her 'demon-lover'. It is suggestive of forcible action-- as if Kubla Khan is raping the slave. But on the contrary it also gives the feeling that the slave is craving for her lover (Kubla Khan). It should be pointed out here that the surface meaning of the poem does not make much sense. Can anyone, for example tell of any woman 'wailing for her demon lover'? If yes, who is the lover? What thing would possibly pay short visits into its abyss like a 'demon'? Surely, nothing can delve into volcano, unless the 'waning moon' is seen as the forefront of Kubla Khan's genital, as in the later lines it is quite clear that what we have is highly erotic description of its to-and-fro motion and the bursting with orgasm. Because of this to-and-fro motion and uninterrupted hard labor a deep interest has developed as 'something' got soaked in liquid. Now that 'something' is mysterious because no clue whatsoever is provided here. Indeed, we don't quite know what got soaked when the poet writes the following lines:

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething

However, this mysterious 'something' has been able to produce viscous gasping on the part of the 'earth'. Again, this 'earth' is referred to the 'garden'. It is described as 'bright' (wanting cultivation), and also like a slave's genital, an inference which does not seem to be unwarranted.

It must be that she has reached her pinnacle of tolerance and can't seem to take anymore of the pleasure and hence she is trying to get her breath back. Soon a powerful 'fountain' spouts, but only for a brief time albeit with great force and 'half intermitted burst'. What does this scene suggest? It certainly doesn't link with the lava because the lava bursts out with great force and flows unhindered. Everything that falls in its way gets soaked and burnt. So, it must be a coded reference to the slave's genital where Kubla Khan has sowed the seeds:

Huge fragments of vaulted like rebounding hails,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail.

Notice carefully the clause 'the thresher's flail' which is a deliberate attempt to compare Kubla Khan with a person who beats the corn or seed just to fit the idea of the sexual act in an image taken from agriculture.

To this point of the poem, the turbulence initiated by Kubla Khan has come to a climax and this is provided with exceptional mastery by applying the smooth sound of the consonant 'm'. Because of this 'm' sound it may seem that poet is in a rush to end the poem, but that is not the case. The intertwined themes itself demands the rush and speed, since the sacred river is running with a giddy motion through the woods and valley and this reaches the caves where no life could be found. It took a great deal of effort and agitation to reach there, and while this agitation is still going on in Kubla's mind, he came to hear the voices of his Ancestors who were prophesying war! This is the end of that 'tumult' and the start of the conclusion to the poem.

Now the poem shifts to the palace and its 'dome' that reflects on the river surface and the waves that are on the rise, coming off the 'fountain'. This 'fountain' as indicated earlier could be a reference to the coming of Kubla Khan from sexual intercourse with the concubine. Coleridge is perhaps claiming the poem to be a marvelous event not ascribable to human elements and as an uncommon arrangement:

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

Now this couplet sums up the argument of this paper - whatever the poem is about, it certainly wears a miraculous disguise. Look at the change from 'stately pleasure-dome' to 'sunny pleasure-dome' for this is where the camouflage is most evident, since the 'caves' are filled with 'ice'. If one thinks of 'ice' intently, one sees it as a cryptic reference to the discharge of Kubla Khan. Coleridge, however, is not only taking pride in having written an ambiguous poem in fits of half conscious sleep, but also claiming his poem to be a 'miracle of rare device'.

In the last stanza, Coleridge laments at not being able to recall the tangible vision that he had when inebriated. Scholars know that Coleridge subtitled *Kubla Khan* "A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment" and added to it a prefatory note explaining its uncommon basis. Atypical indeed, for no other poet has abruptly admitted of his or her addiction to opium except Coleridge, who took opium for meditation. In his inebriated state, he read a passage from Samuel Purchas's *Pilgrimage* - concerning the court of Kubla Khan, till he had fallen asleep. In his dream, he had composed a few hundred lines and immediately after waking up he had begun to write what he had seen in his dream, but a visitor interrupted him and by the time he got a chance to return to writing, his vision fled, his images blurred, and he could hardly recollect anything. He is as much apoplectic with himself as with the answer. He asks himself if he could revive within him the *damsel*'s lost symphony and song; and wonders if he could recapture the whole of the original vision instead of just a portion of it, for then he would build 'in air' (i.e. find verbal music to express) the vision he had experienced. He laments his inability to recollect the vision because at some point in his half-conscious sleep a friend had interrupted him.

However, Coleridge is quickly able to replace the vision of Kubla's 'Xanadu' by that of 'damsel' (the dulcimer playing Abyssinian maiden) singing of 'Mount Abora' - an experience more auditory than visual and therefore less at risk of description by mere words. Moreover, it involves in an equivocal way a vision within a vision, since the remembered reverie of Abyssinian maid is the cortex of the lost vision of the content of her song, such as the maiden of Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*.

Coleridge's Kubla Khan raises at least as many questions as it answers. What, for example, ought we to make of Kubla Khan and his enclosed garden?

According to Kathleen Coburn's *The Self-Conscious Imagination* 'Xanadu' is Paradise Regained and Kubla Khan symbolizes the inventive performer who gives tangible expression to the idyllic forms of precision and splendor. But, an analytic reading of the poem 'Kubla Khan' suggests that Kubla Khan is a self-indulgent materialist, a demonic figure, who imposes his oppressive will upon the ordinary world and so produces a forged paradise of contrived artifice cut off from the realm of Nature by man-made walls and towers. The images of Abyssinian maid and the inspired poet in the closing section of the poem also present a formidable difficulty in interpretation. The predicament is not so much that of the conjectured recognition of these figures (though this is often attempted) as of the overall meaning and intention of the passage. Should we deem that this concluding section is an "anticipation of poetic triumph"? – or that "Kubla Khan" is a symbolic expression of Coleridge's inability to comprehend frustration? Scholarly disagreements such as these can be multiplied almost eternally. In fact, the symbolic valence of practically every image in the poem – the 'sacred river Alph', the essence and shadow of Kubla Khan's 'pleasure-dome', the 'ancestral voices prophesying' hostilities, and so on – has proved a basis of vague (and irresolvable) question; and it is most likely no hyperbole to say that no single analysis of "Kubla Khan" has ever wholly satisfied anyone excluding the person who anticipated it. Despite the reputation of the view that "Kubla Khan" is a poem about poetry, then, there is no agreement about just what is being said about the poetic process.

Therefore, it may be concluded that Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan", though nothing more than a remnant of a half-recollected reverie, raises as many questions as it answers. Certainly, there are in it tacit semblances of Freudian sexuality, 'dream-work' and Dante's conflict of heaven and hell. The simple lyric style of the poem cannot hide an element of the Gothic in it and implies a bizarre mockery of Mughal architectural accomplishments such as the pleasure-dome, which is 'breast-like, full to touch and eye, rounded and complete' (N. Fruman, *Coleridge the Damaged Archangel,* London 1972). Indeed, the poem includes in it a description of the sexual act that is daring and atypical.

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Fanny Brawne: Keats's 'Sweet Home' of Pleasure and Pain

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Abstract

Fanny Brawne, Keats's beloved, to whom he was betrothed, was a source of both pleasure and pain for him. Fanny filled Keats's mind with love and affection when he was going through physical, mental and economic crisis. However, Keats's agonies were multiplied by some misunderstandings about Fanny's dubious behavior and rumours that Fanny was a 'flirt'. Keats's agonies and frustration found vents in his poems and in letters that he wrote to different people including Fanny Brawne. This paper examines some of his poems and letters in an attempt to find out the extent of his feelings and passion for Fanny Brawne. It also includes comments of Keats's friends and critics on his love affair with Fanny Brawne.

John Keats, one of the great English romantic poets, has a remarkable place in English literature. Within a short period of six years (1814-1820), he produced a good number of literary pieces that made him one of the major poets of English literature.

For a number of reasons, his personal life has become a matter of great interest to critics and readers of English literature. His relationship with Fanny Brawne, to whom he was betrothed, has become significant for a few reasons. Fanny entered Keats's life with love and affection to heal the mental wounds that had resulted from the death of his parents and his brother Tom. Fanny's beauty as well as her company provided him great pleasure. On the other hand, Keats's deteriorating physical condition, non-cooperation from his friends and

relatives on his love-affair, Fanny's ambiguous attitude, and society's conservative attitude to the couple made the poet hateful to himself and also to Fanny. Thus, Fanny Brawne appeared in Keats's life as a source of pain as well as pleasure.

In the winter of 1818-19, Keats became very lonely after the death of his affectionate brother Tom whom he had nursed for a long time. Shocked and depressed, he went to live with his friend Charles Brown at Wentworth Place. There, he met Fanny Brawne who gave him invigorating sympathy. Keeping his mind away from the past and from introspection, she encouraged his love of life by her vivacity. Remarkably, Keats's own gaiety returned soon after. Mrs. Frances Brawne, Fanny's mother, had rented half of Brown's house. Keats met Fanny at the Dilkes at Wentworth Place in November, 1818, and mentioned Fanny for the first time in his journal letter to George, his brother, on 16 December, 1818:

> Mrs. Brawne who took Brown's house for the summer, still resides in Hampstead—she is a very nice woman—and her daughter senior is I think—beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable and strange—we have a little tiff now and then-and she behaves a little better, or I must have sheered off. (Gardner, 1965, p. 134)

Fanny gave her first impression of Keats twenty years later in her letter to Fanny Keats, Keats's younger sister: "His (Keats's) conversation was in the highest degree interesting, and his spirits good, excepting at moments when anxiety regarding his brother's death dejected him." (Richardson, 1952, p. 39)

Keats's minute description of Fanny Brawne is found in his letter to George (written on 18 December, 1818) where he not only revealed his inner mind but also presented a critical analysis of her nature:

> Shall I give you Miss Brawne? She is about my height—it was a fact of significance—with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort—she wants sentiments in every feature—she manages to look her hair well—her nostrils are fine-though a little painful—her mouth is bad and good—her profile is better than her full face which indeed is not full but pale and thin without showing any bone—her shape is very graceful and so are her movements-her arms are good her hands are brandish—her feet tolerable—she is not seventeen—but she is ignorant—monstrous in her behavior—flying out in all directions. (Gardner, 1965, p. 134)

On Friday, December 25th of 1818, Keats proposed to Fanny Brawne. "It was", Fanny wrote, "the happiest day I had ever then spent." (Richardson, 1952, p. 15) She accepted him whole–heartedly.

Fanny became a life-force for Keats within a short period of time, and he admitted as much to her in a letter written on 15 July (Thursday), 1819: "...you must write to me–as I will every week–for your letters keep me alive. My sweet girl– I cannot speak my love for you." (Gardner, 1965, p.178)

Keats transfigured Fanny in his imagination and passion. Her beauty, for him, became the truth; and so, she had come to be the Indian maid and goddess in *Endymion* where the very subject of beauty is the reconciliation between real life and Keats's poetic quest that finds a real outlet in a letter written to Fanny on 8 July, 1819:

> Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since without that I could never have loved you. I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admit in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchantment of love after my own heart. (Gardner, 1965, p.175)

Keats celebrated his love in a short poem, "St. Agnes' Eve", which was written in January, 1819, when the possibility of his reunion with Fanny had considerably increased. The theme of the poem is love. It is based on the medieval superstition connected with the Eve of St. Agnes which falls on 20th of January. The legend is that a young maiden who has properly fasted and prayed would have visions of her absent lover at midnight. Accordingly, Madeline goes on a fast, prays and goes to bed. Her lover, being prevented from meeting her in daylight by the hostility of their parents, stealthily enters into her bedroom, and she elopes with him. Hereditary disease, together with malicious rumours directed against both himself and Brawne, frustrated Keats and might have led him to think about elopement.

One morning in May, under a mulberry tree, Keats set down his ode "To Nightingale", and in the same month, he wrote the poem, "On a Grecian Urn". The odes make no direct allusion to Fanny, but they suggest the "ecstasy of passion", the transience of earthly beauty, and the perfection of unchanging joy "for ever warm and still to be enjoyed". They are very significant because they were written within a few weeks of Fanny's coming to Wentworth Place. The poem, "Ode to a Nightingale" was written in April, 1819, when Keats was

staying with his friend Charles Brown at Wentworth Place, Hampstead. A nightingale had built its nest near the house. Keats felt a tranquil and continued joy in its song. One morning, he took his chair to the grass-plot under a mulberry tree where he sat for two or three hours. When he returned, he had the ode ready in his hand. Thus, the ode is a spontaneous expression of the poet's joy in the song of the nightingale. It also is a superb expression of Keats's love for Fanny Brawne. The line in the last stanza of the poem, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" - "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty" gives Keats's view about beauty. To him, 'beauty' and 'truth' are not separate ideas; rather, they represent the same idea seen from two different aspects. What is beautiful must be true, and what is true must be beautiful. For Keats, Fanny Brawne symbolizes such beauty. Keats developed a philosophy regarding love, beauty, truth and religion. Love was his religion and Fanny Brawne was his love. His total submission to Fanny is remarkable: "I could have martyred for my religion—love is my religion—I could die for that. I could die for you. My creed is love and you are its only tenet. You have ravished me away by a power I cannot resist." (Gardner, 1965, p.197)

In a letter written on 27 October, 1818, to Richard Woodhouse, one of his publishers, Keats declared: "With a great poet, the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration." (Gardner, 1965, p.178) In another letter to Fanny Brawne written on 13 October, 1819, Keats expressed a note of selfishness about his love and devotion to her: "My love had made me selfish. I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again—my life seems to stop there-I see no further. You have absorbed me." (Gardner, 1965, p.197) Again, in the same letter, he termed his love as selfish as well as inevitable for his existence: "My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you."

Within a week of meeting Fanny, Keats realized that he had lost all hope of independence. This has been reflected in his poem (in fact, a fragment from an opera) "Asleep! O Sleep! A Little White, White Pearl":

> Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
> My sudden adoration, my great love (L 6-7)

In his letter to Fanny written on 1 July, 1819, Keats revealed his great love for her:

> ... make it [the reply of the letter] rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter, a fairer word than fair. (Gardner, 1965, p.174)

In the same letter, he also wrote: "...I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow, from the delight of one embrace."

In another letter written to Fanny on 8 July, 1819, he said: "Even when I am not thinking of you I receive your influence and a tenderer nature stealing upon me. ... I never knew before what such a love as you made me feel was: I did not believe in it; my fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up." (Gardner, 1965, p.175)

Keats's letter to Fanny Brawne written on 25 July, 1819, uncovers his mental preoccupation and her place in his mind: "I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your loveliness and the hour of my death." (Gardner, 1965, p.179) He was obsessed with the thought of Fanny Brawne, and even in the direst situations of his life, he thought of her. His letter to Fanny written on 10 February, 1820, supports this fact:

> On the night I was taken ill when so violent a rush of blood came to my lungs that I felt nearly suffocated—I assure you I felt it possible I might not survive, and at that moment thought of nothing but you. (Gardner, 1965, p.201)

To Keats, real love possesses a great power which he stated in his letter to Fanny in late May, 1820: "I think a real love is enough to occupy the wildest heart." (Gardner, 1965, p. 212)

Keats is genuinely frank and open in announcing his love and devotion to Fanny. The following line taken from a letter written in June, 1820, marks Keats as a devoted lover: "Upon my soul I have loved you to the extreme." (Gardner, 1965, p. 214)

In a letter written on 5 July, 1820, Keats made a poetic presentation of his love to Fanny:

> You are to me an object intensely desirable—the air I breathe in a room empty of you is unhealthy. I am not the same to you-no—you can wait—you have a thousand activities—you can be happy without me. (Gardner, 1965, p.178)

The engagement between Keats and Fanny Brawne took place towards the end of 1818. However, Keats's friends as well as his near and dear ones did not accept his relationship with Fanny well. Most of them thought Fanny to be a flirt and believed that she was not right for a talented and independent-minded person like

Keats who could sacrifice the study of medicine for his love of poetry. They were shocked by as well as alarmed at Keats's love and fascination for Fanny.

Among Dilke's papers, his grandson found a note: "It is quite a settled thing between Keats and Miss—. God help them. It's a bad thing for them. The mother says she cannot prevent it and that her only hope that it will go off." (Bate, 1963, p. 42)

"Keats' work", Charles Brown recalled, "was constantly interrupted by a circumstance which is needless to mention". (Bate, 1963, p.132)

Keats was disturbed by the comments made against his love by the members of society, including his relatives and friends. He disclosed his opinion on this matter to Fanny in a letter written in June, 1820:

> These laughers (some of my friends), who do not like you, who envy you for your beauty, who would have God-blessed me—from you for ever, who were plying me with discouragements with respect to you eternally. People are revengeful—do not mind them—do nothing but love me if I knew that for certain life and health will in such event be a heaven, and death itself will be less painful. I long to believe in immortality. I shall never be able to bid you an entire farewell. (Gardner, 1965, p.178)

Even when Keats's friends and well-wishers went against his love for Fanny, he sought relief for his mental torment in her love and affection. In the same letter, we find evidence in its support: "If I have no other merit than the great love for you that was sufficient to keep me sacred and unmentioned in such society."

Keats's increased wrath against society found its outlet in a letter to Fanny that he wrote in early August of 1820: "I am sickened at the brute world which you are smiling with. I hate men and women more." (Gardner, 1965, p.222)

Keats was often taken over by disappointment, frustration and loneliness due to his deteriorating health, financial crisis and the malice directed against Fanny and himself by some people. Keats and Fanny would not, apparently, make a fit couple for Hampstead society for a number of reasons. First, he had left a certain career in medicine and had devoted himself to poetry. Moreover, he was not succeeding in poetry either. So acquaintances were writing him as a 'spoiled talent'. Second, critics' rejection of his poem *Endymion* had intensified his dejection. Third, he was frequently unwell and was suspected of suffering from consumption. Fourth, Keats failed to manage his brothers' estate, and so he

was unable to live on his own income. Fifth, from the very beginning of his affair with Fanny Brawne, he was not happy with the behavior of his friends and other members of society. Even Mrs. Brawne, Fanny's mother, was not satisfied with the relationship because of the reasons stated above.

Due to his illness, he thought that Fanny might leave him; so, in the poem, "Ode to Fanny" he prayed to her to stay with him:

> But, pr'ythee, do not turn
> The current of your heart from me so soon. (Stanza III, L 5-6)

Young men of Hampstead society had admired Fanny for her beauty and intellect, and thus made Keats extremely jealous as well as helpless. Personally, Fanny was a cheerful and sportive girl who used to pass time with gentlemen and sometimes went to the theatre with some army officers. Keats became hateful of Fanny when he saw that she had been living a normal life while he was going through mental and physical agony. He thus asked her to relieve him of all sorts of tortures:

> Love, love, alone, his pains severe and many:
> Then, loveliest! keep me free
> From torturing jealousy. ("Ode to Fanny", Stanza VI, L 7-8)

After encountering some rumours about Fanny Brawne and after hearing of her intimacy with Charles Browne, Keats became worried as well as jealous. In a letter written to Fanny in early August, 1820, he stated: "Brown will be living near you with his indecencies—I see no prospect of any rest. I wish you could infuse a little confidence in human nature into my heart." (Gardner, 1965, p.222)

Some speculations against Fanny together with his own poor physical condition might have made Keats suspicious of Fanny. At moments, Keats thought that Fanny was not serious in her love for him; rather, she was playing with him. He expressed this idea in a letter written to Fanny on 5 July, 1820: "Be serious! Love is not a plaything—and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience. I would sooner die for want of you than..." (Gardner, 1965, p.218)

In a letter written to Fanny in early August, 1820, Keats compared his mental torment with that of Hamlet. He thought that they resembled each other in the point of helplessness: "Shakespeare always sums up matters in the most sovereign manner. Hamlet's heart was full of such misery as mine is when he said to Ophelia, 'Go to a Nunnery, go, go'!" (Gardner, 1965, p.221)

Keats tried to re-establish his love for and faith in Brawne and this is reflected in the same letter: "I wish I was either in your arms full of faith or that a thunderbolt would strike me." In a letter to Fanny Brawne written sometime in February, 1820, Keats blamed his deteriorating physical condition as the obstacle to their love:

> How illness stands as a barrier betwixt me and you! … I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make my friends proud of my memory—but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered. (Gardner, 1965, p. 202)

As his physical as well as mental strength deteriorated, Keats stated his frustration to Fanny in another letter written sometime in March, 1820: "Illness is a long lane, but I see you at the end of it, and shall mend my pace as well as possible." (Gardner, 1965, p.209)

Keats's frustration about his unsatisfied love towards Fanny reached its climax in the ode, "On a Grecian Urn" in which the lover can never kiss his beloved. The following lines of the ode symbolize the tension and great pain caused by his unfulfilled love:

> Bold lover, never, never, canst thou kiss
> Though winning near the goal—yet do not grieve. (Stanza II, lines 7-8)
>
> More happy love! more happy, happy love!
> Forever warm and still to be enjoyed. (Stanza III, lines 5-6)

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" also deals with frustrated love. Critics have found autobiographical elements in the poem. The poem was written three or four months after the death of his brother Tom in December, 1818, whom he had loved devotedly and nursed to the end of his life. In the meantime, Keats had fallen in love with Fanny. The signs of his fatal disease—consumption—had also become obvious to him by the time he wrote the poem. The merciless lady referred to in the poem is Fanny Brawne. The mood of disappointment and gloom is caused probably by Keats' frustration in love, the death of his brother Tom, and awareness of his own disease. The exact date of the composition of the poem is not known, but it is certain that it was written in 1819. In the poem, the medieval knight, the main character, looks pale, wild, and sad. He had been captivated by the bewitching charms of a beautiful lady. The poem seems to have originated at a time when he himself was in the grip of love and death.

> I met a lady in the meads,
> Full beautiful—a faery's child;
> Her hair was long, her foot was light,
> And her eyes were wild. (Stanza IV, L 1-4)

Keats wrote to J.H. Reynolds, one of his publishers, on 21 September, 1819: "I equally dislike the flavor of the public with the love of a woman—they are both a cloying trickle to the wings of independence." (Gardner, 1965, p.91)

The poem, "Ode to Fanny" expresses Keats's cynical idea about women. He imagines Fanny to be the prettiest creature in the world, but he warns her not to allow anybody to touch her. To him, a woman is like a feather on the sea, swayed to and fro by wind and tide. The poet knows that women are unfaithful, but he loves Fanny very deeply. He, however, requests Fanny to keep him free from painful jealousy. Finally, he appeals to her to remain pure, and untouched like a fresh budding flower; if she cannot do so, he would better die.

> Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears
> And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries. ("Ode to Fanny": stanza III, L 1-2)

Here is a paragraph where we see how Fanny's biographer defends her against the allegations that she was a 'flirt' and she was not serious in her love:

> Fanny was human enough to feel that his love need not exclude all other admiration; she was eighteen and enjoyed the pleasures of her age. She was, however, blessed with remarkable understanding, and despite his moods of hurtful suspicion which later bordered on insult, she loved him constantly. She answered his letter almost by return. She was afraid that he loved her too much for her physical attraction and too little for her deeper, permanent self, and she asked him to speak less of her beauty, and having corrected him, she feared that he would doubt the entirety of her love. (Richardson, 1952, p. 39)

Many critics have explored the relationship between Keats and Fanny Brawne as well as their individual characteristics. Joanna Richardson, Fanny's biographer, has treated her affectionately, focusing light on her innocence and sportiveness. In her book, *Fanny Brawne*: *Fair Love of Keats,* she has considered Fanny's age and the environment she was living in:

> Through the Dilkes and her mother's wide circle of friends she received many invitations. She could not be expected to remain always at home refusing to go to the opera and rejecting quadrilles; and at times in that early spring of 1819, when Keats reflected on her constant gaiety and

> his own hindering persistent illness his anxiety could no longer be restrained. (Richardson, 1952, p. 64)

Amy Lowell, one of Keats's biographers, wrote: "I think that nothing which one could do would give Keats greater pleasure than to prove to the world that Fanny Brawne was a really very nice girl." (Lowell, 1969, p. 164) Gerald Griffin, another critic, has this to say about Fanny: "She was most animated, lively and even witty in conversation. She quite dazzled me." (Richardson, 1952, p. 35)

In his book, *Life of John Keats*, the biographer Walter Jackson Bates, has specified the legends about the relationship between Keats and Fanny Brawne that reigned through centuries:

> There was a Victorian legend about a dying poet consumed with unsatisfied love for a heartless flirt. This opinion got a very strong ground and still it reigns over criticism on them despite the frequent efforts made to correct it. The following circumstances have contributed to the rise of this legend:
>
> 1. Monckton Milnes, while collecting information for the first biography of Keats (1848), considered it indelicate to inquire into the past affairs of a woman now married. He scrupulously avoided any mention of her name that ultimately created a vacuum where anything could be moved.
>
> 2. He was quite human of Keats's friends to look askance after his death, at a woman they had known only slightly and who had consequently treated them in a casual and independent spirit. George, the Dilkes, and even Brown joined the general shaking of heads over the attachment.
>
> 3. To minds already prepared to bend in this direction; the publication in 1878 of Keats's letter to her seemed to provide a further indictment of Fanny Brawne.

Extremes, of course, beget their opposites and an anti–Victorian reaction in favoring Fanny Brawne gathered force in the 1920s and 1930s. A strange Boston collector F. Holland Day had years before secured from the family of Keats's sister in Spain, 31 letters that Fanny Brawne had written her between September 1920 when Keats left for Italy, and June 1824. (Bate, 1963, p. 421)

After Keats's death, Fanny started the life of an 'unwedded widow' and continued it for twelve years. During this period, she thought only of John Keats and continued writing letters to Fanny Keats, Keats's younger sister. The letters

were full of retrospections about Keats. Fanny Brawne's reaction to Keats's death has been recorded in the following manner:

> The Brawnes went into mourning, and now, for the first time, Fanny's betrothal was made evident. Alone, her hair cut short, and wearing the ring which Keats had given her, the cap and black dress of a widow, she wandered across the Heath, day after day; often retracing their walks, she stayed there far into the night, until some watchman, bearing his lantern, at last discovered her. (Richardson, 1952, p. 87)

For her beauty, love and affection, Fanny Brawne had become the life-force for Keats, who was a worshipper of all these attributes. In his final years, Keats had endeavored to sustain his bond with Fanny though it was not socially accepted due to his giving up the study of medicine. He had tried to write poetry, but had failed to become successful. Then he became afflicted with consumption, the disease that his mother and his younger brother had suffered from. Moreover, rumours and malicious comments about Fanny being a 'flirt' had added to his misery. In a letter written on 5 July, 1820, he had uttered: "I cannot live without you and not only you but chaste you virtuous you." (Gardner, 1965, p. 218)

Due to his deteriorating physical condition, Keats was ultimately forced to yield to Fate. He suffered much, but through all sorts of mental and physical torments, he remained overwhelmed with the beauty and love of Fanny Brawne. Finally, when he realized that he would die, and his dream of a sweet home would remain unrealized, he bid good-bye to his beloved in a letter written to her on February 27, 1820:

> "Good bye, my love, my dear love, my beauty." (Gardner, 1965, p.178)

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"Protective Mimicry": Forster's Literary Imitation of 'Divide and Rule' in *A Passage to India*

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Abstract

Critical response to E. M. Forster's A Passage to India remains diverse. While some commend Forster's depiction of the India, others express their misgivings at his portrayal of Indians attributing his delineation of the Indians, their behaviors, their religions and customs, even the geographical landscape to be in the Orientalist tradition. While looking at the historical bases of A Passage to India, this paper establishes that being conscious of the British administration's policy of 'divide and rule,' Forster undertakes a similar exercise of widening the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. Forster's 'knowledge' of the political conditions in India and Europe, the differences between the two communities and his imperial anxieties pertaining to the future of the British Empire shapes his representation of Hindus and Muslims as two distinct 'types,' as a form of literary mimicry of the British policy of 'divide and rule.' This paper also argues that A Passage to India's importance as a seminal colonial text in India has helped reinforce this difference in the Indian consciousness and continues to foment communal riots in the country even ninety years after its publication

In *A Passage to India (APTI),* E M. Forster endeavors to unravel for western readers the mystery that shrouds India. British rule in India forms a fitting backdrop of the novel and the writer aims to delve into the psyche of both Indians and their British rulers. Forster finished *A Passage to India* in the space of twelve years; incidents in the novel allude to events taking place at that time. He began it after his first visit to India in 1912-13 when he completed portions of the introductory section. The rest of the novel he wrote after returning from his

second visit, in his capacity as Personal Secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas, an experience which provided him with a first-hand look at Hindu India. His first visit, on the other hand, had mainly exposed him to mainly Muslims. As P. N. Furbank says, " Insofar as he had one special motive for coming, it was simply that having hitherto mixed mainly with Muslims he wanted to see more of Hindus" (Vol. 2 p.70).

In view of this, it is not surprising that initial criticism of *A Passage to India* has heaped praise on Forster's depiction of India, its people, its beliefs, its culture and religion (Trilling, 11-27). Unlike Rudyard Kipling's *Kim,* most western critics believe that Forster's *A Passage to India* impartially portrays the arcane nation. In recent times, however, there has been a surge of criticism of *A Passage to India* that point to its deep-seated historical bias (Booker, 151). While a few critics continue to take a positive opinion of Forster's portrayal of Indians, others find the novel to be laced with racial prejudice, delineating the Indians, their behaviors, religion and customs, and even the geographical landscape in the Orientalist tradition (Said, 1).

The progenitor of *A Passage to India* is Forster's own *The Hill of Devi* (1953), a travelogue or a memoir, written in the mould of Orientalist travel narratives which were written apparently with the intent to gather knowledge about these countries the better to conquer and rule them (Said, 210). This book contains the letters and personal observations of the writer derived from his two visits to India. Published 29 years after *A Passage to India,* it provides researchers with background information and offers a firsthand account of Forster's experience to India. *The Hill* of Devi helps a reader of *A Passage to India* achieve a good understanding of the novel. It also informs the reader, as a chronicle would, about the political condition of the nation leading to the Partition and Independence of the country. In his very first letter in *The Hill of Devi,* he documents some incidents of political unrest in the country which is a result of a backlash arising from the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. This sets the tone for the novel as readers become conscious of the fact that they will be reading about a country in political turmoil. In her assessment of Forster scholarship, Bette London disregards Forster's apolitical claim, ("For the book is not really about politics…" (62)) and opines that *A Passage to India* illustrates that "even the most metaphysical concerns have a political base…in culturally coded economies of writing and speech"(62). This conclusion, however, is inevitable, for it would be difficult for a writer who visited India at a politically charged moment in Indian history to

disregard it; thus historical events find their way into the plot of *A Passage to India.*

M. Keith Booker's book entitled *Colonial Power, Colonial Texts,* states that texts "are the products not of the individual imaginations of their authors but of complex historical phenomenon"(3). Booker tries to identify 'a bourgeois cultural revolution as a subtext of the modern British novel" and assess its impact on the "British colonial encounter"(1). He adds that, " Most twentieth century British colonial writers do, however, have an inherent sense of history, if only because they tend to be strongly aware that the British Empire about which they write is in the process of being swept away"(129). Drawing inspiration from Booker's arguments, this paper will try to establish the historical bases of *A Passage to India.* It will try to show that conscious of the British administration's policy of 'divide and rule,' Forster has undertaken a similar exercise of widening the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. I will also take account of the thesis put forward by Francis B. Singh in "*A Passage to India,* the National Movement and Independence," in which Singh finds *A Passage to India* reflecting "the viewpoints of contemporary politicians such as Mohammad Iqbal, Mohammed Ali, M. K. Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru" and "the influence of the Hindu and Muslim religions" (Singh, 265). However, this paper will will differ slightly from Singh's article in that while he identifies Forster foregrounding the Indian National movement for Independence by uniting the Hindus and Muslims in *A Passage to India,* it will be arguing that Forster's 'knowledge' of the political conditions in India and Europe, the differences between two communities and his imperial anxieties pertaining to the future of the British Empire shapes his representation of Hindus and Muslims as two distinct 'type,' that is to say, as a form of literary mimicry of the British policy of 'divide and rule.' This paper also seeks to demonstrate *A Passage to India's* importance as a seminal colonial text that has helped reinforce this difference in the Indian consciousness, a difference which continues to foment communal riots in the country even after ninety years of its publication.

Forster's titles to the two sections of the novel, "Mosque" and "Temple" has generated a lot of debate as to his intent behind writing a novel about India. In his "Introduction" to the *Modern Critical Interpretations shi A Passage to India,* Harold Bloom considers *A Passage to India* as "a strikingly religious book" (2). A cursory glance into the book and the titles of the sections in themselves indicates how it separates India into 'compartments' and prepare us

for the schisms within India. Forster's purpose then becomes clear; he intends to find the 'real India' through his knowledge of the two communities. With this intention, he takes readers into the lives of the Muslims and the Hindus, while in his depiction of their lives, beliefs and religions he wants to emphasize the stark differences between them. The subtle technique Forster employs in rendering the differences between the two communities parallel the British policy of that period. For instance James P Carroll writes in his book *Constantine's Sword,*

> Typically, imperial powers depend on the inability of oppressed local populations to muster a unified resistance, and the most successful occupiers are skilled at exploiting the differences among the occupied. Certainly that was the story of the British Empire's success, and its legacy of nurtured local hatreds can be seen wherever the Union Flag flew, from Muslim-Hindu hatred in Pakistan and India, to Catholic-Protestant hatred in Ireland, to, yes, Jew-Arab, hatred in modern Israel. [Ancient] Rome was as good at encouraging internecine resentments among the occupied as Britain ever was (81).

A recent study by K. Jaishankar and Debarati Halder on the spate of Hindu-Muslim riots in India have identified British administrators and their policies to be responsible for the conflicts between the two communities. They write,

> Eventually, the imposition of colonial rule in India ignited animosity and conflict between the Hindu and Muslim communities. After the decline of Mughal power, the British often utilized "divide and rule" tactics in order to maintain governance over the vast area. In essence, the Hindu-Muslim conflict has existed in earnest since the British rule (Girdner, 1998). The British organized communal violence because it provided them a pretext to further suppress the people and declare that it was not the colonial rule that was the cause of the problems of the Indian people, but that religion was the problem. They blamed the victims and their religions for the situation created by the colonial rule, and said that it is the policy of the British to be fair and pursue a secular policy to do justice to all religious communities.

By trying to be fair, Forster's narrative in *A Passage to India* imitates the actions of British policy makers. Gramsci's notion of hegemony, which helps us understand the subtle techniques the bourgeoisie use to help establish control over the masses, thus becomes pertinent in a reading of *A Passage to India* (Booker, 4). Faced with increasing opposition in the aftermath of the Jallianwala Bagh

Massacre in 1919 and with Mahatma Gandhi's attempts to bring solidarity between the communities, the British administration of the period tried to create rifts between the communities. Foucault's idea of using 'persuasion' in order to bring 'voluntary obedience' can also be traced in Forster's depiction of Fielding and his role in the Muslim community in the wake of Aziz's trial (Booker, 4). After Aziz's acquittal Fielding tries to convince Aziz and the Indians to forego the reparations Adela would have to pay Aziz. Fielding's use of persuasion is indicative of the changing methods of containing Indians. The aggression of the British officials is set in contrast to the mild form of control Fielding intends to have over the Indians.

The most striking aspect of *A Passage to India* is Forster's vivid creation of a Muslim community which he highlights at the expense of the Hindu community. Forster's choice of a Muslim protagonist in a novel about India has drawn criticism from Nirad C. Chaudhuri, who criticized Forster on the ground that Hindus constituted the majority in India and should have received fuller coverage (Francis Singh, 275). Chaudhuri's resentment is indicative of the discord such a novel can create in the Inidan community. Forster's privileging of a Muslim character as representative of India echoes the British administration's policy of isolating the two communities and stressing one at the expense of the other for expediency. The overwhelming presence of a predominantly elite Muslim community and the virtual absence of the Hindu community could also be interpreted as Forster's attempt to establish racial hierarchies in his novel.

The religious demarcation of the different sections in the novel, according to Forster's own comments and the explanation offered by some critics corresponds not only to the experience of Forster in India but also tends to heighten the tensions between the different communities. Indeed, Forster's structural framework suggests the passage that he himself took and then offered others, British and Indian, bent on knowing the real India. So he begins with "Mosque," as if to prioritize the Muslim presence. His reading of history had informed Forster that the Muslims did not constitute the 'real' India, but were 'outsiders' like the British. Benita Parry believes that Forster depicts "the monotheistic system of Islam …as limited"(184). The Indian critic Rustom Bharucha concurs with Parry but points out-"As a Muslim whose allegiance is to Babur and Alamgir, the poetry of Ghalib, and the spirit of Islam, which is " more than a faith" for him, Aziz seems excluded from India in a significant way"(104). Muslims are represented by Forster's narrator as invaders who like the British had

settled in India by force and so the future of British control over India would require the knowledge of India's original inhabitants, Hindus. Hence, 'knowing' Muslims or acquiring knowledge about them would not suffice. Forster makes the transition from the "Mosque" to the Cave with the hope that nature, epitomized by the caves, could quench his thirst for the 'knowledge' he seeks. But even the secular terrain of Indian topography, which has been ravished by invaders, does not offer the much-needed answer. Forster eventually veers the readers to the Hindu State of Mau where he expects to experience the 'real India' in all its complexity. For Benita Parry the "Temple" episode and the Hindu rituals performed within the Hindu place of worship offers 'universal salvation' to everyone. Forster's preference of one religion over the other, Hinduism over Islam, which he makes explicit in his novel could be construed as a colonizer's subtle technique of classifying or categorizing Indian religion which has had far-reaching effects in the larger realm of Indian life. Monotheistic Islam had nothing new to offer British who themselves practiced a monotheistic religion. The variety and vitality of Hinduism never before experienced by British interested them more than Muslims.

Forster deflates Islam and Muslims by criticizing the 'decay' and 'degeneracy' that he felt had set in Islam. For these reasons, he seems bent on delineating Aziz's follies. Toward the close of the novel Forster takes us into the Hindu Temple section where he emphasizes the practices of the Hindus and highlights their religion as 'inclusive'. Wagner opines that-"Hinduism itself is attractive to Forster just because of its apparent childlike freedom from guilt" (367). Forster's privileging of one aspect of one community at the expense of the other was in reality fixing the notion of the 'difference' between them with serious ramifications to their relation and coexistence in the Indian soil. In the guise of being fair to both the communities, Forster actually seemed to indicate that the communities were polar opposites, locked in oppositions.

Forster's depiction of Aziz becomes significant in understanding the underlying differences between the two groups that he creates. Aziz becomes the scapegoat for all Indians in *A Passage to India* his characterization clearly falls in the tradition of the Orientalist discourse where the Oriental is portrayed, either as a liar or as too emotional and libertine. Aziz is the quintessential Oriental in addition to being a surgeon. Despite the false charges that she levels against Aziz, Forster's narrator insists that Adela thinks "over her own behaviour," does not like giving "trouble to others," and "was brought up to be honest." On the other hand, one loses count of Aziz's faults as the narrative progresses. Contradictions

abound in Aziz -" 'How unhappy I am!' and became happier" (56). He continues to revere Mrs. Moore but fails to acknowledge the courage of Adela who restores his dignity even at the expense of bringing calumny on herself. All these problems in Aziz are highlighted by the omniscient narrator and Fielding.

Bette London points out an interesting fact regarding Forster's feelings about Arabs at the time he was writing *A Passage to India,* who quotes him: "I came inclined to be pleased and quite free from racial prejudice, but in 10 months I've acquired an instinctive dislike to the Arab voice, the Arab figure, the Arab way of looking or walking or plump shitting or eating or laughing or anything–exactly the emotion that I censured in the Anglo–Indian towards the natives" (qtd. in London, 94). Forster's remarks about Arabs become pertinent to his attitude towards Muslims in India primarily because he and his countrymen had studied history in a distractive manna. They were very well aware that Muslims in India shared strong emotional and cultural ties with the Arab. The events of the Khilafat Movement, where Indian Muslims expressed solidarity with Arab Muslims, may also have been at the back of his mind while he established correspondence between Arabs and Indian Muslims. London further adds:

> Speaking as his culture dictates, he submerges his personal identity in that of the group. But by the end of the essay he reveals the act as a pose: " In the above anecdote, I have figured as a typical Englishman. I will now descend from that dizzy and somewhat unfamiliar height, and return to my note-taking." Forster suggests that his entire performance was an act of mimicry." (qtd. *in The Appropriated Voice,* 95)

Read in this light it becomes clear that Forster is actually imitating the techniques employed by the colonial rulers. The technique is one of creating fissures between the two major communities, Hindus and Muslims, only to later try to put up the pretence of joining them.

Forster's praise of Hindus or Hinduism is suspect. He points out that Hinduism is better than Islam but that does not charm him into endorsing it fully. Barbara Rosecrance feels that, "yet there is much to show that Forster draws back from a full embrace of Hinduism. His treatment is affectionate but detached"(82). Particularly important is Forster's use of Aziz as a conduit for anti-Hindu statements. Aziz's anathema for Hindus and his total disregard of their religion highlights the deep fissure between the two communities. Forster's portrayal of a Muslim character who hates Hindus corresponded with an important moment in Indian History when the two communities were trying to unite with the intention of fighting the British. Francis B. Singh

writes, "Between 1920 and 1923, Gandhi attempted to realize his conception of Indian independence as basically communal harmony by throwing his support behind the Khilafat agitation and getting Hindus to support it also. The function of this entente, according to Gandhi, was to 'secure Mohammedan friendship for the Hindus and thereby internal peace…'" (267). Throughout *A Passage to India* we sense the tension between the two communities. Although for a brief moment after Aziz's trial there is an entente, Forster's narrative harbors communal animosity in Aziz by making him utter anti-Hindu sentiments. Aziz's generalization of Hindus in response to Adela's complaint of the Bhattacharya's who promised to come to pick them up but failed to come smacks of an ingrained revulsion for anything Hindu. "Slack Hindus—they have no idea of society; I know them very well because of a doctor at the hospital"(69). The narrative voice magnanimously excuses Aziz's extremities since, "incapable of reasoning, his "emotions never seem in proportion to their objects" (254). Therefore, his impatience with regard to Hindus and suspicion of them as allies of the British are explained away as resulting from a febrile imagination.

Similarly, the other Muslim characters in *A Passage to India* also express revulsion towards Hindus. The narrative forces readers into believing that Muslims consider Hindus to be inferiors allying them with the English and pitting them against Muslims. An example is the Nawab Bahadur's condescending views regarding the Maharani of Mudkul, when he says, "A Native State, a Hindu State, the wife of a ruler of a Hindu State, may beyond doubt be a most excellent lady, and let it not be for a moment supposed that I suggest anything against the character of Her Highness the Maharani of Mudkul. But I fear she will be uneducated, I fear she will be superstitious" (93). This prejudice against the Hindus is also echoed by Mr. Haq, an educated Muslim and a close friend of Aziz, who says,"All illness proceeds from Hindus" (105). Forster's depiction of educated Muslim characters as fiercely communal makes one wonder about the extent of the prejudice harbored by illiterate Hindus and Muslims against each other. Communal tension inevitably resonates through the novel and instills in readers a sense of the irreconcilable difference between these two major communities.

In the "Temple" section, Forster presents both the British and the Muslims as aliens in a Hindu land. But he categorizes them into two types. Fielding's genuine desire to watch the Hindu festival seems to be about them indicative of the liberal British attitude to Hinduism, of their wanting to know. Such interest is set up against Aziz's cultivated ignorance of Hinduism.

According to Malcolm Bradbury, "What does come through is Forster's appreciation of certain elements in Hinduism, an appreciation that achieves its apotheosis in *A Passage to India,* and particularly in "Temple," the novel's foreshortened final part"(3). Forster highlights Aziz attitude towards Hindus when he makes him say, "I know nothing at all about the religion here. I should never think of watching it myself" (301), and "It is useless discussing Hindus with me. Living with them teaches me no more…Why [one you] so curious about them" (319). Setting up Aziz, the representative Muslim, as the outsider, Forster writes, "Aziz did not pay attention to these sanctities, for they had no connection with his own; he felt bored, slightly cynical, like his own dear Emperor Babur, who came down from the north and found in Hindustan no good fruit, no fresh water or witty conversation, not even a friend" (306). In a very subtle fashion, the narrative underlines the Muslim's refusal to 'know' the Hindu, a stance which tends to thwart any attempt to achieve amity between them. Thus, Forster pits the two communities against each other.

However, in this kind of a situation, Forster presents the liberal British as the opposite of the educated Muslim in his portrayal of Fielding's desire to watch the celebrations of Gokul Ashtami. Furthermore, the invocation of Mrs. Moore in Godbole's consciousness during the celebrations points at the possibility of friendship or relationship between the British and the Hindu.

Many critics have attempted to see Forster's *A Passage to India* from his view of India seen through a 'double vision' that is characteristic of his stance throughout his oeuvre. This is in keeping with Forster's credo espoused in *Howards End*, of "Only Connect…and human love will be seen at its height"(Ch. 22) But although Forster provides readers of *A Passage to India* with the possibility of friendship between two sets of people, Fielding's and Aziz's friendship, though most expatiated in the novel, does not come to fruition and is ridden with suspicion and misunderstanding, primarily due to Aziz's failure to understand Fielding's true feelings about him. The more important friendship that Forster establishes on a symbolic and metaphysical level is that between Mrs. Moore and Godbole. The novel traces the trajectory of these two friendships and at the end announces the failure of the first most obvious one and hints allegorically at the success of the latter. At the end of the novel Fielding's query to Aziz, "Why can't we be friends now?" is answered by the sky which utters, "No, not yet, no, not there" (322). On the other hand, describing Godbole's invocation of Mrs. Moore amidst the chanting of Gokul Ashtami, the narrative informs us that"Chance brought her into his mind while it was in this heated

state, … and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found" (286). Forster's use of these two sets of pairings, both positing an Anglo-Indian with an Indian, reflects the policy that led the British to maintain a separation of the two communities. We can trace a parallel to the division of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab in 1911 into a Hindu and Muslim sub-division. It also forestalls the Partition of undivided India into India and Pakistan in 1947.

In the "Mosque" section of *A Passage to India* Forster introduces his idea of a possible friendship between an English and an Indian by bringing Mrs. Moore and Aziz together but as the novel progresses this possibility is converted into a nullity. Mrs. Moore's act of removing her shoes before entering the mosque, owing to her "knowledge" of the Muslim practice, wins Aziz's heart and he develops an affinity for her. They come together on two more occasions, at Fielding's party and the Marabar caves, but the relationship does not work out, although it appeared to be so promising. Indeed Forster does not explore the relationship any further, though Aziz continues to remember Mrs. Moore in the trial scene and afterwards. The fate of this aborted friendship foreshadows the outcome of Aziz's failure to forge lasting relationships with Fielding.

In the "Mosque" section the references to the Mohurram celebrations and the possibility of a communal flare-up also provides readers with of the notion of the tension existing between the two communities. This is how Forster describes the situation:

> Mohurram was approaching, and as usual the Chandrapore Mohammedans were building paper towers of a size too large to pass under the branches of a certain peepul tree. One knew what happened next; the tower stuck, a Mohammedan climbed up the peepul and cut the branch off, the Hindus protested, there was a religious riot, and Heaven knew what, with perhaps the troops sent for (96).

The idea that Hindus and Muslims cannot coexist peacefully is expressed clearly, implying the dire need of a British presence to redress the problem. Forster contrasts the preparations for Mohurram with the celebration at Gokul Ashtami at Mau, which passes peacefully. Praising Forster's depiction of the Hindu festival, K. Natwar Singh, writes that "his description of the Gokul Ashtami festival is flawless. Forster caught the spirit of the festival and found meaning and significance in Hindu ritual which have eluded or escaped other English writers"(54). Michael Orange too agrees, "The enactment at Mau is accorded almost sacred respect" (72). Thus, Forster shows that in Mau, a Hindu majority

state, religious fervor can be manifested without any hitch developing in the course of the festivities. Contrarily, in British India, the communities clash and cause all sorts of problems. The idea of separate nation states for the two communities seem to be the solution for enduring peace between them. It is almost as if Forster was prescient about the British decision to divide India in 1947.

Furthermore, in the "Temple" section we see Aziz's attitude towards Godbole undergoing a transformation. Unlike his suspicion of Godbole and Dr. Panna Lal in the "Mosque" section, Aziz tries to understand Godbole here, as "he was well assured that Godbole was a dear old man" (292). Thus the coexistence of Hindus and Muslims depends on a power dynamic where one community wields power owing to its greater numbers and the other becomes subservient.

Alternately, Forster may be apportioning blame primarily on Muslims, perhaps hinting that they are the more violent and belligerent community ("Aziz was provocative. Everything he said had an impertinent flavor or jarred" (77) and "Some Muslims are very violent" (267)) as opposed to the Hindus, whose adherents Forster refers to as "mild–featured men." Forster even views Hinduism as better than Islam when he says that " Something that the Hindus have perhaps found" (277). While Islam is frequently referred to as a religion that is moribund ("the themes he (Aziz) preferred were the decay of Islam") and an obstacle to freedom ("Islam itself, though true, throws cross-lights over the path to freedom") (268). Forster, like those of his countrymen who were at the helm of power, seems to be thinking about a model for a strictly defined tripartite society in India. He seems to negate the assimilation of the Indian Muslims into India by stressing that the Hindus "were the toiling ryot, whom some call the real India" (284). On another occasion he makes Fielding tell Aziz "Yet you can't have patriotic poetry of the 'India, my India' type, when it's nobody's India" (277). Forster's sentiments are governed by his awareness that "the British India rests on sand" (260).

Certainly, Foster's narrative underscores the British administration's handling of Hindus and Muslims at that time. The pitting of the Indian Hindu and the Indian Muslim, in order to stop them from uniting, permanently scars the relations. We can see a direct refernce to this exercise in Colonel Maggs attempt to influence the Rajah of Mau against employing Aziz as his physician. As the narrator puts it, "Colonel Maggs learnt with concern that a suspect was coming to Mau, and, adopting a playful manner, rallied the Old rajah for permitting a Moslem doctor to approach his sacred person" (294). Forster's narrative also informs us that "Most of the inhabitants of India do not mind how the Indians are governed" (114). It further attempts to ingrain in the reading

consciousness that since there were serious differences between the Hindus and the Muslims, the onus of running the administration would best be carried out by the British. It is to be pointed out that Fielding's intentions in befriending an Indian can be suggestive of the Orientalist's goodwill towards the native subjects. His vocation and commitment to teaching brings to mind Macaulay's pronouncement in his "Minutes on Indian Education", where he prescribes the formation of "a class (of natives) who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." It was for this class that Forster wrote *A Passage to India* at a time when nationalism was on the rise. As Jyotsna G. Singh points out, "… in introducing English Literature to the elite Indian…the colonial rulers were not being egalitarian, but rather engaging in a 'hegemonic activity' by which, in Gramsci's terms, "the consent of the governed is secured through intellectual and moral manipulation rather than through military force"(123). *A Passage to India* too falls under this scheme of the ruling class whereby in a very insidious fashion the colonial policy of 'divide and rule is ingrained in the consciousness of the two major communities of India.

The canonization of *A Passage to India* in universities in the Indian subcontinent becomes problematic because it widens differences between the two communities that still live together. The subtle manner in which the book establishes racial hierarchies and its judgmental attitude to the two major religions of the countries. It need to be kept in mind because the deeply entrenched communal differences that surface in *A Passage to India* stems not only from the British officials whose duty was to rule India but also from seemingly liberal British attitude. Forster's narrative voice attempts a similar ploy of stressing the incompatibility of the two communities at the same time very subtly giving reader the impression that the liberal British would govern India without prejudice.

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The Enchantress of Florence: Fabulous Blather

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Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence* glances at history on a grand scale. This, his ninth novel, offers a comparative view of two worlds: Mughal India and Medici Italy. The two dynasties ruled at about the same time–the Mughals in India from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, the Medici in Florence from the fourteenth through the eighteenth century. Rushdie fabricates a link between the two through an account of a Mughal princess–sister of Babar, the founder of the dynasty–who shows up in Florence and sways men in power through her sheer beauty. At a later time, a golden-haired man claiming to be the son of the princess arrives in Akbar's court and tells the emperor the story of the princess. He calls himself "Mogor dell' Amore" or "*a Mughal born out of wedlock*" (Rushdie's emphasis) (91). The story he tells will make or break his fortune. Either it will earn him the status of a Mughal or it will lead to his ignominious exit from the court or a worse fate.

As in *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh,* storytelling is a strong motif in *Enchantress.* Its story, on the other hand, is not as gripping as those of his early fiction. *Enchantress's* Akbar and India are powerfully drawn, but its Florence and the Florentines are hazily contoured. Chapters dealing with them tend to be tangled and meandering. The reader, moreover, feels that Rushdie's humor is not as funny as it used to be and that some of his characters are mere caricatures. Parts of

Enchantress remind one of the first-rate Rushdie. Such brilliance, unfortunately, gushes in spurts and is not sustained throughout the narrative.

While the two worlds of *Enchantress*, India and Europe, share many common elements such as political hierarchy and social composition, they contrast with each other on some fundamental issues. Akbar's Sikri, the dream capital that he built near Agra, is stable and relatively free from political intrigues. The only threat to his throne is Prince Salim, who is keener on assassinating his father's favorite courtiers than ousting him—the rift between father and son mends at the end when Akbar nominates him his successor. The historical Akbar was known for his interest in music and learning. He even founded his own religion, *Din-E-Elahi,* but never forced it upon anyone, adopting instead a policy of religious tolerance remarkable for his time. Rushdie is at his best in portraying this Akbar and his realm.

Contrasting the stability of Akbar's reign is Florence. Plagued with political intrigue, religious persecution, mass murder, and church-sanctioned sodomy, Florence is an utterly lawless land, a city of degenerates. What guarantees one's safety here is power and connection. The story of the stranger in Akbar's court begins with an account of three young friends in Florence: Antonio Argalia, Niccol "il Machia," and Ago Vaspucci. The reader gets a taste of the Florentine state of affairs when no sooner the three freinds enter the narrative than they run cups in hand to collect semen from a hanged man's penis—an Archbishop's in this case—in the wake of Lorenzo de' Medici's brutal suppression of the Pazzi plotters. The boyhood prank occurs because they want to test the popular theories that a hanged man always ejaculates and that semen buried in ground sprouts mandrake plants.

The three young Florentines are interesting enough, but as they grow into adulthood, the narrative sags. When the plague kills Argalia's parents, he leaves Florence. While he is away, il Machio (modeled after Machiavelli, the author of the *Prince*) and Vespucci (cousin to Amerigo Vespucci, discoverer of the New World) grow up to be failures. Il Machio suffers a terrible setback in his prospects because of the return of the Medici in Florence, and both he and Vespucci are content to visit local brothels to ease their frustrations— that is, until Argalia appears with Qara Köz, the lost Mughal Princess, and her maid, the Mirror, so called because she is a look-alike.

Rushdie goes to great length to make the Princess's arrival in Europe from Central Asia believable, but the reader has to tackle a web of yarns. First a captive

of an Uzbeg warlord, then of the Persian king, with whom she fell in love, which was the reason for her refusal to return to her brother Babar, then of the Ottoman general Argalia, with whom again she is in love, Qara Köz, also called Angelica, *"had a weakness for being on the winning side"* (Rushdie's emphasis), as Mogor informs Akbar (211). She is the most ravishing woman of her time, yet her portrait suffers from a certain vagueness of description. Except her name, which means "Black Eyes" (120), no clue to her physical attributes appears in the text. Her effect on people, both men and women, on the other hand, is astounding. Even Marietta, il Machia's jealous wife, is so captivated that she doesn't mind her husband's company with Qara Köz. Rushdie's reluctance to provide a physical description of such phenomenal beauty is perhaps a deliberate artistic choice; what he omits he makes up for by the enchantress's influence on others.

Qara Köz's disembodied presence, nevertheless, weakens *Enchantress*. Several readers have noted the weak appeal of the Florence chapters though many of them have heaped praise on the India chapters, expressing particular admiration for Akbar. Jerry Brotton regards *Enchantress* as "vintage Rushdie," but also adds, "Rushdie is better recreating the lost imperial world of India than Renaissance Florence." In an otherwise exceedingly warm response to the book, Aamer Hussein writes, "The sections set in Italy and elsewhere can at times be so densely detailed that the reader yearns for the quiet of Akbar's contemplations." Andrew Reimer's comment is more to the point:

> The trouble is . . . that Rushdie does not understand that world [Florence] in the same instinctive and wonderfully imaginative way that he understands Akbar's realm—or at least he does not respond to European culture . . . as fully as he responds to the cultures of the Indian subcontinent. This is a harsh thing to say . . . From the evidence of this novel it seems, nevertheless, to be true.

That Rushdie who has spent his entire adult life and part of his childhood in the west does not "respond to European culture" as well as he does to India is shocking, indeed. Clearly, Reimer doesn't like what he has to say about the book, but as a reader he has no choice but to be true to his response.

Evidently, the India chapters fare better because Akbar and his India fire Rushdie's imagination to a degree that Qara Köz and Italy fail to match. Fact, here, wins over fiction. The *Enchantress* Akbar is modeled after the historical Akbar whereas Qara Köz is without precedence. With warlords, pirates, and explorers, the world of *Enchantress* exists in the realm of fantasy, but fantasy,

especially if it is the historical kind, is more convincing when it grows out of facts.

Qara Köz's ending, which will determine once and for all the kinship of the stranger with the Mughals, is another tortuous tale. Mogor concludes her story with an account of her fall from fortune, of her "short journey from *enchantress* to *witch*" (Rushdie's emphasis) (297). When Lorenzo II spends a night with her and dies, Florence regards her an evil witch whose presence spells doom for the city. Argalia protects her the best he can and dies fighting a frenzied mob so she can flee. In their attempt to reach India via Spain, Qara Köz, the Mirror, and Ago Vespucci end up in the New World, where Mogor is born. Akbar appropriates Mogor's story at this point: "This was his story now" (337). He refuses to believe that Mogor is the son of his long lost great aunt. Two unassailable facts contradict Mogor's Mughal lineage: his age and Qara Köz's failure to bear children to the other men she was with. Early in the text, Princess Gulbadan, Akbar's aunt, found a problem in Mogor's claim, which was the age discrepancy. Mogor's present age was "thirty or thirty-one" whereas Qara Köz would have been "sixty-five" when he was born (109). Akbar still wanted to hear him out because he thought Mogor could be the princess's daughter's son. But who was his father? To this question from the emperor, Birbal, the Grand Vizier, pointedly remarked, "'Thereby' . . . 'I do believe hangs the tale'" (110).

Mogor's tale indeed hits a huge snag on this issue. Akbar doesn't buy Mogor's account that Qara Köz had a son by Ago Vespucci. Despite Mogor's explanation that "on account of the unsettled nature of time in those parts [the New World], my mother the enchantress was able to prolong her youth," Akbar rejects the possibility outright (336-37). From the facts Mogor has presented, Akbar deduces what happened: Mogor is a product of an incestuous union between Ago Vespucci and his and Qara Köz's daughter. Akbar, who was considering raising Mogor to the status of Farzand, an honorary son, at one point (316), rules out any dynastic linkage with him because of his incestuous origin. Later on, the phantom of Qara Köz appears to Akbar and makes clear that she never had a child, that Mogor's mother was the Mirror's daughter, not hers. To make the pedigree soup even murkier, the Mirror's daughter, Qara Köz informs Akbar, was called Angelica and was raised as Qara Köz the Mughal princess herself. The phantom exonerates Mogor and his mother from all deception; they were raised to believe who they became by Ago and the Mirror.

Mogor's true parentage, thus, is quite convoluted; it is not unlike Salim's in *Midnight's Children* or Shakil's in *Shame*. The issue of identity, a postmodern

motif, is likely to be a focus in future *Enchantress* criticism. The confusion surrounding Mogor's family descent, curiously, leads two reviewers, Amy Wilentz's and Joyce Carol Oates, to identify Mogor as Ago Vespucci. Perhaps the mistake occurs because both Ago and Mogor are golden–haired, a trait mentioned several times in the text. But Mogor appears as "Niccolò Vespucci" at least twice (92, 308), and his full name, "Niccolò Antonio Vespucci," appears at least once in the book (335).

Enchantress improves toward the end when it returns to Akbar and unravels the mystery of Mogor. Does the denouement save *Enchantress* from its feeble Florence? As Michiko Kakutani writes, "Although the novel gains narrative momentum in its final chapters, large portions of the book consist of tiresome free-associative digressions and asides . . . they threaten to topple the slender frame story around which the book is constructed." The labyrinthine plot provokes Kakutani to present a thoroughly unflattering critique of the book. He is not the only one. David Gates admits he could not keep track of the story because of "all its meanderings" and declares that the work "revels in writerly self-congratulation." Peter Kemp goes a step further and calls it "the worst thing he [Rushdie] has ever written."

Enchantress has generated reviews that are strongly positive as well, for example, those by Ursula K Le Guin, Salil Tripathi, William Deresiewicz (who claims *Enchantress* to be "Rushdie's most coherent and readable novel"), and others. They admire Rushdie's portrayal of Akbar, his recreation of bygone times, and his ability to weave interlocking tales. While Rushdie shows great facility in recreating Mughal India, the depiction is not without some oddities. It is not clear, for example, how Mogor is able to speak to the bullock-cart driver who brings him to Sikri. Mogor is fluent in Persian, which, presumably, he has learned from his mother, but Persian was the language of the court, the officials, and the educated in sixteenth-century India. A bullock-cart driver was not likely to know it. Then, on one occasion, Rushdie's Akbar is playing the *dilruba* (326). This instrument is no more than two centuries old and was invented for women to sing with! Placing it in sixteenth-century is quite anachronistic. No doubt more scrutiny will discover more such lapses in the book.

Another problem is an occasional excess of characterization and expression, not uncharacteristic of Rushdie. Argalia moves with four giant Swiss albino bodyguards: Otho, Botho, Clotho and D'Artagnan (181). Michael Dirda informs us that these names suggest certain qualities, but he also finds Rushdie "silly" for creating these creatures. The idea of four oversized albinos, Swiss on otherwise, is

not funny, but ridiculous. A similar ludicrous event occurs when Argalia, to save his life, has to outrun the Turkish sultan's head gardener, who also works as part-time executioner. To ensure Argalia's safety, Qara Köz gives the gardener flatulence-inducing potion, and the poor man "succumbed to a bout of the foulest farting anyone has ever smelled, releasing blasts of wind as loud as gunshots" (226). This is foul humor, indeed.

What Rushdie seems to have forgotten is that beyond a certain point exaggeration ceases to be funny. There is more. Prince Salim becomes a sex maniac after a slave girl gives him an aphrodisiac containing goat testicles. The result is a "notorious night of one hundred and one copulations" (61). Such sexual prowess is also emulated by Italians. In his glory days, Machiavelli or Il Machia "was fucking a different girl every day . . . and fucking his wife too, of course, six times, at least" (240). Enchantress takes particular delight in depicting a variety of sex acts, the most favored of which is the threesome. The source is not Kama Sutra alone. Rushdie himself acknowledges the fact in an interview with *Atlanta* magazine, where he sounds even a little wistful because "there's a limit to how much of that stuff one can put into a novel." Khushwant Singh's comment is worth noting: "I have not read another book in which the word 'fuck' appears as often as in this one." Singh also considers the book to be "grossly overwritten with a plethora of words in different languages, a veritable verbal diarrhea meaning nothing."

Enchantress is marred by the trite, as well as the extravagant. Rushdie's new novel-"romance," according to some—has found readers who admire it, readers who condemn it, and readers who do both at the same time. Rushdie has yet to match the lucidity of his early fiction, writing that wins all. Though readable and sometimes rewarding, his new book is certainly not by means the best he has ever written. No wonder *Enchantress* did not make the cut in the 2008 Booker shortlist.

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The Endangerment of Small, Indigenous Languages: Lessons from Malaysia

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Abstract

In this article, I take the case of Malaysia's indigenous language endangerment into consideration. Because of Malaysia's geopolitical similarities to that of Bangladesh, I believe the study will have significant ramifications for our indigenous languages. In undertaking the study of Malaysia's indigenous languages, I take into account the state of Remun, a relatively small language spoken in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. I begin my study by measuring the level of Remun's endangerment after which I analyze the underlying socio-political factors that in many cases pervade Bangladesh's situations. In methodology, I use both qualitative and quantitative data. I conclude my study by suggesting some measures that may prove to be effective in protecting the indigenous languages across the world in general and in Bangladesh in particular.

Introduction

Harubaru to	When distant minds
Kokoro tsudoite	come together
Hana sakaru	cherries blossom. (Cited in Salverda, 2002)

The *haiku* inscription from Japan quoted above illustrates the importance of diversity in creating knowledge. We need this diversity at every level, starting from language to culture. Where language diversity is concerned, we find that it is coming under increasing pressure. This pressure comes, on the one hand, from nation states that often identify themselves with the language of the majority and the powerful. On the other hand, it comes from the onslaught of

globalization that involves the hegemony of one language over other ones. The presence of such adverse forces on language diversity is not a recent phenomenon. We find numerous instances of language loss in recorded history. In the Roman Empire, for example, Latin replaced, among others, Etruscan of pre-Roman Italy (Ridgway 1994; Swadesh 1994, quoted in Tsunoda 2005:4). Similarly, in modern history, European colonization exerted the most damaging impact on language diversity (Tsunoda 2005). A combination of this historical and contemporary pressure on language diversity has now left us with only about 6,912 languages. If this trend of language loss goes unchecked, we are likely to lose half of our total living languages in the present century alone (Krauss 1992 cited in Hinton 2001). Can we afford to lose so many languages (and at this pace)? Standing at this juncture of linguistic history, it is crucial for us to understand the conditions in which we lose our languages and then take steps to reverse the situation. In this context, I will take Malaysia's case into consideration. In doing so, I will look into the conditions of Remun, a small indigenous language of Malaysia. I believe that the politico-economic structures that underlie Remun and the kind of measures appropriate for its revival may also apply to many of Bangladesh's indigenous languages.

Ethnographic Background of Malaysia

Malaysia is a multiethnic, multilingual country with about twenty million people. Of them, Malays account for 50.4%, Chinese 23.7%, indigenous ethnic groups (except Malay) 11%, Indians 7.1%, and the rest 7.8%. The country comprises two areas–Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak. While ethnic Malays make up a majority of the population in West Malaysia, divergent Dayak ethnic groups (namely, Iban, Kelabit, Bukar-Sadong, etc.) and Chinese constitute a sizable portion of the population of East Malaysia.

The estimated number of languages in Malaysia is 141 (Ethnologue.com). Of them, Sarawak has forty-seven languages of which one is extinct. The National Language Policy of Malaysia recognizes Malay as the country's national language. The policy also allows education in the learner's mother tongue which is officially known as POL (Pupil's Own Language) scheme. English is offered as a compulsory language in the school and university curricula.

The Remun Ethnolinguistic Group

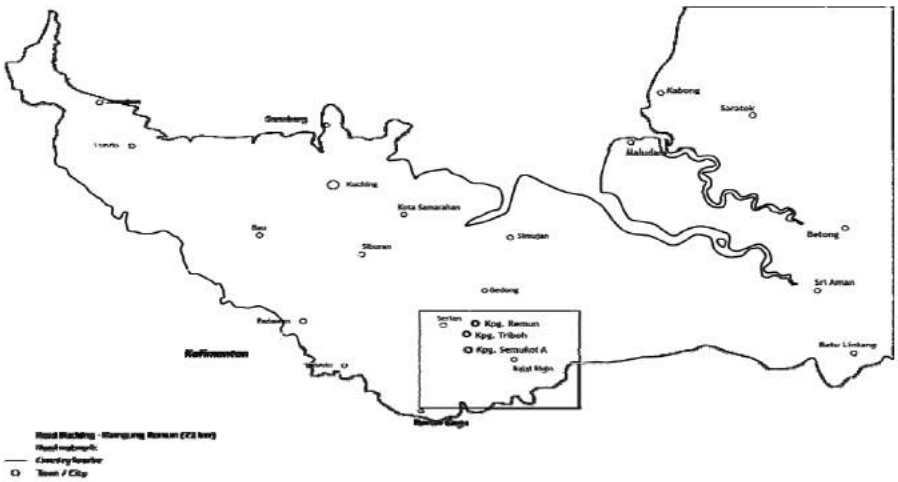
Like other languages in Sarawak, Remun belongs to the Austronasian language stock. It is spoken by the ethnic group known as Remun. In early colonial times, Remuns were officially classified as Milikin (Sarawak Government Census 1961). They live in a broad cluster of villages in Serian district, located in Sarawak's Samarahan Division. The villages are spread along the Krang river and its tributaries between Serian and Balai Ringin. They now number around 7000 and inhabit twenty two villages*. (I collected the information from the headmen of the Remun villages I covered in my study.) Surrounding Remuns live the bigger ethnolinguistic group called Iban. Present-day Remun settlements reflect a heavy mix of Ibans from other areas who have married into Remun communities.

Table 1: Remun Villages (2007)

No.	Village	No.	Village
1	Remun (First Remun Settlement) **	12	Junggu Mawang
2	Lebor	13	Linsat
3	Triboh **	14	Tepin
4	Belimbin	15	Batu Kudi
5	Entayan Kerupok	16	Tanah Mawang
6	Entayan Liun	17	Krangan Trusan
7	Entayan Sarawak	18	Krangan Engkatak
8	Entayan Kersik	19	Krangan Tekalung
9	Semukoi A **	20	Menyang
10	Semukoi B	21	Bayor
11	Meboi	22	Sepan

* I did not find the Remun ethnoliguistic group identified in Sarawak's last population census of 2000 (Anggaran Penduduk 2006)

** Villages Considered in the Study



Map: Remun Villages in Sarawak, Malaysia

Review of Literature

Sarawak's indigenous languages have so far received little scholarly attention. Language research in Malaysia has focused predominantly on Bahasa Malaysia, the national language of the country. One of the reasons for absence of research on Sarawak's languages lies in its reliance on researchers coming from outside Malaysia. In accounting for the lack of research on Sarawak's small languages, Omar (2003) notes, "Such research [requiring one to go to Sarawak] not only requires one to go geographically upstream but also to start from the hitherto unknown". However, Iban presents an exception in this regard. Among others, Omar (1981) has described the language in terms of its phonology, morphology, and syntax. In comparison, research on the indigenous languages from other parts of Malaysia is not as scarce. For example, a number of indigenous languages in Western Malaysia have received considerable attention. (Ghazali 2004) Besides, the Kadazandusun languages of Sabah have also received a wide attention.

Though language research in Sarawak is generally rare, it is possible to find evidence of research on Remun. One such research project was carried out by Cullip (2000) who concluded that the language was well-maintained when it came to the oldest Remun village of Kampong (village) Remun. As far as other Remun villages are concerned, he notes that the language is shifting toward Iban. In this regard, I should like to mention that Cullip's study is based on his survey of only one Remun village called Kampong (village) Remun. Remun's purported shift to Iban in other villages comes from the cursory observations he made during his stay in the area.

Methodolgy

My primary goal in the research project was to measure the extent to which Remun is threatened with extinction. In carrying it out, I tried to identify the reasons that were responsible for the language's endangerment. This essay will also include discussion of the socio-political implications of Remun's endangerment. Overall, it attempts to answer the following questions:

a) Is the Remun language endangered? If yes, to what extent?

b) If the language is endangered, why is this so?

c) What lessons can we learn from Remun's fate?

In carrying out the research, I found that it was difficult to adopt a succinct and generalizable model to measure Remun's endangerment. No doubt, the reason was in the complexities of the dynamic relationship between language and society. Keeping such complexities in mind, I applied a model that took note of the shortcomings of earlier models of language endangerment. The model was proposed by the UNESCO Experts Meeting on Safeguarding Endangered Languages (March 2003) (Brenzinger et al. 2003). Though the model lacked total accuracy, its quantitative nature had the advantage of precisely determining the level of a language's endangerment. The model had already been tested (Lewis, 2005) to measure the vitality of 100 languages of the world and was found to be 'reasonable' and 'feasible'.

The model used the following nine factors to measure language endangerment:

1. Intergenerational language transmission;
2. Absolute numbers of speakers;
3. Proportion of speakers within the total population;
4. Loss of existing language domains;
5. Response to new domains and media;
6. Materials for language education and literacy;
7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies;
8. Community members' attitudes towards their own language;
9. Amount and quality of documentation.

As per the framework (see Appendx-2 for its detailed description) a score (from 0 to 5) was assigned to each of the factors. The combined scores would then provide a measure of the level of endangerment. It should be noted that no single

factor should be considered in isolation since a language that is relatively secure in terms of one factor may require attention due to other factors. In order to complement the quantitative nature of the framework, I also used qualitative data which provided us with a balanced picture of Remun.

Data Elicitation

I used structured interviews and participant observations in eliciting data for my research. The structured interviews contained 27 questions written in both English and Bahasa Malaysia (see Appendix-1). Questions were divided into four major sections. The first section elicited the respondents' demographic and language proficiency information. The second section dealt with the language use of respondents in a variety of domains like home, school, work place, etc. The third section concerned respondents' attitudes to their language and language use. And the final section asked questions regarding respondents' level of awareness about their language's endangerment.

I selected 37 respondents from three Remun villages, namely Remun, Triboh, and Semukoi-A. Each village represented 12 to 13 respondents. In selecting respondents, I made sure that a cross-section of respondents was represented in terms of sex, educational levels, and marital status. When age was concerned, I preferred younger respondents to older ones. In administering questionnaires, I took help of some Remun native speakers who also had a basic proficiency in English. The questionnaires administered in May and June 2007. I stayed with three Remun familes during my research and was able to mix closely with the Remun people and observe their language use and their attitude to language.

A profile of respondents is given in Table-2 below:

Table-2: Social Profile of Respondents

Age	**15-30**	**31-45**
n=34	18	16
%	53	47

Occupation	**Public/Private Service**	**Self-employed**	**Unemployed**
n=34	11	11	12
%	32	32	36

Male/Female	M	F
n=34	20	14
%	59	41

Marital Status	Married	Endogamous	Exogamous	Single
n=34	17	6	11	17
%	50	35	65	50

Education	Primary	Secondary	Post Secondary
n=34	3	23	8
%	9	67	24

Analysis and Discussion

In what follows, I present the findings of my research and analyze their significance from the perspective of language endangerment. The findings are based on the evaluation framework mentioned above.

Table-3: Languages Remuns Can Speak (Kpg. Remun+Triboh+Semukoi)

Languages	R	I	B	SM	M	E	C	L
All age groups (n=34)	33	13	16	7	30	20	1	1
%	97	38	47	21	88	59	3	3
Age: (15-30)	17	7	5	3	15	5	0	1
% (out of the above age group)	94	39	28	17	83	28	0	6
Age: 31-60	16	6	11	4	15	15	1	0
% (out of the above age group)	100	37	69	25	94	94	6	0

Intergenerational Language Transmission and Proportion of Speakers

Remun settlements are closely surrounded by a variety of demographically more dominant ethnic groups such as Iban, Bidayuh, and Malay. Moreover, English and Chinese, due to their commercial significance, have considerable influence in the area. Consequently, Remuns are prone to being multilinguals and their language choice at any given moment is constrained by such factors as place, interlocutor, and situation. Though it is necessary for Remuns to be multilingual,

it is imperative to examine if such a situation hinders their mother tongue transmission to the younger generation. Table-3 below lists the languages the respondents report they can speak.

Table-4: Languages Remun Children Mostly Use

Languages	R	I	M	E	B
n=18	14	10	11	2	2
%	78	56	61	11	11

Kpg.=Kampung (Village), R=Remun, I=Iban, B=Bidayuh, SM=Sarawak Malay, M=Bahasa Malaysia, E=English, C=Chinese, L=Lahanan

As indicated in Table-3 above, while all the respondents of the 31-60 age group are able to use their mother tongue, all their younger counterparts of the 15-30 age group are not capable of speaking the language. This is sign of discontinuity in intergenerational transmission of Remun. In addition, we will find later that those who speak Remun cannot do so in all domains. Thus in view of Factor-1, we can assign the score 4 that indicates that 'the language is used by some children in all domains; it is used by all children in limited domains'. On the other hand, based on Factor-3 that looks into the proportion of speakers within the total reference group, we can also assign the score 4 to the language. The score corresponds to the category of 'unsafe' that states 'Nearly all speak the language'.

Absolute Numbers of Speakers

Though absolute population numbers alone are not enough for a clear indication of the relative endangerment of a language, a smaller group is likely to be under greater pressure than a larger group. In terms of numerical strength, Remun seems to be in a weaker position than 10 other Sarawakian languages that have more than 10,000 speakers. On the other hand, the language appears to be in a more advantageous position than 16 other Sarawakian languages that have 400 speakers on average. However, as numerical strength is relative, I am not able to assign any score to the language based on the factor.

Loss of Existing Language Domains

Table-5: Language Use in the Home Domain						
Languages	**R %**	**I %**	**M %**	**B %**	**E %**	**L %**
Spouse	53	47	29	18	41	0
Children	47	47	6	18	24	0
Siblings	91	21	6	3	3	0
Parents	94	9	3	6	0	3
Grandparents	94	15	0	9	0	3

Language Use in the Home Domain

The home is the heart of family life and the domain where a language will survive, no matter what happens in the outside world. When a language encounters adversarial situations in a country, the home becomes often the last place where speakers can put up effective resistance. As far as the use of Remun in the home domain is concerned, Table-5 shows that a significant portion of respondents (53%) do not speak Remun to their children. Moreover, a good number of respondents (47%) do not speak Remun to their spouses. However, the use of the language largely increases significantly with siblings and reaches its highest level with parents and grandparents. As for other languages, Iban plays a significant role in Remun households. In particular, its use with the spouse (47%) is quite notable.

Language Use in the Non-home Domain

Remuns, like other ethnic communities, no longer confine their lives to households and forests. Because of changes in the way they live, Remuns are increasingly coming into contact with speakers of other languages.

Table-6: Language Use in the Non-home Domain						
Languages	**R %**	**I %**	**M %**	**B %**	**E %**	**SM %**
Friends	82	62	71	41	26	18
Workplace	13	25	88		56	13
School	33	93	100	47	0	20
Supermarket	0	18	94	24	26	12

To account for the Remuns' language choice in the non-home domain, Table-6 provides a list of domains for reported language use. The data of Remun's use in external domains clearly show the polyglossic nature of their communication. Their highest use of mother-tongue is found in their interaction with friends. However, such use is relatively negligible in the workplace. In supermarkets, they don't use their mother-tongue at all. As far as the use of other languages is concerned, Iban and Bahasa Malaysia fare significantly in their schools whereas Bahasa Malaysia and English are largely used in the workplace and supermarkets. Based on Factor-4, we may assign at best score 3 to Remun that corresponds to 'dwindling domains' as per our framework.

Response to New Domains and Media

Remun has, as my observations suggest, practically little chance of responding to new domains and media. The language is not used in any domains that connect the Remuns to the outside world. It is used neither in the media nor in education. Nor is there any effort on part of the Malaysian government or the local community to extend the use of the language in such domains. Rather, signs of its diminishing domains are clear from Table-7. It shows that a good number of words used in everyday affairs are giving way to such dominant languages as Bahasa Malaysia and Iban. Such words include, among others, 'dress', 'food', 'eat', 'see', 'friend', 'later', 'quick', 'stupid', 'trousers', etc. In addition, Remun idioms are also being replaced by simpler and literal expressions (given below), a clear symptom of language decay. Based on Factor-5, we can assign Zero (0) to the language to record how 'the language is not used in any new domains'.

Materials for Language Education and Literacy

Remun is yet to have a written form. As Iban has a written form and a tradition of being used in school and public places, Remuns often adopt the Iban alphabet in writing their language. In view of the absence of Remun orthography, I assign the score zero (0) to the language on Factor-6 that assesses the existence of materials available for language education and literacy.

Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies

In Malaysia, governmental and institutional language attitudes to indigenous languages including Remun, appear to be neither protective nor, at least apparently, repressive. In colonial time, while English was taught to the elites, Malay was offered to the masses (Pennycook 1998).

Table-7: Some Lexical Differences in the Use of Remun between the Younger and Older Generations

Older Generation	Younger Generation	Languages the Words Borrowed From
Kelatang (Dress)	Baju	Bahasa Malaysia
Ngatong (Later)	Nanti	Bahasa Malaysia
Ngilau (See)	Meda	Iban main
Kayu (Food)	Lauk	Bahasa Malaysia/Iban Main
Tegeran lengan (Eat)	Makai	Iban main
Ngitung atap/rasau (Sleep)	Tidur	Bahasa Malaysia
Besulu (Lover/Friend)	Beciuta	Bahasa Malaysia
Reti (Meaning)	Maksud	Bahasa Malaysia
Pangin (Room)	Bilik	Bahasa Malaysia
Lebulan (Stupid)	Bodoh	Bahasa Malaysia
Entau Medak (I Don't Know)	Enda Nemu	Iban Main
anteh (Quick)	Cepat	Bahasa Malaysia
Tanchut (Trousers)	Tanchut (Trousers)	Bahasa Malaysia

After the independence of Malaysia in 1957, English gradually gave way to Malay as a medium of instruction. However, questions of educating children through their respective mother tongues arose from time to time, leading to the development of some policy documents. For example, the Cheesman Plan in 1946 stipulated "the provision of free primary education through the use of the mother tongue" (Puteh 2006). But no policies could be implemented due to the lack of power to enforce it. Then a number of education policies were adopted without any noticeable impact on the children's mother tongue use in school. At present, Malay is the national as well as an official language of Malaysia. Officially, other languages can also be used as a medium of instruction. This can be done in national schools through POL (Pupils' Own Language) in classes. However, in reality, the impact of such official provisions is restricted mainly to Chinese and Tamil. That the government has been gradually withdrawing its support from indigenous languages is clear from the information the Borneo Literature Bureau that collected the indigene's oral traditions into the Sarawak branch of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka that promotes only Malay (Omar 2006: 113). Based on historical as well as

contemporary government policies regarding minority indigenous languages, Remun, can receive score-3, that characterizes government attitude as 'passive assimilation'.

Community Members' Attitudes towards Their Own Language

In my research, I did not attempt a comprehensive assessment of Remuns' attitude toward their language. My analysis of their attitude to their language was restricted merely to livelihood and education. Respondents were asked four questions concerning their attitudes. The first question inquired about the languages they considered most important in their livelihoods. Regarding the language important for livelihood, English obtained the highest position. It was immediately followed by Malay and Iban. As for languages Remuns wanted their children to be taught in school, English was also the most preferred (88%) language.

Table-8: Languages Most Important for Livelihood

Languages	R	I	M	E	C	B
n=34	7	8	14	22	1	2
%	21	24	41	65	3	6

Table-9: Languages Children Should be Taught in School

Languages	R	I	M	E	C	B
n=34	7	9	14	30	1	1
%	21	26	41	88	3	3

R=Remun, I=Iban, M=Bahasa Malaysia, E=English, C=Chinese, B=Bidayuh

Table-10: Remuns' Perceptions of Language Endangerment

Do You Think Your Native Language is Under Threat?

	Yes	No
All Age n=34	19	15
%	56	44
15-30	8	10
%	44	56
31-60	11	5
%	69	31

Table-11: Perceptions about Remun's Potential for Survival		
Do You Think Your Next Generation Will Speak Remun?		
	Yes	**No**
All Age n=34	26	8
%	76	24
15-30	13	5
% (out of the above age group)	72	28
31-60	13	3
% (out of the above age group)	81	19

With reference to the question that asked whether Remun was under threat, a good number of respondents (56%) answered in the affirmative. Most (76%) were optimistic about the potential for their language's survival. Notably, all Remuns were in favor of supporting their language. In consideration of this, I assign score-5 to the language that corresponds to 'equal support' based on Factor-8.

Amount and Quality of Documentation

Remun is yet to be alphabetized, indicating an absence of a corpus. However, few studies have recorded scores of characteristic Remun words (Ray 1913). The language has also not been recorded electronically. In the light of amount and quality of documentation of Remun, I can assign it at best the score one (1) that corresponds to 'inadequate' documentation of the language.

Determining the Level of Endangerment of Remun

Table-12 below shows the overall level of Remun's endangerment in the light of the factors under consideration. As we know, the number in each factor ranged from 0 to 5 and is related to different levels of language endangerment. As Table-13 shows, Remun falls between the categories of 'definitely endangered' and 'severely endangered'

Table-12: Overall Level of Endangerment of Remun		
Factor	**Grade**	**Median Grade**
Factor-1	4	**2.5**
Factor-3	4	
Fadtor-4	3	
Factor-5	0	
Factor-6	0	
Factor-7	3	
Factor-8	5	
Factor-9	1	

Table-13: Overall Measurement of Language Endangerment	
Degree of Endangerment	**Grade**
Safe	5
Unsafe	4
Definitely Endangered	3
Severely Endangered	2
Critically Endangered	1
Extinct	0

In measuring Remun's level of endangerment, I do not claim complete accuracy. Nonetheless, the quantitative nature of the research merits attention in that it allows us to get a clear idea about the extent of Remun's endangerment.

Implications

The findings suggest that Remun is not totally free from the threat of extinction. This conclusion is supported by the fact that almost all Remun children are incapable of speaking it and only forty–seven percent parents speak it to their children. The picture will be grimmer if we project the next generation's use of the language. In this regard, I analyze below in detail how Remun fares in the prevailing regional, national and global power structures.

To begin with, Remun is marginalized as it lies at the bottom of the regional, national, and global power structure. The national language's hegemony

is reflected in its increasing use by Remuns (e.g. 100% in school and 94% in supermarket). English's dominance is clear from its use as a high lingua-franca (e.g. used by 56% in the workplace) and as a language of the household (e.g. used by 41% with spouse).

Moreover, there are also other factors that have led to Remun's gradual loss of ground. First, Remuns developed over time a negative attitude to their language. This may have happened due to its inadequate use. In support of this conclusion, I can attest that Remun is hardly used in such places as school (33%), workplace (13%), and supermarket (0%). Besides, the absence of a Remun script may have also contributed to the development of such an attitude. Perhaps this absence accounts for some Remun's preference for English in schools.

Moreover, Remuns' migration to big cities also contribute to its decay (e.g. 15% identified it as a reason for language loss). Their migration can be attributed to population increase and job opportunities in urban areas. Besides, Remun's absence in the school has played a part in its marginalization (e.g. 10% of the respondents suggested so). Though the Malaysian language education policy allows teaching of students' mother tongues through a policy termed as POL (Pupils' Own Language), it hardly addresses a politically weak language like Remun.

As for measures to be taken for the revitalization of the language, Remuns suggest that they should speak it to the young. Remuns' intention to revive their own language bodes well as a language cannot live unless its speakers choose to speak it (Bradley 2002). In fact, there are no instances of successful language maintenance without participation of the concerned speech community. Successful stories in this respect concern languages like Maori, Hawaiian, Navajo, Lardil Thuaka etc. (Ash et al 2001). Malaysian examples in this regard include the Kadazandusun and the Iranun languages in Sabah, the Iban in Sarawak, and the Semai in Peninsular Malaysia (Smith 2003).

Lessons for Bangladesh

The socio-political circumstances that underlie Remun may be related to Bangladesh's indigenous languages in many ways. Like Remun, we can locate our indigenous languages at the bottom of the linguistic power structure. However, while Malaysia'a official language policy (POL) allows teaching pupils through their mother tongues, Bangladesh's indigenous languages have a less advantageous position as we have no provision for minority language use in our language

policy. In this regard, we may point out that the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh are not yet recognized by its constitution.

In determining whether the factors that expedite Remun's marginalization apply to Bangladesh's indigenous languages, we may take special note of migration, and attitude to language that usually play critical roles in the fate of a language. As far as migration is concerned, Bangladeshi indigenous peoples are likely to show the same trend of moving to cities. After all, both Bangladesh and Malaysia are located in the periphery of a capitalist world system that concentrates development plans in city centers. This may make a language less useful for livelihood than another one which in turn breeds a negative attitude to language.

The case of Remuns' migration to cities brings the whole issue of development into question. It indicates that nation states hardly take indigenous peoples into consideration in chalking out development plans. First, they plan development by leaving out indigenous peoples from their policies. Second, even when they include them, they impose their notion of development on indigenous peoples (i.e. Bangladesh's Kaptai Dam) irrespective of their way of life. This calls for an alternative approach to address the case of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. Moreover, Malaysia's official inclusion of pupils' mother tongues in school has positive implications for reform of Bangladesh's language education policy.

Regarding some (proactive) measures needed to protect Bangladesh's indigenous languages, the example of Remun can offer some directions. In order to revitalize their language, a significant step that they suggested was to speak it to the young generation. Besides, they expressed their desire to document their language and to include it in school curricula. This also suggests that ultimately a community can play the most crucial role in saving its language. Overall, the measures as suggested appear to be vital in ensuring intergenerational transmission of a language and should apply to the Bangladeshi context as well.

Conclusion

The fact that Remuns are showing signs of language loss is indicative of their potential dispossession of many other aspects of their lives such as their culture and knowledge system. No doubt, language endangerment is symptomatic of a flawed politico-economic structure. People never stop using their language voluntarily; they do it only in adversarial socio-political conditions. The Remun language serves as a clear example in this connection.

The fate of Remun indicates that indigenous languages across the world are coming under threat from both global and national languages. As a global language, English often fails to stand up to its (self-legitimizing) promise in cohabiting with other languages and continues to displace them. On the other hand, national languages often take the bulk of resources of nation states, pushing indigenous languages toward extinction. This happens because nation states often subscribe to the old paradigm of declaring one language national which can protect only 287 languages of the world at best. Consequently, it often becomes difficult for indigenous languages to put up with the hegemonies of global and national forces.

However, while the danger facing small languages are many, efforts to resist them are not also rare. Remuns' determination to take their language's fate in their own hands is noteworthy. Such examples abound. We have successful stories of language revival in the cases of Maori, Hebrew and the Kadazandusun languages. No doubt, there exist many more such stories in the world. However, it may be noted that strategies to revitalize languages will vary. But surely, certain strategies apply to all languages, such as the determination of the language group to speak their language and to pass it onto the next generation, etc. Indigenous peoples of the world, irrespective of their contexts, can make use of these principles in their attempt to revitalize and revive their language and culture.

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Appendix-1

Borang soal selidik temuramah

Interview Questionnaire

1. Nama:

   Name:

2. Umur:

   Age:

3. Tempat lahir:

   Place of Birth:

4. Place you are now living at:

5. Status pekerjaan : Kakitangan kerajaan.swasta [ ] Berkerja sendiri [ ]
   Employment Status: Employed [ ] *Self-employed* [ ]

   Tidak berkerja
   Unemployed [ ]

6. Jantina: Lelaki [ ] Perempuan [ ]
   Sex: Male [ ] *Female* [ ]

7. Status perkahwinan: Berkhawin [ ] Bujang [ ] Widow [ ]
   Marital Status: Married [ ] *Single* [ ]

8. Nama bahasa ibunda anda:
   Name of your native language:

9. The ethnic community you are married into:

10. What language do you use to communicate with your spouse?

11. What language do your children mostly use?

12. Bilangan tahun anda bersekolah:
    Number of Years in School:

13. Anda boleh bertutur dalam bahasa:
    Jika lebih daripada satu bahasa, nyatakan bahasa-bahasa tersebut.
    Which language(s) can you speak:

14. Anda paling fasih dalam bahasa:
Which language are you most proficient in:

15. Di sekolah, anda diajar dalam bahasa:
Jika lebih daripada satu bahasa, nyatakan bahasa-bahasa tersebut.
Which language(s) were you taught in school:

16. Bahasa apakah yang anda tuturkan di rumah ketika bercakap:
Jika lebih daripada satu bahasa, nyatakan bahasa-bahasa tersebut.
What language(s) do you speak at home:
Dengan ibu bapa anda:

To your parents:
Dengan anak-anak anda:
To your children:
Dengan adik-beradik anda:
To your brothers and sisters:

Dengan rakan-rakan anda:
To your friends:
Dengan datuk dan nenek anda:
To your grandparents:

17. Bahasa yang paling kerap anda gunakan di pejabat:
Which language do you mostly use at your workplace:

18. Ketika bertutur, adakah anda menggunakan dua atau lebih bahasa yang lain?
Do you mix up two or more languages in your speech?

Ya [ ] Tidak [ ]
Yes [ ] No [ ]

19. Jika anda menggunakan bahasa campur, apakah bahasa yang paling utama/dominan dan apakah bahasa-bahasa lain yang anda gunakan? If you mix up then what is the main language you use and what are the other languages?

Bahasa utama/dominan: Bahasa-bahasa lain:
Main language: *Other language(s):*

20. Pada pandangan anda, bahasa apakah yang paling penting dalam kehidupan anda?
Which language do you think is most important for your livelihood:

21. Pada pandangan anda, kanak-kanak patut diajar dalam bahasa:
Which language(s) do you think should children be taught:

22. Pada pandangan anda, adakah generasi seterusnya akan bertutur dalam bahasa ibunda anda/mereka sendiri
Do you think your next generation will speak your native language?

Ya [ ] Tidak [ ]

Yes [ ] No [ ]

23. Pada pandangan anda, adakah bahasa ibunda anda mengalami ancaman kepupusan?
Do you think your native language is under threat?

Ya [ ] Tidak [ ]

Yes [ ] No [ ]

24. What factors do you think are responsible for this threat?

25. Pada pandangan anda, apakah langkah/cara yang boleh dilakukan oleh komuniti/masyarakat anda bagi menyelamatkan bahasa tersebut?
What do you think your community can do to save your language?

26. Pada pandangan anda, apakah yang patut dilakukan oleh pihak kerajaan bagi menyelamatkan bahsa ibunda anda?
What do you think your government should do to save your native language?

27. Do you think your Remun language is different from the younger/older generation? How is it different? Give some Examples.

Terima kasih atas kerjasama yang pihak anda berikan.
Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix-2: Evaluation Framework

Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission Scale		
Degree of Endangerment	**Grade**	**Speaker Population**
Safe	5	The language is used by all ages, from children up.
Unsafe	4	The language is used by some children in all domains; it is used by all children in limited domains.
Definitively endangered	3	The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.
Severely endangered	2	The language is used mostly by the gra dparental generation and up.
Critically endangered	1	The language is used mostly by very few speakers, of great-grandparental generation.
Extinct	0	There exists no speaker.

Factor 3: Proportion of Speakers Within the Total Reference Group		
Degree of Endangerment	**Grade**	**Proportion of Speakers Within the Total Reference Population**
Safe	5	All speak the language.
Unsafe	4	Nearly all speak the language.
Definitively endangered	3	A majority speak the language
Severely endangered	2	A minority speak the language
Critically endangered	1	Very few speak the language.
Extinct	0	None speak the language.

Factor 4: Loss of Existing Language Domains		
Degree of Endangerment	**Grade**	**Domains and Functions**
Universal use	5	The language is used in all domains and for all functions.
Multilingual parity	4	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.
Dwindling domains	3	The language is in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.
Limited or formal domains	2	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions.
Highly limited domains	1	The language is used only in a very restricted domains and for a very few functions.
Extinct	0	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.

Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media		
Degree of Endangerment	**Grade**	**New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language**
Dynamic	5	The language is used in all new domains.
Robust/active	4	The language is used in most new domains.
Receptive	3	The language is used in many domains.
Coping	2	The language is used in some new domains.
Minimal	1	The language is used only in a few new domains.
Inactive	0	The language is not used in any new domains.

Factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy	
Grade	**Accessibility of Written Materials**
5	There is an established orthography, literacy tradition with grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.
3	Written materials exist and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community; and for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.
1	A practical orthography is known to the community and some material is being written.
0	No orthography is available to the community.

Factor 7: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies		
Degree of Support	**Grade**	**Official Attitudes Toward Language**
Equal support	5	All languages are protected.
Differentiated Support		4 Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious.
Passive Assimilation	3	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.
Active Assimilation	2	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.
Forced Assimilation	1	The dominant language is the sole official language, while non-dominant languages are neither recognized or protected.
Prohibition	0	Minority languages are prohibited.

Factor 8: Community Members' Attitudes toward Their Own Language	
Grade	**Community Members' Attitudes toward Language**
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted.
4	Most members support language maintenance.
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language.

Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation		
Nature of Documentation	**Grade**	**Language Documentation**
Superlative	5	There are comprehensive grammars and dictionaries, extensive texts; constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated highquality audio and video recordings exist.
Good	4	There is one good grammar and a number of adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally-updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.
Fair	3	There may be an adequate grammar or sufficient amount of grammars, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.
Fragmentary	2	There are some grammatical sketches, word-lists, and texts useful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality, with or without any annotation.
Inadequate	1	Only a few grammatical sketches, short wordlists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are of unusable quality, or are completely un-annotated.
Undocumented	0	No material exists.

Second Language Acquisition and Grammar Instruction

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Abstract

Grammar instruction is a contentious issue in the field of second language acquisition. There are arguments about whether or not grammar instruction helps L2 learning. The paper reviews literature on second language acquisition research and theories to present different perspectives on the teaching of grammar. Research suggests that although grammar instruction impacts L2 learning positively it is imperative to take a cautious approach while incorporating grammar teaching in the curriculum.

Second Language Acquisition and Grammar Instruction

O'Grady, Archibald, Aronoff and Rees-Miller (2005, pp. 425-426) maintain that form–focused instruction refers to two practices in the L2 classroom: instruction about the target language and overt correction. This view entails the debate about whether or not the teaching of grammar is helpful for L2 learners, and if at all, how grammar teaching helps second language acquisition. Furthermore, if grammar instruction helps L2 learning, which grammar items should be taught and what would be the role of error correction, one of the by-products of grammar teaching? Although there has been ample evidence in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) that L2 learners learn the grammatical structures they are taught, there is room for caution based on some theoretical grounds (R. Ellis, 2006). In sum, current research and theories in SLA warrant an investigation of the role of the teaching of grammar in L2 learning. With a view to examining the effectiveness of grammar instruction within the purview of current research and

theories in SLA, this paper surveys the literature on the issue. More specifically, this paper seeks to ascertain whether grammar teaching is helpful for second language learning. It intends to determine which grammar items should be taught and what the role of error correction is.

Research shows that grammar teaching does have a positive impact on learners' "interlanguage" (Selinker, 1972) development, although some SLA theorists would refute this claim. Current literature maintains that selection of grammar items should be in line with various SLA theories such as Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1964) and Markedness Differential Hypothesis (Eckman, 1977. However, some scholars are for using frequency test for choosing the most useful grammar items for second language learners (Biber & Reppen, 2002). Current literature on the topic also indicates that error correction does help L2 learners positively and help solve their problems in the target language (R. Ellis, 1997, 1998, 2006).

Historical Background

To examine the relationship between grammar instruction and L2 learning, we must look at the historical background regarding how SLA theories have shaped various language teaching methodologies. Since teaching methodologies have an impact on the way the content is presented in the actual classroom context, it is relevant to see how the teaching of grammar in FL/SL classrooms has evolved over time.

Celce-Murcia (1991) has surveyed the historical background of major methodological approaches in language teaching in the last several years. In her survey Celce-Murcia recaps four major approaches to language teaching. She maintains that the audio-lingual approach (e.g., Fries, 1945; Lado, 1964) to language teaching was a direct offshoot of behaviorism. Behaviorists believed that language learning was a consequence of habit formation. Likewise, proponents of the audio-lingual approach maintained that language learning was the consequence of "habit formation" and "overlearning." Mimicry of forms and certain patterns of sentences received constant emphasis and the teachers were told to correct all errors of learners. Errors were seen as interference from the L1 (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 460). Behaviorism, however, failed to explain all aspects of language learning and eventually lost popularity. In fact, the audio-lingual approach to language teaching would rarely go beyond sentence-level drills and would fail to account for other aspects of language skills such as correct pronunciation, development of pragmatic knowledge, improving writing skills

and so on.

The cognitive-code approach was influenced by the work of linguist such as Chomsky (1959) and a psychologist like Miller (e.g., Miller & Buckhout, 1973; cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991). This approach views language learning as hypothesis formation and rule acquisition and not merely habit formation (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 461). Grammar was considered important for the sake of learning the "rules" of the language, either deductively or inductively. Errors were considered normal byproducts of language learning and correction of errors constituted an important part of the language teaching-learning process. The sources of errors were seen not only as L1 transfer but also developmental. It was maintained that errors were natural in L2 learning and were the result of the internal complexities of the target language.

The comprehension approach (e.g., Wintiz, 1981) sees comprehension to be the primary focus in language learning. Proponents of this approach believe that the development of comprehension skills must precede the development of production skills. Some practitioners of the comprehension approach carefully select the grammatical items in their syllabus and teach grammar inductively. Others, however, argue that grammar should be excluded from the syllabus because grammar does not necessarily facilitate language learning, for at best it may help learners become aware of various language forms. They believe that error correction is unnecessary since learners will self-correct their errors when they are exposed to "more complex," "rich" and "meaningful input" in the L2 (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 461).

Lately, the communicative approach to language teaching has been the prevalent language teaching methodology. This approach originated in the work of linguists such as Hymes (1972) and Halliday (1973). The proponents of this approach claim that the main goal of SL/FL learning is communication and accordingly, the FL/SL syllabus should address this goal by incorporating more content-based, meaningful, and contextualized tasks in the curriculum. There is a great deal of dispute among linguists and teaching methodologists with regard to the extent and type of grammatical instruction teachers should provide to learners in the communicative approach. Since communication is the main objective of language learning, according to the communicative approach errors and error feedback should be of secondary importance for language teachers.

Does Grammar Instruction Help L2 Learning?

The brief historical description presented above shows how various SLA theories helped evolve second language teaching methodologies over time. The account also shows why it is difficult to come up with consistent, all-encompassing, and uniform teaching practices for L2 classrooms. Since language learning is a complex phenomenon, no single theory can address all aspects of the language learning process. Over the years linguists and teaching methodologists have attempted to come up with effective means of language teaching and have provided insights into the complex language learning process.

Whether or not the teaching of grammar helps L2 learners in learning the target language and whether grammar teaching should be incorporated in the L2 syllabus has generated much debate in SLA circles. There are theorists both for and against explicit grammar instruction in L2 classroom. Before moving on to examine studies relating to the effectiveness of the teaching of grammar it is necessary at this point to be familiar with a dichotomy used in the discussions of grammar instruction in communicative approach, namely, "focus on forms" and "focus on form".

Common terminologies used for dealing with grammar in a communicative setting are "focus on forms" and "focus on form". These were proposed by Long (1991; cited in Gass & Selinker, 2001). "Focus on forms" is the "structure-of-the-day" approach whereby focus is on the *form* and activities are directed towards a single grammatical form (e.g., subject-verb agreement). On the other hand, in "focus on form" approach, the focus is more on *meaning;* and attention to the forms arises out of communicative activities. Focused tasks are required to elicit occasions for using predetermined grammatical structures.

It has been argued that there is evidence that focus on form in L2 instruction facilitates SL learning (R. Ellis, 2002, p. 223). N. C. Ellis (2002) thus maintains that form-focused instruction is "facilitative" or "even necessary" for adult L2 learning. However, other theorists believe that FFI does not have as much impact on L2 acquisition. Krashen (1993) for example, continues to argue that focus on form has very little impact on L2 learning and he describes its effects as "peripheral."

In his survey of studies on form-focused instruction, R. Ellis (2002, p. 232) found that the key factors in FFI were the nature of the target structure and the length of treatment. He maintained that FFI instruction was likely to have a better chance of success if it was used for simple morphological features such as

verb forms, articles, etc. as opposed to more complex structures such as passive sentence, or Spanish clitic pronouns. Further, N. C. Ellis (2002) argues that extended treatment involving FFI is likely to achieve more success than limited treatment. In other words, frequency of treatment is a major factor in determining successful L2 acquisition. Finally, R. Ellis (2002) points out that the variables that determine the success of the instruction are "the complexity of the target structure, the extent of the instruction, and the availability of the target structure in non-instructional input" (p. 234).

Which Grammar Items Should Be Taught?

Although the discussions above may indicate that form-focused instruction indeed helps L2 learning, a few obvious questions are in order: How should teachers incorporate grammar instruction in L2 curricula? Should grammar be taught communicatively? Should production skills override reception? Should grammar be taught through practice drills? Exactly, which grammatical items should be taught? Should teachers teach grammar explicitly, or is it better to teach implicitly so learners acquire grammatical knowledge in a more natural way? Should teachers correct grammatical errors? There are countless questions such as these that keep L2 researchers and theorists engaged and they constitute some of the most intriguing research agenda in the field.

Research shows that the answers to the above questions are divisive rather than decisive. One main reason behind the division of opinions is various diverging SLA theories on the issue. For example, while SLA theorists like Krashen (1982) believe in "natural" order and "meaningful input" for the acquisition of a second language, more recent theorists like N. C. Ellis (2002) opine that L2 learners' efforts can be facilitated by providing them with as much exposure as possible. In other words, for Krashen, grammar teaching may prove ineffective unless learners are ready to acquire the structures that they are taught. The opposing views suggest that when L2 learners are exposed to different grammatical structures, even those that are unfamiliar to them, it is likely that the exposure would help them better understand the target language. Overall, in spite of these differences the popular belief remains that grammar instruction does help/facilitate L2 learners' development of the interlanguage and that "there is ample evidence to demonstrate that teaching grammar works" (R. Ellis, 2006, p. 102).

Having surveyed the literature on the topic of grammar teaching in SLA we may sum up the status of the issue as follows. Recent SLA theories suggest that grammatical rules taught should emphasize not only the forms but also the

meanings of the structures (R. Ellis, 2006, p.102). Which is to say, while learners should be exposed to grammatical structures communicatively, they should also be made aware of the use of these structures. In this connection, Celce-Murcia (1991) argues that grammar should be taught through meaning. For example, the teaching of prepositions in English can be presented so that learners can "view" grammatical rules in "service." Instructors can use "fully-illustrated" and "well-demonstrated" (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 467) examples to show various spatial meanings of prepositions:

1 a. Bob put the book *in* the box./The book is *in* the box.
b. Bob put the book *on* the table./The book is *on* the table.

2 a. Ann threw the ball *in* the basket./ The ball is *in* the basket.
b. Ann threw the ball *on* the floor./The ball is *on* the floor. (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 467)

Subsequently, L2 learners can be asked to describe similar situations to practice the use of other prepositions. Examples 1 & 2 above are meant for teaching English prepositions. One salient feature of these examples is that for each pair of examples (e.g., Bob put the book *in* the box./The book is *in* the box) instructors can have learners "view" the functions of English prepositions rather than have them memorize their usage. For example, the meaning of "in" can be clearer to learners when they actually "see" the book "inside" the box.

Although it is generally believed that both "focus on form" and "focus on forms" can be effective for grammar teaching, their success largely depend on how teachers implement these practices in actual classroom settings. Arguing in line with one of the principal tenets of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (see Lado, 1964), R. Ellis (2006) maintains that there might be an advantage in teaching grammatical rules that are different from learners' L1. Eckman's (1977) Markedness Differential Hypothesis provides valuable insights into the selection of grammatical rules or topics. According to Eckman, teaching the grammatical rules that are more "marked," or rarer and less frequently used can be of more help for L2 learners regardless of their L1. For example, a structure such as

3 a. He made me *follow* him. (R. Ellis, 2006, p. 89)
b. We let him *call*.

may be more useful to L2 learners considering the relatively "rare" or more "marked" construction of this type of sentences (e.g., example 3) in which an

infinitive without "to" is followed by the verb *make* (and let). More specifically, example 3 is not a common construction in that generally English infinitives are preceded by "to", such as

4 a. He wanted me *to go* there.
b. We asked him *to run.*

The main difference between examples 3 and 4 then is that after the main verbs *make* and *let* we do not use the infinitive with a *to* (e.g., *follow, call* in example 3); but after verbs such as *want,* ask, when they are used as main verbs, we use "to" with infinitives (e.g., *to go, to run* in example 4).

A Few More Relevant Issues About Grammar Instruction

One of the inevitable byproducts of any kind of grammar instruction is learners' errors. In spite of a long-drawn debate on the issue (e.g., Ferris, 1999, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2007; and Truscott & Hsu, 2008), it is widely accepted that feedback on errors does help learners' interlanguage development (R. Ellis, 1997). Since global errors could be a cause for miscommunication, it is likely that error feedback on this kind of errors is more important than local errors (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 469). Some of the options of error feedback proposed by R. Ellis (1998, p. 52) are explicit correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. R. Ellis (2006) maintains that corrective feedback is as important as the teaching of grammar itself. Further, the best feedback could be given "using a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based" (p. 102). One obvious question relating to the error feedback involves what type of feedback is most effective. One way researchers attempt to understand the effectiveness of error feedback is by analyzing learners' *uptake* (R. Ellis, 1998). That is to say, they want to ascertain to what extent learners are able to internalize the feedback and are subsequently successful in repairing the incorrect forms.

As far as selecting materials for grammar instruction is concerned, given the enormous amount of language data around it is difficult for teachers to choose the right kinds of materials for an appropriate context or an appropriate group of learners. It is also difficult to select the appropriate topic for grammar instruction. In their research, Biber and Reppen (2002) find that "information based on actual frequency and context of use" can help teachers and materials developers alike in determining the grammar topics that need to be taught. This can, in turn, help teachers provide "meaningful input," one of the main tenets of

Krashen's (1983) "input hypothesis," to L2 learners. Biber and Reppen (2002, p. 207) also suggest that with the rise of corpus-based analysis, it is now more practical to include grammatical items in the curriculum after conducting frequency studies. Although this may not provide the ultimate solution to the problem regarding which grammatical items should be taught, frequency studies do provide interesting insights into the grammar teaching in L2 classes.

Another relevant issue about the teaching of grammar is adopting an appropriate teaching method so that learners' "uptake" could be maximized. R. Ellis (1998) notes that explicit grammar teaching explains grammatical rules and takes the form of written or oral presentations of these rules. In a separate account, Fotos and Ellis (1991) maintain that instructors could also adopt the options of direct and indirect explicit as well as direct and indirect consciousness–raising grammar instruction, although both have certain advantages and disadvantages. Further, R. Ellis (1998) talks about the deductive and inductive modes of grammar instruction which are direct offshoots of the language teaching methodologies such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual method in vogue in the 1960's. In grammar-translation method learning grammatical rules of the target language was most important. Also, the focus always was on the translation of the L1 into the target structures. One problem with this method, however, is that communication is not considered a primary focus in instruction. As a result, learners with good knowledge in grammar would fail in communicative tasks in the target language. The audio-lingual method, as discussed earlier, promotes language learning as habit formation, which by no means explains all aspects of acquiring target language structures.

While it is important to follow the appropriate teaching methods, it is equally important to find how instruction can help learners practice grammar skills. Conceding the crucial role of grammar teaching in SLA, Zhonggang Gao (2001) declares that grammar instruction can be used to increase adult L2 learners' analytical abilities which may eventually help their chances of more efficient second language acquisition. He argues that in order to help L2 learners effectively, grammar should not be taught in an isolated context but rather should be contextualized. He argues that "grammar is not an end; it is a means." (p. 333)

Another way learners can develop their grammar skills is by practicing production drills. Although language learning involves both receptive (i.e., listening, reading) and production skills (i.e., speaking, writing), it is commonplace that learners practice production skills more. Although linguists such as Corder (1967; cited in R. Ellis, 1998, p. 51) believe that L2 learners have

their own built-in syllabus and will follow a specific order of acquisition no matter what they are taught, Schmidt (1994) disagrees. He argues that although learners may not be able to learn entirely new grammar forms, production practice involving new forms helps them become more fluent and conscious about the accurate usage of the partially acquired forms in their interlanguage. Further room for uncertainty, however, remains regarding what type of production practice, whether text manipulation or text creating, helps learners best in acquiring target structures (Castagnaro, 1991).

Discussions

The accounts above problematize the issue of grammar teaching without providing any concrete solutions. In fact, this typifies the very nature of the literature available on the topic. While SLA theorists and researchers come up with interesting hypotheses and fresh set of research findings it is always difficult to provide generalizable principles for language instruction that meet various individualistic and contextual variables. It must be conceded, however, that the ongoing conversations regarding grammar instruction in the field of SLA and TESOL provide us with new insights into the topic and help us become aware about nuanced facets of L2 learning.

Having reviewed the literature on the role of grammar teaching in SLA, this paper concludes with the following observations, which though note based on any empirical data will surely add to the already existing body of knowledge about grammar instruction in SLA:

1. Even though some SLA researchers (e.g., Krashen, 1982) do not agree that grammar teaching helps develop L2 learners' interlanguage system, it seems plausible that some degree of grammar instruction helps learners understand and apply the knowledge about the target language they have acquired thus.

2. Although there is dispute surrounding "focus on form" and "focus on forms" it seems more logical for instructors to use both approaches interchangeably, providing them the option to choose between the two depending on all contextual needs and circumstances.

3. Error feedback should be incorporated into the curriculum, because unless learners are shown the incorrect forms it is likely that they may not be able to identify problems on their own. In spite of disagreement about error

correction (e.g., Ferris, 1999; Truscott, 1996) it seems more reasonable in L2 learning to adopt different correction modes such as elicitation and explicit correction interchangeably, depending on various contextual factors such as learners' proficiency level, the nature and level of language instruction, and so on. Instructors may inform learners what mode of error correction they should follow for a particular lesson or course. This would help learners become aware about what is expected from them and teach them to become more engaged and responsible about the entire language learning process. Additionally, if learners are informed about various error correction modes instructors should follow in the lesson, it would remove any confusion learners may have about instructor's teaching practices.

4. While some theorists maintain that grammar should be taught communicatively, it may not be a plausible idea when one considers various contextual constraints within which L2 learning takes place. More specifically, grammar instruction through communicative approach may prove ineffective in large classes. Considering the amount of work instructors would already have to invest for *planning* a lesson so that "focus on form" and "focus on meaning" are appropriately integrated, it is difficult to imagine how they can accomplish grammar instruction communicatively while doing well in it and retaining the interest for the challenge for long.

5. Most current research focus on the effectiveness of grammar instruction, identifying the grammar rules that need to be taught, specifying grammar structures that learners have difficulty with, and underscoring materials that need to be incorporated for grammar instruction. In literature it is customary to relate effectiveness to the short-term "effects" of grammar instruction. Considering that a great body of SLA research (see Major, 1992; Taura, 2008; Oxford, 1982) has looked into the retention and attrition of various linguistic skills at various levels (e.g., phonology, syntax), it would be worth exploring learners' retention abilities of grammar instruction. This line of SLA research may be useful in eliciting understanding regarding what aspects of grammar instruction help learners retain the *obtained* linguistic/grammar knowledge over time.

Conclusion

This paper has surveyed literature relating to SLA and the teaching of grammar. It has shown how grammar instruction is embedded in current SLA research and theories. Research shows that there are contrasting theories in the field regarding whether or not grammar teaching helps L2 development. In spite of disagreement it seems that the majority of researchers believe that grammar teaching has positive impact on L2 learning. Related research sheds light on which grammar items are most helpful for L2 learners' interlanguage development and the role of error correction in it. While looking at various aspects of grammar instruction in SLA, this paper argues that materials developers can consider Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1964) and Markedness Differential Hypothesis (Eckman, 1977) in choosing grammatical items for a particular group of L2 learners. Finally, it seems that an exploration of learners' retention abilities of grammar instruction could provide L2 educators with a better idea about aspects of grammar instruction help learners obtain "long-term" linguistic knowledge.

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Introducing Poetry in the Language Classroom to Help Develop Learner's Speaking

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Abstract

This paper aims at discussing the pros and cons of using poetical works or poetry in the language classroom. There is an attempt made to justify the use of poetry in language teaching by throwing some light on the existing debate surrounding the issue. It will also try to demonstrate how poetry may be effectively used in the class to help develop a learner's speaking ability through discussion activities.

1. Introduction

The foremost reason for introducing and using literature in the language classroom is to encourage and expand students' creativity and the faculty of imagination. However, deciding on an appropriate text for a class is a crucial issue mainly because, when choosing a text, language difficulty has to be considered, so that access is not restricted and learners can attain a basic level of comprehension. McKay (1986), however, cautions against simplification of texts, since this may result in diluting information and reducing cohesion and readability. Students also need to be able to identify *with* the experience, the thoughts and situations depicted in the text, in order 'to make connection to personal or social significance outside the text' (Brumfit, 1985: 108). Therefore, as McRae (1991:126) suggests, a good choice would be any text that encourages or invites interaction with the world of ideas, a text that 'affirms, confirms and expands the indispensable human capacity to read the world'.

The term 'literature' now encompasses a wide range of genres from popular fiction, to advertising and film in order to make the whole teaching/learning process more attractive and interesting. However, for the sake of the present paper, the focus will be on the use of one particular genre, poetry, and its relevance and application in the language classroom, especially in developing learner's speaking skills.

'Poetry', is often used in the restricted sense of the classical canon of literature; however, in this study, this is not the case. This article aims at discussing how poems can be used to arouse learner's interest and curiosity and make the foreign language learning process a pleasing and rewarding experience. Poetry is chosen because of its poetic qualities, which, if explored properly could be a source of immense satisfaction. Here poetry is not used as a means of testing memorising ability, as in many cases where learners in a traditional learning environment are asked to memorise a poem, without even understanding what the poem stands for. The emphasis throughout is on using poetry to foster the meaning of language used, i.e. on helping students to become 'language-users', rather than on providing them with knowledge about language (van Lier, 1995:9). In this 'whole-language' approach learners are exposed to meaningful 'chunks' of language. This means firstly that the chunk of language are much larger than those traditionally presented in the EFL classroom and secondly that these larger chunks of language are integrated within a clear social context which they can relate to and imply in their own day-to-day lives.

Poetry recognises syntax, invents its own vocabulary, freely mixes registers and creates its own punctuation. The genre draws creatively on a full range of archaisms and dialects, and generates vivid new metaphors along with patterning sounds and ordering rhythms. However, it is interesting to note that, these effects and linguistic devices are also found in advertisements, nursery rhymes, jokes, riddles, political slogans, hymns and songs. However, it is probably true to say that poetry employs a higher concentration of such linguistic devices or effects than other forms of discourse. For this reason, as pointed out by Leech (1988) and Widdowson (1984) poetry has been described as deviating from the norms of language. Poetry often has the quality of a story; usually many poems narrate a story, having a beginning, middle and an ending, initiating further interpretation, understanding and thought.

2. Usefulness of poetry as a text in the classroom enhancing learner's language ability, especially speaking

As observed by Bygate (1987: vii), 'Speaking is in many ways an undervalued skill… which deserves attention.' In Bangladesh, in the English language usage ability scenario, students are able to read works in the original English version, but are still hesitant to ask for a glass of water in the language. Although students are quite good in reading and writing, they are unfortunately weak in their speaking ability, even after twelve years of compulsory English learning. Most language teachers agree that to get students talking is difficult although most satisfying.

Moreover, as pointed out by Wilkins (cited in Bygate,1987:6), when classroom activity is determined by the teacher, 'we are protecting [the learner] from the additional burden of having to make his own choices', resulting in the learner not being 'able to transfer his knowledge from a language-learning situation to a language-using situation'. The difference between *'knowledge'* about a language and *'skill'* in using it, as noted by Bygate (1987:3), is crucial in the teaching of speaking.

Now the argument that poetry frequently breaks the 'rules' of language, can open up other possibilities as by so doing, it communicates with the reader in a fresh and original way. Moreover, it is important to note that language may not be quite as rigidly governed by rules as usually thought. This is even truer in the case of 'speaking'. Listening to any conversation for a considerable period of time will reveal this fact. Two native speakers of English having a relaxed casual conversation may disclose examples of slips of the tongue which are actually 'incorrect' uses of grammar and vocabulary.

Conversely, most teachers would agree that it is pedagogically useful and necessary to provide students with idealised language rules. However, when using poetry in the classroom, the teacher could in fact exploit the more 'deviant' or unusual use of language found in it as a basis for expanding the student's language awareness and interpretative abilities. For example, if a poem contains unusual grammar then students could be asked to pinpoint in what way it is unusual and to contrast this with more commonly accepted uses. In so doing, they would attain some kind of conclusion about the stylistic effect conveyed by the language, and hence the meaning of the poem. All of these would initiate discussion and interpretation and multifarious application of language. A poem that mixes formal and informal registers

could be used as a starting point for a lesson sensitising students to different uses of register.

In selecting a poem for the class, teachers need to ensure that they choose poems suitably graded to the level of the students and that they are given as much help as possible in understanding the language of the poem. It should also be noted that some students may actually understand the literal meaning of each element in the poem without being able to engage in an interpretation of its deeper meaning. In such cases, teachers may devise activities which will smoothly lead students towards making interpretations of their own, rather than demanding that they generate their own interpretations from the start. All these will enable the teacher to decide how poetry can be of value to the language learner.

2.1 Poems as texts - linguistic and universal value

It is important that texts should provide good resources for a variety of classroom activities in order to give students more chance to gain true familiarity with any work as a whole. Most importantly, the texts should have the capacity to engage the interest of the student. For example, as noted by Collie and Slater (1987), while short stories offer greater variety than longer texts, offering greater chance of finding something to appeal to each individual's tastes and interests, poems offer an ever richer and varied range and are a source of much enjoyment.

However, a poem may not always be a favoured item in the classroom mainly because of its deviant and densely metaphorical use of language. The element of the out-of-the-ordinary and unexpected nature of poetry makes it both more attention-grabbing and awe–inspiring, initiating curiosity and motivation in the reader. However, teaching poetry becomes especially difficult when the emphasis is put on the issue of grammatical correctness. In the traditional EFL scenario, there was little place for literature, poetry in particular, with its deviations in language usage and in uses of unusual imagery, since 'it [poetry] is misleading as a model [in teaching approach]…that insists on the gradual accumulation of correct forms' (Widdowson, 1984:162).

However, the use of poetry in teaching language is increasingly being seen as a road to learning by ESL practitioners from both philosophical and practical perspectives (Bakhtin 1986; Carter and Long 1990; Widdowson, 1975). As pointed out by Hess (2003:20):

> …poetry, seems to bring out emotions and entering a literary text, under the guidance of appropriate teaching, brings about the kind of participation almost no other text can produce. When we read, understand and interpret a poem we learn language through the expansion of our experience with a larger human reality.

Collie and Slater (1989) promote literature as authentic material that deals with universal human concerns, and invites personal involvement. They add that the brilliant concision and strong imagery of poetry enable the learner to experience the power of language outside the straightjacket of more standard written structure and lexis. Poems often explore themes of universal concern and embody life experiences, and thus initiate a strong response from the reader. There is also the initial advantage of length as many poems are appropriate to a single classroom lesson. Provided that learners are given help with the necessary personal and linguistic resources, they are expected to attain the fuller enjoyment of a poem that comes from a sense of sharing the poet's created world and becoming, as readers, a new creator of meaning.

Widdowson (1989) also argues that poetry has characteristics which make it especially well qualified to assist learners in developing their ability to use language, and to put linguistic forms to the service of meaning. He adds that in the interpretation of poetry, there is a necessary interdependence between the understanding of formal structure and the recognition of a communicative effect. Meaning is a function of a focus on form and an increased awareness of the subtleties of poetic representation and inevitably entails an increased awareness of the signifying potential of grammar. Although, poetry and grammar, linguistic analysis and literary interpretation, have by tradition been seen as distinct polarities and in opposition, according to Widdowson (1989) they can be combined for mutual benefit, and can initiate practical pedagogy from a broader educational perspective.

According to Hess (2003), through its drama, intensity, and tightly controlled emotional context, a good poem is suitable for close reading, with much language unfolding as the reader goes along with newer understanding and interpretations of the same verse and, as a result, much good language practice. In dealing with a poem in the classroom, she suggests a nine-step technique that includes, 'trigger', 'vocabulary preview', 'bridge, listen, react, and share', 'language', picture', 'more language', 'meaning and spin-off'. She also provides a description of each step and demonstrates how they should work to initiate the best output. Hess claims that she had applied the formula to any number of

poems, and always found it enjoyable, linguistically rich, and communicatively satisfying.

Moreover, Maley and Duff (1989) point out that although, for many years now, literature, in particular poetry, has not been regarded as 'proper' material for foreign language learning, the rhythm and cadence of poetic language that we had tasted during childhood, continues to flow as a deep undercurrent through our lives. In contrast to these writers, however, the whole thrust of the structuralist approach tended to exclude literature, and the utilitarian favouritism towards the communicative approach deflected attention away from anything which did not seem to have a practical purpose. When literature was included in traditional language programmes, the emphasis was on the use of texts for commentary and analysis or merely for illustration. In the case of poetry, for teachers, it was simply an extra option rather than an integral part of the language programme. In contrast, Maley and Duff (1989:7) suggest:

> Poetry offers a rich resource for input to language learning. As such it is at least as relevant as the more commonly accepted types of input (e.g. contrived dialogues, isolated texts for reading comprehension, simulations, etc.). So, it should be given at least equal weight.

They claim that the use of a poem as the centrepiece of a unit of material does not prevent the use of other types of language in relation to it. For example, they demonstrate that the language used to agree and disagree about 'meaning' in a poem will not be essentially different from the language of discussion central to any interactional activity. Therefore, if poetry is integrated with other forms of language, and thus demystified through a direct approach, students will come to an understanding of what is special about poetry as a mode of language use.

Maley and Duff also consider the many advantages which poetry seems to offer. As a form of language use, it is universal. Most themes (e.g. love, death, nature, religious belief, despair, etc.) of poetry are common to all cultures, and the conventions (for example, rhythm, rhyme, metre, alliteration, repetition, etc.) governing the language of poetry are likewise familiar, and readily recognisable to foreign language learners from their mother tongue experience.

Therefore, the only unfamiliarity would be the foreign language which they may not know, although they may know the conventions of poetry which both their mother tongue and the foreign language in question may have in common. Therefore, although at first sight, poetry in the foreign language may appear impenetrable, nevertheless, familiarity with the conventions of poetry in

the students' mother tongue would make it more readily accessible to him or her. Moreover, the realisation that though they may be relatively inexpert in the language they can still appreciate (to a degree) the use of language in it, would work as an added advantage. The opportunity to play with language also helps the learner learning it. Moreover, poetry is the medium per excellence as all poets stretch the language by coining new words, creating new collocations, experimenting with sound, using old words in new ways, and so on. The ambiguity of a poem evokes individual interpretations, leading to the opportunity for discussion.

Moreover, poetry deals with important experiences and heightens the readers' perception not only of such experiences, but also of seemingly trivial or unimportant ones. Poetry, thus, provides a content which will appeal to learners because they are able to respond to it in their own way, adding to the motivating factor in learning. The possibility of having multifarious interpretations will also let each individual student feel that he or she has a valid contribution to make while discussing a poem. The suggestive, colourful and associative quality of poems suggest that each learner's personal interpretation has validity. Since each person's perception is different, poems initiate an almost infinite fund of interactive discussion and can create the atmosphere necessary for a genuine exchange of ideas. The development of a personalised reaction to texts engaging the intellect as well as the feelings is a very important part of the language learning process.

Moreover, the memorability feature of a poem offers students with the opportunity to unconsciously absorb language that can enable them to retrieve grammatical and lexical information they did not know they had. In language teaching, stress and rhythm are often taught through the imitation of model sentences. According to Brown (cited in Maley and Duff, 1989:11), rhythm 'is not something extra…it is the guide to the structure of information in the spoken message', and therefore, even though poetry may not focus expressly on rhythm, it can help develop a sensitivity towards it. Moreover, some of the essential features of fluent speech, such as clarity of diction, phrasing, stress and rhythm, control and variation of pace and so on, flow naturally from reading poetry out aloud. Poems also offer a complete context in compact form. The meanings conveyed in poems are usually expressed very economically. In order to retrieve these meanings and talk about them, it is necessary to expand and extend the words on the page; consequently, from a small language input a large and varied output can be generated.

However, there may still remain some doubts about the value and practicability of using poetry as a major element in language teaching because of the conception that 'poetry' is equivalent to a special register which is characterised by archaisms, peculiar inversions, heightened vocabulary, and so on. Nevertheless, in the classroom, there is no need to choose poetry with these features. A teacher should rather choose the ones which are closer to normal, everyday language. Moreover, modern poetry does not necessarily use special language features. Choosing this kind of poetry minimises the problem of language that is 'too special'. When teachers come to select poems they will need to take into account which poems are suited to the learners' interests, language and maturity levels. Therefore, as far as possible, the level of difficulty of the poem should approximate the level of competence of the learners. Learners should be offered access to poems through carefully chosen activities and tasks that are designed to help them appreciate the lyrical and melodic qualities of poetry as well as its metaphorical richness in order to facilitate comprehension.

McRae and Vethamani (1999) observe that the growth of strong local literatures in English has triggered a corresponding interest in incorporating such texts into language teaching materials. However, Vethamani (1996) argues that new literatures are unjustly overlooked in many teaching contexts, whereas their inclusion in the classroom can broaden students' perception of the use of English in wider cultural contexts, which will continue to fuel interest in using literary texts for cross-cultural exploration. As such, literature lends itself well to investigating similarities and differences between self and others, and to an awareness and understanding of 'the other' (Kramsch 1993). For local learners, it can be suggested that incorporating poetry written in English by local poets will be appropriate and an added benefit to the learner who would be quite at ease to have something from their own surrounding and culture.

3. Poetry: Realm of 'intuited truth'

According to Kermode (1957: 128) poetry is 'concerned with intuited truth, not with what is discursively explicable by the reason'. This section of the article will try to expand the idea of 'intuitive truth' and will demonstrate how a poem can be effectively used in the language classroom.

The imaginative space which poetry allows the reader is exactly in the realm of 'intuited truth', and that is what gives the reader the widest range of intuitive possibilities. Many poems rich in language and imagery represent aspects of human experience in direct but intuitive and concise but rich terms. Although poetic

diction and the concept of the poet as a kind of seer contribute to the distancing of poetry from day-to-day reality, in the 'average' mind, nevertheless, there are texts that can be approached as a simple functional message. The poem titled 'This is Just to Say' by William Carlos Williams is a fine example of the use of such 'daily' language use. The poem can be presented in a message form and when it is done as presented below, it gives the reader a very simple everyday message, perhaps written on a piece of scrap paper, and left on the tea-table for someone to read.

'This is just to say I have eaten the plums that were in the icebox and which you were probably saving for breakfast. Forgive me, they were delicious, so sweet and so cold.'

A whole range of ideas will emerge if questions are set on the poem such as, where could the message be found, and what its function might be. The text, as presented above, is both a simple message and an open text: a note of apology, and a description of feelings of enjoyment. The text does not look like a poem.

If it is next presented as it was originally written, the pertinent question that arises is whether it suddenly changes from being 'not a poem' to being a poem.

This is Just to Say

I have eaten
The plums
That were in
The icebox
And which
You were probably
Saving
For breakfast
Forgive me
They were delicious
So sweet
And so cold

- William Carlos Williams

This original presentation will certainly promote further discussion on issues related to the poem. In order to keep the discussion going, learners have to make use of their 'experience' and 'knowledge of the world'. The issues related to natural intensity of longing and the after–effect of the event when the reality

takes the apologetic turn will be points of interests to learners. Experience can also initiate questions such as:

- Have you ever felt tempted before about eating/doing something? What did you do then?
- Do you think it is okay to behave this way?
- Was the person your friend whom you have done something similar before?
- What was his/her reaction to the incident before?
- What might be the reaction of the host after reading the note?
- Do you think you should replace the fruit next time you turn up? Why/why not?
- How would you have felt if someone had done the same to you?

Knowledge of the world may initiate questions such as:

- What is a 'plum'? Is there any fruit that grows in your country, which resembles a 'plum'?
- Why do you have to apologise if you could eat the fruit without permission, when the host is your friend or someone very close to you?
- What age group do you think the person belongs to? Was it is very mature thing to eat the plums without permission?

There are also poems written in the form of dramatic monologue. We quite often talk to ourselves while alone. We talk about tit-bits of life and also sometimes create imaginary situations and build up imaginary conversations on them. There are many poems written in the form of a dramatic monologue which constitute a very rich resource for developing spoken skills, by poets like John Donne, Robert Browning, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, and many others. These poems can be used to compare and contrast human nature and what goes on inside their mind at a given point of time or for a specific situation. Here is an example of a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning. The poem is titled 'Porphyria's Lover'.

Porphyria's Lover

The rain set early in tonight,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me - she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshiped me: surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound

Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

- Robert Browning

The narrator of the poem has a study to is late to reading. It gives us a vivid picture of the nature and climate of that particular night, when the story begins and unfolds gradually, leading us through quite a dramatic atmosphere and feeling of uneasiness and dismay. The story is told by one character who also infoms us of the situation and the feelings of the other character. Through him we come to understand the situation of the lady.

Many questions will emerge from the reading of the poem. These will surround the characters, subject–matter, story line, the tone and message of the poem, and what its function might be. The text is both a gripping story and an analysis of the mind of an abnormal person. The poem will encourage discussion on issues related to love, psychological complexity of humans, the eagerness to possess forever, the obsession regarding eternity, disappointment and desperation in love, and the after effect of the event when reality takes a strange twist. The following questions can be initiated for discussion:

- What do you think the poem is dealing with?

- What sort of relationship is this? What is the tone of the poem?
- What do you understand about the psychology of the main character? Would you call him a 'lover' or a 'killer'? Explain your choice.
- How do you feel now that you have read the poem?
- What are the contradictory elements in the poem?
- What is your reaction to the central character?
- Have you come across any such characters in real life or in literature?
- How do you feel about the lady?
- Do you ever feel such complexities in your life dealing with relationships?
- Do you feel that everything is justified in love?
- Do you feel that the character is abnormal?
- How would you explain the last line of the poem- 'And yet, God has not said a word!'?
- What do you think that the man would do afterwards when reality will actually strike him?
- Do you come across similar stories in the news or newspapers? What preventives do you think could be taken to avoid such a situation?
- If you are to retell the story with a positive tone, how would you frame it?

Poems that relate universal personal experiences and focus on memory and the passing of time are good choice because any such theme can appeal to readers from all cultures and age groups as humans have the natural tendency to connect themselves to personal experiences that are universal and common to everyone. These themes, therefore, can be a good base for discussion. Thus, a theme-based approach to poetry can help students to relate the situation to their own experience and talk about it in order to develop their interpretative and conversational skills. They can also be asked to imagine situations made complicated by chance and then initiate solutions through negotiation.

4. Conclusion

This article has discussed the pros and cons of using poetical works or poetry in the language classroom with an attempt made to justify the use of poetry in language teaching by throwing some light on the existing debate surrounding the issue. It has also demonstrated how poetry may be effectively used in the class, especially in order to help develop a learner's speaking ability through discussion activities. In order to do so, it has looked at a number of tasks and activities for exploiting poems with students. However, in planning a lesson using a poem it is always useful to try to anticipate some of the difficulties students may face when reading or studying a poem. By doing so, the teacher can design materials which help the students through some of the difficulties identified.

In many EFL contexts there are constraints/restraints on the teacher's part in terms of availability of books, or the set curriculum they are to follow. If the texts are imposed and used year after year, it becomes more and more difficult to maintain one's originality and enthusiasm, both on the parts of teachers and students. Goodwyn and Findlay (1999) point out that teachers teach best when they are enthused about a text/topic they are teaching. Nevertheless, it has already been observed that the available texts and materials including poems suitable for the target group can be successfully used to achieve objectives if used properly and systematically. In selecting poems for learners, it is necessary to remember that the teacher him/herself should find the poems enjoyable, entertaining and amusing because these feelings are infectious in a classroom. Selecting the right poem will also help break monotony prevailing in the classroom that stems from following the set curriculum for years.

It can now be reiterated that placing the language of the poem at the centre of classroom activities can initiate enthusiasm and productivity among learners, if the students' own interests and experience can be drawn on fully at all stages of the lesson, with the acceptance that the interpretation of one single poem will vary substantially from reader to reader. Many of the techniques that are commonly used in the classroom can equally be used when teaching poetry. Nevertheless, as already pointed out, poetry does have some fairly distinctive features from other forms of discourse. It is useful to identify these features in order to help students grapple with certain problems they may encounter while reading poetry.

Finally, it can be said that poems can be introduced in the class because of their poetic qualities, their use of everyday language in creative ways and because they fulfil a social and communicative purpose artistically.

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Resisting Colonial Discourse: Edward Said and Speaking Truth to Power

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> I am for dialogue between cultures and coexistence between people: everything I have written about and struggled for has pointed to that as the goal. But real principle and real justice have to be implemented before there can be true dialogue (Said, Quoted in Bove, 1).

Every time he puts pen to paper, Said takes up scholarly, moral and political responsibilities of one kind or the other. Said's intellectual commitments, in fact led him towards developing groundbreaking methodologies in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* in order to resist narrow cultural compartmentalisation and to advance 'coexistence' and 'dialogue' among peoples from different cultural backgrounds. In *Orientalism,* Said's methodology is a re-appropriation of the Foucauldian one so as to conduct a cultural debate surrounding a worldly identity, that is 'the Other', and also to put forward a strategy to oppose the cultural domination of 'the Other'. Said conjoins Foucault's textual theory with Gramsci's analysis of hegemony to shore up an intellectualism ready to affront an unjust and overwhelming Orientalist power-mechanism that has created 'the Other'. In fact, Said's background, to borrow the title of his book, is 'Out of Place'; he is a Palestinian living in the West, a fact that adds earnestness to his argument against Western formulations of 'the Other'. That is why Said cannot be at one with Foucault's methodological ambiguity about resistance against power. He is against following Foucauldian *theorization* to the letter in order to pursue a definite argument for a well-determined purpose: 'I am an Oriental

writing back at the Orientalists, who for so long have thrived upon our silence' ('Interview' 47). His mission in *Orientalism* is, therefore, to expose how 'real principle and real justice' are self-contradictorily shorn off the portrait of 'the Other' in Western humanist discourse. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he strives with humanistic conviction to make 'the Other' break out of hegemonic constraints and invalidate Otherness through an intellectualism *par excellence*. Said emphasizes intellectual responsibility, as opposed to operating as unassertive reservoirs of impressions. This is how he creates his counter-discursive model of *thinking anew*, which accentuates connection between cultures, rather than fostering domination. Ultimately, resistance to injustice is made synonymous with intellectualism through Said's effort.

As a post-Enlightenment philosopher, Foucault was concerned with establishing two facts in textual analysis: first, philosophy cannot be separated from the history of critical thought and second, our analytical and ratiocinative faculties cannot ignore politics. He tried to transgress orthodoxies to *know and make known* the nature and limits to the philosophy of our *subjectivity*. For that reason, he investigated the Western archive of epistemology by critically evaluating Western methods, positivities and discontinuities. As he has noted:

> As for what motivated me, it is quite simple… it was curiosity… what is philosophy today– philosophical activity, I mean– if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known? (Foucault 2000)

Foucault himself failed to think 'differently' in at least one respect (though he was remarkable for doing so in most cases), as he cut off the Orient from his map of knowledge. Indeed, Said redirects Foucault's legacy of critical thinking towards the right track by using the French intellectual's method in critiquing the Western archive from a peripheral point of view. Said declares: 'history is not a homogenous French-speaking territory' (*The World* 22). Foucault was not directly concerned about the impact of Orientalist discourse as hegemonic domination, though his power/knowledge theory helped Said to prove that such "anthropological imperialism" exist ('Interview' 46). But Said felt the need to reverse the practice of distorting 'the Oriental as human' ('Interview' 44). *Orientalism* proves that power is not only a self-existing cobweb but also a network where the relationships between the ruler and ruled, privileged and

repressed play varied roles, a fact not fully reflected in Foucault's 'textual, or rather textualized' argument (*The World* 246). This is where Said disagrees with Foucault, for he is clearly not inclined to divide theory from its worldly connections.

But it is to Foucault's credit that he made Said believe that textual theory can very well play into the hands of worldly power games.[2] Said's aim is, therefore, to cut short the practice, failing to do so being what he sees as the failure of traditional humanistic studies:

> I consider Orientalism's failure to have been a human as much as an intellectual one; for in having to take up a position of irreducible opposition to a region of the world it considered alien to its own, Orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience. The worldwide hegemony of Orientalism and all it stands for can now be challenged… (*Orientalism* 328)

As a result, *Orientalism* is counter-hegemonic discourse. In order to identify the failures of colonial discourse, Said establishes an even stronger counter-discourse in *Culture and Imperialism.* What was an invitation to challenge hegemonic domination in Orientalism develops into full–scale critique of such domination in *Culture and Imperialism* (often seen as a sequel to the first book). In this work, Said connects culture and imperialism even more thoroughly. Through his now legendary conception of 'Contrapuntal Reading', he forms an effective technique of fighting back against the coercive connection between culture and colonialism/imperialism. 'His voice is…that of the "lonely individual scholar" (or, as he would call it, the "secular or oppositional intellectual") with which he embraces the idealism of incorporating a counterpoint' (Kennedy, *Edward Said* 110).

The main endeavour of the technique of 'Contrapuntal Reading' is to strengthen the so-called colonial 'Other' culturally, thereby removing the dividing lines between 'the self' and 'the Other'. 'Contrapuntal Reading' urges intellectuals to explore a text with an awareness of the history of domination and its dominant discourse so that they can figure out what the text says from a pluralistic perspective rather than any fixed viewpoint. It is a kind of reading that uncovers the submerged presence of colonialism in canonical texts. Said derived this technique from listening to the famous Canadian pianist Glenn Gould so that he could disrupt the univocal reading of Western discourse. Said notes:

> In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work (*Culture* 59-60).

To translate this musical method in reading, Said imparts to the peripheral intellectual a tremendous responsibility. S/he has to enter Western discourse and insert his or her suppressed viewpoints to create a harmonious admixture of colonial and colonised standpoints within it. According to Said, such a 'voyage in' will create a brilliant polyphony of interpretations of texts instead of replaying the unthinking refrain of dominant Western point of views.

This is how to bridge the 'We-You-They' divide, as Said famously puts it (*Orientalism* 47). This is how one must combine geographies and histories of cultures imaginatively, the lack of which he had deplored in *Orientalism.* The book revealed the problem of monochromatic understanding and gestured towards an alternative intellectualism to critique simpleminded-ness, the consequences of which are far from simplistic. In *Culture and Imperialism,* Said completes his project to initiate a true 'critical consciousness', which is sceptic and sensitive enough not to stay eye to eye with discourse. He wants a paradigm shift in thinking to resist forms of cultural domination and control. The change becomes possible if individuals know 'how to read… and not detaching this from the issue of knowing what to read. [One has to believe that] [t]exts are not finished objects' (312). The transformation occurs as the reading of a canonical Jane Austen text is combined with, for example, a non-canonical, C.L.R. James narrative. It is not about depreciating Jane Austen but about admiring her with an awareness of the colonialist assumptions present in her writing for obvious historical reasons. This is the kind of intellectualism that rides out hegemony; the lack of this was lamented and protested by Said on many occasions.

That true intellectualism promotes 'coexistence' between cultures and the absence of it is enervating is established in *Orientalism.* This is the point of Saidian departure from Foucault. Foucault thinks hegemonic monochromatism to be supreme.[3] Said takes in quite the opposite tack: it can be destabilized to promote harmony and coherence between cultures. For him, cultural hegemony is not simply given to mechanized manipulation. Rather, cultures are, he claims, 'possessing possession[s]' (*The World* 7). Individuals are not merely caught up in their culture but also belong to it with an owning sense of the horizon which 'is broad enough to include quotidian elaboration as well as complex and sundry

intellectual activity…' (Monroe, 'The World' 457) In other words, culture does not simply denote structures contributing to unseen suppressions of individuals. Individuals can also critique its unjust aspects from *within* the field. Cultures cannot ever be so monolithic that their unmerited features can go unquestioned. That opposition to the unjust is also part of culture in the pluralistic sense is what Said tries to centralize all throughout. He thus talks about

> … modes of reconciliation where you can reconcile (without reducing) histories. That's why, for example, the contrapuntal approach is very interesting: you can reconcile the history of the colonizer with the history of the colonized without an attempt to "be impartial", because there's always the question of justice ('An Interview' 21).

Said argues that intellectual endeavour to establish counterpoint is the way to work in favour of justice and that can never be unimportant.

> Yet unlike Michel Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted, I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism (*Orientalism* 23).

At this point, Gramsci provides Said with the means of negating the systematisation of hegemony through an 'anonymous collective body of texts'. In the ultimate analysis, Foucault himself exercised intellectual power by deconstructing the disciplinarian world. His exposure of the way it works was nothing but placing an obstacle before its apparently impenetrable ways. Therefore, despite distancing him from Foucault's 'theoretical overtotalisation' that undermines resistance to power, Said discovers the *unspoken* adversarial position of Foucault vis-à-vis the power-network (*The World* 246). And so he can say:

> … my whole point is to say that we can better understand the persistence and the durability of saturating hegemonic systems like culture when we realize that their internal constraints upon writers and thinkers were *productive*, not unilaterally inhibiting. It is that idea that Gramsci, certainly, and Foucault and Raymond Williams in their very different ways have been trying to illustrate.
>
> *(Orientalism 14).*

Ultimately, Said appears to be a great believer in the kind of Gramscian non-impartial, politically committed intellectualism that challenges hegemonic affiliations. For Gramsci, ideas, philosophies, and ideologies find their ways to the minds of common people through discourses. The ruling class then maintains a

hegemonic control over the masses through embedding their interpretation of ideas etc in discourses. Said claims that Orientalist writers were effectuating a convenient picture of 'the Other' that justified the colonial perspectives by exercising hegemony. Said analyzes the so-called strength of the typical Orientalist writer:

> In short, having transported the Orient into modernity, the Orientalist could celebrate his method, and his position, as that of a secular creator, a man who made new worlds as God had once made the old (*Orientalism* 121).

The Orientalist assembles information on the Oriental from previous writings and formulates an image of him, 'a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics' by joining all the pieces of citations (177). The illustration of 'the Other' is thus achieved by ignoring the 'the complex dynamics of human life' to reach 'the level of accepted truth' (247, 250). The Oreintalist writer is then canonised in the Western archive. S/he earns renown for completing the view of '"the Oriental" as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction' that gets transformed through discourse into hegemonic 'truth' (8). Said thus connects Foucault and Gramsci, since they are both theorist with well-developed notions of discursive knowledge formation. But like Gramsci and quite unlike Foucault, Said's criticism is *openly* un-relinquishing against such a nexus.

Said is relentless in his exposure of such hegemony:

> Knowledge no longer requires application to reality; knowledge is what gets passed on silently…Ideas are propagated and disseminated anonymously… they have literally become *idées reçues:* what matters is that they are *there,* to be repeated, echoed, and re-echoed *uncritically* (116).

So much so, that the Oriental is denied 'the right to be generated, except artificially in the philological laboratory' (148). And so, 'The Oriental he [the Orientalist] studied became in fact *his* Orientals, for he saw them… as monumentalised objects in his account of them' (233). Said reveals how 'To know the Orient… is to know it because it is entrusted to one's keeping, if one is a Westerner' (256). Hegemony seems to give 'Orientalism the durability and the strength' so that 'European suzerainty… is extended effectively over Asia' (7, 256). However, Said makes it clear that unlike Foucault's ambiguous renunciation of the power-knowledge nexus,

> My objection to what I have called Orientalism is not that it is just the antiquarian study of Oriental languages, societies, and peoples, but that as a system of thought it approaches a heterogeneous, dynamic, and complex human reality from an *uncritically essentialist standpoint*… (My italics 333)

Valerie Kennedy confirms Said's Gramscian stance on resistance: 'Finally, Gramsci like Raymond Williams sees power as "not invincible, not impervious to dismantling, not unidirectional", which means that there is at least the possibility of theorizing resistance' (*Edward Said* 31). Gramsci's ideological commitment then becomes the means through which Said sees the possibility of resistance to reductive 'essentialist' discourses.

Inspired by Gramsci, Said modifies Foucault's methodology of the power-knowledge structure. He denotes the possibility of a twofold resistance: to insist that the Oriental is a distorted construct and to oppose 'how the cultural domination is maintained' (*Orientalism* 324). This is a consistent inconsistency that Said justifiably uses in bringing together the ambivalently anti-humanist Foucault with the humanist Gramsci. As Said notes:

> *Orientalism* is theoretically inconsistent, and I designed it that way: I didn't want Foucault's method, or anybody's method, to override what I was trying to put forward. The notion of a kind of non-coercive knowledge, which I come to at the end of the book, was deliberately anti-Foucault (Salusinszky, *Criticism* 137).

Orientalism blows away every kind of satisfaction of putatively designating 'a distinct culture' of any type: either the 'self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other")' (325). Contrary to Foucault's theoretical portrayal of the impossibility of resistance, Said opposes Orientalism by upholding a form of 'critical consciousness' that nullifies Foucault's theoretical absolutism in promoting a 'non-coercive knowledge'.

Said concretises what has been called an 'oppositional version of Western humanism' in order to resist coercive Orientalist discourse (*Edward Said* 35). Said's point is that Western humanist ideals of equality cannot be a universal doctrine in theories since in practice they are applicable to a privileged few, namely Westerners, as is the case with colonialism. That is why he melds Foucault's idea of power being everywhere with Gramsci's notion of power not being absolute so as to argue against the deceptions of Western humanism. He protests against non-humanistic race prejudice evident in Oriental scholarly treatises: 'The very possibility of development, transformation, human

movement—in the deepest sense of the word—is denied… the Oriental' (208). Thus he is at war against Western dominion of the colonial 'Others'. However, his ultimate belief in Western humanist ideals is never lost. And so, he is against being portrayed as 'a defender of the downtrodden and abused, whose mission was to engage Western authorities in a kind of epic and romantic *mano-a-mano*' (335).

Put differently, rather than obliterating Western humanism, he wants to reform it. Therefore, he fights against the discrepancies in Western humanism by combining the two different value systems of Gramsci and Foucault to *assail* inhuman power. The fight is for 'real justice' and 'real principle', ideals that are ultimately derived from Western humanism. This is Said's way of standing up for a humanistic 'coexistence' between colonial and colonised cultures through advancing non-aggressive knowledge for *all*. Said observes:

> I believe *Orientalism* as a book shows it, especially when I speak of humanistic study as seeking ideally to go beyond coercive limitations on thought towards a non-dominative and non-essentialist type of learning (336-337).

As an intellectual then, Said is an exponent of the type of knowledge in the formation of which intellectuals have an immense responsibility. To him, individual writers are not simply instrumental to discursivity but also, essentially, forces that can bring in new outlook and introduce resistance whenever injustice overwhelms humanity.

> Thus each individual contribution first causes changes within the field and then promotes a new stability, in the way that on a surface covered with twenty compasses the introduction of a twenty-first will cause all the others to quiver, then to settle into a new accommodating configuration (*Orientalism* 273).

For Said, an intellectual receives information from a particular discourse and then remoulds it to create a place for his/her insights inside it. Hegemonic discourse is made up of efforts from scholars who have merely reshaped previous ideas while remaining affiliated with dominant presumptions. In other words, these contributors' delineations have only reinforced old proclamations. Arguably, intellectuals can perform in the opposite way too. While reconstructing an archive, they can deny hegemony by refusing to harmonise with the customary intonation. For Said, it is imperative for intellectuals to take a stand whenever they find 'the seductive degradation of knowledge' governing their field (328).

The 'quiver' created by their new 'configuration' will be 'accommodated' in their field because of its novelty/originality; however, it should be invariably directed against injustice. Rather than joining voices with hegemony, Saidian intellectuals should, therefore, become radical, revolutionary and resisting forces by challenging 'systems of thought like Orientalism, discourses of power, ideological fictions—mind-forg'd manacles—[which] are all too easily made, applied, and guarded' (328). Said thus argues that resistance and reformation are possible from *within* an archive through original thinking and unconventional 'configuration(s)' that favour truth and justice.

That is why Said believes that intellectuals need to subject every presumptive *idea* to critical scrutiny. They have to be 'on guard against *idées reçues* all too easily handed down in the profession'; because their allegiance is to truth and justice, not to ready-made ideas in a pre-existing archive (*Orientalism* 326). Said adds:

> What I tried to preserve in my analysis of Orientalism was its combination of consistency *and* inconsistency, its play, so to speak, which can only be rendered by preserving for oneself as writer and critic the right to some emotional force, the right to be moved, angered, surprised and even delighted (341).

Said contributes to the opposition to *idées reçues* through creating a counter-image of the resources that exist in the Orientalist discourse. He examines general dogmatic views on 'the Other' and various writers' endeavours to throw light on the Oriental. He is 'angered' at the way 'the Other' is always given a clichéd appearance in both cases. Finally, his 'delight' is to invalidate the flawed discourse by forming its counter-image that reveals the fatuity of such stock representations.

Inspired by Gramsci, Said opposes the ideas regarding 'the Other', despite working within a Foucauldian framework. As he observes,

> In the *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci says: "The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "Knowing thyself" as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you, an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory." The only available English translation inexplicably leaves Gramsci's comment at that, whereas in fact Gramsci's Italian text concludes by adding, "therefore, it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory." (*Orientalism* 25)

Having considered the Orientalist texts, Said creates 'an inventory' (in Foucault's terms a discourse) so that he can form a consciousness of the identity manufactured for 'the Others' like him. And after protesting against the flawed portraiture, he proves that even though he as an 'Other' is a construction, he as an intellectual possesses the power to resist such subjugation. This is how he uses 'the master's tools' (Western humanism is meant here; but why not Foucauldian or Gramscian theories as well, especially when he intermingles them?) to 'dismantle the master's house' (*Edward Said* 34). Needless to say, Said's revolt thus makes truth and justice persist in our perception.

That is why, the example of individual authors like Erich Auerbach is so important to Said. Auerbach advocates viewing Western culture from an impartial perspective so that the judgement does not navely tune in with the authoritative Orientalist tenor. To Said, intellectuals like Auerbach can successfully introduce an attitudinal alteration to the way cultures are traditionally interpreted. Said explains how this is brought about:

> Rather than alienation and hostility to another time and a different culture, philology as applied to (Auerbach's) Weltliteratur involved a profound humanistic spirit deployed with generosity and, if I may use the word, hospitality. Thus the interpreter's mind actively makes a place in it for a foreign Other. And this creative making of a place for works that are otherwise alien and distant is the most important facet of the interpreter's mission' (Said, 2003).

Following Auerbach, Said claims that an intellectual can uphold truth not jejunely formed to serve a pre-existing vision, if his/her 'mind actively makes a place in it for a foreign Other'. For this to happen, intellectuals need both to involve themselves with and maintain distance from indigenous and foreign cultures in order to accomplish non-discriminatory judgements. This is 'to lead to an enlargement of the scholar's awareness', to a 'synthesis', to a 'contrapuntal' revelation through endorsing 'the universality of certain principles of human behaviour', that is truth and justice (261). Only in that case can an intellectual judge his/her own culture critically and the 'other' culture sympathetically and vice-versa. That is what Said later calls the 'exilic' vision:

> Not for nothing, then, did Auerbach end autumnal reflections with a significant quotation from Hugo of St. Victor's ***Didascalicon*** … 'but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.' The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment *and* generosity necessary for true vision (***Orientalism*** 259).

Viewing 'the entire world as a foreign land' makes the 'exilic intellectual' oppose, negate and transform unjust disciplinary techniques like 'the Other'. Said provides us with examples of intellectuals like Chomsky and/or Fanon, who took up such maverick projects.[4] Influenced by Fanon, Said's 'contrapuntal' method nullifies 'Otherness' in a critical but humane way. Like Fanon, Said wants the colonial self to scrutinize itself with a consciousness of its pre-imperial and colonial past so that an ideal self can be worked out by believing, of course, in universal humanism and emancipation. Said, therefore, juxtaposes Fanon as an emblem of political resistance and liberation with Foucault as the theorist of the imprisonment of a *subject*. He explains that Fanon's work is very significant as it

> programmatically seeks to treat colonial and metropolitan societies together, as discrepant but related entities, while Foucault's work moves further and further away from serious consideration of social wholes, focusing instead upon the individual as dissolved in an ineluctably advancing "microphysics of power" that is hopeless to resist (*Culture* 335-36).

Said's vision of an oppositional critical intellect should be fully comprehensible now. He wants an intellectual

> to be sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in socio-political role of intellectuals, in the great value of sceptical critical consciousness (*Orientalism* 327).

In the end Said rejects Foucault because he is a paradox as far as his theoretical boundary goes. In a zeal to distance himself from Marxism, Foucault had created an incongruous claim on the individual and the system that holds him/her. Said minimises the incongruity by re-appropriating Foucault's theory for the emancipation of individuals. As a great believer in 'critical consciousness', he cannot be one of the Foucault acolytes who prefer to be encircled by the walls of the latter's totalitarian theory. Rather, Said's critical cognisance makes him declare that '*Orientalism* is a partisan book, not a theoretical machine' which contradicts colonial subjection by confronting its machinery critically so that human freedom remains the book's main focus (340).

Unlike Foucault, Said ultimately valorises intellectual opposition, which challenges a panoptical (the system of power imprisoning individuals through symbolic panoptic structures) society, to use the Foucauldian idea of control. Said believes that however totalised a discourse/system is, an intellectual is always powerful enough to penetrate it. Said is, therefore, against Foucault's *theoretical*

stamping out of resistance and assessment of systematization on the basis of a preoccupation with only half of human history. 'The parallel between Foucault's carceral system and Orientalism is striking' (*The World* 222). Indeed it is, especially when Said uses the parallel to point out the defects of Orientalism through Foucault's own method. A big 'but' remains, though:

> The problematic of the relationship between subjectivity and ideas of justice, for example, or the category of the aesthetic as a negation of power… all these… remain for [Foucault's] students, like ourselves on such occasions, to expose and if possible to resolve (Said, 'Foucault and the Imagination' 245).

As we have seen so far, Said did 'expose' the problem of Foucault's aesthetics and 'resolve' it through his iconoclastic methodology that resists unjust power by upholding humanist ideals. Said declares that:

> Humanism is centred upon the agency of human individuality and subjective intuition, rather than on received ideas and approved authority… And lastly, most important, humanism is the only–I would go so far as saying the final– resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history (Said, 2003).

In order to highlight a universal humanism, Said adds a significant dimension to intellectualism: *commitment.* This is the ultimate reason why Said retains a strong hope for the triumph of humanistic ideals, despite acknowledging the presence of inhuman power games. Said believes that human belief in 'connections' between cultures will ultimately overrule the 'unbridgeable chasm separating' them (*Orientalism* 352). Although such a project may face many obstacles, committed intellectuals like him continue to create the valued connections through exercising their critical faculties. As Dutton observes so succinctly,

> Said's wide-ranging concerns and marshalling of diverse archives, the generalising and beguiling simplicity of many of his statements, arguments and conclusions, his attempts to identify connections between worlds and texts and critics, between cultures and imperialisms, among other things, qualify him for nomination as a great synthesiser in an era of forbidding complexity: the general intellectual and critic as exemplary individual, as committed intellectual and cultural nomad (Dutton, 'Translating Theories' 119) .

We owe it to Said that intellectual commitment to 'critical consciousness' and universal humanism become the key issues of culture studies of our time.

Notes

1. The article is based on a chapter of my MA dissertation written in 2004 at the department of English and American Studies in the University of Manchester. I am thankful to my supervisor, Dr Anastasia Valassopulos, for her support with the writing.

2. Through *Discipline and Punish* Foucault (and later on Said) *places* the theory of an object formation into the power/knowledge network. Foucault proves that power is not simply 'a set of physico-political techniques' (*Discipline* 223). It has a cyclical relationship with the production of knowledge. He then projects the discursive field as 'an epistemological "thaw" through a refinement of power relations' (*Discipline* 224). In other words, for Foucault (and for Said), knowing and power go hand in glove. Because we know the world through our knowledge of it being piled up in an archive in a certain way, knowledge always belongs to the group who has the power to authenticate their version of information in *there,* argues Foucault and Said. Discourses thus become weapons of a power-knowledge yoke.

3. Foucault claims that visible knowledge is naturally put 'into political investment' of subjugation (Discipline 185). Individuals become '"specific" features…. under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge' (190). This documentation marked the unseen coercion of power over individuals in modern society as every man becomes 'a "case"' for power to study and control through knowing (191). Consequently, *resistance from individuals could be controlled despite its ability to disrupt the normalcy from time to time* [emphasis added]. In this way, power no longer remains prohibitive. Rather, the ever-present, ever-working, positive power 'produces reality… [And] [t]he individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production' (194). Said also shows this kind of subjection to be present in colonialism; but he is never willing to submit to such a domination in a passive way.

4. Said finds in Noam Chomsky another model of opposition by proving that Foucault's methodology is not totally exemplary. Unlike Foucault, Chomsky is in favour of both exploring the power-mechanism and unceasingly battling against it. His invincible courage to speak against US policies, conscience generated intellectualism, and staunch support for justice are the qualities which exemplify for Said an image of the kind of intellectual needed in today's world. Talking about a Dutch Television discussion in which Chomsky appeared with Foucault, he reflects on their disagreement. Whereas Chomsky emphasises justice and intellectual tasks

> In the historical perspective of Foucault, one no longer seeks to identify the innovators and their specific achievement or the obstacles which stand in the way of the emergence of truth, but to determine how knowledge, as a system independent of individuals, modifies its own rules of formation (Language 76)

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The Sundarbans Forest Systems: Patterns of Colonial Control and Social Response to Capitalist Enterprises, c.1830-1905

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Studies of the forest have received intense and varied attention in the past few decades, generating three major trends. One relates to the discourse of destruction of forest regimes. The intervention of colonial capital as well as pressure of population growth has been understood to be contributing to such destruction. Another theme is that of conservation which has highlighted the debates around the place of origin of conservation ideas and practices. Although the initial assumption was that conservation practices started in the USA in the nineteenth century, some historians have argued later that conservation policies and practices originated in the colonial world, where the destruction of the environment was most remarkable. Recently, particularly in South Asia, there have been important discussions on the intervention of the state in forest regimes and the resistance from forest dwellers. Seen in any way, the role of capital and the colonial state have been regarded as one of uninterrupted domination. While this proposition stands the test of empirical scrutiny in many respects, it blocks a more flexible reading of the varied development of capitalist intervention and colonial domination within a given ecological regime.

The Sundarbans, one of the largest mangrove forest systems of the world, sheds useful lights on the patterns of capitalist intervention and colonial control amidst changing societal responses. This paper studies the historical significance of the Sundarbans in Bangladesh from the perspective of nineteenth-century social formation and developments in the agrarian economy. The study depends

on three broad interdisciplinary angles. First, it examines the political economy of the colonial state's absolute proprietary rights over the Sundarbans. Then it emphasizes how colonial power lost its centrality and grip in the actual process of capitalist exploitation of the forest. Finally, it traces the ways in which indigenous society responded and operated in the wake of the colonial state's dilemma of owning the Sundarbans but its inability to fully exert its metropolitan muscle.

Return to the forest wasteland?

According to Manu, the ancient Indian sage, just as the wild deer of forests became the property of the man who first pierced them with arrows, so did the arable land became the property of the man who first cut down the jungle for purposes of cultivation (quoted in Mookerjee 1984). In Islamic tradition, as endorsed by the prophet of Islam, 'whoever gives life to dead land, it is his' (Farmer 1974). No wonder in ancient and medieval India, individuals who reclaimed and utilized wastelands were generally favoured by their rulers. The British colonial state also followed the existing practice of favouring the reclamation of wastelands; however, the Bengal wasteland became doubly significant in the context because of a number of circumstances.

One of the reasons that led to qualitative changes in colonial policy and practices in relation to the wasteland was the desire of the colonial state to keep Bengal connected to the world market of raw materials. This was imperative in the wake of the decline of deltaic indigenous commerce and industries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This decline was mainly caused by the monopoly of the East India Company, which was sustained by a nexus of Company staff and their native collaborators, and which went against the spirit of the free trade of the time. Whereas in the late seventeenth century Dutch purchases of textiles in Bengal perhaps generated 100,000 new jobs for that region, by the end of the eighteenth century this situation had begun to change for the worse. By 1830, the decline, particularly in the textile sector, climaxed in Dhaka in particular and Bengal in general (Tomlinson, 2000; Boyce, 1987). The dismantling of Bengal as a commercial hub created a void within the array of colonial activities. Inevitably, the Company began to look for new avenues of raw materials and new sources of revenue. Against this backdrop, the Sundarbans drew fresh attention from the Company. Thus began an era in which the domain of the wastelands of the Delta became the last resort of the Company, their agents and, most remarkably, jobless commercial craftsmen, as well as landless peasants. This situation perfectly fitted the new wave of home and international demand

for raw materials. It formed part of the general nineteenth-century trend, which was regarded as the great age of commodity demand and consequent change in land uses (Tucker & Richards, 1983). Significantly, this was a time when the British colonies, after a long spell of closed mercantilist practices, were increasingly becoming open to the wider world (Fieldhouse, 1968).

Another rationale that drove the colonial state towards the systematic exploitation of the Sundarbans by the 1830s was related to social and political considerations. The policy shift came in sharp contrast to the policy which the Company had pursued right after its take-over in Bengal in the middle of the mid-eighteenth century. In 1793 the Company, under governor Lord Cornwallis, introduced the Permanent Settlement system of land management. In this system, landlords were given enormous power to collect revenue from actual cultivators and pay annually a fixed amount from the collection to the state. While this process created a new landed elite loyal to the government, it dealt a serious blow to the general well-being and social autonomy of peasant society. Landlords now took control of the countryside and employed all sorts of methods of exploitation to collect revenue. A remarkable consequence of this type of land settlement appeared to be the pauperization of the peasant population and led to a series of rebellion and resistance movements against colonial rule. Perhaps the most serious problem from the perspective of the colonial state was the development of the landlord's practice of collecting as much tax as possible from cultivators but paying a fixed revenue to the Government. The state had nothing to do in such cases since it was a permanently settled land treaty. The way the colonial state sought to meet the dilemma led to a policy shift which not only returned the state's gaze to the wasteland but also to those vulnerable members of society who were hitherto exploited by the landlords in the permanently settled areas.

The government policies and the peasants

The issue of settling the Sundarbans was raised by Lord Cornwallis during the debates that preceded the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793. The Sundarbans indeed formed part of his general arguments for settling lands with a new class of landed aristocracy. The Sundarbans was, however, not only excluded from the Permanent Settlement, it even fell outside the jurisdiction of the mainstream revenue collection mechanism (Beveridge, 1876). Afterwards, following disputes between the government and landlords who wanted to have a share in the Sundarbans wastelands adjoining their permanently settled estates, the government clarified its position through subsequent regulations. An 1837

regulation thus established the government's 'inherent title to share produce of all lands cultivated in the Sundarbans on the ground that the tracts were waste in 1793 and thereby not included in the permanent settlement' (Pargiter, 1885).

In order to reclaim forests, the government opted for a lease system in which large capitalists, generally known as grantees, were awarded lease of large tracts of forests. The general principle, as framed in 1853, was that one-fourth of the total grant was to be held rent-free forever; that the remaining three-fourths should be rent-free for twenty years, and should then be held subject to the payment of a progressive rental. While these provisions appeared lucrative to grantees, there were two aspects of the whole affair that directly or indirectly went in favour of the *abadkars* or reclaimer-cultivators. This is mainly because the grantees who took licenses to clear the forest were not in a position to operate according to their unbridled free will. Like the government, they were equally aware of the difficulty of earning profit without the active role of the *abadkars* who could clear, settle and cultivate lands in the wastelands. The grantees, therefore, were dependent on the actual reclaimers:

> Not only are settlers able to obtain very favourable terms as to rent, but they are often assisted by the superior grantees by money advances, or by cattle purchased for them. A grantee naturally does all he can to lease out the whole of his clearing, as, if allowed to remain fallow, it quickly reverts to jungle (Hunter, 1875).

On the other hand, the field level organizers of the reclamation operations, known as *hawladars* who took lease from the capitalist grantees could not clear and cultivate all the portion that they had received from the grantees. They would therefore create sub-tenures. For example, a *hawaladar* used to create a subordinate tenure called *nim hawala* and subsequently an *ausat hawala*, intermediate between himself and the *nim hawaladar*. Neither the government nor the grantee interfered in the *hawaladar*'s right to create sub-tenures as each of the parties involved knew that unless things were left to develop in such an order, the project of reclamation and cultivation would not come through within a specific time. This system of sub-tenures shows that the very nature of the difficulties in the reclamation process made each of the tenures and sub-tenures dependent on each other (For details about the development of land tenure in colonial Bengal, see Islam, 1985).

Given the unique circumstances in the wasteland, it was not the capacity to collect rent from corresponding sub-tenants, but the capacity to employ physical enterprise and labor which held the intra-tenural relationship in this

system intact and which amply rewarded each party involved. At the same time, in the same situation in which lands were too extensive to till, *abadkars* tended to regard themselves as having occupancy or proprietary rights in the land they had reclaimed by hard labour. This was an *abadkari swatwa*, or reclamation right, which were founded upon 'original reclamation' (Westland, 1874).

Robert Morrell, holder of one of the largest grant of wasteland in the Sundarbans, used to contract *hawaladars* at a certain rate. Under this system, they were obliged to clear away forest and settle cultivators on it and cultivate it for three years by themselves or by the cultivators. On the settlement of cultivators, initial contracts were given first in the shape of *amulnama*, or mere orders to remain in possession and to cultivate. Thereafter they were to pay rent according to the amount of *beegahs* which had been cleared and measured. On the question of whether cultivators would take up contracts unless given in perpetuity, Morrell mentioned that in that case some would not refuse it, 'but', he continued, 'unless I give such *pottas* (written contract), they would not come willingly and in numbers, and my object is to get as many *ryots* (cultivators) as I can'. According to Hunter, the abundance of spare land and the scarcity of labour were 'sufficient protection to the cultivator against oppression on the part of the grantee'. In addition to the compulsion as entailed by the highly fluid ecological circumstances in the wastelands, the government ruled that failure to reclaim a certain tract of lands in a stipulated time would result in the termination of grants, including those parts of the granted tract that had already been cleared and cultivated (RAB, 1873-4).

These circumstances put the Sundarbans grantees, unlike grantees or colonizers in the Nilgiri Hills or Darjeeling, under considerable pressure. If compelled them to give leases to the *abadkars* on the same lucrative terms that they were given by the government. They were given lands in perpetuity with occupancy rights as well as money to settle their families and to buy animals and other agricultural equipment. Besides, the termination of any grant did not affect the rights of actual reclaimers. Under the term of lease of 1853, when a grant was cancelled, land found to be actually under cultivation was to be measured and settled with the cultivator or under-tenant. As the Delta was most capable of creating new lands, this policy presumably affected a large section of the cultivating class who had settled in those lands owned by the government. For instance, Morrell admitted that the oppressed cultivators in the permanently settled lands could only run from one landlord's estate to another to be oppressed again, but the opening of a fresh tract of wasteland gave them a chance of

escaping altogether from oppression, and obtaining and holding lands for a better terms, which, in a measure, was a 'check upon the practice of the zemindar'.

The society

In addition to securing entitlement to the land they had settled in, the *abadkars* in the Sundarbans entered the wider network of domestic and international market in a direct and free manner. This was a welcome change in agrarian market relations as in the landlord's territory every producer-seller was subject to various undue hindrances. For instance, Lal Behari, a contemporary tourist, observed that in a market place that operated on a land owned by a landlord, *Brahmins* would ask tax for *pujas* (Hindu religious worshipping), *phandidar* or police constable would ask tax for providing the so-called 'safety' of the villagers, and the landlord himself would collect tax in various ways. The landlord would not impose tax for the ground itself, but would reimburse himself by taking a small quantity of goods in which the sellers dealt. By adopting this method of remunerating himself, Lal Behari thought that landlords got 'a hundred times more than he would have obtained if he had charged a fair rent for the ground.' (Day, 1894).

The creation of new markets by the grantees in the Sundarbans opened wider scope for the cultivators to sell their produce without such traditional marketing hazards. As a government official reported, there were numerous markets of different sizes in the Sundarbans. This was because the Sundarbans itself was producing a huge volume of export crops, notably rice and jute, and also because the Sundarbans possessed the principal river routes to Calcutta Port. The Sundarbans markets were used not only by the cultivators who resided in the territorial boundary of a particular *grant/lease*, but also by cultivators of adjoining and distant estates of the landlords. Peasants would bring their produce by boats, three to six hour pulls, to these markets and sell the products themselves. Morrell used to let shopkeepers have their lands rent free for six or seven years, and reduced the price of salt from eight to *six pice* (equivalent to a penny) per kilogram by procuring salt direct from the government. By this measure, he said, he had 'induced the ryots to come stealthily' to his bazar, and so gradually his bazar became the largest in the Sundarbans. It was reported that in Chandkhali alone, on an average, 3,000 to 8,000 rupees worth of rice changed hands every market day when about 1,500 boats were brought up.

Between the government policy of encouraging the commercialisation of agriculture and flexibility in tenure and landholding, peasant society in the Bengal Delta showed signs of remarkable dynamism. After meeting its domestic

consumption demand, it not only supplied rice and jute, among other items, to the domestic and world market, it was the last resort for the famine stricken-districts of the older parts of Bengal in particular and India in general. The qualitative changes brought about in the socio-economic conditions were reflected in the rates of labour-cost and range of indebtedness. It was noticed that whereas debt was 'worse in Behar, [it was] somewhat considerable in Central and Western Bengal and Orissa, less decidedly in Eastern and Northern Bengal' and was 'altogether disappearing in parts of Eastern Bengal and Northern Bengal' (Temple, 1876). On the question of the wages of labour, Richard Temple observed that, in general, it was one to *two annas* a day in Behar, two *annas* in Orissa, three *annas* in Northern Bengal, four *annas* in Central Bengal and five annas in Eastern Bengal.

It was estimated that among those who reclaimed wastelands, nine out of ten cultivated them with their own hands, though they might have employed others to assist them. This collective process of reclamation and settlement bonded the reclaiming tenants together in a spirit of equality. They developed mutual dependency as well as a collective way of doing things. In the Delta, for instance, it was the custom of the cultivators to assist each other mutually with labour and recourse to hired labour was unusual. Probably as a result of such customs, social stratification did not develop to any remarkable extent. As old aristocratic Muslim families, like the Brahmans, were not involved in the actual reclamation process, the whole range of *ashraf* or *atraf* typology mattered less than it did in the older tracts of Bengal. In fact, Beveridge was surprised by the dearth of aristocratic Muslim families in Bakarganj, which was full of Muslims.

The deltaic wasteland provided new opportunities for survival and even prosperity for those who took advantage of the new opportunities. They included unemployed weavers to landless and oppressed peasantry. In the 1871 Census of Bengal, it was found that among the weaver class of Deltaic districts, only about 45 per cent were actually engaged in the weaving profession. The rest were assumed to have gone to the fields reclaimed from the coastal wasteland (Eaton, 1990). Beside the weaving class, a large number of people who were outcasted from their own community also found their way into the deltaic hinterland. In Faridpur, the bulk of the agricultural population was mainly composed of *Chandals*. This had been a community of Hindus of many castes, who had all, from Brahmans downwards, been 'outcasted and banished' to what were then the great swamps of Faridpur. They made mounds in the swamps, and lived by fishing. 'Gradually' as one contemporary observer noted, 'the swamps dried and

became rich land, and the Chandals from a race of starving wild men became substantial yeomen, increasing abundantly in wealth and in number' (Carstairs, 1912). Among the Muslims, too, a process of upward mobility and a sense of collective strength developed (Ahmad, 1970). This trend among Muslim was manifested in a socio-political movement known as the Faraizi movement. The *Faraizis*, who concentrated in the new lands in the chars, islands and the reclaimed lands from forest, not only represented the improving economic condition of the peasantry, but also organized resistance against the injustice imposed by the colonial system. In his search for the causes of the increasing Muslim discontents in Bengal, William Hunter found in 1871 that 'a hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Musalman in Bengal to become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich' (Hunter, 1871). But Hunter proved himself self-contradictory on the issues of the Faraizis. In his multi-volume *Statistical Account of Bengal*, whenever he described the Faraizis, he invariably pointed out to their economic well-being. Recently, historians have attributed the development of a distinctive political identity in the nineteenth century to the Faraizi movement (Ahmed, 1979; Bose, 1986; Samad, 1983).

Conclusion

In the light of the present economic and social condition of Bangladesh, the nineteenth-century picture of relative prosperity and social mobility may appear surprising. In this paper, I have attempted to show that though this region did not experience a peasant utopia in the nineteenth century, it nevertheless had a relatively better time, compared to other regions in South Asia. This was possible mainly because of the extensive wasteland and dynamics of reclamation. The question remains; why has this region failed to perform in the twentieth century through the present day? Throughout the nineteenth century there was no instance of remarkable food shortage, but the new century saw a number of small-scale famines culminating in major famines in 1943 and 1974. Although there has not been massive food shortage since then, the overall social and economic developments for the majority have remained unrealized. Historians have sought to answer this question from different perspectives, including that of the lack of capital formation, suppressive hegemony of religion, or the false ambition of nationalist politics. Given the strong link between a formative ecology and socioeconomic dynamism in the nineteenth century, it is perhaps also time to see to what extent the dislocations of the ecology of the region in more recent times can help formulate an answer to the question posed above.

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Government and Housing for the Poor Policy and Implementation in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The national constitution of Bangladesh recognised that housing is a basic need, and hence it is primarily the responsibility of the government. The 1993 National Housing Policy too guaranteed everybody's right to decent housing. However, in reality the poor are marginalised, and suffer from lack of resources and the bias of policymakers. The meagre housing sector allocation in the National Plans is mostly spent to build government offices and staff houses. Forced eviction is rampant while the most needy of the urban destitute poor is deprived of basic needs. The paper discusses urban housing in Bangladesh and shows that successive administrations have neglected the poor despite all policies, studies and government documents that stressed their particular needs. It exposes the gap between the policy and practice, and highlights the housing rights violation going on. It also notes that the city of Dhaka suffers the most, and suggests remedies.

Housing Problem

Urbanisation is transforming human settlements in developing countries; progress nowadays depends on the ability of the urban centres to meet crucial needs such as housing. The value of housing, which encompasses more than living space and shelter, is determined by both physical quality and access to varied services and amenities like education, health, and security. It cannot be produced or consumed piecemeal; any improvement in housing standard requires extensive restructuring of the economic decision-making system. In the process,

the community's social, moral, legal and business relationships are related to the economics of land, capital, materials, services and infrastructure. The limited but indispensable urban land available is to be shared by the community, which defines and creates it.

Urbanisation in recent decades has reached a critical level in Bangladesh because it has excluded the provisions of infrastructure, services and employment. This is especially evident in Dhaka, the capital city, whose population has grown tenfold in the last 3 decades.[1] 55% of its 600,000/year population increase is due to in-migration, mainly by rural destitutes (McDonalds, 1997).[2] According to Lall (2006), 46% of the 1991 population in Dhaka were born outside its metropolitan area. A majority of them have to face economic hardship and absence of accessible and affordable shelters and services and end up in *bastees*[3]. The number of *basteebashees* first became alarming after 1971 and subsequently natural calamities, famine, and socio-political causes have accelerated the influx. Their number is difficult to estimate as many *bastees* are temporary, often dismantled and, as often re-set. They are not covered in censuses as the makeshift shelters are not considered as housing units by administrations, and hence *basteebashees* are deprived of many facilities.[4] Poverty causes environmental and socio-economic deterioration in Dhaka's *bastees*.[5] The pressure is overwhelming on the meagre infrastructure, services and amenities, controlled by a small rich class while the poor lack basic survival needs.[6]

Under these circumstances, the public sector, acting directly as a provider and seldom indirectly as an enabler, should have assumed a primary role in providing services for the have-nots. Unfortunately, till now planned development and land subdivision managed by public agencies and real-estate developers has largely served the higher echelon. Yet only the housing need of the top 10% has been met. Thus far, the rich and powerful and vested interest groups have appropriated all benefits; in the process excluding the poor migrants of the city from meeting minimum socio-economic needs. Access to land via informal unplanned processes is widespread among the poor. Though the informal private sector has been meeting the housing needs of a range of income and occupation groups that physically and economically enjoy a lion's part of urban growth, the agencies rarely serve the majority and the neediest.[7] The government and its agencies have failed to demonstrate commitment and the capacity for providing secured land and affordable infrastructure and services on a large scale for the poor. Without such intervention the cost and scarcity of resources and lack of

access to finance and power will continue to marginalise the poor in the urban housing market.

On the other hand, increasing unplanned use is encroaching flood-prone agricultural land surrounding many of the urban centres of Bangladesh in the absence of master plans, infrastructure, and planning enforcement. Thus environmental conditions have deteriorated. Moreover, ensuring access to land and shelter for the poor through a planned growth has become difficult.[8] Existing policies and institutions for urban growth management and equitable distribution of resources are mostly inadequate. Ineffective land use planning, regulation and transfer mechanisms, inappropriate and non-enforced zoning, building and infrastructure regulations, under-used high value government holdings, absence of cost recovery and lack of co-ordination etc. are but some of the many areas of concern.

Public Housing and *Bastees*

Despite the government's pledge to provide shelter for the poor, subsidised sites-and-services plots turned posh residential areas and staff housing monopolize the main public housing programs in Bangladesh. These schemes are concentrated mainly in Dhaka, and are grossly inadequate compared to the requirement.[9] After independence, besides the huge task of reconstructing the war-ravaged country, the government faced rising urbanisation fuelled by economic migration. Under such circumstances, the UNDP suggested that "before any action is taken to resettle or remove squatters, steps should be taken to develop a short-term strategy", which included "*bastee* improvement, sites-and-services and minimum shelter schemes" (Ullah, 1994). However, recommendations of many such foreign funded studies did not address the problems related to *bastees* and the poor, and were mostly not implemented.[10] Ensuing attempts to improve *bastees* had mixed results.[11]

The *bastee* problem has remained the main focus of many policies or programs. Yet the government in reality has remained indifferent to the *basteebashees* and their legitimate demands. The 1990 Slum Problem Eradication Committee, Task Force Report, and the 1993 National Housing Policy urged upgrading the *bastees* in situ instead of eviction. Some of the non-government organisations (NGOs) too undertook limited shelter schemes, which were mainly bogged down by lack of land tenure; few such programs have been accepted as models in both developing and developed countries (Rahman, 1999).[12] In 1996, a program taken to address the

poverty situation of the urban poor more comprehensively through replicable education, health and sanitation schemes was stalled due to inter-agency tensions.[13] Developers and NGOs were invited to bid in a hastily launched project of 16,000 low-cost units in Bhasantek in 1996; the only attempted government-NGO collaboration to house the *basteebashees* in multi-story blocks could start only in 2003. Passing through many controversies, it too ignored the need for an environment conducive to work and live in (Ghafur, 1999), and fixed the price at a level that will rule out the so-called target group.[14]

Bastee Eviction

Upholding the housing rights of the urban poor in Bangladesh is made difficult by their lack of land ownership[15] and hostility of the administration who use eviction to end the *bastee* problems, though the *basteebashees* are employed in jobs others would not do, thereby keeping the city running (Rahman, 1990).[16] There have been numerous incidents of squatter demolition and evictions in the last three decades, particularly in Dhaka.[17] In 1971, the Pakistan Army burnt down the *bastees* to ashes, killing thousands and forcing others to become refugees. In early 1975, 173,000 *basteebashees* were picked up and put into three destitute camps set up hastily on unutilised government land at the city fringe. They, however, re-infiltrated the city soon after as the camps had no job or commuting facilities (Ullah, 1977). Though politicians used to hire *basteebashees* to attend rallies, they had no use under the new one-party Government, and hence were abandoned by their former patrons.

In November 1983, fences were erected on both sides of the VVIP road to hide *bastees* from visiting dignitaries. In 1990, bullies put arson in the Kalyanpur *bastee* in a bid to gain control over the land; several *basteebashees* were killed in that incident. On a rainy day in October, 1992, the Mayor ordered the demolition of the Palashi *bastee* which had been set up on a disused road; fresh *bastees* were set up in nearby areas immediately afterwards. The Housing and Settlement Directorate, the purveyor of poor men's housing and custodian of a Housing Policy that talks about avoiding "the displacement of *basteebashees*", asked the Agargaon *basteebashees* to vacate their shacks within weeks of the adoption of the Policy; a child was even killed under a bulldozer during the demolition of 20,000 shelters afterwards. The Railway Minister led the eviction drive of 10,000 families living along the railway track in 72 hours' notice in 1994.[18]

The doctors and the students of Dhaka Medical College Hospital started

agitation in late-1994 demanding building of an auditorium after the eviction of a nearby *bastee*. The Health Minister made that happen by promising to resettle the eviction victims, but it was a promise he did not keep. Footpath vendors are often evicted, affecting the lives of several million people including the dependants each time this happens; promises to relocate them in planned markets are almost never met. On 1996 when Labour Day coincided with Eid, the Azimpore *basteebashees* battled the police who were trying to evict them. There have been several court cases in 1999 against forced eviction when the police made at least 50,000 people homeless after one of their constables was killed by drug peddlers in a *bastee*.[19] The Court and the civil society expressed their concern over the affair.[20]

Brutal means like cordoning and beating the inmates or arson are used for eviction (Singha, 1994).[21] Often the *basteebashees* are given only a day to leave their shelters, which often are no more than makeshift shanties (Robinson, 1995).[22] In many *bastees*, various NGOs run poverty alleviation and environment upgrading schemes approved by the government; but even these are not spared eviction and demolition.[23] This is a lack of commitment and coordination among various government bodies. Thus evictions create more problems than solve it by denying the poor the right to a decent living; and yet the government has no qualms about this (Robinson, 1995).

Ghafur (1999) refuted the premises used by the government to justify eviction. That eviction will alleviate law and order is disputable; no data shows that only *basteebashees* are prone to crime. That eviction will end utility pilferage is not true as there are greater defaulters, while it is also true the *basteebashees* pay highly for the services though to the *mastaans*.[24] Also, eviction cannot recover substantial government land; influential bodies have appropriated most of the land. Relocation projects boost the construction sector, but the poor may not get access and benefit to them. Yet in the context of eviction-rehabilitation debate, a culture of power-project-profit prevents the reality from being understood. In fact these are socially unresponsive policies and dubious technical solutions (Ghafur, 1999); the Bhasantek project is a very good example.

Housing Rights

The rights of the urban poor, *basteebashees*, homeless and destitute, have been recognised in many international and national declarations and charters. The 1987 International Year of Shelter for the Homeless confirmed the need to intensify national and international efforts to produce, deliver and improve

shelter for all. In view of this decision, the UN General Assembly endorsed the proposal of the Commission on Human Settlements (Resolution 43/18; 20.12.88 & 1992/14; 27.8.92)[25] to undertake a global strategy for 'shelter for all by the year 2000'. The Assembly recognised that adequate and secure shelter is a basic human right, vital for the fulfilment of human aspirations. The resolution aims at the delivery of shelter for all income groups, particularly to those residing in *bastees*, "which can only be successful if framed within a comprehensive 'shelter strategy' that lists priorities, identifies affordable approaches and makes provisions for the proper allocation of resources."

The issue of eviction is also covered by UN resolutions on issues related to forced migration and refugees, and hence is of utmost importance. In August, 1991 an UN subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities termed forced eviction "a gross violation of human rights". It urged the governments to undertake policy and legislative measures to stop forced evictions. UN Commission on Human Rights (UNHCR) resolution 1993/77 on eviction states that "every woman, man and child has the right to a secure place to live in peace and dignity."[26] The UNCHR emphasises that the ultimate legal responsibility for preventing forced evictions rests with governments.

The Male Declaration 1990 recognises the issue of shelter and advocates "a concerted effort of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) member nations in providing people shelter that suits their individual socio-political and economic contexts." In fact, the issues of housing rights and environmental degradation, including housing in the urban areas, common to all South Asian countries to a certain degree, have been raised on many occasions in regional forums for example, as late as in April 2006 during the SAARCH (Association of SAARC Architects) Conference in Dhaka.

Bangladesh, a signatory in many of these declarations and charters, is aware of the commitment required of it to implement the contents of these documents. Accordingly, it has tried to meet some of the prerequisites to create an atmosphere conducive to upholding the housing rights of the urban poor and solving their housing problem in the most appropriate and cost-effective way. For example, the government has declared 'Housing for all by the Year 2000' as a national target, and has prepared a housing policy outlying priorities and strategies, formed a Housing Ministry, undertook many studies to alleviate poverty and the severe housing and environmental

problems in the urban areas, and devised a few low-income groups housing and lending programs. However, most of these initiatives remain moribund; moreover, many provisions, meagre compared to the widespread violation of rights and housing shortage, are not being enforced.[27] As the Constitution says

> It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people with a view to securing to its citizens: the provision of basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care (Part II, 15a)

The 1993 National Housing Policy (NHP) reiterated the government's position against forced eviction:

> the government would take steps to avoid forcible relocation or displacement of slum dwellers as far as possible... encourage in situ upgrading, slum renovation and progressive housing developments with conferment of occupancy rights, wherever possible, and to undertake relocation with community involvement for clearance of priority sites in public interest (5.7.1 & 5.7.2).

The objectives of NHP are: "to make housing accessible to all strata of society.... the high priority target groups will be the disadvantaged, the destitute and the shelterless poor; and to develop effective strategies for reducing the need to seek shelter through formation of slums.... to relocate them in suitable places" (Para 3.1 & 3.3).

Hence forced eviction of squatters without proper notice and without resettlement scheme for them is a violation of the stated policy of the government. The NHP has recognised the difficult situation in which the poor live in *bastees* and the violation taking place in them. Yet many actions taken later contradict the NHP as various government agencies lack commitment in protecting the housing rights of the poor. The government has even gone as far as to amend the NHP through office directives to justify the widespread *bastee* eviction of 1999, and has then drafted a fresh one in 2004. There have been no law enacted based on the Policy to give it legislative strength. Meanwhile, the 2004 Policy is still waiting the government's final approval.

Plans and Policies

The need to develop a housing policy to determine subsidy, identify its sources, allocate funds, co-ordinate programs, recommend external aids, identify technical and financial assistance needs, and materials import was felt in 1980. Nevertheless, the NHP was not ready until 1993. Before and after the enactment of the NHP, public housing programs and implementation of related policies and adopted strategies was under the purview of Long-Term National Plans from 1973. These Plans were but one of several instruments available to the government to meet the housing needs of all income and occupation groups. To face the continuous urbanisation and huge housing shortages, it was imperative for the government to adopt housing projects for the poor, and lead others to do so. Unfortunately, the ill-conceived, misplaced and inadequate policies and strategies included in the Plans failed to alleviate the housing problems, particularly of the urban poor.

Housing is included in the Physical Planning sector in the Plans, which also includes other areas such as tourism, civil defence, police, fire service etc. Funds for the sector were even diverted to the President's favourite projects like *upazilla* infrastructure, flood embankment etc. Such lack of commitment, less priority, and inadequate monetary allocation by the government undermined the crucial role housing plays in national development and economy.[28] Investment in housing was largely left to a private sector that is profit driven, while the government, considering housing as a consumptive good, continues to place more importance on sectors such as agriculture or industry that has visible impact on the economy.[29]

Pro-poor strategies in these Plans are often found on paper, but are not implemented as projects that benefit the already privileged (politicians, bureaucrats, military). There are always gaps between stated policies and undertaken programs. No effective roadmap has been followed to achieve the target—often set as 'housing for all by some year'—nor is there sufficient desire to formulate such a roadmap. Such anomalies are rampant due to various reasons. Firstly, there has been no commitment made by either the politicians or the government agencies, and secondly no monitoring has been done of whether policies were followed, strategies adopted, or programs implemented. The policy part in the plans were either written by subject experts or copied from contemporary literature using popular jargon insincerely, whereas the parts that included the actual programs to be undertaken were written by bureaucrats who give preference to their own choice and interest that mostly contradict the policy

and can not benefit the masses.

For example, after independence, the government adopted a policy of encouraging housing co–operatives but it took no proper strategy to realise this goal (Rahman, 1994b).[30] Instead of allocating developed land to the cooperatives so that they could undertake construction, the real–estate developers were allowed to build high–density luxury apartments on single-family government residential plots. No tax exemption or credit was given to enable cooperatives and large employers like industries and corporations to house their own employees (to reduce the government's burden) according to the declared policy.

The government accepted the responsibility to house the neediest groups in the very first Plan in 1973. Yet public sector activities, instead of aiming to meet the housing need of the poor, favoured already privileged groups. It was decided in the First Five Year Plan (1973-78) to construct multi–storied flats, minimum shelters, nucleus shelter, sites-and–services for co-operatives and industrial workers' housing and temporary settlements by subsidising the capital costs as the 'desirable long-term solution'. However, the government was not in a position to afford subsidising the housing needs of a huge population; the socio–political situation would have inhibited the poor from availing any such benefit that would eventually have accrued to influential groups. Moreover, free provision of resources, baring spontaneous ingenious solutions arrived at by the poor, was not sustainable (Ferozuddin, 1999).

The 1978 Two Year Plan said that "enough was catered for the rich, favoured by the government service and finance agencies, shunning attention and investment for the others." Later the government admitted in the Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) that

> conventional approach couldn't solve the massive housing problem. Selectivity ought to be practised by constructing a large number of low-cost semi-permanent housing units fast, using own resources to ease the shortage, increasing the stock by providing plots, utilities and easy-term finance, and reducing the residential entitlement to optimise resource-utilisation.

It was reiterated in the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) that "the policy of developing posh enclaves amidst the *bastees* was to be reversed by providing civic facilities and comforts to the other classes too." The above statements suggest that the situation has always been analysed correctly; unfortunately, the steps taken were not compatible.[31]

Though the priorities and interests of donor agencies and the NGOs often influenced the programs taken, the mostly large infrastructure and integrated area development projects pursued did not facilitate NGO participation as *development* partners. In the 1980s, emphasis was put on cost-recovery by International Funding Agencies (IFA), based on the motto of affordability-accessibility-replicability (Choguill, 1994). In the 1990-95 Fourth Five Year Plan, the government conceded that it could not meet the housing demand of all because of its meagre resources and the providers approach. In a gradual shift towards an enabler's role, it decided to intervene only to plan and develop land, infrastructures and services, and arrange finance. Otherwise, it intended to formulate policy to stimulate private sector participation, including by NGOs, so that in an environment of public-private cooperation, it could meet the housing need of the greater majority effectively.

The government decided to improve the quality of living and their work environment by providing adequate physical infrastructures and other services in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1995–2000), which envisions development of low–cost multi-storied buildings for resettling the poor, and flats for sale on "hire–purchase" basis for government employees. However, nothing substantial was accomplished during this period. Though the decision to provide supporting infrastructure and services was part of the government's enabling policy, the other two strategies had political motives intended to justify the two favoured programs of the government (limited small-scale housing credits,[32] and 16,000 flats in Bhasantek).

Finance and Budget

Finance, recognised as an important housing resource in many developing countries in the early 1970s, was neglected till the Third Five Year Plan (1985–90). The Plan identified the lack of matching funds in many projects, lack of savings and collateral, and an undeveloped mortgage market, and suggested taking steps to increase the availability of housing finance, including setting housing banks and seeking foreign fund. However, many of those steps were either not taken, or proved less effective. The Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC), the lone such bank for four decades since the 1960s, has been operating on and off since the 1980s, due to mismanagement, low rate of recovery, and hence lack of seed fund (Rahman, 1994). Setting up of a new housing bank was recommended in several plans, but only implemented in 1999 in the private sector with the establishment of BRAC–Delta Housing Bank and National Housing Finance Ltd.

It would take more than the government's entire housing sector budget to provide all with housing even in the capital city. Yet, most of the meagre budget allocated was spent on staff houses, mainly for upper-class employees. Even then, not all of them got accommodation. Though "the government should not build houses except for emergency staff and in remote areas", as reiterated in the Plans, construction of staff houses has remained a common concern and is often the only program recommended in the Plans. Situated in prime locations, staff houses follow high space standard, have better service and amenities, and allow for a large support staff. That the below-market rent cannot even recoup the maintenance cost make these houses highly subsidised, enjoyed by only a privileged few, and therefore unsustainable.[33] Yet despite admitting in 1980 that the "construction and maintenance of staff housing was uneconomic, wasteful, and a perennial burden upon the government", such projects were continued.[34]

Historically, government allocation for public housing in the budget has been the lowest among all development sectors, reflecting the neglect shown towards it and the government's limited capacity.[35] Many claimants shared the meagre allocation; only a small part of what was available for direct housing activities was used for government offices.[36] In fact, more was allocated for activities other than public housing. Only Tk 212 million was allocated for the purpose in 1973 when 20 times were needed to clear the minimum backlog of 20,000 units in Dhaka city alone. To meet Dhaka's yearly housing requirement, at least Tk 7,500 million was needed in the mid-1990s although the nation-wide allocation was only 10% of that amount (Rahman, 1995b). Moreover, most public housing provisions allocated out of the meagre fund benefited upper-income groups, and were spent in Dhaka. Yet allocated funds were not utilised in due time, reducing the amount actually spent in this sector. Most of the programs undertaken in a plan period were not completed timely due to want of fund, and bureaucratic and political obstacles, more pronounced in the areas of construction.[37] Thus actual achievement always fell far short of the target.

Solution

Scarcity and cost of land and finance, the two most crucial components of housing, define the problems. A solution to the housing problems lies in increasing access to them. The government should intervene in the urban land market extensively, in a context as volatile as in Bangladesh, as recommended in the 1976 Vancouver Habitat Conference. Land is a political issue (entitlement, access), not a technical one (scarcity, production, supply); if properly managed, and ownership and if use and development rights are separated, more people could be provided

access to land in various forms.[38] Without secure land tenure, no agency or bank will cater for *basteebashees*; also no *basteebashee* will want to invest on their own to improve their housing situation even if he or she could. Yet many programs ignore the importance of providing the poor some form of land ownership to allow them a foothold to bargain in the housing market (Peattie, 1987). Dhaka, an unfairly structured city where the rich typically enjoys more opportunities and subsidies than the poor, could benefit most from an effective land policy (Wilcox, 1983).[39] Context-sensitive innovative means applied to address such issues in comparable cities like Karachi, Kolkata or Jakarta show that incremental upgrading of the bastees is among the reasonably successful solutions to the problem rather than eviction.[40] Significantly, the World Bank initiated such approach towards *bastee* problems in the late 1960s (Choguill, 1987; Miah et al, 1989).[41]

In the absence of social awareness and legislative support, *bastee* eviction appears inevitable to many. However, it must be avoided as resources are severely constrained and housing rights cannot be violated to protect property rights (Singha, 1994a). Proper laws on land occupation, forced eviction, temporary transfer of use and development rights need to be enacted to protect the destitute and facilitate innovative unconventional schemes. Subsidies must be avoided except in justifiable cases, e.g. cyclone shelters, night shelters etc. Rather than building staff houses, housing affordability of organised occupation groups should be enhanced with the provisions of hire-purchase flats and long-term loans so that they do not depend on government provisions to meet their own housing needs. Similarly, cooperatives and large employers should be encouraged with incentives like tax exemptions, and assistance like materials credit, land development and servicing, to enable members/employees to house themselves. Infrastructure and services, income generation, and literacy and hygiene projects should be given priority over direct building so that housing improves by default with overall improvement of the living environment.

Immediately, after independence, the government had shown some awareness of land ownership problem in the urban areas, and accordingly had made modest efforts to alleviate the situation. For example, a bar on land ownership and freezing urban land price was declared in 1972 but then it was not imposed rigorously. Also, anyone holding land in urban areas was made ineligible to apply for government plots. But it was possible to deceive the relevant agencies by holding plots in alias since verifying records was a lengthy and flawed process. Guided Land Development, Land Pooling and Plot Reconstitution methods were extensively used to produce and supply developed and serviced plots in and around the many mega-cities of Asia. However, attempts to adopt such methods in Dhaka in the 1990s could not

overcome resistance from vested quarters, and offset the lack of commitment and expertise in the agencies (McDonald, 1997). Spare Plot Mechanism, another method particularly suited to the buoyant land market, was not considered.[42]

Government bodies occupy more land than they need, and often keep them unutilised for years, encouraging formation of *bastees*. In many third world cities, temporary land tenure arrangements for the poor have brought good results. Thus the near-urban land that will inevitably fall to unplanned and haphazard urban sprawls, or unutilised government land, can be handed over to the poor temporarily.[43] The poor should be given some kind of tenure with access to basic services and other resources on the land they occupy if there is no relocation site and no imminent development program on that land; this can be done by separating titles and various rights, or through long term lease. Utility agencies can overlook the ownership issue to extend services to *basteebashees* (Ferozuddin, 1999) who are already paying *mastaans* highly for such services (Matin, 1998), and can use available resources to pay for other housing components (Rahman, 1993).

The government should initiate and support poverty alleviation programs and housing loan schemes so that affordability of housing increases for poor people, and an environment is created to stimulate the informal sector that often provides ingenious cost-effective solutions (Dunham, 1994; Rahman, 1999). Micro-credit or domestic savings based income generating programs can be used to extend affordability. These and other programs could heighten the savings propensity if tied to prospective home-ownership (Jorgensen, 1977; Rahman, 1990, 1993). Besides, zero or low interest credits from the IFAs, available for urban housing and infrastructure development, could form a housing seed fund to be matched by the government's allocation and people's savings (Rahman, 1999). Till now this has not been sought due to ignorance about the existence of such a fund, and the inability of the agencies to prepare proper proposals and financial analysis (Navaratnam, 1985).

Migration and associated demands on infrastructure and services is an inevitable consequence of rapid urbanisation; radical approaches can only slow them down, not retard it (Todaro, 1989). Migrant *basteebashees* contain many people with the expertise and skill that can contribute to building cities, which can be channelled to improve *bastees* by exchanging sweat equity that contributes in reducing costs (Jorgensen, 1977; Payne, 1983; Varkey, 1994). By giving impetus to in situ upgrading and legitimacy, affordable and socio-culturally suitable building capabilities of the poor can be used to reduce the government's burden.

Conclusion

To conclude with a neat set of recommendations would be pretentious since housing is a vast area that has been inadequately treated till now. A paradigm shift is required where housing could have a comprehensive, rather than a piecemeal solution, dealing holistically with issues of land, shelter, migration, bastee, housing rights, income generation, poverty alleviation, environmental improvement, subsidy, resource optimisation, priority, public-private cooperation, community participation, enablement, governance, gender etc. This would include the government assuming the role of a facilitator, rather than that of a provider, to enable individuals, groups and communities solve housing problems themselves and not stress the public sector any further since its capacity is limited.

The government should intervene only to ensure access to such resources that may not otherwise be accessible and affordable to a majority of the population, or may require infrastructure and finances beyond the individual's capacity, e.g. land, finance, transport network, etc. It can be done by instituting regulations and guidelines (broad framework of actions) through various agencies and by creating a congenial market environment. In this framework, intermediaries would be required to mediate resources for allocation to particular groups or individuals. Thus the government should pursue a strategy of development in partnership and by co-operation between public (agencies building infrastructure, providing services, planning and managing cities etc.) and private (NGOs and CBOs, cooperatives, banks, builders, professionals and practitioners, academics and researchers, groups and individuals etc.) sectors (Rahman, 1999).

The government has never made a concerted attempt to solve the problem of the masses. Political parties, who should ideally act to ensure fundamental human needs, has no agenda on housing. Policymakers, impotent in finding a solution with present wisdom, have failed to adopt innovative approaches to provide land, materials and capital. People's participation can provoke pro-people actions through policy makers, NGOs and community co-operation. Adopted policies are not implemented as the political commitment and stability needed are lacking. A democratically elected government's policies should be pro-voter, a majority of whom are poor. Above all, it must possess the commitment and the willpower to solve the housing problem.

Notes

[1] Dhaka's current population is estimated at around 13.485 million. Currently, it stands 9th in the world in terms of its population, which is projected to move up to the 4th position with 22 million people in 2025 (UN, 2008). It is growing at an annual rate of between 2.5-2.8%. The city has one of the highest rates of urbanisation in the world (currently 4%+) which was 6.6%+ and 10%+ in 1974-81 and 1981-91 (BBS, 1994). Between 1995-2000, the population in Dhaka increased by 4.24% annually (BBS, 2003).

[2] Migration in Bangladesh occurs mainly due to extreme rural poverty and landlessness, and the large urban-rural wage differential (Lall, 2006). Dhaka attracts most of both the rural destitute and literate manpower because of it's geo-political primacy, accessibility, employment scope, education and health facilities, administrative offices, industries, as well as failed policies.

[3] Various indigenous Bengali terms for squatter settlements and slums have been used in international literature, including *bastee* (indicates both squatter settlements and slums) and *basteebashee* (bastee dwellers).

[4] *Bastees* housed 37.4% of Dhaka's population in 2003, an increase from 25% in 1996 (Islam, 2005). Nearly 3 million *basteebashees* lived in 2156 bastees in Dhaka Metropolitan Area, formed from the mid-1980s at 20 settlements/year rate, and at 100 settlements/year rate, increasing to over 2800 clusters in the next decade (IDSS, et.al., 1996). The growth in the last decade has been immense and indeed, nothing short of spectacular. The *bastee* population in Dhaka was 1.5 million in 3007 clusters, out of a total of 5.5 mil people in 1996. In 2005, it grew to 3.4 mil in 4996 clusters out of a total of 9.13 million people. While the population in the same 360 km2 area is growing at a rate of 4.33%, the *bastee* population is growing at 10%+/yr.

[5] Bastees are characterised by dense unhygienic conditions, unsanitary situations, lack of basic services and amenities, illiteracy, unemployment and crime, environmental and psychological degradation etc. (IDSS, et.al., 1996). The basteebashees are employed mainly in the informal sector characterized by low wage, long working hours and insecurity (Le Blanc & Buckley, 2006). The health situation is precarious in comparison with even rural indicators; 19% of households with monthly incomes of less than Tk 2000 reported receiving treatment from modern clinics (Rashid & Hussain, 2006). 9% of the poorest quintile enjoys sewerage, and 27% piped water, only 2.5% of basteebashees live within 100m of a toilet. 70% of households under poverty line do not have access to piped water and use tubewells as their main water source; 90% do not have access to sewerage line (Lall, 2006). Existing limited amount of services to the poor are delivered by a mix of government, NGOs, donors and private individuals who often use illegal methods (mastaans); these services are limited and are of low quality. Whatever administration exists is marked by incapacity and lack of coordination. Less than 20% of households are satisfied with 8 out of 11 services; among the poor in Dhaka the proportion is less than 5% (World Bank, 2002) as most government agencies ignore the slums (Rashid & Hussain, 2006).

[6] 28% of Dhaka's population or 3.36 million people were poor and 12% extremely poor in 2000. The incidence of poverty is lower than the national headcount of 50%, rural areas (53%), as well as other main cities of Chittagong (46%) and Khulna (50%). Poverty incidence in Bangladesh decreased by 9% during the 1990s. The poor spend the majority of their budget on food (62%). Other major expenditures are housing (14%) and non-food items (14%). The rich pay 32% on food and 24% on housing (Lall, 2006).

[7] During the 1970s public housing boom, the government could supply only 2000 housing plots a year

whereas Dhaka alone required over 40,000 units (Rahman, 1991). Most of these were for government staff and upper-income groups comprising less than 10% of the population (MacDonald et.al., 1997). Nearly 90% of the current stock is created by the informal sector (Islam & Shafi, 2008). The informal sector is estimated to have produced 85% of 1.0 million housing units in the DCC/DMA area. The public sector's contribution to the housing system in Dhaka has been around 100,000 (Islam, 2006).

[8] For example, in Dhaka land supply has been severely constrained by the flood plains and rivers that periodically inundate the surrounding lowlands. This has forced a north-south elongation of the city over time. Most of the flood-free land is already built up but new buildable land is being produced by filling the flood plain - a process that threatens the ecology. A real scarcity in developable land is reflected in very high density (over 20,000 persons per sq.km. and more than 100,000 people in some areas).

[9] Dhaka annually needed over 83,000 housing units in the mid-1990s- a third of the national urban area requirement. The current requirement has been projected to be over 120,000 units in Dhaka and 400,000 units in other urban areas (IDSS, 1996). More than half of these are targeted for the poor. Islam & Shafi (2008) estimate that for a period till 2025, 2.34 million new housing units will be required for Dhaka city. Of these, 1.17 million will be for the low-income groups and .93 million for the middle-income groups. Nearly a million houses will be required in the short term (within 2010). There is a huge and growing backlog.

[10] The US $ 170 million consultants' fees for 63 urban planning and infrastructure studies in the early-1990s, like Urban Sector National Program, Urban Sector Development Document, Urban and Shelter Sector Review, Land Development Control and Procedure, Dhaka and Chittagong Integrated Urban Transportation and Master Plans, Multi-Purpose Cyclone Shelter, 15-Year Perspective Plan, Training the Environmental Impact Trainers etc. could instead be used to develop *bastees* in the 20 large urban centres.

[11] For example, the army was asked to shift the near-cantonment camp created on a low-lying land in Bhasantek during the 1975 eviction, with UNCDF finance in 1977. The project was revised thrice due to adoption of costly method, collapse of wrongly designed embankment, overlooked operation and management costs, and lack of co-ordination among the participating agencies (Choguill, 1994). The highly subsidised project was condemned by the UNCDF as not replicable. Shahidnagar-Islambag upgrading scheme never picked up pace. Kaibalyadham project too could not overcome obstacles. In 1985-95, Slum Improvement Project (SIP) replicated in 60 municipality towns benefited 40,000 families as housing improved by default with infrastructure and utility development, income generation, women's participation, and community resource mobilisation.

[12] The credit schemes of the NGOs show that the poor can improve housing which in turn can increase labour productivity and hence their repaying capacity. Pravati Sangha organised the Khilgaon *basteebashees* to generate income from regular savings, and purchase suburban land for housing.

[13] It had a shelter component of US $ 5 mil to provide night-shelters, rental housing and small loans to poor *basteebashees*.

[14] An eviction attempt of the Bhasantek *Bastee* in 1997 was thwarted as the Association of Development Agencies convinced the Prime Minister that such eviction was against the Housing Policy, and the Housing Minister had to resign. Thereafter, this project of 9024 200 ft2 flats for the *basteebashees* and 6000 300 ft2 flats for others was undertaken. The estimated cost, including that for land, was US $ 770 mil. The price after 25% profit can be recouped in 12 years by the developer. The project has been slowed by political motives and bureaucratic entangles.

[15] It is estimated that 97% of the urban poor do not own any land in the city. Islam et.al (1995) has found that only 3.2% of the urban poor in Dhaka own a plot of land on which their dwelling unit is located. It is estimated that less than 20% of the poor of Dhaka are owners. Islam et.al. (1995) has found that 16% of the poor in Dhaka are owners, 56% tenants. Only 5% of the poor of Dhaka in 1995 lived in permanent or pucca house and 73% in temporary or rudimentary or *katcha jhupris* (Islam & others, 1997).

[16] *Bastees* are considered 'overcrowded, ugly, unworthy of existence, and safe haven of miscreants, drug traders and abusers.' The Housing Minister told the BBC on 09.08.99 that- 'Strict measures would be taken to remove the criminals' dens. We can no longer be humanitarian. They have to solve their own problems' (Amirul, 1999).

[17] There are at least 30 eviction cases in Dhaka that were reported in the media between 1990-92, which affected 200,000 people and destroyed US $ 2.5 million worth of property (Singha, 1994). This has been compiled from various other sources (viz. Nawaz, 2002; ASK, 2003) that at least 135 eviction cases have occurred in Dhaka in the quarter of a century following 1975. Though the number of *basteebashees* evicted in each case is unknown, the pace has not slowed down. In 2004 alone 40,000 *basteebashees* were evicted from Agargaon.

[18] The first was aimed at pleasing the Prime Minister who was to pass by the largest *bastee* of the city in February, 1994. Frequent rail accident was an excuse in the other case.

[19] On 8th August, 100 shelters at Balurmath, Rail Barrack and TT Para *bastees* were burnt, and 2000 people in 400 structures evicted. On the 9th, more than 3000 illegal structures along 4 km of railway in old Dhaka were demolished. The next day, 5000 structures along 2 km of railway in the new city were removed and about 27,000 people were made homeless. An NGO challenged these moves as no arrangement for alternative accommodation had been made and no prior notice given. The Court on August 11 asked the government not to evict anybody till the hearing. The next day, protests by about 60,000 Agargaon *basteebashees*, who were asked to leave by the 13th, turned violent; the Court directed the government to refrain from eviction for 1 week. After 6 days, about 5000 recent evictees started to build shelters in a park to get attention. The Court extended the stay order by another week, and directed the government not to evict the *basteebashees* without rehabilitation. It also stayed the demolition of the Agargaon *bastee* rescheduled for the end of August.

[20] Four major NGOs, who had invested about Tk 100 billion in income generating schemes, apprehended the negative effects of eviction. The donors opined through the World Bank that it was against development. Due to the harsh criticism, on day 3 of the eviction drive affecting, nearly 50,000 basteebashees, the government formed a Committee headed by the Home Minister (responsible for many evictions as the Housing Minister). Taka 50 mil was sanctioned as relief to implement its programs in phases. The Housing Fund Trustee sanctioned Taka 134 mil for constructing 6700 low-cost houses for evictees returning to their villages. After the park invasion (see the note above), the Krishi (agriculture) Bank included 10,000 evictees in its rehabilitation program (see Note 27).

[21] Shahidnagar-Islambag suffered from arson often; for instance a fire killed innocent women and children, and destroyed small factories.

[22] The Recovery of Possession Ordinance 1970 asks for a months notice by the District Commissioner before action is taken to evict unauthorised occupants. It may be mentioned that hoodlums take advantage of eviction. They raise false alarms and collect tolls for so-called negotiation with the landowner.

[23] For example, there were two schools running in a Palashi *bastee* when it was evicted. It could be relocated on 2% of the government land on the west of the road left unused for 50 years.

[24] Scarce resources and recurring conflict in the *bastees* often provide a power base for a group that dictates terms under which the residents of a particular area have to live. Known as the *mastaans*, it performs key functions which link the socially excluded urban poor to a series of basic needs such as employment, shelter, services etc. through a process of 'adverse incorporation' wherein the excluded and marginal groups are integrated into the pervasive system of clienteles and dependents (Matin, 1998). For consuming public utility the *basteebashees* more often have to depend on illegal connections by paying off the *mastaans*.

[25] 1. Affirming that the practice of forced evictions constitutes a gross violation of human rights, in particular, the right to adequate housing.

2. Urges Government to take immediate measures at all levels aimed at eliminating the practice of forced evictions.

3. Urges governments to confer security of tenure to all persons currently threatened with forced eviction and to adopt all necessary measures giving full protection against forced evictions based upon effective participation, consultation and negotiation with affected persons or groups.

4. Recommends that all governments provide immediate restitution, compensation and/or appropriate and sufficient alternative accommodation or land consistent with their wishes or needs, to persons and communities, which have been forcibly evicted, following mutually satisfactory negotiations with the affected persons or groups.

[26] According to the statement, "...the practice of forced eviction involves the involuntary removal of persons, families and groups from their homes and communities, resulting in increased levels of homelessness and inadequate housing and living conditions.... forced eviction and homelessness intensify social conflict and inequality and invariably affect the poorest, socially, economically, environmentally and politically most disadvantaged and vulnerable sector of society."

[27] Many of those advocated the need for innovative policy. For example, the primary objective of the Urban Sector National Program was to improve access to land and shelter. However, no one has addressed the *bastee* problems per se.

[28] All such added projects are capital-intensive prestigious buildings, for example, the International Conference Centre, Ministers' Bungalows etc., which are not compatible with the housing sector from which the fund was diverted, and therefore they can not be justified as priority schemes.

[29] Apart from social benefits, housing generates production, income, employment, savings and consumption. It lowers work absenteeism, raises health level, increases productivity, lowers social deviation, absorbs surplus labour, reduces traffic congestion and commuting expenses (Grimes, 1976); while investment in housing increases labour output. Housing can make under-utilised labour productive at low cost. Also, shelter sector investments are attractive for low import requirements; thus incremental investments generate more domestic multiplier than import-sensitive investments (UNCHS, 1995). In addition, it creates investments in other sectors; for every US $ 10,000 spent on building a house in Bangladesh, over 20 jobs are created. The price elasticity is higher for housing services than for a capital good, with 7-10 capital-output ratio (Jorgensen, 1977). Economic multiplier for the low-cost housing is 2 (Grimes, 1976). A high portion of income is spent on housing by poor families of developing countries (Jorgensen, 1977); governments should invest in it to increase employment among the people (Klaassen & others, 1987). As they have lower marginal

propensities to import, pay tax or save than the rich, multipliers would be greater, which could play an important developmental role if the growth rates for the housing sector can be increased during economic stagnation.

[30] In the 1973 Plan it was argued that cooperatives could take collective responsibility to acquire affordable housing. It was expected that this would lead to cooperative provisions for services, marketing, transport etc., running the community within a socialist framework. The decision that a committee should find incentives like credit for cooperatives or loans for members, and identify serviced land at suitable locations, guidance and regulations was not followed. Regulations too were not set to check the '*mushroom growth*' of such bodies who were acting as real-estate developers (Second Five Year Plan, 1980-85).

[31] For example, 2000 new plots were given to upper-income groups in 1978-80 as RAJUK activities were revived after an idle period.

[32] The Central Bank announced funds (1998) for individuals or groups of poor through NGOs but this scheme did not have much impact. The Krishi Bank took a no-collateral credit program (US $ 100-6000) in 1999 for 3 million *basteebashees* to encourage them to return to their original rural occupation that was to be disbursed through the NGOs. However, the migrant families resented violation of their right to stay and chose their own occupation and disliked the selection procedure. The experts and NGO activists predicted their compulsive return given the worsening socio-political situation and reducing economic opportunities in rural areas. These were in fact introduced to quell public criticisms immediately after the 1999 eviction drive (see notes 13 & 14).

[33] Old space entitlement standards were restored after short-lived new space standards were introduced during the 1980's austerity era; smaller flats built accordingly were then termed sub-standard. Government employees get about 45% of the basic salary as housing allowance. Those in government accommodation (staff house) pay 7.5% of salary as rent, which is much below the market value of such houses. Those in substandard houses pay rent on floor area basis, and retain the allowance, and hence are doubly subsidised.

[34] The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) mentions that "unjustified construction of staff houses should be stopped given the resource constraints and other pressing needs. It is not possible to provide houses to all employees in two decades. Also, some of them with accommodation discriminates the rest on allowances." Yet the program of 32,000 housing units recommended for the government staff in the Plan exemplifies its contradictions.

[35] Tk 2720 million (5.8% of the public sector) was allocated for physical planning and the housing sector in 1973-78, and Tk 2500 million (7.8% of the public sector) in 1978-80; the proportion started to decline thereafter. Tk 8200 million (5.1%) in 1980-85 and Tk 5500 million (2.2%) in 1985-90 were allocated for this sector, Tk 12410 million (2.96%) was allocated to the physical planning and housing sector in the Fourth Plan. This amount increased to Tk 49,816 million in the Fifth Plan (4%). See Rahman (1996) for more details.

[36] 31% of the Physical Planning and Housing Sector allocation was spent on office building construction during 1973-78, made to meet the immediate needs of a war-torn country. But this allocation remained high in subsequent plan periods too (about a fifth of the allocation). 13-36% the fund available for the housing sector was spent on direct housing, though mostly for staff houses (30%).

[37] The 1980-85 Plan proposed 20,000 new plots that could not be created despite several designs adopted and change of techniques suggested in 15 years. Out of 45,000 new units proposed in 1973,

less than 6500 have been built. Of 40,000 flats and 20,000 low-cost units planned in 1978, only 4731 flats and 5400 low-cost units have been constructed. In the 1985-90 period, only 243 units out of 3645 staff houses targeted were built.

[38] It was claimed in both the 1981 Dhaka Metropolitan Integrated Urban Development Program and 1995 Dhaka Structure Plan that more than double the current population could be accommodated within the existing Dhaka city conurbation through proper planning and management.

[39] While the poor constitutes 70% of the city's population, they occupy only 20% of its residential land (Islam, 1988, 2005).

[40] The Indian Vacant Land Act prohibits landlords from evicting poor tenants. The Urban Land Ceiling Act puts bar on owning more than a fixed amount of within-city land; the government has the right to appropriate extra land for social purposes. In Kolkata, *basteebashees* cannot be evicted; street sleepers can be evicted but must be relocated. In Bombay, they have been provided with potable water and sleeping sheds (Chowdhury, 1994). In 1988, Mumbai's Railway *Basteebashee* Federation negotiated resettlements for 30,000 squatter families living along the railway. It is now gradually linking other such *bastees* in large cities through people-managed resettlement on negotiated Railway land. Mahila Milan is mobilising Mumbai and Pune pavement dwellers to improve their settlements.

[41] Irregular settlements have been regularised in Mexico and Korea. Eviction is discouraged in ASEAN countries. The Thai government prevents a landowner from evicting people and encourages sharing. After decades of eviction and arson in Bankok's Rom Klao, the Human Development Centre negotiated lease from the Port Authority for Klong Toey Resettlement Program by re-blocking. Squatters negotiated interim land ownership and development in Towon-dong and Songhak, Seoul. In Payatas Hill, Manila, Golden Shower Homeowners' Association negotiated land tenure and development with the Water Authority in exchange for planting trees. In Samahang, Homeowners' Association negotiated use of part of the National Power Corporation's land. In Ibayo-Tipas, Southeast People's Association negotiated to buy the land they were occupying from the Far East Bank and Trust Company with loans. They developed the land and constructed houses with mutual labour. A set of alternatives like land sharing, land swapping, buying back, voluntary relocation and in situ redevelopment have been used through Pagtambayayong Foundation, Cebu. Housings in Indonesia keep 40% provisions for low-income groups. Governments in Malaysia and Colombia sell subsidised plots to developers who set aside a certain portion for non-profit housing. In Columbia, squatters are given a form of land title after 30 years occupation. The Philippines government has low-income housing programs like CMP, PHASE etc.

[42] As tried in Mexico where double the required amount is allocated to reap the enhanced value in the future to cross-subsidise the cost.

[43] Under a tripartite arrangement, land ownership remains with the actual owner and development rights go to the *basteebashees* for a certain number of years. The *basteebashees* can walk out of a contract when they can afford to but the local authority stands as a guarantor as the owner cannot increase the rent beyond a limit in the stipulated period.

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Potential Benefits and Pitfalls of IT Outsourcing from the Viewpoint of Developed Countries: Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh

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Abstract

Outsourcing generally refers to the practice of farming out jobs from the home base to other countries, largely in an effort to cut costs. Software developers are among an increasing number of companies turning to outsourcing as a strategy to improve cost control, product quality, product development schedule reduction, and focus on core business activities. As IT outsourcing becomes ever more ubiquitous across the globe, corporations are taking a closer look at the scope, quality, and nature of their outsourcing agreements. By 2015, analysts predict that more than 3 million white-collar jobs in the U.S. will be farmed out to other countries, up from about 300,000 today. If that shift is inevitable, the next question becomes which countries offer the best choice. Here, in this paper some guidelines have been provided to get the answer. Several years ago, software was identified by the government of Bangladesh as having important export potential and the IT industry was declared as a thrust sector. Human resources for the IT industry have also been growing rapidly. Considering all the factors involved, this paper concludes that Bangladesh could become one of the most competitive IT outsource centers for the entire first world. This paper also discusses the opportunities and challenges for Bangladesh in becoming a successful IT outsourcing country.

Keywords

IT Outsourcing, IT Outsourced Country, IT Enabled Services

1. Introduction

Today's business environment has led many companies to streamline business processes and outsource activities not considered "core" business functions. In many businesses, IT development is classified as a non-core activity. As G. Hermann [1] observes, "The IT industry has achieved a notorious reputation for being out of control in terms of schedule accuracy, cost accuracy, and quality control". In response to these problems and business trends, software developers have tried process improvement and project management techniques, and are now outsourcing software development in increasing numbers. Like their counterparts in the business world, software developers think an outsourcing vendor can do the job cheaper, faster, and with higher quality than current in-house efforts. During the last 10 years, outsourcing has transformed many companies of the world, especially in North America and Europe. As the World Wide Web is a well-accepted interconnected resource, companies are moving towards becoming virtual corporations. Information Technology (IT) and IT enabled services have been leading the charge by resorting to outsourcing. Indeed, IT outsourcing continues to play a leading role in the overall outsourcing revolution. The aim of this paper is identify outsourcing strategies, motivations, benefits, drawbacks and show how Bangladesh can play an important role in this field to become one of the best countries for outsourcing.

2. Research Methodology

This research is basically based on literature study. To understand IT outsourcing in detail along with its benefits and drawbacks we depended on proceedings, journal papers and articles from the Internet such as A. E. Petrick [2], A. Woodsworth [3], D. Stokes [4], D. Nuzzo [5], G. Grossman and E. Helpman [6], H. A. Rubin [7], I. Sheila [8], J. Cronk and J. Sharp [9], J. Dwyer [10], J. L. Ogburn [11], J. N. Berry [12], J. Thottam [13], J. Yesulatitis [14], M. C. Lacity and R. Hirschheim [15], M. Smithson [16], V. M. Scheschy [17], W. Benedon [18], W. Jones [19] etc. After gathering information about IT outsourcing, we analyzed a few papers to understand the current situation of IT outsourcing in various countries. The papers that have been discussed in some detail are: A. Oser and H. David [20], K. Lakey

[21], R. Dossani and M. Kenney [22], S. A. Strickland [23], [24], [25] etc. To learn about the various facts and figures of IT outsourcing, we have scrutinized resources such as S. Harken [26], W. L. Currie [27], [28], [29], [30] etc. We then went through a few more articles to understand the current ICT situation in Bangladesh and to explore the benefits, and pitfalls of IT outsourcing in Bangladesh. These papers are: [31], [32], T. Paul [33], etc.

3. Definition of IT outsourcing

According to G. Hermann, [1] IT Outsourcing means contracting (or subcontracting) with an external organization for the development of complete or partial IT products or/and the purchase of packaged or customized package IT products, or/and activities to aid in the software development life cycle.

4. Reasons for company to outsource

"Twenty years ago we stopped putting a premium on assembling products," declared analyst John McCarthy of Forrester Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2005. He suggested that many corporate functions are likewise becoming commoditized and therefore do not require a highly salaried workforce. Companies like Citigroup and General Electric of USA were pioneers, having established specialized centers in other countries. They also begun to relocate more complex and critical functions outside the U.S. Companies like IBM acknowledged the trend and soon attempted to move jobs outside the U.S. before its competitors did the same. IT companies like Software Developers were among an increasing number of companies turning to outsourcing in recent years.

At this juncture, we need to identify the reasons for which a company will outsource its jobs to companies located overseas. Actually, companies turning to outsourcing for IT products or services are typically under pressure to deliver high-quality products within budgetary and schedule constraints. According to M. Nuala, [34] the following are some reasons for which a company can outsource:

4.1. Delegate "non-core" activities

An important reason for a company to consider outsourcing arrangements is to delegate non-core functions to another organization. The company can then concentrate on doing that which it does best.

In this scenario outsourcing is part of a growth strategy. Through outsourcing, an organization is able to concentrate on those things that offer the most potential for innovation and high quality service.

4.2. Lower Cost

Another important reason for a company to consider an outsourcing arrangement is to reduce or control costs. Outsourcing can lower costs because:

1. an outsourced company may be able to accomplish the task with fewer staff, especially in the areas of supervision and administration;
2. the costs of labor and employee benefits of an outsourced company may be lower;
3. community nonprofit contractors might accomplish the tasks partially through the use of volunteers;
4. on-going costs for permanent staff and training, and overhead costs for space and equipment may be reduced;

4.3. Increased Access to Specialized Skills and Expertise

Outsourcing enables organizations to gain access to expertise and state-of-the-art capabilities that are not normally available in-house. Institutions can benefit by contracting with specialists or professionals for specific tasks that the organization itself could not afford to hire on a permanent basis or might not need except in particular circumstances. Many organizations outsource very specialized, technical information and communications technology requirements.

4.4. Improve Service Quality

Outsourcing to a supplier with more expertise or more staff can result in an improvement in the quality of the work done or the service provided. By building quality measures into the outsourcing agreement it is possible to improve turnaround times and volume output and introduce more innovation and creativity into the work being outsourced.

4.5. Increased Flexibility

Outsourcing can provide greater flexibility to management in making adjustments to the size of a program, service or function. Outsourcing enables an organization to get the work done at the time it needs to be done. This is particularly the case for special programs, sudden emergencies, temporary tasks or seasonal work.

So, these are the few reasons for which a company can outsource a few tasks to other companies. But as IT outsourcing becomes a norm, corporations are taking a closer look at the scope, quality, and nature of their outsourcing agreements. With prices coming down, and customer service expectations rising, enterprises are no longer satisfied with vague service level definitions. Today's savvy CIO's are demanding in-depth, detailed service level agreements that are tailored to their business needs, IT resources, and future development plans. That's why companies which want to get outsourced jobs should be careful about their strength and commitment. Otherwise, it will be difficult to get the job done.

5. Current Situation Analysis

IT outsourcing has not only grown impressively in recent years, it has also evolved and changed steadily, according to *The Outsourcing Institutes IT Index.* The IT Index suggests that the industry has become more multi-faceted and varied, and companies have become more comfortable in forging deals and maintaining relationships. Examples of innovations and trends can be easily found. Software giant Oracle, for example, recently said that it is moving 2000 developer jobs from the USA to India, doubling the number of developers it has on payroll there. Then HP announced plans to close a customer-service operation

Table 1: Number of US jobs moving towards other countries

Number of USA jobs moving to other countries

Job Category	2000	2005	2010	2015
Management	0	37,477	117,835	288,281
Business	10,787	61,252	161,722	348,028
Computer	27,171	108,991	276,954	472,632
Architecture	3,498	32,302	83,237	184,347
Life Science	0	3,677	14,478	36,770
Legal	1,793	14,220	34,673	74,642
Art, Design	818	5,576	13,846	29,639
Sales	4,619	29,064	97,321	226,564
Office	53,987	295,034	791,035	1,659,310
Total	102,674	587,592	1,591,101	3,320,213

Source: U.S. Department of Labor and Forrester Research Inc. All numbers are made rounded

in Florida and send the operation's 1200 jobs to India. Like Oracle and HP most large companies have diverted their operations or outsourced some of their services to offshore venues. However, there are plenty of opportunities left for many companies. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 3.3 millions of high-end technology and service jobs will be shifted from USA to less expensive foreign venues by 2015.

The above research and data clearly shows that an ample market for outsourcing exists worldwide and any company can position itself to take advantages of this trend.

6. Position of Bangladesh in this Scenario

With a population of almost 150 million people, Bangladesh is one of the least developing countries of the world. According to IBTCI (2002) [31] Bangladesh was expected to earn $2 billion in revenue from the IT sector by 2006. This was too optimistic a projection, but it definitely indicates the potentials of IT. At present, 79 public and private universities and some institutes and colleges are offering degree courses in the area of Information Technology. According to T. Paul, [33] every year around 3000 IT graduates are coming out of these institutions. In addition, there are large numbers of IT training centres, some of which are operating under foreign franchise. Last but not least, the Bangladesh Government has declared IT as a thrust sector. Considering all these trends, it can be said that in recent years Bangladesh governments and the people of Bangladesh have realized that this country could become a competitive IT outsource center for the United States and the entire first world. We have very bright students in Bangladesh, with adequate skills and knowledge in mathematics and science. If we could train them to become IT professionals, we could attract United States clients for lucrative outsourcing contracts.

6.1. Reasons for choosing Bangladesh for IT Outsourcing

Use of computers in Bangladesh as a research and data manipulation tool dates back to more than 30 years. Today computers are widely used in the country's offices, businesses, educational institutions, at home and in field-level work. The state provides many fiscal and infra-structural facilities to accelerate the use of computers and boost the growth of the IT industry. When software was identified by the government of Bangladesh as an industry with an important export potential, the Ministry of Commerce established a task force in 1997 to identify methods by which this sector could be developed. The report (known as

JRC report), that was submitted by a committee headed by Mr. J.R. Chowdhury in September 1997, identified Bangladesh's competitive advantages in this sector as follows: low labor costs, high programmer productivity and widespread knowledge of English, the availability of a wide range of hardware platforms, existence of an experienced software sector, etc.

Of the advantages identified for software export in the 1997 report, the first one "Low labor cost", is the most important. Most of the companies from abroad are interested to outsource their jobs because of costs. If we can provide the lowest cost to them then definitely we have ample chance to be the market leader in a short time.

The size of the IT industry at this time is estimated to be at around USD 150 million but is growing at more than 20% each year now. Among the major IT projects already done/undertaken in Bangladesh are: (according to T. Paul [33])

1. Preparing a national voter database and producing computerized ID cards for each voter.

2. Implementing computerized nationwide seat reservation and ticketing system for Bangladesh Railway.

3. Preparing and administering motor vehicles and drivers registration database. The nationwide system handles more than one million registrations/renewals each year.

4. Establishing a National Data Bank. This on-going state-funded project started in 1995 and plans to be the ultimate repository of all information of Bangladesh.

5. National pre-university examination system automation. The boards of secondary and higher secondary education process more than 30 million examination papers each year through the automated OMR based computer system.

The software and data-processing industry in Bangladesh has had a successful track record of exporting to the USA and Europe for more than a decade now. The areas of competency of the IT industry in Bangladesh (as per the report by BASIS [32]) are as follows: Web-page design and web- enable software development, Multi-media design and publishing, alphanumeric data processing (from paper documents, scanned images and verbal

recordings), relational database applications development. Front-end tools used are Visual BASIC, Developer 2000, Power Builder, Access, FoxPro and others. Back-end systems used are Oracle, Informix, Sybase, DB2 and others, Device drivers for UNIX, Windows NT and Windows 95/98, Y2K related database and program modification work, Euro-money related database and program modification work.

Human resources for the IT industry have grown rapidly since the government declared this industry as a thrust sector and embarked on a mission to make the industry a substantial part of the USD 36 Billion economy. According to IBTCI (2002) [31] the vital statistics for this sector included: more than 300,000 IT professionals engaged in the industry, 79 public and private universities and some institutes and colleges offering degree courses in the area of Information Technology, and more than 1000 private and public sector computer training institutes providing IT skill development at various levels.

True to its commitments, the government cut through a lot of red tape to ensure the right kind of environment for IT entrepreneurs to thrive in the country. The incentives and infra-structural facilities made available for the IT industry include: (discussed in the report by BASIS [32]) up to 2Mbps telecom link with North America, full exemption from income tax, state-sponsored "IT village" which offer high-tech offices ready for rental by software companies at preferential rates, working capital loan from banks at preferential interest rates and with no collateral requirement, absolutely duty and tax free import of computer hardware and software, etc. Considering the above situations it can easily be said that Bangladesh should be the first choice as an IT outsourced country for many companies of the developed world.

6.2. Challenges for Bangladesh

Nevertheless, even after offering such ample scope in various sectors Bangladesh has not been able to attract sufficient outsourcing ventures. This is no doubt because of the various problems, starting from political to personal ones which exist here. If we look at India we will be able to find out the following reasons for which they are the first choice for IT outsourcing jobs right at this moment [24]; strong human resources, low labor cost, availability of high quality IT firms having SEI-CMM level 5, availability of technologically advanced outsourcing firms, reliable communication facilities

and stable government. Now if we compare the Indian scenario with Bangladesh, we will find that we are far behind India in the last two points i.e. the reliable communication facilities and stable government. We do not have good and reliable communication facilities and without them it is impossible to get good deals from outside countries. We are not also politically stable, which is also a factor for not getting good jobs from overseas companies. The JRC report which was submitted in 1997 had identified a few other problem areas for Bangladesh. These were: poor telecommunications infrastructure, insufficient number and capacity of ISP's, lack of contacts with international markets, etc.

Another area of concern for Bangladesh is the brain drain. At the moment, an expert IT-sector is important for Bangladesh, since it generates foreign exchange and provides highly skilled jobs. To achieve this, the education system must produce better–equipped students and the IT infrastructure should be improved. If such an IT– industry does not develop, the problem of the brain drain will continue to exist. Around 80% of graduates and teachers have indicated that they would migrate to other countries if they could (UNCTAD, 2001). So far, Bangladesh has lost the majority of its scientists, technologists and engineers to the western world.

Considering all these drawbacks to become the leader among the IT outsourced countries the government of Bangladesh should take necessary steps so that the following solutions could be found as soon as possible; good communication infrastructure, improved contacts with international markets, restriction on the movement of trained IT personnel and stability in politics.

7. Pitfalls of IT Outsourcing

Though the benefits of IT outsourcing are difficult to deny, there are some pitfalls or risks involved. Few of the pitfalls mentioned in the Business Fact Sheet, Blue Phoenix Solutions, USA [28] are discussed below.

7.1. Loss of Control

The boards and management of the outsourcing company may have to surrender some of the controls to the outsourced company. This might happen especially when core functions are outsourced.

7.2. Decline in Service Quality

When a task is outsourced, there may be a risk that the new group doing the task will not maintain the same levels of quality as previously established. As a result the quality of services might decline.

7.3. Risky Dependency

When a task is outsourced to another company, whether a private business or a not-for-profit organization, there may be the risk that the outsourcing company will become too dependent on that outsourced company. Becoming too dependent on the outsourced company can be dubbed risky dependency.

7.4. Increased Cost

Because many functions or tasks of an outsourcing company might be unique, there could be very few alternative service suppliers available. In a situation where there is only one alternative supplier the dependency of the outsourcing company on the supplier may become excessive, as there would be no fall-back position should the supplier fail. When there is only one alternative supplier there is no competition and therefore it is possible that the anticipated cost-savings may not be realized; rather, it would be increased!

7.5. Negative Impact on Jobs and Professional Careers and Staff Morale Problems

When an outsourcing company's function or service is outsourced, the jobs in that company related to the performance of that particular function or service usually become redundant. Therefore, some public sector jobs will be lost unless the outsourcing company decides to reassign those positions to different departments or work areas. When professional functions are outsourced, professional jobs may be lost, together with the expertise that accompanies them. The remaining professional staff may have fewer opportunities for advancement because the jobs that have been outsourced could no longer be available to them. The outsourcing of professional work is often perceived to be, and in fact, often does lead to the de-professionalization of those jobs. Because of the impact on jobs and promotions, outsourcing always has an impact on staff morale and it can be a negative one if not handled effectively.

Outsourced countries like Bangladesh should have clear understanding of these pitfalls so that they can take necessary actions before or after taking the outsourced jobs.

8. Conclusion

Outsourcing has become an established management tool. Outsourcing can be a cost-saving and efficiency-building mechanism. Outsourcing companies, as well as their governing authorities and donors, have begun to consider outsourcing as an alternative service delivery mechanism. However, outsourcing presents both benefits and problems. If not done well, outsourcing can cause significant problems.

A country like Bangladesh can be considered a potential destination for IT outsourcing. Few companies from abroad have already started to outsource jobs to Bangladesh and have expressed satisfaction with the results. One of the most interesting advantages is the potential to achieve a significant reduction in project costs. There is not a very large turnover of staff and a wide range of hardware platforms is available here. These are advantages Bangladesh has over competing countries in the region, such as India.

The IT sector of Bangladesh is not yet well known internationally and software exports are still limited. Many local IT companies do not yet have international experience. To improve this situation, export promotion should be a major goal for Bangladesh. Firms must be prepared to invest in marketing activities such as commercial representation, networking and advertising. If that is the case, then more companies from Bangladesh might be able to generate revenue from outsourcing companies from North America, Europe etc for global IT outsourcing.

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REVIEW

Gary Day. *Literary Criticism: A New History.*
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,
2008. 344 pages.

Critical response to E. M. Forster's A Passage to India remains diverse. While some commend Forster's depiction of the India, others express their misgivings at his portrayal of Indians attributing his delineation of the Indians, their behaviors, their religions and customs, even the geographical landscape to be in the Orientalist tradition. While looking at the historical bases of A Passage to India, this paper establishes that being conscious of the British administration's policy of 'divide and rule,' Forster undertakes a similar exercise of widening the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. Forster's 'knowledge' of the political conditions in India and Europe, the differences between the two communities and his imperial anxieties pertaining to the future of the British Empire shapes his representation of Hindus and Muslims as two distinct 'types,' as a form of literary mimicry of the British policy of 'divide and rule.' This paper also argues that A Passage to India's importance as a seminal colonial text in India has helped reinforce this difference in the Indian consciousness and continues to foment communal riots in the country even ninety years after its publication.

This history is written against the background of umpteen critical theories which swept over Europe in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, and in part as a reaction to them. The last quarter of the twentieth century also saw management theories come to the centre stage with their jargon, 'mission objectives," "strategic plans," "capturing relevant information," and so on. The book takes as its province the whole gamut of European literary criticism from Plato to Derrida. It is not a

conventional history and yet it is an insightful, absorbing and provocative account of the development of theories in the West in the last twenty-four centuries. It provides unsuspected connections between criticism and commerce The author finds returns, revisions, repetitions and continuities rather than ruptures in the course of the growth of theory. He says that there are two main strains of criticism, namely, rhetorical and grammatical, which have continued over the centuries to this day, albeit in different garbs and emphases.

The refrain of this new critical history is that there is an affinity between criticism, money, market, and management theories. No wonder, Derrida, the high-priest of deconstruction, motivates management theories. The disproportionate importance given to theory prevents students from the experience of literature. This book illustrates how criticism increasingly uses the concepts and technical terms of economics. The contemporary consumer culture triggered by the free market and globalization was, in a way, anticipated by Lord Byron and John Keats who pleaded for 'a life of sensations.'

Day draws a parallel between money and language because both are forms of representation: "Money confers value on commodities, while language confers value on objects, thoughts, and feelings." However, his attempt to link this relationship to Ferdinanad de Saussure's linguistic theory seems rather far-fetched. He charges that criticism of the 1980s and 90s has degenerated into a technique of reading that uses 'literature' as a way of validating its own 'isms' It substituted doctrine for genuine engagement with the literary work, and its contempt for humanism played right into the hands of a system that viewed its objects as nothing more than units of production and consumption." The theories which sprouted in the last three decades have, far from encouraging the study, understanding, and enjoyment of literature, willfully destroyed interest in literature. The proponents of the new theories, in Day's view, are 'fundamentalists and fanatics' who do not brook any disagreement.

The six chapters in this book are evenly distributed for an informed discussion of the development of literary criticism in Europe. However, the developments in this field on the other side of the Atlantic are not mentioned.

This book is written in an engaging style and it is enlivened by interesting tidbits about critics and their times. It provides a comprehensive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources chapter-wise. Most of the works listed are recent publications. The bibliography will be of immense use to students who want to pursue their inquiry further.

On the negative side, there is a feeling that the author is over-enthusiastic at times in trying to fit developments in critical theory to a pre-conceived grid of management theory and practice. Occasionally, Day's account appears somewhat disjointed.

This book will serve to de-addict a generation which consumed too much theory. It is useful for a critical debate, although it is not a substitute for the primary critical texts.

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