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TAYR Quarterly (ISSN 2382-2872. Impact Factor 1.533) is an indexed journal that publishes research articles in English Language, Literature, and Culture studies prepared by young researchers from all over the globe. All manuscripts are reviewed by a committee of specialized researchers.

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TAYR Quarterly (TQ), a professional journal, encourages submission of previously unpublished articles on topics of significance to individuals concerned with English language teaching, learning, and research.

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- issues in research and research methodology
- testing and evaluation
- professional preparation
- curriculum design and development
- instructional methods, materials, and techniques
- language planning professional standards

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- anthropology
- applied and theoretical linguistics
- communication
- education
- English education, including reading and writing theory
- psycholinguistics
- psychology
- first and second language acquisition
- sociolinguistics
- sociology
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• The manuscript elucidates the relationship between theory and practice: Practical articles must be anchored in theory, and theoretical articles and reports of research must contain a discussion of implications or applications for practice.
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Localizing social media through the lens of Actor Network Theory

By Dr. Hassen Rebhi, University of Gafsa, Tunisia

Abstract
A successful localization of social media is at the heart of educational concerns - in schools, training centers, universities, laboratories and policy boards alike. This happens when there is compatibility between the functionalities of the technology and instructor's or researcher's pedagogical beliefs. However, multiple challenges may arise when we focus on the enactments of social media, the politics they produce and their contribution to change. One theoretical approach to material analysis is offered by Actor-Network Theory (ANT). But aside from a few accounts of educational change drawing upon ANT (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010), scientific research literature offers little uptake of ANT concepts. This is unfortunate, given ANT's capacity to trace complex materializing processes that are useful in research practice. This paper addresses the contribution of ANT to academic research settings by following the traces of a Tunisian team-based research community. As a result, scientific knowledge does not originate from institutionalized practices of supervisors or the cognitive abilities of researchers. It emerges through heterogeneous associations between human and non-human entities. Scientific knowledge comes to be performed as it moves through a network. It is shaped, modified and sometimes transgressed depending on the circumstances.

Key words: localization, social media; Social networking sites, ANT, scientific knowledge

Introduction
Social media and related web 2.0 technologies have skyrocketed in recent years (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). They become an essential ingredient of personal life as users generate content, share photos and play games. Following this trend,
researchers are also increasingly adopting and adapting these technologies in their academic activities and professional career (Collins & Hide, 2010). Different social media platforms play different roles in sharing information, connecting researchers, and producing knowledge.

Widely embraced as a learning tool, social media such as blogs, wikis and social networking sites may be an effective tool for research-related activities. At the same time, the potential role for social media as facilitator and enhancer of research is receiving an increased research interest. A recent example of their growing ubiquity involves life science researchers who took to twitter, a microblogging service, to voice their criticism over an article published in science magazine that purported to have found a gene that predicted the human lifespan (Mandavilli, 2011). This is but one of many cases of how social media and networking technologies are changing research practices.

Despite the increased importance of social media in general and social networking sites in particular (SNSs), few studies have been conducted about their use for research-related practices (Collins & Hide, 2010; Gruzd et al., 2012), and even fewer studies have focused on the localization of these applications and their active role in the production of scientific knowledge. The current study, thus, seeks to explore the way a Tunisian online research team is using SNSs for the communication, for the production, and for the dissemination of knowledge.

Multiple challenges, however, may arise when we focus on the enactment of SNSs, the politics they produce and their contribution to change in research practices. One theoretical approach to socio-material analysis is offered by actor-network theory (ANT) due to its capacity to trace complex materializing processes that are useful in knowledge production. Translating ANT to research settings, this study follows the traces left by a team-based research community. The findings of an ANT-informed analysis reveal that knowledge does not originate from the practices of supervisors or the cognitive abilities of researchers. It emerges through heterogeneous associations and continuous interactions between human and non-human entities. Scientific knowledge comes to be performed as it moves through a network. It is shaped, modified and sometimes transgressed depending on the circumstances.

**Conceptual background**

The current study is based on the premise that localizing social media in general and SNSs in particular may play an active role in the generation of knowledge. Broadly speaking, social media is a term which is used to describe a set of "technological systems" in the terminology of Joosten (2012). Such a view is congruent with Kaplan and Haenlein's definition (2010) as they see it as a" group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content"(p. 61). Both social media and web 2.0 technologies are sometimes used interchangeably to describe an emerging trend of using the Internet based on participation and collaboration in the creation and modification of an online content.

According to Kaplan and Haenin (2010), a precise definition may be elusive. Social media is better defined by applications such as blogs, wikis, and social networking sites just to name a few. These applications have the potential to create an interactivity rarely visible in face-to-face interaction or print media. Such a claim is based on the premise that social
media can be used not only for social networking and entertainment but also for educational purposes i.e., for learning and for carrying out professional work (Gulbahar, kaleliolu & Madran, 2010). In recognition of this trend, the current study assumes that social media, once translated to research settings, could bring innovation in knowledge-building practices (Gruzd et al., 2012). Knowledge production cannot be coherent and static. It rather emerges in a contentious dynamic bringing together an association between researchers and the technology in use.

To narrow the range of this study, social networking sites (SNSs) in general and closed Facebook groups in particular are the focus of the present study. Developed in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook is one of the most popular online interactive platforms (Lenhart et al., 2010). Enacting its functionalities, users can send messages, post content, share information, upload references and produce knowledge. This is the case of an online research team under the supervision of Professor Amel Grami. Her continuous guidance helped shape and reshape the production of a book on online Islamic preaching. Adopting and adapting the functionalities afforded by Facebook, the research team was able to write, rewrite and report their perceptions and anxieties towards one of the hotly debatable issues, enriching the existing literature on cultural studies.

To explore the way interaction occurs among a Tunisian online research team, this paper opts for ANT. It is important to highlight that ANT is a material semiotic paradigm that could be used to explore the agency of non-human entities in the social world. By emphasizing that society comes into being through complex associations of heterogeneous actors, ANT ascribes a more active role to material artifacts and creates new possibilities for understanding social relations without reverting to technologically or socially determinist arguments as Law (2001) says as if certain phenomena are given in the order of things. He writes:

Nothing that enters into relations has fixed significance or attributes in and of itself. Instead the attributes of any particular element in the system, any particular node in the network, are entirely defined in relation to other elements in the system, to other nodes in the network. (Law, 2001, p. 4)

From this perspective, the Facebook technology will be viewed not as a neutral tool regulated by human intentions, but rather as fundamental resource and trigger of action. As Latour (1999, 2005) argues, the actions performed by non-human are taken beyond causality, determination and intention. Material artefacts can also suggest, allow, constrain, invite, shape and prescribe different forms of interaction. It may also enable to describe how relations are established, how they function, and which effects they have.

In an ANT sense, an actor-named also an actant, is any agent that can associate, change associations, and dissociate with other agents (Latour, 2005). When associated, actant establish what Law has named a "semiotic relationality". They define and reshape each other (Law, 2009, p.146). This means that each time an association is formed, actants acquire "new attributes, new purposes and new functions"(Latour, 1999, p.182). The association Facebook-humans shows not only how technologies acquire agency, but also how actor-networks are formed. A network means, in this context, the capacity of the SNS to trigger action in the Tunisian research community. Consequently, any actor-network is
temporary associations between different agents, in which each agent is transformed as interactions are performed.

In its conception of knowledge and knowledge production, ANT highlights enactment made visible through connections and circulations among entities. Knowledge does not originate from institutionalized practices of educators or the cognitive abilities of learners. It emerges through heterogeneous associations between human, discursive and material entities (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). Knowledge comes to be performed as it moves through a network. It is shaped, modified and sometimes transgressed depending on the circumstances.

A particularly significant study of the way knowledge is produced was the focus of Gherardi and Nicolini’s (2000) study. Drawing upon insights from ANT, the authors studied the way cement laying workers learn safety knowledge skills. The study revealed that safety knowledge could not occur outside its use. It is situated and distributed in safety manuals, protective equipments, signs and inspectors. Within a network of relations, safety knowledge can be modified or transgressed depending on deadlines, weather conditions or equipments in use. The crew’s culture itself embeds a history of use possibilities and constraints that may influence the safety skills performed by those who interact with the equipment in use.

Gherardi and Nicolini’s (2000) study also highlights the role of innovations in the enactment of safety knowledge. In a safety inspired design improvement for a cement mixer, a new disk was attached over the spokes of the mixer’s steering wheel. The integration of a new disk entails a modification in the practices of using the wheel as well as in the content of safety manuals. The disk affords a series of connections. Actors encountering the disk interact to accommodate the action required to operate the wheel.

Any material equipment that appears to be passive is, in fact, a package of knowledge in Fenwick and Edwards’ (2010, p. 27) terms. The wheel disk, for instance, is the outcome of histories of innovations that include research, design and development. These processes are performed by other networks such as safety discourses targeting the reduction of risks and market conditions promoting competitive products. In this logic, knowledge production is an achievement of a process of struggle involving “the self acting upon itself, as well as upon others and upon the material world” (Fox, 2000, p. 800). This is likely to occur in research settings when a technological innovation is introduced and implemented. Changes in knowledge-building practices might be expected.

In a similar vein, Roth and McGinn’s (1996) study shows that technological inventions occur through translations. Learning triangle principles of engineering, Roth focuses on the way glue guns began to focus the activity. Initially, there was only one glue gun and one student who knew how to fix joints in their structure. But, as soon glue guns proliferate, a reorganization of the classroom was needed to accommodate new groupings of students. The glue gun created a network because it satisfied the students’ needs and it also brought together other necessary entities for the development of gluing practices such as glue sticks, power outlets and pedagogy. Therefore, the glue gun inventions are not an individual production. They are, rather a network effect.

The previously shown cases demonstrated that knowledge production emerges in a contentious dynamic bringing together an association of human and non-human entities. Implementing an ANT approach in research environments could render visible the complex
interpenetration of multiple factors involved in the production of knowledge. This is possible not only by tracing the associations at work, but by identifying the entities rallied and mobilized to perform particular effects. They also showed that knowledge production is a network effect of web of associations linked together through processes of translation through the mediation of the functionalities of the social media in use. Once enacted, these functionalities could bring innovations in knowledge and knowledge-building practices through the connections created that could link researchers with external networks dispersed in time and space. To follow these connections, the current study opts for the following method.

**Methodology**

In line with the spirit of ANT, the current article follows the associations crafted by the research team under the supervision of Professor Amel Grami as they enacted the functionalities of the Facebook technology. Following the association needs a form of content analysis. Generally, content analysis helps describe the content of data via systematic, objective and quantitative procedure. It is a formal system for drawing conclusions from observations of the posted content (Krippendorff, 1980). For this, a total of 299 posts were retrieved and stored in a database from 7 researchers who shared their posts after they were informed about the purpose of the study. Of the 7 researchers contributing to the research project, 4 were males and 3 were females. A variety of academic experiences and positions unique to the research group were reported in the following table

**Table 1: Participants' demographic information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic information</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Female</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MA student</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Secondary school teacher</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assistant lecture</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professor</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Supervisor: Professor</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying the actor-network shaping knowledge production could be more richly revealed by quantifying the traces left by researchers in their networking and online research experience. For this, a coding scheme was developed. Some of the coding categories included users, the frequently used functionalities, their effects on knowledge-building practices, and the constraints they faced. Two research assistants independently coded each post transcript. Once each research assistant completed coding, the two datasets were compared. There was high level of agreement between coders: 95% of all coded sections of transcriptions had an agreement level above 85%.

Since the primary goal in this study is to explore the way knowledge production took place via the mediation of Facebook, the aim of the content analysis was to identify the nature of associations crafted by the research community and the mediators that made these associations possible. Effects of enacting the functionalities of the technology in use and other intervening actors in the process of knowledge production, if any, were also a target goal. The content analysis was carried out while confidentiality and anonymity of all the participants were ensured by making their names only known to the researcher and excluding identifying characteristics.

**Findings**

The findings of ANT-informed analysis revealed that knowledge production is a network effect of associations between multiple entities. In line with the theoretical standpoints of ANT, actors pursued their research project which they translated into a set of multi-perspective articles and thereby aligned different interests into an actor-network. Knowledge production could in ANT terms seen as a phase of problematization, where the main actor identified common interests among the other actors that are consistent with its own. The table below details the major actors involved in the research project and their interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Major actors and their interests</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1—Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Small technology solution provider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4-Publishing company - get a profitable content
5-Infrastructure providers - Provide the infrastructure and be part of the network
6-Readers - Get an appropriate and readable content

The research project coordination was initially assigned to a group member and then carried out by the supervisor as she tried to create a research team and maintained its stability following a set of enrolling and mobilizing strategies. To start with, the supervisor requested researchers to mention the titles of their research projects, to identify the name of the preacher they were working on, and to provide tentative research proposals (see entry posted on November 22nd 2017). From time to time, the supervisor intervened to provide feedback on the posted proposals (see FE on March 9, 2018). On March 4th, she enrolled further human entities to keep the network stable and at the same time (see entry posted on March 26th, 2018), she reminded the group members that the content posted should be related to the research project (March 5th), deadlines should be respected and the platform should be interactive (entries on April 2nd; May 30th; June 24th; July 14th: July 17th, 2018).

The supervisor set deadlines to post the topic, the approach and the method opted for. She assigned July 20th an extended deadline for the first draft when researchers were supposed to modify and did the necessary changes based on the feedback of both the supervisor and the other members of the research team. The correction phase (July 25th) was followed by an improvement phase (August 10th). Along these phases, the supervisor provided feedback (July the 8th and the 16th), excluded inactive members (July the 3rd), reminded the group members to unify concepts, introduction, the method and the remaining sections in terms of the number of words (March 28th). All these were carried out while thanking those who respected deadlines (July the 3rd), praising positive aspects of individual works (July, 18th), congratulating members for their academic achievements (May, 12th) and thanking individuals for any individual uploading efforts (April, 6th).

An important part in the execution of the research project was assigned to researchers. Multiple perspectives and goals were negotiated and approved by the supervisor (see entry March, 9th; March, 26th). Tasks were set and interests were integrated in all parts of the research project. As a perquisite for the advancement of the research project, the supervisor insisted on interactivity (March 26th; April 2nd). This was reflected in the online behaviour of the research team. As soon as the members of the team proceeded to action, a web of relations was created and an online posting behaviour was established. The figure below shows the nature of such behaviour.
As shown above, researchers contributed to the research project and strengthened the formed network by sharing YouTube video links (12.7 %), uploading articles and books (6%), uploading word files (42%) and posts that are text-based (38.7%). Their identity was defined by the capacity to share, upload, download, comment and reply to previous comments. This is consistent with ANT-ish claim that capacities and roles are not pre-determined but emerge as a result of negotiations between the involved actors. These textual artefacts are an evidence of the transported presence of multiple influences in shaping the online research experience. They also reflected not only an interactive pattern between social media users, supervisor, members of the group, electronic data bases and electronic libraries but also a translation process mediated by the functionalities of the Facebook technology.

The members of the research community were not discrete entities. They were the outcome of an interactive process. Their identities emerged and changed in the course of their interaction. As they negotiated their research proposals, the approaches opted for, and the methodology followed, researchers were not only shaping the form and the content of their research articles but also aligning initially diverse interests and sustaining a formed network. In doing that, they were establishing an interactive pattern rarely visible in offline research settings. As soon as the Facebook technology was enacted, a set of association was crafted. The following figure is a visual representation of the interactive pattern among the

**Figure 1:** A summary of the online posting behavior
members of the research community from the creation of the group (September 23rd, 2017 till September 5th, 2018). The form of the interactive pattern was measured by following the frequency of use of these functionalities: seeing, liking, uploading, downloading, sharing and commenting.

As shown above and along the time frame selected for the current study, knowledge production was an outcome of an interactivity between human entities and the affordances of Facebook. As soon as the functionalities of the technology in use were enacted, researchers proceeded to action and got involved in their research project. This is clearly visible in the frequency of use of the previously mentioned functionalities. Interactivity scored high in March (45.7 %), July (92 %), and August (33.4%) compared to other months like September, 2017 (7.27%), June, 2018( 7.41%) and September, 2018( 10.66%). The frequency of use Facebook functionalities is further detailed in the table below:

Table 3: The total frequency of occurrence of Facebook functionalities across the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Uploading</th>
<th>liking</th>
<th>seeing</th>
<th>commenting</th>
<th>sharing</th>
<th>Downloading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September, 2017</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-October, 2017</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown above, the members of the research community saw, liked and interacted with the posted content. Their interactivity took multiple forms. They sometimes shared links, uploaded documents, suggested revisions or provided feedback. Remarkably, these interactive features scored high in March, July and August. However, they were low in the remaining months such as September and October. The increase or decrease of the interactive pattern might be accounted for by a variety of factors.

The content analysis of the studied entries revealed an interrelated network of mediators shaping and reshaping the online research experience. In her entry published September 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2018 referred to some of these mediators. The traces of the mediators were visible in previous entries posted August 10\textsuperscript{th} at 9.42 pm and July 16\textsuperscript{th} of the same year. Some researchers apologized for delay or for being less committed to the spirit of the group. The enactment of the write and comment functionality allowed unexpected personal circumstances or heavy academic burdens (MA dissertation, exams, correction) to play a role in their research path (see for instance the entry posted June 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2018). Further members stated that they had a problem of time management and consequently unable to meet the expectations of the supervisor (See the entry posted July the 7\textsuperscript{th}, 2018).

On the contrary, the high pace of interactivity was possible by the enthusiasm and the dynamism of certain members to meet personal ambitions and to respect the deadlines set by the supervisor. In addition to an enormous effort in a peer review process, researchers tried their best to make sure that the required recommendations were understood (See entries posted on March 10\textsuperscript{th}, March 25\textsuperscript{th}, May 30\textsuperscript{th}, June 24\textsuperscript{th}, July 18\textsuperscript{th}, July 21\textsuperscript{st}, August 10\textsuperscript{th}, September 7\textsuperscript{th}). However, it is important to note that the interactive pattern was threatened by temporary technical problems. In an entry published August 16\textsuperscript{th}, a researcher stated that as he tried to access a word file, the following message surfaced:"Desole, ce contenu n'est disponible actuellement". Such a problem was confirmed by the supervisor. In her

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Value1</th>
<th>Value2</th>
<th>Value3</th>
<th>Value4</th>
<th>Value5</th>
<th>Value6</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>March, 2018</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>July, 2018</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>August, 2018</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2018</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-----</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
entry posted August 18th, 2018 at 9. 29 pm, the supervisor requested the members of the research community to send their articles via a newly created e-mail. Yet, the intervention of a technical solution provider kept the stability of the formed network (See entry posted on August 18 at 2.28 pm).

In addition to the enormous effort of the researchers and technical solution providers, the supervisor acknowledged the help of less-visible human entities "Jean-Baptiste Bonnard, Valerie Huet, Pauline Schmitt-Pantel and the group" for their remarks and suggestions which contributed in a way or another to knowledge-building practices (See entry posted on August 28th, 2018).

The benefits of the publish-comment structure of the Facebook technology can be fully realized only when it is integrated into knowledge building practices. In the space provided for posting entries, researchers can reflect textually and / or visually on posted content. Regularly writing and keeping entries develop critical and reflective thinking among the actors involved in the research process. In their interaction with peers, researchers learned attitudes, values and skills. They also solved problems collectively. Exposure to social media experience, researchers shared their research experiences with peers while learning and building new knowledge structure. The comment feature also facilitated the social construction of knowledge. Scaffolding of the meaning making process carried out through commenting can further enhance learning. Supervisors as well could benefit from the publish-comment structure of Facebook entries. When purposefully integrated in research settings, Facebook networking experience allows supervisors to share ideas, provide resources and reflect on their research career.

Norms of interactions based on sharing, rating or commenting help researchers not only articulate thoughts and anxieties but also share their concerns with a research community. Encouraging researchers to create their own research experience could be a chance for them to create an ongoing portfolio of samples of their writings and discuss the activities they did with their peers or external audience.

Enacting the sharing and the uploading or the downloading functionalities exposed researchers and supervisor to a multiplicity of sources: articles, books, social media sources or news sources. They can both participate in the intertextual process of generating knowledge that reflects their encounters with other texts by other agencies and from different times and places. The linking pattern, in the data sample analyzed, established a level of textual negotiation–both in the ways researchers create their texts and respond to audiences as well as the ways in which others respond to and influence the texts created. Via hyperlinks, researchers were connected to a platform that links researchers with peers, scholars, academic institutions and electronic libraries and data bases in a way that was inconceivable prior to the digital era. In an environment in which hypertext links one text directly to another, the questions of citations alters. Taking advantage of intertextual features, researchers will come to know the members of the community more fully, thus providing them with a better understanding of what it means and why it is important to cite and acknowledge others with more care.

Added to the hyperlinked and intertextual features, the data sample studied showed frequent use of multiple modes of expression as key element of textual connectivity. Images, videos and texts are integrated in a meaningful whole. Researchers need to develop multiple literacies since multimodality has become a key element of textual connectivity.
Research settings can be enriched by taking into account the multimodal interaction among different semiotic sources.

When translated to research settings, the Facebook functionalities can create an active and constructivist research environment where researchers, supervisors and peers play roles in the construction of knowledge. Sharing, linking and commenting features are compatible with the socio-cultural constructivism introduced by Vygotsky and his contemporaries who emphasized the importance of social interaction and collaboration. Scaffolding by supervisors or more capable peers is necessary to help researchers achieve their potential level of development. The interactive structure triggered in posts and comments assists researchers through their ongoing zones of proximal development as peers, supervisor and Facebook acquaintances scaffold them through the various problem solving processes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Knowledge production is, thus, a relational phenomenon. It is shaped by connections between actors maintained during a process of translation. The value of ANT was argued on the basis of its ability to foreground the collective in the production of knowledge. The supervisor and her research team were the primary actors in producing knowledge. They adapted their interests to those of Facebook designers to create and disseminate knowledge. But they were also part of media companies. Template providers were associates and partners. They had an interest in making their technical platform an Obligatory passage point for a fresh content and a wider readership. Publishing companies had an interest in such an experience.

Processes of negotiations and deployment of strategies were shaping and reshaping the online research practice. To different degrees, these strategies strengthened or threatened the formation and maintenance of associations between the actors involved in the production of the book. Rather than being solely shaped by the internal dynamics of the members of research community, the online research experience was highly influenced by competition between members. Aspects such as personal interests, social context and the availability of different communication media played a role in shaping both the format and the content of the production.

The process of knowledge production was an effect of enrolling and mobilizing a network of human entities by a set of verbal and non-verbal strategies. Redistributing these strategies revealed the types of mediators that made possible the transportation of agencies over great distances. Part of these mediators was the technical functionalities afforded by the Facebook. As soon as these functionalities were enacted, multiple textual practices were made visible. These practices included reports, postings, emails and video sequences, dictionaries, books, articles. They circulated from one entry to another bringing together multiple agents from distant places and times. Added to their connecting role, these textual things embedded norms and values that assemble actors with diverse interests.

Practically, the present study provides preliminary glances to assess the effectiveness of the Facebook technology in research settings through the lens of ANT. The theory offered the vocabulary through which the agency of non-humans could be acknowledged and explained. By arguing that knowledge production comes into being through fluid and complex relations between humans and non-humans, ANT provided a new frame through
which knowledge building practices should be reconsidered and available research units should be evaluated.

Academy could benefit from such an interactional platform as it offers recurring spaces for conversation. These spaces are vehicles for heterogeneous language use, diverse generic encounters and multiple perspectives. Exposure to Facebook platform could foster a collaborative environment among researchers where they could behave as an individual with a unique experience and as a member of a group who shape a collective culture rather than being assimilated by the academic community.

References


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Literary Theory in Class: Crafting the Syllabus and Assessing the Outcomes

By Sana Bin Ali Taga and Amira Hedhilie

Introduction:

In An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory, Bennett & Royle (2009) concede in the Preface of the first edition of the work that grasping literary theory is a daunting undertaking “especially when it takes the form of ‘isms’”. Giving the intricacy of literature as a subject matter and its intrinsic interdisciplinarity, the literary theory course can be said to be “intimidating” and challenging to most students (Bennett & Royle, 2009, Preface; Chambers & Gregory, 2006, p. 72). Drawing upon the institutional practices related to this field of study, most scholars evoke the challenging and wearisome aspects involved in the conventional location and reception of literary theory as an academic field of study. Yet, it would be reductive to think that the perplexing nature of the course resides in its bulky theoretical, cultural, historical and philosophical cross-pollinations that can be too condensed for EFL undergraduates to grasp. The difficulty in teaching this course arises from the necessity to design a classroom-friendly pedagogical approach geared towards the attainment of the course objectives and the optimization of the learners’ intake of transferrable skills. Literary theory as an academic field of study requires a heterogeneous pedagogical approach that combines selection, expansion, digression, analogy and analysis.

This paper seeks to test the thematic-based syllabus approach of the literary theory class by examining 47 exam papers of 3rd year EFL students. The literary criticism and theory course is one of the four classes of the literary unit taught to third year students of Fundamental English and that stretches to two terms (Semester 5 and 6). Each two-hour lecture session covers one theoretical perspective supported by a literary (Anglophone) text. Class also includes peer analysis and discussion during which students attempt to
adopt a particular critical tool to the literary text. Added to that, students are quite familiar with paramount literary elements including character/characterization, setting, plot and also several stylistic devices such as narration technique, irony, metaphor, simile and so forth which they have mainly encountered in other courses of literature (Poetry, drama and fiction). During the six semesters of their academic years, students have read a number of literary works (short stories, novels, poems, dramas) ranging from different British, American and Anglophone literary trends and covering mainly canonical literary works. To name but a few, these works include William Faulkner’s *Light in August* (1932), Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) (1945) T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) James Joyce’s *Dubliners* (1914) Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* (1953) J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) together with a selection of poems by William Wordsworth, William Blake, E. E. Cummings, etc.

Proceeding upon the baseline preposition that tackling theory is one of the precepts of academic syllabuses, the learning objectives of this course must be pivoted on enabling students to acquire a tool-kit to be able to theorize their own practice and critical point of view. In this vein, inquiries cover the effectiveness of the thematic-based syllabus when evaluating a summative exam and attempting to assess the course objectives. Consequently, this study is divided into two main parts including a qualitative method when designing the literary theory class and a quantitative method when analyzing the outcomes of this class teaching approach.

**Challenges in Syllabus Crafting:**

When designing their literary theories course outline, mentors of this class are likely to be confronted with two general approaches to the subject in question. In introducing this course to undergraduates, teachers can shape their courses on a chronological template through adopting a forward-moving timeline. In this respect, mentors would work on tracing the historical lineage of each school of thought. They would also expound the patterns of continuity and discontinuity between the literary trends covered while bearing out the nexus between history and literature. This chronology-based approach is mainly geared towards raising students’ awareness of the correlation between literature and history and the importance of contriving the link between art and life in its broadest sense. Working within this historically informed framework, literary theories tend to be construed as a byproduct generated by the interplay of social, cultural, economic and political factors. Therefore, gauging the importance of literary theories as a critical enterprise is premised on redefining and reappropriating the relationship between art and life and expounding the evolution of the critical paradigms and of each literary theory/epoch.

Literary theory as a class is rewarding for students to varying degrees. This course is of a patent eclectic interdisciplinary and cross-generic nature as it instructs students about the attendant historical context of a given literary theory, expounds the genetic features of the text in question and account for the cultural landmarks of the literary outlooks evoked in class. In a typical literary class, teachers will go to great length in order to avert this conventional “hand me over” pattern of teaching where students are confined to the role of a passive recipient. In carrying out this teaching assignment, mentors generally focus on gearing their courses towards inducing students to raise open-ended questions about the
various topics tackled in class. Through positing learners within hypothetical situations, drawing analogies between disparate theories, and bearing out the differences and the affinities characterizing the plethora of literary theories evoked, mentors attempt to transmute their class into a query for patterns of thoughts rather than merely stating facts and enumerating characteristics. This teaching approach has been tested in one of the magisterial classes on tracing the philosophical lineage of the relationship between art and life and formulating an understanding of the Platonic critical reception of this duality of art vs. life. At the outset of the course, students are introduced with an animated video projection of Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” and are induced through a set of thought-provoking prompts to consider its implications and elaborate on its relevance to the course of literary theory.

It is also worth noting that students’ motivation is another challenge for the literary theory class instructor, as also underlined by Sly & Mick (1997), Chambers & Gregory (2006) and Bennett & Royle (2009). Most students come to the class with some misgivings about their capacity to digest the course and fathom its theoretical content and scholastic concepts. In designing the pedagogical approaches, teachers may deem best to teach literary theory following a strict chronological and historical approach. They may craft appropriate teaching method to help students overcome the pitfalls that this course may involve. Among the most arduous undertaking that teachers are confronted with when teaching literary theory is attempting to balance between theory and practice and inducing students through carefully designed prompts to work out the nexus between the theoretical tools they acquire and the literary texts they are supposed to work on. But, before embarking on this course, teachers need to address the rhetorical question of the why we study/teach literary theory and bring to the fore the importance of acquainting undergraduates with this field of study. Other inquiries teachers might face include but are not restricted to the following:

- What teaching prompts can be adopted to instigate students’ learning/understanding of the course material?
- What pedagogical instruments can be used to tamper with the theoretical density of the class?
- Which approach is better suited to subsume the interdisciplinarity of the course?
- What limitations and success are inherent to each approach?
- How can teachers manage time effectively and allocate ample time to cover class discussion and further readings required and tackle theoretical queries about the assigned topics?
- How can teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice?
- What teaching methods can teachers have recourse to in order to induce students to adopt various theoretical approaches to the same literary text?
- How can teachers highlight the intersection and expound the link between philosophy, culture and literature without indulging in lengthy digressions?
- How can students’ interest and enthusiasm for the subject be triggered?
The pedagogical expediency of this practice resides in prompting students' understanding/learning to foster an associative/syllogistic way of thinking about the different topics broached in class. The main observations that were culled from this teaching method is that students show more enthusiasm to take part in the discussion held, came up with different interpretations of the cave allegory and formulated various interpretations of the relationship between the projection and the subject matter presented in class. In this respect, due to its specificity and its ramifications into various disciplines, the literary theory class warrants an effective pedagogy in asking questions in order to enhance the quality of students' responses and gauge their capacity for grasping the concepts tackled in class. Based upon the quantitative data we have gleaned from our analysis of students' oral and written output so far, we can venture to assume that closed questions through which mentors expect a clear-cut answer should be averted. Given the specific nature of literary theory as a class, mentors are recommended to use open questions or “Socratic questions” which are pedagogically aimed at displaying students’ understanding and propel them to steer clear from ready-made ways of thinking (Elder & Paul, 1998, p. 298). On this basis in teaching literary theory “questioning is not simply normative pedagogical instrument to exhort learners to elicit critical responses towards the theoretical presumptions addressed in class” (Elder & Paul, 1998, p. 298). In fact, through open and Socratic questions, mentors can accrue the ability to monitor students’ different levels of cognition through diversifying the types of questions.

By designing cognitive-oriented questions, mentors can infer the thinking patterns performed by learners during class. Drawing upon Bloom’s revised taxonomy of learners' cognitive levels, students, to varying degrees, testify to a capacity to perform various operations ranging from accruing “knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation” (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 31). The transition between these various cognitive levels is monitored by designing pedagogically expedient questions to propel each cognitive phase. In a class environment, “thinking is not driven by answers but rather by questions” (Elder & Paul, 1998, p. 297). In order to keep a field of thought, a concept or a topic alive, teachers have to constantly ask questions to be able to challenge existing or established thinking (Elder & Paul, 1998, p. 297-298). Questioning is posited as a central tenet of the learning process as it enables mentors to assess students' pace of progress and intake level. In this context, Dweck’s concept of “growth mindset” (2006) can be used to motivate students and help them see their shortcomings and provide them with feedback as to how to get over them.

In line with this assumption that crafting a well-structured questioning strategy is a prerequisite of teaching literary theory, teachers constantly wonder as to how best approach this class and how to instigate students to apply critical lenses to the texts and the subject matters evoked in class. In their attempts at incorporating theory within a classroom context and fit the subject into a syllabus loaded with interlinked leaning objectives, mentors “must not only permit, but rather actively sponsor those textual and classroom encounters that will allow our students to begin their own odyssey toward theoretical maturity” (as cited in p, 69). Elaborating upon Emig's statement, learning/teaching literary theory is analogous to a journey where both mentors and learners are bound to embark on a quest for meanings, landmarks, and frames of references. Keeping up with Emig's likening literary theory teaching to an odyssey, we
should ponder on the implications of this drawn analogy. By extrapolation, “odyssey” as a concept, however literary it may sound, is evocative of routes, roads and paths. Correspondingly, when broaching the various queries in crafting the course, teachers show a proclivity to model their lessons on either a chorological or thematic template. Yet, the context here warrants that an elaboration on both approaches be made to bear out their respective advantages and their shortcomings.

Granted when broaching the various literary discussions and theoretical queries raised by the disparate school of thought and literary theories, mentors display acute awareness of working out the nexus between literary theory and its historical backdrop. In fact, the chronological approach hinges primarily on sticking to a progressive timeline where the mentor moves from the Greek tradition to major contemporary theories, highlighting the different philosophical, cultural, social transitions working in tandem with the theoretical trend evoked in class. By way of illustration, bringing to the fore the historical backdrop attendant the rise of Russian Formalism with the advent of the newly devised scientific study of language purported by Prague linguistic circles can be pedagogically expedient to help students forge the link between literature and its accompanying cultural/historical context. Apart from enabling students to trace the literary ancestry and theoretical lineage of the various literary theories addressed in class, this chronological approach can be convenient to prompt students to discern the historical roots of important critical paradigms such as “mimesis” and “representation”.

Through charting the cross-cultural pollination between disparate literary theories pertaining to diverse epochs, students are induced to accrue a synthetic and critical lens whereby they can gauge the evolution of particular critical paradigm across genres. In fact, pinned against a Platonic philosophical backdrop, “representation” can be understood as a replication of a phony world of simulacra, whereas an Aristotelian construal of the same concept posits it as an act of recreation of an intrinsic transformational potential. Yet, despite the pedagogical rewards this teaching approach may entail, mentors should not lose sight of its limitations. When implementing this teaching method, teachers should be wary of the fact that sticking to a timeline when teaching literary theory can foster in learners the propensity for overgeneralization and gloss over the idiosyncrasies displayed by writers and theorists pertaining to the same literary outlook and theoretical trend. Among the pedagogical stakes involved in this teaching method is leading students to perceive the class as a plethora of theories set off by clear-cut chronological lines. In fact, through adopting this chronological tailored approach, learners are likely to develop a predilection to overlook the patterns of continuities between the different literary theories covered in class and fail to “engage productively in reflection literacy by text” (Unsworth, p, 15)

In view of the aforementioned pedagogical deficiencies involved in modeling one’s course on a strict timeline of successive time slots, this research argues for adopting a thematic approach while considering a chronological framework as a more learning effective substitute. Through the classroom based experimentation expounded hereafter, a thematic approach can be a more efficient teaching surrogate as it can “empower students to do for themselves what they may think they need a teacher to do for them” and help them acquire a “more technical system of thinking” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p, 67). As mentioned above, the thematic approach adopted is centered on mimesis/representation following a two-fold perspective where both timeline and the theme of
mimesis/representation are examined through literary theories and their application to a literary text. One of the main arguments in favor of this thematically designed approach whereby a mentor selects a major thematic strand or a pivotal critical paradigm to highlight, comment on and compare the various appropriations of these concepts across theoretical appropriations of these concepts across theoretical outlooks is that this approach is critically more “empowering” and cognitively “less-binding”. In fact, to use literary theory to prompt critical thinking, we must avoid confining the scope of action allowed to students to “receiving, filling, and storing the deposits of knowledge”, but rather propel them to think reflectively about the topics broached in class, as advocated in Paul Freire’s “The Banking Concept of Education” (as cited in Pollard, 2002, p, 365).

The Quantitative Method in Assessing the Outcomes:

The course is crafted with an awareness of the difficulties that students might face regarding the theory in question, philosophy and their historical frames. The syllabus is mainly based upon the students’ existing knowledge bearing in mind their unfamiliarity with most of the theories to be covered in the classroom (Chambers & Gregory, 2006, p, 72). Several references had been used when crafting the syllabus most notably Literary Theory: The Basics (2014), Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism (2002), and Literary Theory: An Anthology (2004). Most of these references are used as compendia and companions to the course. The main reference that have closely inspired the syllabus is Rivkin & Ryan’s Literary Theory, an Anthology (3rd ed.) (2017) since it is based on the design of the editors’ courses as underlined in the preface of the work.

The main objectives of the course are:

1. Students will understand and be able to explain the basic premises of the selected theories.
2. Students will grasp the different theoretical appropriation of representation (mimesis) as a critical paradigm across the various literary theories covered.
3. Students will understand the critical enterprise of defining the relationship between literature and the world.
4. Students will be familiar with the cultural background attending the rise of the selected literary theories.
5. Students will apply selected theories to specific literary works and decide which approach is best suited for the interpretation of a literary text.
6. Students will be able to avoid indulging into impressionistic and judgmental readings of a given literary text through adapting a more theory-oriented approach.

The course objectives are categorized within Anderson and Krathwohl’s revision of Bloom’s taxonomies of the cognitive domain (2001) of six process categories. Objectives (1), (2) and (3) pertain to “1. Remember”, “2. Understand” and “3. Apply” as students, with the completion of the course, are able to recognize and recall the literary theories covered in class, summarize and give examples, and apply them according to the literary text that is presented to them (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p, 31). Objectives (4), (5) and (6), on the other hand, display a more sophisticated level of knowledge as students need to “(4) Analyze”, “(5) Evaluate” and “(6) Create” by distinguishing, for example, between two or
more literary theories, judging which of two theories is better attributed to a particular literary text, and producing an essay using theoretical tools while interpreting a literary extract (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p, 31).

Assessment consists of a two-hour exam that comprises two parts. The first part of the assessment exam includes two theoretical questions but also require the student’s critical perspective. The second part is a theoretical analysis of a literary text extract which the student has to approach from a specific literary theory developed in a short essay. The exam is designed so as to assess students’ ability to display their understanding of a particular literary theory, to compare two or more literary theories and to utilize theoretical tools in their analysis of a literary text. It, hence, attempts to evaluate the course objectives based on Bloom’s revised taxonomy. The assessment task is therefore summative conforming to the UK English Benchmark Statement reported by Chambers & Gregory (2006) that states that “assessment inheres in and informs the learning process: it is formative and diagnostic as well as summative and evaluative, and the process should provide students with constructive feedback” (p, 161).

Sampling includes 47 exam papers that students sat for during the main exams January session of the university year 2018-2019 at the Higher Institute of Applied Languages and Computer Sciences of Beja, University of Jendouba, Tunisia. The exam is typically divided into two parts following the description provided above. The first part includes two separate questions about Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” that students need to explain from its implication on art and Aristotelian view of poetry and identify the reference to Catharsis. The second part, on the other hand, requires a written essay where students analyze an extract from *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot using a New Critical approach. Students are expected to provide a well-written answer with correct English and display knowledge about a particular theory from a critical perspective. The scoring/evaluation rubric is adapted from Chaitkin & Kostman (2004) as different factors are taken into consideration ranging from meaning, development, organization, language use and conventions (p, 77-79). A high performance paper would, therefore:

- establish a main idea that reveals an in-depth analysis of the literary text;
- make insightful connections between the main idea, the ideas of the extract/topic, and the elements or techniques used to convey those ideas;
- develop ideas clearly and fully, making effective use of a wide range of relevant and specific ideas from the literary text/topic;
- maintain the focus established by the main idea, and exhibit a logical and coherent structure through skillful use of appropriate devices and transitions;
- be stylistically sophisticated, and aware of its audience and purpose; and,
- contain no errors.

Students’ performances are overall displayed in *Figure1*. *Figure1* showed that only 8.51% could be regarded as high performers while average performers constituted 38.30% and low performers 53.19%. Added to that, two main factors were taken into consideration when carrying out the quantitative study. The first factor is the student’s ability to provide a satisfactory response to the evaluation question (as demonstrated in *Figure2* and *Figure3*);
and the second factor seeks to explore whether the balance between the first part of the exam and the second is possible, i.e. whether a paper that displayed an average performance in the first part, for example, maintained that average mark in the second (See Figure 4). Moreover, the exam is closely designed based on Bloom’s revised taxonomy. Indeed, the first three levels of the revised template by Anderson and Krathwohl of Bloom’s cognitive taxonomies are achieved through the first part of the evaluation. The second part, on the other hand, seems to be more challenging to students since it requires a critical reading of the literary text using specific theoretical tools which can be categorized in the fifth and sixth categories and cognitive processes of Bloom’s revised cognitive taxonomies labeled as evaluating and creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 31).

Positive outcomes include the student’s ability to display knowledge about a particular literary theory, describe it within its context and identify affinities and dissimilarities compared to another. 76.60% of the papers were successfully able to explain Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” and provide its implication on art (Figure 2). When analyzed separately, the first part showed that 38.30% of the papers managed to explain Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” and to analyze a statement on the Aristotelian view of art valued for its affective impact on the audience (Figure 3). On the other hand, 31.91% succeeded in providing a well-written academic essay on the analysis of an extract from T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* using a New Critical approach (Figure 3). It is worth noting that students are familiar with the literary work as it is part of their Poetry class syllabus. The results can be regarded as satisfactory to variant degrees. These variations hinge on the different nature of assignments given to students, and also on their individual writing and critical skills. For the assignment which are to elicit a synthetic response on the part of the students where they provide a brief account of some of the theories covered in class, students’ output can be assumed to be average.

On a close analysis of the students’ written accounts about Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave”, it can be inferred that 11 exam papers provided a description of the Allegory without elucidating its implication for its duality of poetry/art versus life within the Platonic philosophical context. Conversely, in the second task of the first part, one of the shortcomings was related to bearing out the relationship between Aristotelian construal of art and its affective function. In their response, 74.47% of papers failed to identify and expound the link between mimetic aspect of poetry and its resulting affective/cathartic potential (Figure 2). As for the assignment where students are required to tackle reflection-based question and put their theoretical tool-kit into practice through working on literary support, 22 responses out of 47 attested to some methodological deficiencies as well as conflated knowledge interference (Figure 2). For instance, in their literary analysis, some students introduced “defamiliarization” as a New Critical concept and utilized it as a technique when interpreting the passage. Other papers failed to duly apply the New Critical approach as they accounted for the poet’s melancholic vision through pinning down the poem against its historical backdrop, which stands in stark contradiction to the theoretical principle of New Criticism of discarding context when analyzing a literary text. Added to that, Figure 4 supported that the balance between the two parts of the exam was maintained in 33 papers. Students’ answers in the first part were reflected in the second part as both sought an evaluative process as a second degree in the first part and as a first degree in the second. Students who displayed factual and conceptual knowledge, to use yet again Bloom’s
revised “Knowledge Dimension”, succeeded in demonstrating procedural and metacognitive knowledge by adopting specific techniques and methods in approaching the literary text and by being able to use “heuristics” and “cognitive demands” each task required (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

**Conclusion:**

What can be inferred from the observations and classroom-based experimentation that have been conducted so far is that literary theory course requires a meticulous monitoring of learners’ cognitive levels. Consequently, “to teach literary theory is to teach critical thinking about texts of all kinds” (Wilson, 2014, p, 69). This type of course is geared towards inciting learners to adopt a more reflective approach wherein they actively draw upon their background knowledge about the theoretical trends discovered as well as engage in a more empowering critical stance. Central to this learning objective is designing a set of thought-provoking questions that instigate learners to address the debates broached in class in a more responsive and theoretically informed way. In this respect, it is highly recommended that “close” questions should be minimized or averted to use reflection-inducing interrogatory prompts instead. In much a similar vein, chronological approaches can be safely assumed to have some pedagogical limitations because modeling one’s course on a solely chronologically informed template may result in eclipsing the intersections and affinities between historically distant literary theories. Hence, a thematic approach was deemed more pedagogically expedient to optimize students’ intake. Ultimately, the divergent methods devised to teach literary theory, with their varying degrees of efficiency, bear testimony to the intricacy of this subject matter.

On a second level, while testing this thematic approach to the literary theory class, assessment was summative inducing students to show understanding while at the same time displaying the ability to critically approach exam questions. Results demonstrated that balance was maintained as most students who were able to answer the first part of the exam that required recalling, explaining and evaluating two theories were also able to use specific literary theory tools to analyze a literary extract while also putting elements together to form a coherent and functional whole (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p, 31). Added to that, high performance papers also succeeded in bringing together class content and background knowledge and at the same time viewing the literary theory within the thematic context of mimesis/representation. Despite the limitation of the sampling in this study, the results displayed some shortcomings of the thematic-based syllabus as only 22 papers out of 47 had the average in the overall marks of the assessment task. The challenge for low performers was mainly in the second part of the task as it required writing skills and argumentation as well as the ability to recall and apply the literary theoretical tools of a specific literary theory (New Criticism, in this case). Future research can tackle a comparative approach to students’ receptive outcome between a strictly historical class and a thematic class in literary theory.

**References:**


**Appendix 1: Figures**

*Figure 1:*
Figure 2:

Overall Marks

- Low Performers: 25
- Average Performers: 18
- High Performers: 4

Marks of each Exam Question

- Q1: Below Average Mark = 10, Above Average Mark = 36
- Q2: Below Average Mark = 12, Above Average Mark = 35
- Q3: Below Average Mark = 22, Above Average Mark = 25

Legend:
- Below Average Mark
- Above Average Mark
**Figure 3:**

**Average Marks according to Parts**

- First Part: 18
- Second Part: 15

**Figure 4:**

**Balance between the Two Parts of the Assessment**

- Achieved: 70.21
- Not achieved: 29.79
Family stories and Counter-history in Hisham Matar’s memoir *The Return: Fathers, Sons, and the Land in Between*

By Dr. Hatem Ben Jemia, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Manouba

Abstract
The revolution that broke out in Libya in early 2011 and generated an ongoing political turmoil has sparked an overheated debate over the roots of political violence in this North African country. Its negative outcomes have prompted Libyan intellectuals to trace back the history of political oppression since the Italian occupation and to re-explore its foundational narrative. However, their efforts to examine the aspects and the consequences of ongoing tyrannical policies have been crippled by the obvious paucity of historical documents and frustrated by the systematic destruction of the national archive by the successive totalitarian colonial and nationalist regimes. In the face of documents’ scarcity, the younger generation of Libyan literary elite has sought to grapple with the thorny question of political oppression and have examined its legacy by means of new approaches of historical research. They have attempted to re-visit and re-write colonial and postcolonial Libyan history through delving into alternative unofficial documents and through adopting innovative strategies of historical inquiry and representation. In his critically acclaimed memoir *The Return*, the Libyan Anglophone writer Hisham Matar engages in articulating a counter-historical narrative by throwing light on darkened unauthorized yet significant accounts of political oppression in colonial and postcolonial Libya which is articulated through alternative lenses. This paper addresses, more specifically, the issue of historical representation in official documents, and deals with the representational approaches deployed by Hisham Matar in his autobiographical narrative to challenge the authority of colonial historiography and to celebrate competing past narratives which are mainly articulated through inherited family stories.

Keywords: colonial historiography, historical representation, political oppression, counter-narrative, family stories, native experience.

The revolution that broke out in Libya in early 2011 and led to the overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi’s despotic rule brought global attention to this North African country
both politically and culturally. It highlighted also the paucity of Western recognition of Libyan rich cultural heritage and the shallow understanding of its colonial and postcolonial history. The latter has remained for decades poorly known for the majority of the English speaking-world.

Except very few scholars and experts in Libyan contemporary political history, the majority of the Anglophone world know almost nothing about the sordid realities of political oppression in which Libyan people have succumbed since the Italian colonization at the beginning of the 20th century because the narratives of individual, communal, and national sufferings have been discarded and excised from the few accessible official historical documents. If ever they have managed to get scant information about the brutality of Italian colonial rule and the authoritarian nature of Qaddafi’s regime, they mostly ignore the un-official version Libyan political history and the stories of systematic persecution, cruel torture, forced exile, and massive killings which have had taken place throughout the 20th century and which were expunged from Libyan foundational narratives such as the massacres committed against political opponents in the concentration camps during the later phase of Italian occupation and in the notorious Abu Salim prison in June 1996 during Muammar Qaddafi’s autocratic rule. Otherwise, even if they know that Libyan contemporary history was marked by successive dictatorships, they are almost not acquainted with the methods and mechanisms whereby such dictatorships functioned as well the disruptive impact of their oppressive policies on native Libyans.

Hisham Matar figures among the most promising Libyan Anglophone writer who engages in introducing the understudied Libyan culture and history to the large English-speaking audience. Born in 1970 in New York City, he gained prominence in the literary world when his first novel In the Country of Men was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. His second Novel entitled the Anatomy of Disappearance received positive critical reception. Matar rose to fame when his internationally acclaimed memoir The Return was published in 2016. Matar’s childhood was shaped by Libya’s unstable political situation. Travelling between Libya and the US, his family faced political persecution under Libya’s revolutionary regime, and therefore escaped to Egypt. Underscoring the political precariousness of those living in exile, his father was kidnapped whilst in Egypt under mysterious circumstances and his whereabouts remain uncertain. Matar’s fictional writings are largely shaped by his complex diasporic condition and his transnational belonging as he is “born on the fault lines of shifts of cultures and history”. but more importantly by the trauma of political oppression which marred the history of his native nation and its concomitant Human Right violations of which his father was victim (France 24 English). His memoir The Return, Fathers, Sons and the Land In between largely consists in a moving account of the disappearance of the author’s father, interwoven with the narrative of Libya’s turbulent political history.

Haunted by persisting questions about what happened to his father and nation in the past, Matar articulates an autobiographical narrative which mirrors his obsessive concerns with Libyan history and the disruptive effects of an ongoing political oppression. When Hisham Matar was a nineteen-year-old university student in England, his father disappeared under mysterious circumstances in Cairo in 1990. Hisham would never see him again, but he never relinquished hope that his father might still be alive and that he
might find him one day somewhere. Two decades later, he went back to his native Libya in quest for the truth behind his father’s sudden disappearance.

In his memoir, Hisham Matar chronicles this journey back home in 2012 after 22 years in search for the truth of what happened to his father. However, beyond his fervent quest for answers about his father’s mysterious disappearance which was a watershed, Matar’s decision to embark on a perilous journey back to post-revolution Libya is fuelled by the obsession with unburying truths about the dire realities of political repression whereby Libyan people have undergone since the Italian occupation.

His autobiographical writing is “driven by curiosity, the need to understand what happened to [his] father but also what happened to [his] country..what happened to many people” (France 24 English ,2017). The correlation between the search for the father’s tragic fate and the nation’s gloomy past stems from Matar’s firm belief that grasping the causes of his father’s dramatic end can only be achieved by means of exploring the context and the deep roots of political violence in general.

In his memoir originally written in English, Matar is targeting mainly the British and American audience whose governments contributed to the political detritus in Libya. Nevertheless he seeks to go beyond a particular audience and to introduce the contemporary history of Libya to international audience and to let them know more about the long-lasting plight of Libyans that better explains the popular discontent and outrage in the duration of 2011’s revolution and its aftermath. He stimulates them, furthermore, to explore the unvisited realms of the Italian occupation period and Qaddafi regime’s epoch and to reflect upon the heavy legacy of an ongoing political repression for generations of Libyans who did not live that epoch.

Along with exploring the tense political context and the ambiguous circumstances of his father’s sudden disappearance and the lingering traumatic effects of such disappearance on himself and his family through a journey back to his homeland in the wake of the Libyan Revolution, Hisham Matar traces back the origins of political violence characterizing colonial and postcolonial history of his native Libya. Throughout the narrative, he delves into the thorny question of historical representation and the pertaining quandary of the systematic falsification of history perpetrated under successive repressive regimes and pores over the reasons of its endemic complexity.

While carrying a painstaking investigative task of historical inquiry, he engages in questioning the available past narratives and unearthing interesting facts concerning political repression since colonization. This investigative task led him further in his search to identify and foreground obvious flaws and inconsistencies inherent in the foundational narratives of official historiography. Stimulated by an overwhelming sense of discontent and burdened with the responsibility of disclosing occluded counter-histories, Matar seeks, throughout the text, to demonstrate that the mainstream past narratives are not trustworthy since they are premised on narrow reductionist accounts or conventionalized falsehoods about major historical events.

Exposed to very few historical documents about Libya which are full of gaps and contradictions, Matar develops a deeper awareness of the inescapable obstacles which hinder a full access to historical truths. When re-writing the history of Libya outside the ideological frames of colonial and postcolonial nationalist historiographies, Matar persistently emphasizes the irretrievability of the past and the inevitable provisionality of
any historical narratives as he affirms in his interview in France 24 that when it comes to history he do[esn’t] believe in closure.” Matar avows that the answers about question of his father’s fate are still and will remain endlessly open. He adds in the same context that “[he] would not say that the book is a kind of conclusion, but [he] can say that [he is] not completely convinced of the idea of the conclusion. [He is] much more interested in opening things than closing them” (France 24 English, 2017).

Thus, he never claims to detain final and absolute truths and to offer an exhaustive history of Libya. He rather calls for rethinking the timeless validity and the authority of the totalizing narratives embedded in the rare accessible historical annals. Tormented by persisting questions about his father and nation, Matar seeks to engage in a revisionist task of articulating new narratives whereby the history of Libya is revisited and re-written from alternative lenses.

Although Matar’ autobiographical narrative essentially revolves around the history of postcolonial Libya and more particularly the origins and aspects of political oppression during Qaddafi’s autocratic rule, it covers also the history of colonial Libya. As a matter of fact, Matar’s obvious interest in revisiting the earlier colonial epoch is inextricable from his concern with apprehending the causes of political violence characterizing the modern and contemporary history of Libya. Exploring the accessible narratives of Italian occupation of Libya and the disruptive effects of its repressive policies on Libyan people is necessary for his historical inquiry.

Through having recourse to the available historical texts documenting political oppression during that epoch, Matar faces three big conundrums. The first one is the scarcity of documents as well as the shallow and reductionist nature of its narratives. He affirms that “[a]ll the books on the modern history of the country could fit neatly a couple of shelves. The best amongst them is slim enough to slide into my pocket and be read in a day or two” (Matar,2017, p.151). The second one is the destruction of colonial archive which has generated a big loss. Matar (2017) writes: “The Italian then kept few records, most of which were destroyed during the war” (p.161).

The third one is the fact that the written history of colonial Libya is articulated almost absolutely through a colonial lens where European past experiences in Libya are depicted with details while Libyans experiences and stories are ignored and even erased. Otherwise, the written history of Libya was about everyone and everything but Libyans and their experiences. As a corollary, this historical narrative paradoxically alienates the Libyan from their own past by marginalizing and even obliterating his individual and communal memory and replacing it with a European colonial one. Matar (2017) writes:

A Libyan hoping to glimpse something of that past must, like an intruder at a private party, enter such books in the full knowledge that most of them were not written by or for him, and therefore, at heart, they are accounts concerning the lives of others, their adventures and misadventures in Libya, as though one’s country is but an opportunity for foreigners to exorcise their demons and live out their ambitions. (p.151-52)

The author implicitly argues that such written history which ignores significant accounts about the suffering and bravery of Libyans under a brutal fascist rule, and which
are irrelevant with their real life and experiences is a lingering legacy of an oppressive colonial regime. The latter exercised not only a military repression through political institutions, but also a symbolic discursive violence through academic ones. In the process of creating colonial archives and collections, certain historical knowledges were deleted, some secreted, and others valorized. Matar conveys the idea that the systematic erasure of native Libyans’ history is another form of political repression.

He perceives that the history of colonial Libya is a history of gaps, which implies a large part of the true history of Libyans was effaced or at best falsified by the colonizer, and consequently by Western historiography through a discursively established system which replicates Western ethno-centric supremacist attitudes and mirrors their hegemonic exclusionary tendencies. The reading of Libyan history from Western perspectives enables him to develop deeper insights into another aspect of colonial violence exercised against colonized people which is the systematic obliteration of collective communal memory.

This process consists in engulfing the colony’s historical narrative with colonialist representations and assumptions about the colonial epoch developed by European orientalists like journalists, historians, and travelogues, and excluding natives’ narratives from the mainstream colonial past narrative. Western representation of Libyan history gestured towards: the “reduction of the past to an unproblematic continuum, to a representation of a historical progress which led to dismantling its power, deprived the future of its inheritance, and pressed a blindfolded generation into the service of fascism” (Seyhan, 2001, p. 34-35). In their rush to write their revisionist accounts of their colonies past, these Italian scholars have deliberately narrowed the scope of Libyan culture and identity and reduced Libyan history to a mere few years.

Therefore, the bulk of colonial representational practices which horizon towards generating alienating effects among colonial subjects aim ultimately at creating a gap between the colonized and his history and forcing him to absorb colonial visions and to internalize its intrinsic Euro-centric grand speculations about the imperial project.

When going through the narratives elaborated in the accessible historical documents and annals, Matar bitterly realizes that the strikingly paradoxical erasure of Libyans experiences was a subtle colonial representational strategy which would have far-reaching disruptive effects on the whole nation. In fact, the deliberate dehumanization of the colonial subject in isolated concentration camps which aims eventually at annihilating his presence is paralleled with the systematic elimination of his own experience from the foundational historical narrative.

In this context, Frantz Fanon reflects on the discursive hegemony which underlies colonialist representational praxis. In his seminal essay “On National Culture”, he explores the mechanisms of symbolic violence exercised against the colonial subject to perpetuate his inferiority and to sustain, consequently, his dependence to his colonizer. Reflecting on colonial politics of representation, Fanon unveils the ideological controlling motives which impelled the colonial enterprise to underrate the native’s past, obliterate his cultural memory, and discard his narratives. He demonstrates that the discursive marginalization of the native in historical narrative is inextricably associated with the process of perpetuating the oppressive master/slave dichotomy. According to Fanon (1961):
[c]olonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. (p.210)

Drawing mainly upon Fanon’s influential works on colonialism and indigenous culture, along with Michel Foucault’s referential theses on knowledge and power and the violence embedded in the hegemonic discourse of colonialism and its totalizing representations, many Arab postcolonial thinkers have focused on demystifying the domineering motives underpinning Western narratives of Arab colonies’ histories such as Salam Hawa who notices that colonial historiography is fraught with representational injustices. He suggests that the colonial institution had utilized a wide range of strategies to generate, normalize, and hence control historical discourse.

He stresses that the biggest problem lies not only in the fact that colonized Arabs’ narratives which reveal the bad realities of the colonial epoch were poorly documented, but also lies in the fact that the new generations have lost their own parameters and narrative paradigms and unquestionably espoused colonial ones. As a result, native Arabs’ experiences and their oral and written counter-narratives articulated during the colonial epoch are threatened with oblivion. Hawa (2017) writes:

Burdened with a persistent feeling of inadequacy, the colonised appear to search endlessly for their origins, but are forced to use alien concepts and are only given access to histories of their culture written by the victors. These histories have a single objective: to maintain European hegemony. (p.149)

Hawa warns that unless Arab colonial history is reread and re-explored through non-Western lenses, most significant narratives will never be retrievable. Through his exploration of colonial historical documents about Libya, Matar discovers that Italian colonialism sought to underrate the Libyan people and to devalue their culture by portraying them as primitive nomadic people who have no significant history and have no contribution to world civilization.

Matar realizes that this stereotypical representation is further fostered by the classical binary opposition between the civilized Italian colonizer versus the barbarian natives of Libya which is subtly devised to produce and to perpetuate the supremacy of the Eurocentric discourse. The latter was carefully devised to vindicate the imperialistic domineering policies in the colonial world and to justify their massive depredations against their helpless colonial subjects in colonial Libya and elsewhere.

In his memoir, Matar goes beyond the mere description of colonial representational practices. He seeks to subvert its pertaining foundational assumptions by going back to the pre-colonial pristine history of Libya. In chapter 12 entitled Benghazi, the author traces back the ancient history of Benghazi. He throws light on the cultural heritage of Libya’s second largest city, and emphasizes its richness through depicting the variety of its architecture which reflects the diversity of its cultural tributaries, and which bears witness to the successive great civilizations invading Libya over history such as the Greeks, the Romans, and the Ottomans. When describing his visit to Benghazi, Matar (2017) writes:
Scattered around it are the remains of several buried cities: a Greek wall that dates back some 2300 years, ruins from a Roman settlement, Byzantine church, and I am sure, if excavations were conducted clues to Phoenician life would be found too. From here the living city begins, the houses and markets of the medieval Arabic city together with what the Ottomans added. (p.120)

The narrative of the glorious multicultural city articulated through Matar’s portrayal of Benghazi’s pristine history stultifies Western totalizing assumptions about Libyan history and topples down the established facile dichotomies between Western civilization VS non-western backwardness. The author establishes a parallel between the burial of ancient cities in Benghazi over time and the repression and marginalization of Libyan history by its invaders. Inasmuch as Western historians sought to underrate the history of Libyan people and to their cultural memory, He attempts to foreground the originality of Libyan pre-colonial history and to celebrate its richness. This counter-representation is substantial in his attempts at challenging monolithic essentializing narratives embedded in the colonial hegemonic discourse and embracing contingency and difference. Against the backdrop of colonizer’s confiscation of Libyan history, Matar implicitly urges his fellows to take back their own stories, and to revive their own cultural patrimony, and hence to shift the perspective.

Family stories which convey mostly unknown experiences of suffering and resistance during colonial and postcolonial Libya, and which are massively illustrated in Matar’s memoir, potentially suggest counter narratives which subvert the dominant reductionist and totalizing historical narratives. Considered as the little narratives, family stories play a pivotal role in interrogating and dismantling the authority of official foundational historical texts (or the grand narratives).

Indeed, the poignant accounts of the harsh realities of Libyans and the upsetting depiction of their tormented lives under a brutal fascist dictatorship are wittily deployed by the author to prompt his audience to develop deeper insights into the peculiarities of colonial Libya’s political context and to expand their knowledge about its untold history beyond the narrow ideological frames of the vapid narratives of Western colonial propaganda. Otherwise, by means of exploring biographies of ordinary Libyans since colonization and going through the tiniest details about their bitter experiences, Matar’s narrative sheds light on obscured events, unearth staggering facts about tragic massive murders, and points out striking paradoxes which marred Libyan modern history and which paved the way, ultimately, for the outbreak of 2011 revolution.

By tracing back his family’s tragic past and delving into shocking stories of persecution, Matar wants to underscore the fact that the bloody crackdown of protestations in the wake of the popular uprising was not accidental, but rather an extension of years of institutionalized political repression. He demonstrates that the prevalent narrative of national ordeal in the post-revolution period is just an episode of a long narrative of bloody history of violence, and that the popular revolt against dictatorship did not ignite overnight, but it was a long process which culminates in early 2011. The contesting representations of daily oppression are not accessible to western audience through official documents, but instead through popular stories which are highlighted and put to the forefront by dint of
family narratives. The latter reveal the limitations of official histories by demonstrating that they are replete with flaws and inconsistencies and therefore, far from being able to embrace everything about the past.

Although Matar’s central concern is unveiling the truth of his father’s disappearance and poring over the mechanisms of political repression perpetrated under Qaddafi’s regime, his historical inquiry covers also colonial Libya. As was mentioned above, Matar chooses to retrace the ideological roots of repression by going back to the earlier epoch of colonization and retrieving buried stories depicting that epoch. In chapters 15 and 16 particularly, he touched on the ordeal of the people of Libya, who for decades, have been under the yoke of Italian colonial power and have succumbed to its cruel repressive policies, and whose bitter experiences have been marginalized and overridden by European historians.

Driven by the fervid desire to reconnect with a lost past and faced by the predicament of facts’ scarcity as well as the deliberate destruction of national collective memory, Matar has recourse to fragments of family stories passed down through the generations. Starting from re-exploring his grandfather’s experience of anti colonial struggle, the author engages, then, in throwing lights on obscured popular experiences and develops, consequently, more insights into their intriguing diversity and their priceless historical value.

By revisiting and exposing family stories of resistance and suffering in his autobiographical narrative, Matar puts his finger on the thorny question of colonial history and representation. He realizes that the reductionist narratives and the shallow inconsistent conclusions about the colonial epoch which he managed to get by means of the few available documents tell nothing about the shocking realities of political oppression characterizing the colonial past, and have nothing to do with the richness and diversity of popular experiences. He finds that the largest part of the past was almost completely overshadowed.

While historical documents seem mostly insignificant and uninteresting, families stories which he managed to gather through his investigative task during the journey back home, offer, conversely, a productive site of political contestation whereby the narrow history of colonial Libya which was almost exclusively written from a Western lens is reconsidered. Through the task of collecting stories transmitted over generations and inherited from his father and grandparents, Hisham Matar removes the dust over the abuse experienced by Libyan people in the duration of the Italian occupation such as the massive uprooting and deportation of the cream of Libyan society to the peripheries of the Italian territories in miserable conditions reminiscent to the disgraceful inhuman shipment of African slaves in the notorious transatlantic slave trade.

The author’s re-exploration of buried stories of forefathers’ tragedies allows him to apprehend that the history of national liberation in Libya was drenched on the blood of the revolutionary heroes like Omar al Mokhtar, but also on the blood of the nation’s elite. The latter were as, Matar reports, targeted by the fascists and many of them were killed in cold blood during horrific public executions. In her PhD dissertation Erin Haddad-Null stresses the subversive interventions of family narratives in the re-writing of history. She maintains that:
The family histories offer a means for representing access to counter-histories. Those historical experiences often occluded or excised from official accounts of history. These counter-histories typically emerge from a need to understand the way particular forms of nationalism suppress or elide certain experiences. (Haddad-Null, 2013, p.24)

The author seeks to re-authorize buried family stories because they offer a significant site of contestation whereby the hegemonic politics of historical representations are demystified. Referring to one of the collected testimonies about this experience, Matar (2017) reveals that:

[t]he conditions aboard ship were so bad that during the journey, which couldn’t have taken much more than a couple of days, hundreds of prisoners died. [..] . The Majority of those who reached the island prisons perished in captivity.(p.152-53)

The traumatic experiences of massive deportation and detainment have brought about severe sense of pain for those who survived it and tormented a whole generation the rest of their lives. The discovery of this national tragedy which has left deep scars in the Libyans national psyche was extremely upsetting yet mind-opening.

Despite the fact that he managed to gather some stories about these systematically persecutive policies, Matar still laments the loss of many significant narratives which may further disclose more facts about the degrading treatment of detainees in the notorious concentration camps as well as debunk the civilizing mission of the colonizer by exposing the sordid realities of detainment. In the absence of official documents that provide consistent information about fascist atrocities, popular stories and folktales become his prime source of historical inquiry. Told with a genuine sincerity and rich in interesting facts and details, these stories allow the author to stand closer to little known yet very telling narrative of massive intimidation as well as physical and mental sufferings.

The author depicts, in one of these poignant stories, the horrible experience of concentration camps and the pertaining policy of genocide traditionally practiced by the fascist regimes against innocent unarmed people including native people of the countries they invaded such as the natives of Italian Libya. Matar (2017) reports that: [t]he tribal population was marched on foot to several concentration camps across the country. Every family lost members in these camps. Several of my forbearers died there. Stories of torture, humiliation and famine have filtered down through the generations. (p.153).

Matar was told that the ruthless fascists who were supervising the concentration camps ordered intermittently their subordinates to exterminate what they consider as the brute who have no right to live. As a result thousands of Libyan detainees were executed without trial. Conducting interviews with old people whose parents witnessed the turbulent colonial epoch, albeit distressing, is awakening. The testimonies he manages get open to him wider doors to develop deeper understanding of a gloomy phase of Libyan colonial history and to develop deeper awareness of the roots of political repression in contemporary Libya and its current outgrowth.
Along with undertaking interviews and conversations with relatives, Hisham Matar refers, in the task of compiling family stories, to a range of unofficial oral and written texts transmitted by Libyans and foreigners who witnessed the horrendous crimes of the Italian fascist officers and who were among their victims such as the oral poems by the Libyan poet Rajab Abuhweish who engaged in the anti-colonial resistance as well as the written testimonies by the Danish journalist and travelogue Krud Holmboe who lived for a while in colonial Libya, which are illustrated in his book: Desert Encounter: An adventurous Journey through Italian Africa. The oral poetry of Abuhweish movingly depicts the horrors of the colonial epoch and transmits the tormenting feeling of loss and sorrow. He offers, through an eloquently written poem, an important historical material which unveils an unauthorized version of colonial Libya’s biography. Having experienced the nightmares following the brutal invasion of his village by the fascist troops and the massive deportation of its inhabitants to concentration camps, Rejab Abuhweish conveys the grief of his unfortunate people who were uprooted and transported with members of his family and tribe in el Agheila camp. Matar translates to English one of his poems. He writes:

I have no illness but El-Agheila camp
The imprisonment of the tribe
And being cut off from the open country

I have no illness but this endless despair,
the scarcity of things and the loss of my red mare
its forelegs black to the hoofs

When disaster struck
She galloped, stretching her long neck
With incomparable beauty

I have no illness but the loss of noble folk
and the foul ones who now
with calamitous, shameless faces, govern us.

How many child have they taken and whipped?
The poor young flowers return confused?
made old without having lived. (Matar, 2017, p.156)

In these selected stanza illustrated in the memoir, the Libyan poet throws light on obscured realms of Libyans’ colonial past and illuminates the unknown travails they went through during their miserable experience due to their living under the yoke of an oppressive colonial institution. He reveals to the reader, through his heartrending depiction, the distress of thousands of families who bore the brunt of a cruel tyrannical fascist rule which transformed their plain and serene lives into a real nightmare. Through his poems which straddle the borders between literature and history, between national and family stories, and between the personal and the collective experience of resistance and trauma, Abuhweish documents an important yet little-known phase of colonial Libya’s
history. The touching poems he composed had, according to Matar, a profound impact on Libyan people since they were “committed to memory “and “memorized by others and that ways spread across the country”(155). Dane Johnson (1996) observes that:

\[t\]he blurring of history, story, and genealogy is another form of resistance to the official stories embedded in each of these narratives. Colonized groups often find that getting their story straight and protecting their heritage against attempts to erase it takes the form of genealogy of family history, which then stands in opposition to the official story. (p.150-151)

The moving words of Abuhweish become the bridge which allows the people of Libya to reconnect emotionally with the history of their forefathers, but they become also an important historical material which helps Libyan historians to partly fill the obvious historical voids endemic in the narrative of official documents. These literary texts enable, furthermore, the Western Anglophone audience to know what actually happened during the Italian occupation of his native country.

These un-authorized yet genuine representations of Libyans’ harrowing plight prompt them to reread Libyan colonial history beyond the reductionist narratives elaborated through colonial lenses. Accordingly, family stories which portray the bitterness of colonial experience and which are carried by virtue of inherited folktales or oral poems become the receptacle of native Libyans’ alternative counter-historical narratives.

Together with oral poetry, diaries published by foreign travelogues depicting Libyans ‘daily lives during Italian occupation offer an important historical material which provides interesting facts about the colonial epoch. Matar refers, in his historical inquiry, to written testimonies about the dire conditions in which Libyan detainees lived in concentration camps which are illustrated in the travel narrative of by Krud Holmboe. The latter, being an impartial travelogue, chronicled his journey to Libya and faithfully conveyed the horrors of concentration camps which he came across during his journey and published them in his book mentioned earlier.

The latter is a rare document. It is very important for historians because it illustrates untold stories about the terrifying experience in an extract whereby he offers “a troubling account” of collective sufferings he witnessed when passing through one of the concentration camps in the Libyan desert (Matar, 2017, p.54). Quoting from Holmboe’s book, Matar (2017) writes:

\[t\]he camp was immense. It contained at least fifteen hundred tents and had a population of six to eight thousand people […] As we drove up among the tents children came running towards us. They were in rugs and hungry, half starved[ [...] Many of them seemed ill and wretched, limping along with crooked backs, or with arms and legs that were terribly deformed. (p.54)

The gripping testimonies introduced by the Danish travelogue allow Matar to delve further into staggering stories of collective suffering and to develop, ultimately, deeper insights into the fallacious and inconsistent nature of the colonial version of Libya’s history. Veering away from methodological strictness of conventional historical inquiry, Matar
vacillates between oral and written sources and fluctuates between locals and foreigners’ testimonies to gather the largest possible number of family narratives in his quest for the truth of political violence in colonial Libya.

Matar illuminates, by means of family stories, the overshadowed colonial past and throws lights on the unknown misfortune of Libyans under the tyrannical rule of Mussolini whose crimes in Europe are, unlike in Libya, well-known. Many truths, in Matar’s view, disappear in the foundational historical documents about colonial Libya because Western official memory is blatantly selective. Matar (2017) posits that “[h]istory remembers Mussolini as the Buffoonish fascist, the ineffective silly man who led a lame military campaign in the Second World War, but in Libya he oversaw a campaign of genocide” (p.153).

By dint of family stories, the author compels the Western reader in general and the English-speaking one in particular to compare the terrible plight of Libyans under an oppressive colonial occupation with testimonies about the horrendous crimes perpetrated against the helpless Jews and the Roms minorities by the Nazis in the 1930’s. Matar seeks to highlight the fact that the hideous crimes of the Italians against the helpless Libyan people are no less horrifying than the notorious Holocaust. While the latter was extensively explored by historians and widely known among the mass in Europe, the fascist repressive colonial policies and the concomitant flagrant human rights violations in colonial Libya are almost unknown due to the lack of historical material documenting them.

Popular accounts about the colonial legacy and its critical juncture and the alternative perspectives they come to suggest are primordial for his quest for facts concerning the bloody political history of colonial Libya. Throughout his autobiographical narrative about the epoch of Italian occupation of his native country, the author argues that the Italian colonizer oppressed the people of Libya twice: first when he invaded his country and practiced the worst crimes of repression and abuse against a large number of helpless people, and second when he deleted an important part of the experiences of these oppressed people and imposed a mediocre version of history which does not reflect the negative legacy of an oppressive occupation According to Matar family stories survive and illuminate darkened experiences against the backdrop of systematic erasure.

Notwithstanding that these family narratives do not unfold straightforwardly and coherently, and do not have scientific or factual validity, they derive their own worth from the narrative possibilities and their intrinsic disruptive potential. These kinds of non-official historical sources significantly contribute to the elaboration of a contesting narrative which counters the official colonial version of history. Indeed, the multivocal and multifocal family stories break through the artifice of linear narratives and put the emphasis on alternative perspectives and deeper layers of national experience which remained hidden by the dominant official story which is articulated and purveyed by the colonizer and which serves his exploitative and domineering agenda.

The importance of a family story does not only lie in the representational significance of the alternative narratives of daily suffering it actually offers and the diverse experiences of resistance it potentially highlights, but also in stimulating critical revisionist reflections on the politics and approaches of historical representation itself in the process of re-writing the political history of colonial Libya through competing lenses. As a matter of fact, by gathering and accounting for his interrogates the authority of monolithic narrative
embedded in official school textbooks and shakes, hence, their putative claims of unity and coherence. Moreover, Matar reconsiders the very possibility of writing a unified, comprehensive, and coherent narrative of the colonial history of Libya. In fact, the diversity of family stories which depict the hard and bitter experiences of persecution under a totalitarian rule and their incompatibility with each other represented a turning point which urges the writer to constantly throw into doubt notions of closure and linearity traditionally associated with colonial historiography and to cast into doubt any possibility of having access to the whole truth of what happened to his people in the past.

In The Return, Matar evokes his bitter struggle for overcoming the quandary of documents’ scarcity on the one side and the limitations of the few accessible sources as well as the fragmented narratives it come to offer on the other side. In the face of the unscrupulous falsification of history shamelessly perpetrated by colonial historians, Matar perceives the necessity of challenging their dominant narrative. It becomes imperative that he reconstructs his own history through fragments of family stories. He asserts that in the duration of the journey he tried to piece together scattered truth and make sense of fragmented images partly out of the shards of family stories that he compiled through an exhaustive investigative task. Yet he still faced the predicament of information loss. Indeed, having access to untold stories is an extremely complex task. Unrecorded family experiences can never be fully preserved. People who kept oral stories are likely to be dead. Even the few available manuscripts and written testimonies which record family stories and experiences largely disappeared over time. Inevitably split by obvious gaps, historical narrative can never unfold straightforwardly and coherently. Matar (2017) asserts that:

Small scraps of information began to emerge, each incomplete, as if careful not to reveal the whole picture [of the massacre] at once. I heard the stories and registered them [...] even then understand them only partially. So much information is lost that every small loss provokes inexplicable grief. (p.247)

These losses continue to haunt the author and to exacerbate him. Their troubling silences open wider doors to multiple scenarios and hampers, consequently, any access to a palpable historical truth upon which he can elaborate a consistent conclusion. Matar (2017) confesses that “time rolls on, infinitely duplicating the distances, furthering us from the original event, making it less possible with every passing day to account for exactly what happened or to be certain, indeed, that anything happened at all” (p.247-48). As time passes on, the possibility of obtaining valuable facts about Libyans’ experience of concentration camps and massive deportation during the colonial epoch are dwindling because the number of people who witnessed that epoch is ineluctably decreasing. His sorrowful awareness of the irretrievability of the past accentuates his sense of alienation and bleakness and further destabilizes him.

When tracing back the colonial history of Libya through exploring family stories of fear, distress, and affliction, Matar encountered many obstacles which perplex him and confuse his historical narrative. The biography of his grandfather Hamed is among the most intriguing ones. The fragments of stories about his grandfather’s experience during colonial Libya that he managed to obtain from relatives and veterans, though important, are frustratingly confusing. They do not allow him to grasp a final conclusion since “[o]ne
explanation [is] told in different versions, depending on who is telling the story” (Matar, 2017, p.158). A single story has different versions depending on the context and the motives of the teller. In addition to their conflicting nature, these versions are fraught with inconsistencies and contradictions which make them largely unconvincing and even preposterous. The author asserts that the only acceptable version of the story about the grandfather’s brave anti colonial struggle and his heroic attack against a colonial officer which led to his deportation to Italy for trial and execution is still untenable as it is replete with mysteries and doubts and cannot, accordingly, be endorsed as a historical truth. Even though he illustrates this available version of Hamed’s story in the memoir Matar (2017) avows that:

[he] found it difficult to believe the attack was random [...] but because the whole story may not be true he may not have killed the officer, and moved simply because he had had enough of the war and wanted to bring up his young family in peace and in the cultured city of great opportunities that Alexandria was in those days. (p.159)

This hypothesis which seems plausible to a certain extent may shatter the whole story of the grandfather’s heroism. Matar is even more perplexed by the strange and mystifying story of his grandfather’s sudden and unexpected return to Libya after being released by the fascist authorities. He acknowledges that “[he] found the story puzzling. Why did he return so quickly and place himself in an even more danger ” (Matar, 2017, p.160)? Unable to determine what is wrong and what is right about his grandfather’s miraculous survival, Matar seems to get lost in the maze of miscellaneous scenarios none of them is quite palpable. The fragments of stories he strove to get, albeit important, cannot dispel his sense of confusion and uncertainty.

Throughout his quest for the past, Matar is constantly haunted by these unresolved mysteries. The truth about his anti colonial commitment will remain endlessly suspended because most people who witnessed that turbulent colonial epoch and who can provide solid proofs and reasonable satisfying answers are dead. Thus, Matar realizes that he could only get assumptions or versions of the truth and that his historical narrative is inescapably provisional as it is unavoidably informed and shaped by a continuous process of disclosure.

By tracing back his grandfather’s nebulous relation with colonial authorities, Hisham Matar raises the problematic issue of historical representation and grapples with the thorny question of truth recovery. Because of the flagrant lack of recorded facts many stories, like Hamed Matar’s one, remain confusingly contradictory and perpetually incomplete. Matar(2017) writes:

I knew that his life had been deeply disrupted by the Italian invasion, and, because of the scarcity of accounts from that period, the gaps in grandfather Hamed’s life are in part connected to the wider story of the occupation. The trend of silence continued. Even today, to be Libyan is to live with questions. (p.151)

This complex relation with the grandfather implies a deeper complex relation with his native nation Libya. Matar establishes a kind of symmetry between both grandfather and nation. In fact, the quandary of the grandfather’s unresolved enigma is metaphorical to
the thorny problem of the nation’s ambiguous past. The gulf between Matar and both his grandfather and his nation generates similar alienating effects. Unless he can unveil significant truths about the dire realities of political oppression during the totalitarian fascist rule, his relation with and his sense of belonging to the native nation is never complete.

Far from being fuelled by wistful feelings, Matar’s fervent quest for the past is at the heart of his attempts to come to terms with his native nation and to reconnect with a lost part of his identity as he affirms that “[a]ll the tools [he] had to connect with [his] country belonged to the past” (Matar, 2017, p.119). The past is, for Matar, the symbolic bridge that allows him to re-inscribe himself in his Libyan context and a significant domain whereby he can regain a lost sense of belonging, and hence, recover a missing narrative of his national identity.

In the maze of interweaving official factual and unofficial fictional historical texts, the author seems to be far from being able to articulate a coherent past narrative. He seems rather to be lost in his historical narrative which does not correspond to other stories he compiles. His awareness of the incompatibility between the narrative that he constructed out of fragments of family stories and the dominant accounts deepens his sense of alienation from his past. His disorienting sense of alienation pushes him to recognize the inaccessibility of concrete and consistent historical evidence as the only certain truth he can get from his journey back home. White observes in his review of Matar’s memoir that the author’s complex relation with the past is replicated in his problematization of historical narrative. He posits that:

The restiveness of Matar’s mind is reflected in the digressive structure of the book, which sweeps between cities and decades often within each chapter, blending national history with family anecdotes, memories with documents. The reader is forced to construct the linear narrative of events from this apparent disorder and it is only as the book unfolds that you realise this disorder has itself been contrived and the fragments and stories are part of a coherent whole that culminates in the thrilling tension of the final act. (White, 2016)

Matar engages in envisioning new approaches of historical writings which contribute to the creation of a gradual epistemological rupture with normalized representational paradigms. As a free non-conformist writer, Matar writes an unconventional memoir whereby he redefines the borders of historical representation by going beyond the mere factual description of what happened in colonial and postcolonial Libya. He suggests a problematized past narratives which conveys the complexity of truth recovery and which rethink the whole process of historical representation, Such deconstructive style of historical writing “provides”, according to Hartman “a counterforce to manufactured and monolithic memory” (as cited in Seyhan, 2001, p.39).

Revisiting obscured family narratives and re-exploring repressed communal memory becomes an act of resistance against the institutionalized forgetting and a means of healing national wounds. Through his autobiographical text, Matar’s re-exploration of Libya’s history gestures towards disclosing, to use Azade Seyhan’s words, “an unauthorized biography of the nation” (Seyhan, 2001, p.96). His ultimate goal is to enhance historical writings in new Libya, but also to educate and conscientize the young uninformed and even
the informed but frightened and lethargic to what happened in modern Libya including what happened during the earlier epoch of colonization. Moreover, through writing in English and through having recourse to clarity and directness in elaborating his attitudes and perceptions, Matar is targeting Anglophone and international audience whose knowledge of the history of political oppression in Libya is very limited.

The author’s proclivity towards relying on family stories as a principal material in revisiting and re-writing the history of political repression in Libya stems from his unflinching conviction that the counter-narrative underlying these stories not only offers alternative standpoints and perspectives, but further it potentially undermines the authority of the dominant historical texts and dismantles the intricate power systems enmeshed in their narratives.

Matar disrupts all totalizing historical narratives of colonial Libya including Western grand narratives of colonization. He demonstrates, through re-exploring the hidden competing narratives about the history of colonial oppression in his native country, that any claim of objectivity and scientificity anchored to colonial historiography is inevitably illusory since “claims for historical knowledge must always be fatally circumscribed by the character and prejudices of its narrator” (Schama, 1991, p.322). Through revisiting his grandfather and his community’s past, Matar illuminates and celebrates overshadowed stories about brave popular sacrifices and devoted anti colonial activism which stultify Western derogatory representation of colonized natives as a group of uncivilized people.

This painstaking yet enlightening task allows him to develop deeper insights into the meticulous process of selection and filtration whereby the mainstream past narratives evolve. He concludes that this task of selection and filtration is primordial for maintaining and perpetuating the unquestionable authority and the timeless validity of the authorized past narrative. He realizes, as well, that the sustainability of these discursive hegemonic practices is inextricably linked to dictators’ obsessive greed for power. As a corollary, he becomes mindful that the colonial and nationalist historians who wrote the official history of Libya almost dismiss and obscure all unpleasant stories which may discredit the very regime they wholeheartedly defend and sanctify.

Matar’s contentious representation carries obvious subversive traces as it gestures towards disentangling national history from the strict ideological frames and expanding its narrative beyond the narrow official to the rich un-official realm so that new truths can be told and new horizons can be envisioned. Thus, the narrative possibilities offered by the series family stories in the memoir undo closures endemic in totalizing narratives, add a representational value to national historical narrative and hence, allow for a deeper apprehension of political oppression in colonial and postcolonial Libya which is crucial to the task of facing state-building challenges in a post-revolution Libya.

References


A semiotic Analysis of Wes Craven's *Scream 4* : Use of Kress and Van –Leeuwen’s Framework of Visual Grammar

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**Abstract**

This study seeks to investigate the framing strategies used in the horror film *Scream 4* which are marshalled to create fear and suspense in the audience. To put it differently, horror films are generally characterized by certain elements designed to frighten, panic and invoke the viewer’s worst hidden fears in a terrifying and shocking manner. Hantke (2004) maintains, “There are techniques and devices by which horror texts create horror” (p.10). These techniques of horror will be explored via a semiotic analysis of *Scream 4* released in 2011.

**Keywords:** Framing, horror movies, semiotic analysis.

**Introduction**

The term framing has caught the attention of many researchers to investigate its meaning and recognize its effects. Some scholars define framing as a process of selection. This idea is firmly adopted by Entman (1993, p. 52) who asserts that a frame is determined by its outcome or effect: “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and / or treatment recommendation” (as cited in Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2008). In the same line of thought, Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss and Ghanem (1991) affirm that “[a] frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (p.11) (as cited in Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2008).
Framing has been used in a number of fields, including communication, sociology and politics, but to the knowledge of researcher, the study of framing in horror movies, which will be the focus of my research, has not been widely tackled. This article will tackle the use of framing in the American horror film *Scream 4*.

Horror movies are interpreted from psychoanalytic, feminist and pragmatic approaches. However, to the knowledge of researcher, the semiotic framework of Kress and Van Leeuwen and the study of framing in horror movies have not been widely tackled.

The specific research questions can be summarized as following:

- How does *Scream 4* create fear?
- What are the signified meanings of non-verbal elements of *Scream 4* through the use of Kress and Van Leeuwen's approach to 'reading images'?
- What are the framing strategies of *Scream 4*?
- How does *Scream 4* involve or disengage the viewer?

**Methodology**

This section will shed light on the research paradigm, namely the qualitative research. It also accounts for the general framework employed to analyse *Scream 4*, an American horror film. In fact, the research at hand will essentially be supported by Kress and Van Leuuwen's framework of semiotics.

**The qualitative research paradigm**

Analyzing *Scream 4* will rely on a qualitative method. According to Joubish, Khurram, Tasneem and Haider, “qualitative research is used to help us understand how people feel and why they feel as they do” (2011, para.1). In this way, it can show how and why people feel afraid of horror scenes. In other words, there are certain framing strategies that elicit this sense of fear in them.

Qualitative research is adopted in this study to analyse and interpret the film under study in order to trace the framing strategies used in them. In this frame, it is worth noting that a qualitative method involves a “naturalistic” and “interpretive” approach as claimed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000). In other words, qualitative research enables researchers to “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p.3).

**The general framework: Semiotics**

The general framework applied to the analysis of the film under study will be Semiotics. Semiotics or 'Semiology' is defined as the “study of signs and their use, focusing on the mechanisms and patterns of human communication and on the nature and acquisition of knowledge” (Crystal, 1999, p. 33).
Thus, a semiotic analysis can be undertaken to explore Scream 4 that includes many signs. Semiotics provides very significant tools to analyse images in this film and uncover its strategies used to create the viewer’s fear. In this respect, Lacey (1998) argues that “one of the great strengths of a semiotic approach is that the reader is encouraged to look at familiar objects in a fashion that makes them appear strange; nothing is taken for granted” (p.56). It is worth mentioning that this investigation will draw on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) framework of visual grammar.

Kress and Van Leeuwen’s framework

The Kress – Van Leeuwen framework (1996) builds a grammar of the visual design similar to the Hallidayan grammar of language (1985). It is concerned with the non-verbal components of discourse. To put it differently, “just as grammars of language describe how words combine in clauses, sentences and texts, so visual ‘grammar’ will describe the way in which depicted people, places and things combine in visual ‘statements’ of greater or lesser complexity and extension” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.1). It is also noteworthy that this framework is contingent on the following claim: “What is expressed in language through the choice between different word classes and semantic structures is, in visual communication, expressed through the choice between, for instance, different uses of colour, or different compositional structures” (ibid, p. 2). It is significant to say that Kress and Van Leeuwen’s approach to “reading images” relies on three metafunctions: the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions used to scrutinize stills from Scream 4.

The ideational metafunction

The ideational or representational metafunction sheds light on people, places and objects revealed in images. According to Kress and Van -Leeuwen (1996), this metafunction shows how a semiotic system “represent[s], in a referential or pseudo-referential sense, aspects of the experiential world outside its particular system of signs” (p.40). With reference to the ideational metafunction, attention will be paid to transitivity patterns.

The system of transitivity in Visual Grammar builds on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar. It classifies the kinds of “doings” and “beings” that constitute the human experience (Halliday, 1985, p. 170- 171). Therefore, while Systemic Functional Grammar depends on a system of transitivity composed of six processes, Visual Grammar revolves around narrative and conceptual processes. In fact, the next section will shed light on these two major types of ‘ideational’ processes in Visual Grammar.

It is argued that narrative processes are classified into actional and reactional processes. Actional processes describe the actions that participants are doing. They depict a physical action that expresses an event, a movement or a change in state (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 56). In this way, images realize a narrative actional process by representing what is taking place and what is done. As far as reactional processes are concerned, they focus on the represented participants’ reaction realized by the reactor’s direction of his or her glance. The receiving participant of this reaction is termed the ‘phenomenon’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.64-67).

Conceptual processes depict the participants’ state of affairs. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), “conceptual processes are image representations of the general state
of affairs of participants and general truths about the world” (p.114). These processes are classified into three types: classificational, analytical and symbolic processes. The first type concerns the classification of participants in terms of their classes (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 81).

Analytical processes relate entities in an image in terms of a part–whole relationship, where one participant is named as the ‘carrier’ representing the ‘whole,’ and the other participants are referred to as the ‘Possessive Attributes,’ being the ‘parts’ (ibid, p. 89). As far as symbolic processes are concerned, they show what a participant ‘means or is’ and focus on the messages conveyed by the participants’ gestures and relations (ibid, p. 105).

**The interpersonal metafunction**

As far as the interpersonal metafunction is concerned, it is concerned with how a semiotic system “project(s) the relations between the producer of a sign, or complex sign, and the receiver/reproducer of that sign” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 42). It is said that there are three parameters related to the interpersonal metafunction: “mood” or “image acts,” “spatial distance” and “attitude.”

Mood or Image Acts are realized in offer images. To explain, offers are achieved when a represented participant has no direct eye contact with the viewer. In addition, in an offer image, “the viewer is not object, but subject of the look, and the represented participant is the object of the viewer’s dispassionate scrutiny” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 119). Thus, the audience observe the represented participants objectively and “impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case” (ibid) and feel disengaged.

In addition to that, image acts can be revealed as demand images. They are realized when a represented participant has an eye contact with the viewer. In “visual demands,” the participant uses gaze and gesture to demand that the viewer enters into an imaginary relation with him or her and to create an “image act.” Thus, his or her demand is aimed “to do something to the viewer” (ibid, p. 118). In this regard, it is significant to note that the viewer is emotionally involved in a visual demand. It can be deduced that “mood” can be a useful tool to show traces of the viewer’s involvement or detachment.

Spatial distance deals with types of relations between the represented participants and viewers. These social relations are manifested through the use of very close-up shots, close-up shots, medium shots, and long shots. In the same line of thought, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) insist, “the relation between the human participants represented in images and the viewer is once again an imaginary relation. People are portrayed as though they are friends or as though they are strangers” (p.126). In fact, the type of shot chosen by the filmmaker in *Scream 4* signifies the type of relation between the viewer and the represented participants in this film. This idea is well illustrated in Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 1: Size of Frame and Social Distance</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Frame Size</strong></td>
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<td>Vey close -up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close –up shot</td>
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</tbody>
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54
Medium shot | Cuts off subject approximately at knee level | ‘familiar’ social
---|---|---
Medium long | Shows full figure | general social
Long shot | Human figure fills half image height and anything beyond. | public, largely impersonal
Very long shot | higher than half-height | Little or no social connection


The last component related to the interpersonal metafunction is attitude. Attitude is connected to the relations of power and involvement that are developed between viewers and images via the horizontal and vertical angles of shots.

It is argued that the horizontal angle shows the relation between the viewer and the represented participants. As a matter of fact, the horizontal frontal angle outlines the viewer’s involvement and considers participants (or characters in the American trailer for the horror film) as one of “us.” In contrast to that, the oblique angle treats these represented participants as “them” and expresses viewers’ detachment. Therefore, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) indicate, “the difference between the oblique and frontal angle is the difference between detachment and involvement” (p.143).

The vertical angle is of great significance in the interpersonal metafunction because it shows power relations between the spectator and participants or characters. In fact, camera angles demonstrate power relations between the viewer and the image. To explain, a high vertical angle expresses the viewer’s power over the image, but a low vertical angle implies the image’s power over the viewer. Finally, an eye level angle is a fairly neutral shot. In other words, the camera is positioned as though it is a human observing a scene. This kind of angle signifies equality between the spectator and the image.

**The textual metafunction**

The textual or ‘compositional’ metafunction refers to the layout, or the “way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 176). At this stage, attention will be devoted to the information value of the represented participants in the selected film.

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), the information value of participants is concerned with the placement of the elements, which are connected to different “zones” of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin.

With reference to the Left-Right compositions, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) use Hallidayan concepts of the ‘Given’ and the ‘New’. They indicate that ‘Given’ is something
already known, whereas 'New' is something to be found. Also, they state that « the elements placed on the left are presented as “Given”, the elements placed on the right as New » (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, p. 181). In this way, the spectator has to focus on elements placed on the right.

As far as Top–Margin compositions are concerned, elements at the top are called “Ideal,” but elements at the bottom are named “Real.” In this respect, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) state that “the upper section tends to make emotive appeal and shows us what might be while the lower section is more informative and practical showing ‘what is’” (p. 186). In addition to that, they claim that “Top” and “Margin” compositions have different connotations. The concept of “Top” refers to something good, powerful and high, but the notion of “Margin” pertains to something bad, weak and low.

With reference to Centre-Margin compositions, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) illustrate that “for something to be presented as Centre means that it is presented as the nucleus of the information on which all other elements are in some sense subservient. The margins are these ancillary, dependent elements” (p. 196). These explanations will be used to study Scream 4 in the current research.

**Analysis And Discussion**

As far as the ideational metafunction is concerned, an emphasis will be put on the transitivity patterns and agentivity roles. Therefore, there will be a reference to the characters in Scream 4 through a description of their gestures and their faces. In other words, images and visual structures will be scrutinized because “ visual structures realize meanings as linguistic structures do also. ( ...). For instance, what is expressed in language through the choice between different word classes and semantic structures is, in visual communication, expressed through the choice between, for instance, different uses of colour, or different compositional structures.” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.2)

The transitivity model is chosen for the analysis of the selected film’s screen shots in order to discover how certain semiotic structures combine to generate the viewer's suspense and fear, and frame their assumption about the films. In fact, the analysis of transitivity and its application to the film under scrutiny follow Kress and Van Leeuwen’s framework used to analyse visual structures. The following figures show significant examples of transitivity models found in Scream 4.
Concerning transitivity processes, figure 1 above provides an instance of symbolic processes, namely symbolic attributive processes through the depiction of Sidney, the protagonist, who is the carrier of the symbolic meaning. As symbolic attributes can be “pointed at by means of a gesture” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 108), the symbolic meaning in this figure is conveyed by Sidney’s facial expressions. In fact, she looks afraid and speechless after receiving a threatening call from an anonymous caller. Her facial traits of fear are apparent in the images. This can bridge the gap between the viewer and the represented participant. At this point, the audience can start asking: why is the character afraid after receiving a call? Who is this caller? Why is his tone threatening? All these questions seem to be enigmas for the viewer. It is worth noting that this opening shot in the trailer is a framing strategy opted by the trailer publicist. It attracts the viewer’s attention to Sidney, who will manage to reveal the killer’s identity, and to the theme of the advertised movie revolving around a confrontation between high school students namely Sidney and a killer being the mysterious caller as it is shown in the above shot. Another symbolic meaning is conveyed by the police’s angle of view as it is presented in this following figure:
In this figure, the police’ fixed and steady way of looking is very confusing. It can be a sign for astonishment, fear or shock.

Thus, viewers may feel bewildered because they do not know the reason and the meaning behind this strange eye of looking. Also, the presence of the police merits consideration. As a matter of fact, it is commonly known that a police exists when there is a problem or someone in danger and in need for protection. In this case, the viewer may relate this shot to the previous one (figure 1) because it comes immediately after it. Then, he or she can come to the conclusion that the police exists because there is a danger. However, the source of this danger is not identified in the film. This absence of clarity creates mystery and ambiguity. The same confusing gaze is illustrated in all these successive figures found in *Scream 4*:
If we apply Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) ‘s view, we would say that all the previous figures represent narrative reactional processes since they reveal the represented participants’ reaction realized by the direction of their glance and their confusing gaze. However, the direction or focus of this reaction does not follow a vector to the receiving participant, termed as ‘ the phenomenon’. In other words, the receivers of the represented participants’ look are absent, with the exception of the figure 6. In fact, in this picture, the represented participant, Charlie, is looking at a girl standing for ‘ the phenomenon’ ; his gaze may illustrate some kind of severity towards her because “ the particular nature of this reaction is encoded in the way that the reacter is looking at the phenomenon” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.64- 67). It can be said that Charlie’s way of looking at the girl can work as a foregrounding as this character appears as the first killer in the film. Thus, the film frames the viewers’ expectation about Charlie and arouses their uneasiness about him.

This figure demonstrates a ghosface chasing a girl. The goal of the action seems to be scared and tries to save her life from the performer of the act. What’s significant, however, is that the actor is shown from an oblique angle or from a black view because he or she wears a mask and black clothes. In other words, there is no clear description of him or her. Thus, spectators do not know whether the ghostface is a male or a female and whether he or she is a human or non–human being. This ambiguity is strategic because it aims at raising the viewer's suspense about the film.
Figure 8: *Scream 4* (the Ghostface)

Figure 8 realizes a narrative actional process in which the ghostface holds a knife and is ready to kill his or her victim. The film-maker focuses only on the performer of the act and turns a blind eye to the goal or the receiver of the action of killing. Thus, the purpose is to reveal who is performing the action, who appears with a clear determination to perform violently. However, the goal is absent and the result of the violent action, that is to say the act of killing, is not apparent in the image and the whole film. In fact, the backgrounding of this absence and the foregrounding of the killing act are significant because the film-maker wants to highlight the action that is performed. Thus, the viewer is urged to think about the act of killing a girl with a knife. In this way, the audience may feel afraid of the killer and sympathize with the victim. At the same time, they can manage to recognize the genre of the film, that is to say the horror genre.

Figure 9: *Scream 4*

Figure 9 achieves an actional process where the gostface, the actor, tries to kill the girl. It is worth mentioning that the actor is not well visible; only his or her hand holding a knife is obvious. In contrast to that, the girl who is acted upon is clearly shown, and her facial expressions of fear are well seen. She defends herself against the killer without a knife or
any weapon. In this case, the viewer may have a sense of sympathy towards the goal represented in a situation of horror and image of torment. At the same time, he or she may feel afraid of the killer who seems heartless and cruel. Also, the confrontation between the represented participants shows the contrast between evil and good, and strength and weakness. Also, it can be argued that this shot is an instance of classificational processes because this image classifies the represented participants in a hierarchical order. In other words, there is a class of the strong standing for the ghostface and the class of the weak represented by the victimized girl.

**The interpersonal metafunction**
The interpersonal metafunction will be devoted to the study of mood, spatial distance and attitude.

This section will shed light on the image act and gaze in some screen shots taken from the selected film in order to show the effects drawn from the depiction of the represented participants.

In the following screen shots taken from *Scream 4*, the main protagonist, Sidney, and her friend are not looking at the viewer. So, these two figures constitute a visual “offer” where the represented participants are depicted as objects of contemplation or attraction, showing them as heroes or victims trying to create a feeling of disengagement with the viewer (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 124).

![Figure 1: Scream 4](image1.png)  
![Figure 5: Scream 4](image5.png)

In contrast to the previous figures, the represented participants look directly at the viewer and eye contact is established in the following shots extracted from *Scream 4*:
Figure 3

Figure 2
The characters’ gazes demand something from the viewer and invite him/her to enter into a relation of social affinity with them. That is why the figures are ‘demands’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 124).

In other shots, the killer who is the ghostface looks directly at the viewer, so the vectors formed by the participant’s eye lines connect the participant to the viewer. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Together with the participant's gaze, the gesture of hands also demands something from the viewer, especially that the represented participant is holding a knife which is directed at the viewer. He demands that the viewer relates to him as an inferior relates to a superior (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). This idea is illustrated in the following shot taken from Scream 4:

Figure 11

Spatial distance is another significant angle to investigate within the interpersonal metafunction. It is worth studying as it reflects the social distance between the viewer and the represented participants. The latter are depicted as far away or close to the viewer. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). A close up shot expresses a close personal distance, a medium shot corresponds to a far personal distance, and a long shot shows a far social distance.

The following figure taken from Scream 4 depicts a girl falling on a car and people witnessing the accident in a very long shot. This shot represents a far social distance between the viewer and the represented participants. Thus, there is no emotional engagement between both sides, that is to say the participants and the viewer.
What is significant is that the previous shot is only the very long shot used in the whole film because the other shots are close-up. For instance, the next figures depict the represented participants, that is to say the victims, in close-up shots establishing a close personal distance between the viewer and the characters. This is meant to keep an intimate relationship between the viewer and the represented participants.
Figure 14

What is significant is that in figure 14, the girl is the closest participant compared to the killer appeared in black clothes. Keeping the girl close to the viewer is meant to establish an imaginary relation between the audience and the woman who will be victimized by the killer.

Close-up shots are also used when depicting killers. This is done not to have an intimate relationship between them and the viewer. Instead, they aim at arousing the viewer’s fear. In fact, when becoming close to the facial expressions of killers, the viewer may have access to their minds and detect their cruel nature. Thus, he or she may feel uncomfortable and terrified by them. For example, this idea is illustrated in the next shots taken from Scream 4 consisting of a close-up shot (figure 15).

Figure 15

Also, what is significant is that the killer in Scream 4 is depicted in medium shots. He or she is either isolated from the other characters in close-up shots or shown in confrontation with their victims without interacting with them. This may convey that he or she is different from the depicted characters and viewers as if he or she is a stranger. Contrary to that, in the film under study, the other characters, that is to say the victims, are
shown in medium shots focusing on their dialogues, interactions and relationships. Thus, they can get closer to viewers because they resemble them and belong to their world. For instance, this idea is illustrated in the following shot taken from *Scream 4*.

![Figure 16](image)

The horizontal angle expresses the audience’s involvement. In this regard, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, p. 143) state “The horizontal angle encodes whether or not the image-producer (and hence, willy-nilly, the viewer) is involved with the represented participants or not”, with the frontal angle evincing involvement and the oblique angle denoting detachment. In fact, most of the victims depicted in *Scream 4* are shown from frontal angles.

The vertical angle specifies the type of power relations between the viewer and the represented participants. A high angle conveys the viewer’s power, whereas a low angle denotes the represented participants’ power over the viewer. As far as the eye-level angle is concerned, it expresses equality between the two sides, that is to say the viewer and the represented participants.

In the film under study, low angle shots depicting the killer are more dominant than eye-level shots. For instance, the following figure describes the murderer from a low angle. It reflects his or her power over the viewer and the other participants, the victims, that are apparent in the film. In addition to that, the added height of the killer may inspire fear and insecurity in the viewer. Also, the killer’s gaze fosters the idea of his or her power and authority. To put differently, the fact that he or she looks steadily at the audience with such a gaze makes the viewer powerless and afraid of him or her.

![Figure 17](image)
The textual metafunction
The textual metafunction will be studied through a focus on information value of participants, modality markers and music.

The information value of participants will be analysed with reference to the left or right, composition shedding light on some shots taken from the film under study. The analysis of shots will be based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996)’s framework.

Table 2: Left-Right composition (Scream 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left-Right (Scream 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Left-Right Composition" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Left-Right Composition" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In *Scream 4*, there is a clear tendency to use black and grey colors. They signify the presence of the evil represented by the killer. Also, these dark colors show the gloomy atmosphere of the settings and represent a context of horror. In addition to that, these colors create darkness and add to the ambiguity and mystery of the film because they hide characters and events. Consequently, the viewer may wonder what is going to happen and he or she feels anxious to find out. Thus, these colors enhance the mood of suspense as they may arouse the audience’s interest, curiosity and anticipation of what is going on in the film.

The viewer can hear slow sounds at the point of equilibrium. They may convey an uneasy mood and add tension as the onlooker expects something sudden to happen. At points of disequilibrium, the tempo and franticness of the music increase and coincide with the confrontation between killers and victims.

In the film under examination, non-diegetic sounds are extensively used to create suspense and terror. The dominant non-diegetic sound is an eerie voice used to introduce the promoted film. As a way of explanation, *Scream 4* opens with a voice threatening Sidney and the other characters. The unknown speaker says «you cannot save them, all you can do is watch”. Then, the scene closes with his or her scaring laugh.

One cannot deny the effective use of the diegetic sound in the selected film. It is incarnated in the character’s screams and cries. In fact, their voice begins calmly and gradually, increases in intensity and volume and rises throughout the film. The characters’ screams are very loud and signify that characters are scared of the killer. This use of the diegetic sound makes the viewer feels the victims’ fear and shares their horrific experience. It can be said that a play with diegetic and non-diegetic sounds creates ambiguity, suspense and fear. Also, it orientates the viewer towards the important scenes in *Scream 4*. For example, background music and the ringing of the telephone are used to direct audience’s attention to the voice of the killer devastating the targeted participants and viewers’ equilibrium and generating their fear. In addition to that, background music and screams of
characters combine together to involve the spectator in the characters’ horrific venture. Consequently, the viewer may bond with the film and may forget its technological basis. Thus, music is not ‘innocent’ because it is loaded with hidden messages. In this context, Gorbman (1980, p. 185) said: “we can no longer consider it (film music) incidental or “innocent”. Like lighting, free of verbal explicitness, music sets mood and tonalities”.

It is worth noting that sounds are sometimes brief and interspersed with silence in the selected film. Silence is functional because it builds suspense and makes the audience feel fearful of what might be approaching.

It can be concluded that the information value of participants, colors, illumination and music are not only used for aesthetic reasons, but also for framing the audience’s expectation about the selected film and generating their suspense and fear. Also, the interaction between these elements has a cumulative effect.

It can be argued that all these framing strategies in Scream 4, agentivity roles, actional, reactional, and symbolic processes, ambiguity, visual demands, close-up shots, horizontal and vertical angles, information value of participants, red and black colors, darkness and illumination, combine to create a cumulative effect and influence the viewer’s understanding of the movie under examination. Thus, they exercise a manipulative power controlling viewers’ emotions and orientating their perception about the film. In this regard, it is worth mentioning Van Dijk’s (1996) definition of power as “the control exercised by one group or organization (or its members) over the actions and/or the minds of (the members of) another group” (p. 84). Van Dijk also claims that power in ‘modern’ societies is conveyed by implicit strategies and embodied in the act of persuasion and manipulation rather than force embedded in overt orders and commands. In this way, power refers to the loss of viewers’ freedom. In other words, one may superficially think that horror films engage viewers in the process of constructing meanings. On the contrary, they deprive viewers of their freedom of interpretation because it has been set by the film loaded with the aforementioned framing strategies. Also, these strategies play a role in attracting the viewer and persuading him or her to watch the film. That is why, they are a “persuasive kind of attraction” (Kernan, 2004, p. 18). Thus, it can be argued that visuals function as an agent of framing. In fact, film-makers select the visuals to be shown and emphasize the relevant details. This means that they frame the viewer’s perception of the horror films because framing depends on principles of selection, emphasis and relevance.

On the whole, the goal of this study was to explore the framing strategies used in Scream 4 to market fear, suspense and involve the audience in the horrific experience. Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) semiotic framework is used to analyse this horror film.

**Research implications**

One of the major implications the current study offers is to raise the viewers’ critical thinking about horror films. In other words, it calls their attention to the framing strategies used to orientate their understanding of this horror genre and frame their emotions and response(s) of fear.

Using Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) framework, this study has shown visual instances of Scream 4 and analysed them. The aim has been to shed light on how Wes
Craven, the film-maker of *Scream 4*, uses these visuals to shape the viewer’s understanding of the film, control their emotions and thoughts and generate suspense. Such a research can open future horizons for other topics related to the ideological assumptions of American horror films. In fact, a film-maker does not turn a blind eye to the problems and anxieties ingrained in his or her society. He or she tries to blur a line between reality and imagination. This view is highly upheld by Jancovich. He states that horror films “had already placed the horror within the context of modern American society, and had located the cause of the horror within that context” (2002, p. 4).

**References**


Ideology Discourse Approach: Bigger Thomas’ Logos of Resistance

By Miryam Mezhanni, Institute of Applied Sciences in Humanities of El Kef, Tunisia

Abstract
Discourse analysis is concerned with studying language as a social meaning-making factor. As a discipline it seems to favor institutional, social, and political contexts. However, in this article I apply Teun Van Dijk model of ideology discourse analysis to study an extract from Native Son by Richard Wright. The result of this application is twofold. It extends the capacities of the theory to provide for a literary critical reading of the black male main character, Bigger Thomas and his relationships of power negotiation. Second, it enlarges the possibilities for the analysis of fictional texts by offering a discourse-oriented approach to the genre.

1. Introduction
Despite any disagreements or disparities, scholars seem to concur that what distinguishes man as a human being is his ability to reason. Bertens advances the notion that “ideology is waiting for us wherever we go, and everything we do and everything we engage in is pervaded by ideology” (67). Thought motivates human behavior and deeds (Iverson and Thelen 1999). When people think, they process change and ideas become the raging motor of adjustments. Proportionately, in Native Son, the use of Ideology Discourse Analysis (IDA) in the study of the black hero’s ideology and struggle for power seems to be an appropriate tool of analysis. IDA proposes to detect the expressions that behold ideological constructs, to analyze them, and to classify them. It provides a method to study such an elusive and abstract concept as ideology through the study of its concrete reflections in language.

Indeed, Native Son is the story of Bigger Thomas, a Black man, hired by the Daltons, a rich white family, as their chauffeur. At the Dalton’s he is befriended by Mary, their only daughter. Bigger drives her around to meet her boyfriend Jan. They invite Bigger to join them for a drink. Inebriated, Bigger and Mary leave for home where he carries the senseless girl to her room. Panicked by Ms Dalton’s sudden entrance, Bigger smothers Mary. He burns the corps in the basement and attempts to implicate Jan to cover his tracks. However, Mary’s bones are discovered and Bigger starts a life of flight. He commits his second murder when he kills his girlfriend Bessie. Eventually, Bigger is captured and thrown in jail. The last part of the novel gives an account of Bigger’s mock trial and his sentence to death.

Towards the end of the novel, Bigger confesses “I didn’t know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for them” (501). To sustain life and sanity against persistent disempowerment and chronic depersonalization, he embraces cruelty.
Aimé Ellis describes Bigger Thomas as a poignant reflection of a “hyper-masculine world of social despair and dysfunctional violence” (26). In this context, it becomes interesting to study not only how the main protagonist ensures his survival but also how concepts of power and resistance allow him to seize his humanity and momentarily talk back against a culture of fear.

The discussion that follows is intended to process the stages of Bigger Thomas’s journey of self-discovery and resistance relationships through ideology discourse analysis. To achieve these goals, Dijk’s taxonomy of ideology discourse principles will be applied to the main character’s speech. It will particularly focus on Bigger Thomas’s speech situated in the final chapter of Native Son which is entitled Fate. The extract is based on a conversation between the hero and Max, his lawyer, before the pronouncement of the former’s death sentence. As a consequence of this investigation, the theory will gather some conclusions regarding the main character’s position in his world and his resistance relations with his white entourage. Finally, the discussion will suggest that an ideology discourse perspective may have much to offer to literary criticism.

2. Ideology in Literary Terms

When it comes to literariness, one might wonder how to classify ideology. Shakespeare gives an answer to the question even though he seems to raise more speculations than he silences. In Hamlet, he says “there’s nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so” (2.2.259). Today, the debate is still in progress: how to take ideology and even how to understand it? Different theories are being argued over and disputed.

Postmodernism refers to ideology as “a background of signifiers without signified referents” (Morris 15). The term denotes the abstract conceptual side of ideology as well as its organized and structured facet. For instance, each group of people would have a different attitude toward a specific matter. Religious people would reject abortion, divorce, or gambling. Feminists would argue against male chauvinism and call for women franchise. Capitalists will strive for unrestricted free markets while communists will seek to share wealth and gather resources. Indeed, the variation of messages in this system of thought generates diverse actions and reactions on the part of its advocates.

Psychoanalysis, for example, defines ideology in terms of dreams. Psychoanalysts claim that ideology is like the dreams that “cloak unconscious motivations in symbolic guise” (Eagleton 134). The idea suggests a parallelism between the working of the neurologic system and the impact of ideology on people. In Bertens’ The Basics, he develops some of the Freudian theories related to ideology (159). He explains that according to Freud, the ego is always trying to “control the wishes and desires of the unconscious” (160). Hence, the dominant ideology tries to control the receiver’s wishes and to impose its own will upon his mind and actions.

Likewise, Hall believes that “ideology must not be considered a false consciousness or kind of concealment, but rather as a multifaceted force in the struggle for cultural power” (cited in Abrams and Harpham 209). Power and ideology sound to be fatefully connected. One initiates the other. For instance, In the 60’s, two different ideologies, Capitalism in the USA and Marxism in the former USSR, were each preaching for their own cultural supremacy. Their attempts to dominate the majority of the world’s countries set the tone for their race for power and preeminence.
Different critical schools have and are still trying to understand the weight of ideology in power scales and its role when married with literature in shaping the minds and the identities of the readers. In his introduction to ideology, Freeden maintains that “reality is simply what discourse ordains reality to be a discursive construct, and objectivity is a chimerical pursuit even for the scholar” (105). There is no innocent text. Literature is pervaded with ideology because writers cannot be completely stripped of their own ideas and thoughts while writing. Even criticism is not totally distanced; since the critic lets some of his own visions infiltrate his evaluation of the literary work. But, how does this combination between ideology and literature work?

Colebrook observes that “because texts are made up of language or discourse they take the very material of ideology and enable it to be viewed as ideology” (163). From now on, another factor is likely to be involved in this dual association between intellect and authority, which is literature. Language appears to be the means that gives ideology a form. It transforms the ideological constructs into actual and substantial words. Eagleton further explains that “the word poetry, then, no longer refers simply to a technical mode of writing: it has deep social, political, and philosophical implications, and at the sound of it the ruling class might quite literally reach for its gun” (17). The observation seems to suggest that literature bears in its folds the indentations of the ideology of its culture. Freeden confirms that “literature takes sides” (106). Therefore, the literary text is neither subjective nor neutral. For instance, the literary text can be loyal toward the ideology of the existing order. It can also be a dissident text that beholds a nonconformist ideology calling for change. In all cases, literature becomes a weapon in the hands of its preacher since it has the power to subdue and influence people. MacGillivray argues that “ideology cannot operate without discourse” (8). Indeed, it can be argued that literature proposes contradictory visions of life, discusses them, and tries to resolve the cacophony of the real world’s conflicting ideologies.

Climactically, it is difficult to associate a specific or a final definition to literature since it is not a static concept. This flexibility in significance allows for divergent conclusions and assumptions about its nature to come to life. Hence, according to all the visions and theories introduced above, one can assume that in this triadic relationship between language, ideology, and power, literature seems to be the mediator that transfers ideology and power from the metaphysical realm to the world of evidence through words and meaning. It turns to be a critical vehicle of ideology since the literary text has the potential to carry the ideological beliefs of his characters.

3. **Ideology Discourse Analysis: Perspectives**

The early debates about ideology use the notion of ideas or ‘logos’ to refer to it. The term is coined by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. There was at the time genuine curiosity about the source of ideas and how they could help improve the material world. In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle argues that people do not form ideas out of the blue, and that the latter take shape from “the experience of the senses in the material world” (51). With time, ideology has evolved from being a polemic topic of debate among scholars to become a weapon. In 1610, in “Treatise of Monarchy”, Greville writes “that as the heads’ ideas rule the heart/So power might print her will in every part” (2.377). Power and ideas seem to have already started their courtship. The impact of combining ideology with politics, religion, and literature was on motion, setting the tune for the practices and conjectures of the upcoming ages.
Dijk defines ideology in the following terms: “ideologies mentally represent the basic social characteristics of a group, such as their identity, tasks, goals, norms, values, position, and resources” (2). Technically, in his IDA model, Dijk divides group or individual relationships according to the pronominal binarism of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (144). The division is not only physical but also spiritual. The distance established by the personal pronouns marks the difference of the group’s ideology, ideas, beliefs, and even behavior. The black hero’s affiliation and position in his world will be classified according to Dijk’s ideological structures categories (147) which are divided into six major principles.

Self-identity description is concerned with the answers to the following questions; who are we? What is our history? How are we different from the others? What are we proud of? Dijk presents this sentence as an example “in our interpretation of democracy, our rejection of elites, our well-nigh demagogic respect for the opinions of the unlearned, we are alone” (New York Times, Mark D. W. Edington, 2 March 1993). Indeed, the NYT journalist identifies the American leadership essence in terms of democracy and equality.

Activity Description is concerned with what do we do? What is expected of us? What are our social roles? In another example Dijk provides the following expression “the demands of leadership, if not a sense of moral responsibility, will not permit us to abdicate our responsibility for protecting innocent civilians and standing up against state-sponsored slaughter” (New York Times, Mark D. W. Edington, 2 March 1993). The expression shows that the USA activities are to assume peace responsibilities and to lead the world against terrorism.

Goal Description focuses on the goals of group or individual activities. They are, by definition, ideological and not necessarily factual; how the group or the individual wants to be seen? (Dijk 147). For instance, the previous journalistic extract of the NYT associates the American government’s goals with protecting the innocent and safekeeping justice.

Norm and Values Description is a crucial principle in most ideological discourse to discern the meanings that involve norms and values about what we find good or bad, right or wrong, and what our actions and goals try to respect or achieve: e.g. “terrorists destroy the real lives of American working people, traumatize actual American children” (NYT, Robert Stone, 4 March 1993). Accordingly, what motivates American policy is upholding the American dream and protecting the rights of American generations to a bright future.

Resource Description intimates that groups can generally exist and subsist only when they have access to general or specific resources. For instance, in order to create an aura of invincibility, a nation can focus on promoting the force of its weaponry, intelligence gathering, or finance.

Position and Relation Description defines the groups’ identity, activities and goals largely also in relation to other groups, for example, anti-racists by definition with respect to racists, and feminists with respect to chauvinists. For further understanding, Dijk presents this example: “Arab intellectuals poisoned in their own minds with their obsession with Arab ‘identity’, a supernationalism that overrode political liberty, human rights or mercy for their own people” (NYT, A.M. Rosenthal, 13 April 1993). Arab dictatorships are contrasted to American democracy. The loss of liberties, violation of human rights and deliberate cruelty are deeply clashing with the American principles. The distance between the Arabic “them” and the American “us” seems final.
Ultimately, the study of Richard Wright’s hero his ideological beliefs conducted in the remainder of this article will navigate between versatile readings of Bigger in order to understand his concepts of resistance and dissidence within a world governed by verbal, physical and mental racism, and segregation. The following section will try to discern the inner workings of Bigger’s mind in order to understand the different parts that constitute his ideological creed when facing the white self.

4. Bigger Tomas through Ideology Discourse Variables

The table below contains an alphabetical organization for the ideological constructs, their IDA realizations, and frequency of occurrences determined in the extract taken from Fate, Native Son. The studied passage is about a conversation between Bigger and his lawyer Max in which the protagonist opens his heart and explains the whys behind his actions. It is a crucial moment in the novel since the hero establishes communication not from an antagonistic stance but rather in an attempt to defend his actions according to his own line of thought. It is a passage where Bigger Thomas’s voice is most heard. The studied expressions solely focus on Bigger’s voiced utterances in the dialogic section of the text.

The table will attempt to paint a portrait of Bigger Thomas’s notion of heroism through the study of the main character's ideological constructs. IDA will process the stages of Bigger Thomas’s journey of self-discovery and self-fulfillment. It will determine his position in his world and his power relationships with his white entourage. To achieve these goals, the main character’s statements will be classified according to the following ideological units: self-identity description, activity description, goal description, norm and values description, resources description, position and relation description. Thus, the table will provide a tentative distribution of the different lexical categories that characterizes Bigger's utterances. The utterances to be studied will mainly focus on expressions related to the hero's black self “I” and the other white self “THEM”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Utterance</th>
<th>Ideological Construct</th>
<th>IDA Interpretation</th>
<th>Pronominal Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'd rather die</td>
<td>Goal description</td>
<td>Bigger chooses death over prison</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wouldn't do nothing for them</td>
<td>Activity descriptions</td>
<td>Bigger’s refusal to cooperate with whites</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They hate black folks</td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>whites are racist</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>But they hate black folks more than they hate unions.</strong></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>whites are racist</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All I know is that they hate me</strong></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>whites are racist</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What’s the use of being sorry? That won’t help me none</strong></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>Bigger claims responsibility for his decisions and actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I was all mixed up. I was feeling so many things at once</strong></td>
<td>Self-identity description</td>
<td>Bigger’s identity crisis</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naw, Mr Max. I didn’t but nobody’ll believe me.</strong></td>
<td>Self-identity description</td>
<td>white inequity</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I don’t know I was feeling a little that way. I reckon I was. I was drunk and she was drunk and I was feeling that way</strong></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>Bigger confesses his inclination to commit rape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>But everybody’ll say I did it? What’s the use? I am black. They say black men do that. So it don’t matter if I did or if I didn’t.</strong></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>white despotism</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I hated her! So help me God, I hated her.</strong></td>
<td>Position and relation description</td>
<td>Bigger’s antagonism towards a white female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I hate her now, even though she is dead! God knows, I hate her right now</strong></td>
<td>Position and relation description</td>
<td>Bigger’s antagonism towards a white female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I ain’t sorry she’s dead</strong></td>
<td>Position and relation description</td>
<td>Bigger’s antagonism towards a white female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It was hell… She asked me a lot of questions. She acted and talked in a way that made me hate her.</strong></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>Marie’s invasion of Bigger’s privacy</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
She made me feel like a dog.  

We’re all split up… All I knew that they kill us for women like her.

We live apart. And then she comes and acts like that to me

She was rich. She and her kind own the earth.

She and her kind say black folks are dogs

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Table. Ideological Categories Distribution in *Native Son*’s Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Utterance</th>
<th>Ideological Construct</th>
<th>IDA Interpretation</th>
<th>Pronominal Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They don’t let you do nothing but what they want.</td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>oppression of black people</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is the same color as the rest of’em</td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>Bigger’s racism</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They say we rape white women when we got the clap and they say we do that because we believe that if we rape white women then we’ll get rid of the clap.</td>
<td>Position and relation description</td>
<td>degradation of black people</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They draw a line and say for you to stay on your side</td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>violation of human rights</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| They don’t care if there’s no bread over on your side. They don’t care if you die. | Norm and value description | violation of human rights | THEM 
|---|---|---|---|
| When you try to come from behind your line they kill you. They feel they ought to kill you then. Everybody wants to kill you then. | Norm and value description | white dictatorship | THEM 
| I’m black. I don’t have to do nothing for them to get me. | Norm and value description | Inequity of rights | THEM 
| I knew what I was doing, all right. But I couldn’t help it. | Norm and value description | Bigger takes responsibility for his actions | I 
| I hated her then and I hate her now. | Position and relation description | antagonism toward Marie | I 
| After killing that white women it wasn’t [...] else I didn’t have to think much about killing Bessie. | Norm and value description | Bigger’s impassivity towards murder | I 
| But I reckon I wanted to do what other people do. | Goal description | Bigger’s desire for freedom | I 
| You get a little job here and a little job there... when you going to get fired. | Resources description | The black community destitution | I 
| Pretty soon you get so you can’t hope for nothing... and other people can live. | Self-identity description | dehumanization of the hero | THEM 
| They own everything. | Resources description | Unlimited Whites’ ownership | THEM |
### Table. Ideological Categories Distribution in *Native Son’s* Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Utterance</th>
<th>Ideological Construct</th>
<th>IDA Interpretation</th>
<th>Pronominal Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>They choke you off the face of the earth.</em></td>
<td>Activity description</td>
<td>White racism is relentless.</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They like god.</em></td>
<td>Self-identity description</td>
<td>Whites are godlike</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They don’t even let you feel what you want to feel.</em></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>white totalitarianism</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They after you so hot and hard you can only feel what they doing to you.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They kill you before you die.</em></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>white oppression of the black community</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Why should I want to do anything? I ain’t got a chance.</em></td>
<td>Resources description</td>
<td>deprivation of the black people</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I don’t know nothing. I am just black</em></td>
<td>Self-identity description</td>
<td>Bigger's self degradation</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They make the laws</em></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>Inequity of justice</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>But they wouldn’t let me go to the school...who lived within the line.</em></td>
<td>Norm and value description</td>
<td>Inequity of life opportunities</td>
<td>THEM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We ain’t got no money. We don’t own no mines, no railroads, no nothing.

They made us stay in one little spot.

For a while I was free. I was doing something.

It was wrong but I was feeling all right.

I killed ‘em ‘cause I was scared and mad.

But I been scared and mad all my life and after I killed that first women, I wasn’t scared no more for a little while.

Goal and activity description are both scarce in Bigger’s system of thoughts. His depiction of his intensions and objectives is highly characterized with its negative nuance. This may suggest how much removed from his predicament Bigger feels. He does not care to gain Max’s sympathy or embellish reality, nor does he strive to leave a good impression on his white interlocutor. This may infer that Bigger is giving a nude portrayal of what he really believes. Whether this reflection undermines his position does not seem to be of weight to Bigger. More than that, Bigger’s self-propelled alienation is directed not only toward the white other but also toward his own community. In one sense, Bigger contributes to shaping the image of the ‘bad negro’ that the white ideology has been cultivating of his people, as the following conversation reveals:

Max: ‘but, did you rape her?’

Bigger: ‘Naw. But everybody’ll say I did. What’s the use? I’m black. They say black men do that. So it don’t matter if I did or if I didn’t.’ (386)

By choosing to stand alone, Bigger reveals his antagonism and refusal to integrate either group. The hero’s decision to belong nowhere may suggest his deep feeling of division and estrangement within himself.

Norms and value description are another component of Bigger’s ideology. They are the most important recurring elements in the character’s explored beliefs in this study. Dijk
insists that “in the description of our opponents or enemies, we may thus expect an emphasis on the violation of such norms and values” (148). Through the massive use of negative connotations in reference to the American values, Bigger announces the country’s moral bankruptcy. He describes America as amoral, undemocratic, intolerant, oppressive, and violent (see Table above). He reveals that the American dream is nothing more than an illusion. By questioning the sincerity and authenticity of the white civil values, Bigger casts doubt on the credibility of the system’s judgment and the validity of its rejection of his blackness. By exposing the hypocrisy of the white society’s principles and ideals, the hero dethrones the dominant ‘Other’ from his position of centrality. He minces the system’s monopoly of power and knowledge disturbing the white unilateral visualization and selective acceptance of human beings.

The hero’s apparently little effort to promote a positive image of black norms and values only reinforce the credibility of the accusations against him. However, Sinfield argues that “a dissident text may derive its leverage, its purchase, precisely from its partial implication with the dominant” (48) adding that “it may embarrass the dominant by appropriating its concepts and imagery.” The table shows that the norms and values of both communities are denounced. So if the black man is stained, then it is originally caused by the white man’s failings. In this extract, the white ‘Other’ seems to be in trial since the hero is condemning the white man’s norm and value system. It is Bigger’s turn to express his ideology and vision of his white rival. By taking the position of a judge, Bigger gives himself the power to attack, censure, and embarrass white racism. Bell argues that Bigger has become “an outsider or a marginal man, a person living apart from the values of both black and white cultures” (67). The table reinforces this vision in that Bigger’s ideology is based on estrangement. He rejects any affiliation with whites or blacks alike. Still, Bigger offers no alternative, since his own values are about violence and antagonism. While he attacks the white oppressive ideology, at the same time he embraces matching beliefs of violence. The study of position and relation description criteria in Bigger’s speech reinforces the idea of a reciprocal aggressive attitude between Bigger and society. According to the findings in the previous table, Bigger shows the same amount of hostility and antagonism towards the white entity as the latter witnesses toward him. He is treating the white body with the same aggressivity and disdain it does to him. Brivic says that Bigger’s “soul may be not so much the white man’s artifact as an antagonistic reaction to that artifact” (78). Indeed, Bigger refuses to reveal weaknesses or to wield any more power to the ‘Other’ so as to reduce him and frighten him. His resistance and dignity become related to how much he compromises of himself and how much challenge he shows. Also, the black hero is a man who believes that the whole world is at the image of his white counterpart. Thus, there is no place for him in such a hostile and stifling world but to be the monster and the enemy. When Bigger refers to ‘this white world’, he means that the only existing world is white. When he tries to imagine what he wants, it cannot be formulated, for it is outside human language (Brivic 79). Hence, he chooses isolation and violence to challenge the existing order and to speak his mind.

Self-identity description shows that unlike what the title of the novel proclaims, Bigger knows that he is no native son of America. He has been treated and labeled as an outsider. Hricko maintains that "his exclusion from the society he desires contributes to his sense of alienation” (133). However, the hero’s anger galvanizes him to look for an
anchorage point where his difference can be if not celebrated at least accepted as the following conversation demonstrates:

Bigger: they made us stay in one little spot...
Max: and you didn’t want to stay there

Bigger glanced up; his lips tightened. There was a feverish pride in his bloodshot eyes.

Bigger: I didn’t (391).

To some extent, Bigger’s alienation seems to be partly the result of a self-impelled decision. The hero also believes in violence and retaliation as a means of self-defense against the world’s intent to enslave and victimize him. The overwhelming use of negative connotations in Bigger’s speech reveals his loss of faith and despair in his humanity. The schism in Bigger’s black identity seems to be reflected in his adherence to conflicting ideologies. He cannot integrate the system nor can he perpetually bear oppression any more. His resistance is a combination of violence and bravery. His ideology is torn between the desire to join white supremacy or continue his warfare against black submission.

Indeed, the strong presence of the white man, visible through the recurring use of the personal pronoun “THEM”, seems to reflect Bigger’s ideological crisis. The white system composes the hero’s environment and causes the uncontrollable forces that hamstrung his efforts to escape the chains of heredity and prejudice. He is pursued, judged, and punished by white laws and values. Deserted by all, Bigger stands alone against the world and yet remains invisible. The frequent employment of the pronominal reference of whites ’THEM’ more that the ‘I’ of the hero’s black self suggests an overwhelming presence of the dominant voice in Bigger's mind. Dubois speaks of the notion of “always looking at oneself through the eyes of the others” (215). Thus, Bigger’s identity seems to be trapped within the white Man’s gaze.

Resources description demonstrates that technically Bigger is free only within the borders of the black-belt. He has his own area of the city, his own side of the street, and his own school. He can dream to be an aviator, a marine, or a business man but all he will be is
a street-sweeper, a shoe-maker, or a servant to white capitalist masters. In *Native Son* he confesses to his friend “*they do things and we can’t. it’s just like living in jail. Half the time I feel like I’m on the outside of the world peeping in through a knot-hole in the fence...*” (58). The discrepancy between Bigger’s aspirations and his reality is colossal. It is highly visible in the combination of extreme poverty, illiteracy, and ignorance which culminate and flare with the accidental murder of Mary. In spite of his destitution, murder allows Bigger, all by himself, to send Chicago into disarray. When he steps over the limits and restrictions of the white man, the town goes wild. Indeed, Bigger reveals the vulnerable core of the white system. To catch one black man, the means of the white system are mobilized. State force is mobilized. Riot squads are deployed in the streets armed with heavy weaponry and gas bombs. A wave of hysteria and panic shakes the media and the population. Shuman contends that “Bigger is the assertion of a rebellious, defiant African American personality proudly unwilling as both an American and a black person to accept the restrictions that dominant society imposes” (170). After being invisible for so long, Bigger becomes a character who is not only at the heart of events but who makes action happen, an agent of his own destiny.

5. The Black Hero’s Ideology of Resistance

Throughout the novel, the monster behind Bigger’s visage seems to be looming quite beneath the surface. In the early chapters of *Native Son*, Bigger demonstrates a strong propensity towards violence. He is the leader of a gang in his neighborhood. He plans a robbery and tries to coerce his friend into felony. Bigger confesses to Gus that “*maybe they right in not wanting us to fly... cause if I took a plane up I’d take a couple of bombs along and drop ‘em as sure as hell...*” (55). Thus the murders of Mary and Bessie come as no surprise. Indeed, both seem to be the result of a lengthily suppressed wave of anger.

Many feminist critics behold against Bigger the savagery of his killing of the female characters in the novel such as Griffith who argues that “Bigger’s frustration at his lack of power causes him to redirect that frustration at women in a violent way” (63). The claim is that the murder of these women serves to cover his cowardice rather than being an act of rebellion, as Bigger’s victims have nothing to do with his racial issues. He never expresses feelings of regret or guilt whenever he rethinks of Mary and Bessie’s murders. The total absence of compassion and introspection accentuates the monstrous side of Bigger’s character. The gruesomeness of Bigger’s crimes has no precedent in the literature of the African American bad man (Bryant 65). He strangles, decapitates, burns, and mutilates. Inflicting death seems to give Bigger a grisly sense of exhilaration and liberation as he tells Max “*I killed that first woman, I wasn’t scared no more for a while*” (392). To a certain extent, Wright depicts a hero with a sociopathic tendency, a man who exalts in devastation. Angry, vicious, and illiterate Bigger reinforces the image of the black Man as a locus of chaos and primitiveness. However there is more to Bigger than this façade of mindless violence.

Ideology discourse analysis reveals that Bigger Thomas is not a conventional tragic hero; he is no Othello and no Macbeth. There is nothing noble or great in him. Yet, what makes him a hero is the fact of his being a common man. Arthur Miller maintains that:

> The tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing--his sense of personal dignity. From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggles that of the individual attempting to gain his "rightful"
The idea is that the desire for respect and dignity is not exclusive to noble men and women and to achieve their goals these figures would make extreme decisions. In this case, heroism does not necessarily lie in what it achieves but rather what it failed to achieve. Bigger is also trying to assert his identity. He resists the white man rather than be subservient to his oppressors. Eventually, Bigger pays with his life for his choices. To a certain extent, his heroism is tainted with hatred and violence. Yet, bereft of his humanity and freedom, little room is left for greatness of heart, fairness, or even conscience.

Bigger seems to inaugurate the birth of a new kind of heroes with no moral principles, and no graciousness. He is a hero driven by hunger; the hunger for respect, integrity, a decent life, and a chance to be a better person. Sewall claims that “in tragedy, truth is not revealed as one harmonious whole; it is many faceted, ambiguous, a sum of irreconcilables- and this is one source of its terror” (cited in Brivic 91). The sublime in Bigger's character resides in its veiled ideological motivations. He is a combination of different controversial personalities, a monster, a victim, and a hero. He is a modern Frankenstein, a complex common man, composed of distinctive organs and principles. There is no catharsis no relief or a cleansing ritual with the death of the hero. Bigger Thomas reveals too much of the naked beast, when cornered, within the breast of every civilized man for the comfort of the audience.

The protagonist adopts an ideology that is at odds with the white man and his own community. He takes a position that rejects the world in which he is evolving. He is cornered by two realities. Bigger realizes that the white world has every intention to impair and smite him. He also becomes conscious that, however fragmented and adrift the black community might be, it does not have a united front of solidarity to stand up for itself and achieve change: “They wouldn’t listen to me...when it come to guys like me. They say guys like me make it hard for them to get along with white folks” (395). After all, he may represent the ghetto people, but he is not speaking for the pent up and frustrated masses. He is rather the solitary leader of what Wright calls an “aimless rebellion” (26) climaxing into an insulated act of painful violence. At the end, he closes the novel in the following terms “what I killed for, I am!” (461) accentuating his self-centered struggle. Bigger is no national hero.

Regardless of all Bigger’s self-inflicted destructive behavior, the overwhelming presence of the white other seems to play a critical role in his downfall. Sinfield argues that “groups with material power will dominate the institutions that deal with ideas. That is why people can be persuaded to believe things that are neither just, humane, nor to their advantage” (35). In the extract, when Max asks Bigger about the reasons that led him to killing Mary, his answer was "I acted toward her only as I know how” (388). Hailed by the societal dominant voice as a monster, Bigger only responds as he knows how; through.
violence and rage. Bigger’s ability to behave in a rationally civilized manner is hampered by the system’s continuous sustained savagery towards him. Sooner or later, the image in which the main character is considered as an object and an animal eventually will end by contaminating his own vision of himself (see Table). All his life, Bigger is conditioned to believe in his worthlessness and inferiority. It only underlines the naturalist angle of his demise. In the beginning of the novel, Bigger himself foreshadows his imminent downfall as he tells Gus “every time I get to thinking about me being black and they being white, me being here and they being there, I feel like something awful going to happen to me...” (58)

In this blithe landscape of repression and confinement, Bigger Thomas resorts to violence to achieve some exploits as a man. Patricia Tuitt argues that “behind Bigger’s apparent crude simplicity resides a cold rationality that allows him to treat the death of a fellow human as the extremely fertile ground upon which his nature can feed and mature” (113). Tuitt’s assumption is based on the principle that Bigger is a whole human being. Yet, Bigger is a broken man whose identity is fragmented, with no sense of belonging nor dignity. He has been rebuffed and fueled with hatred for so long that any leftover of humanity seems to be stifled within his soul. Being thoroughly abused and reduced to nothingness, the hero’s reactions are moderately the natural results of a life bred by social subjugation and disillusionment. Indeed, treated inhumanly, Bigger Thomas cannot be expected to react with humanism. He rather adopts violence as his only means of expression and control.

In keeping with the way that the white society has been fostering fear within Bigger’s mind, he is not supposed to be able to rebel. Yet, he breaks up with the cycle of terror when he kills a white woman. In fact, the protagonist does not see Mary as an individual; she is rather the representative of the whole white system. Mary becomes the emblem of the collective ideology that has been choking him and degrading his manhood. In the middle ages, decapitation was reserved to traitors among nobility so that the king would salvage his duped confidence and tarnished honor. By decapitating Mary, Bigger salvages his own bruised self-esteem. Likewise, burnings were stored for witches and through smoldering Mary’s corpse, Bigger destroys all the prejudices and the racism that stands behind her.

By killing a white woman, Bigger refuses to submit to the feared power of the dominant white. It is in watching Bigger come to terms with his own disfigurement, his own disenfranchisement that we see the figurations of a dead man walking (Henderson 70). Despite the aggressive dimension of Bigger’s actions, the murder seems to be an act of rebellion that embarrasses the general order by adopting its own methods of violence. In Native Son, the hero tells Max “I was always wanting something and I was feeling that nobody would let me have it. So I fought ‘em. I thought they was hard and I acted hard” (457). Bigger wobbles the scales of power towards him when he erases instilled phobias and unapproachable taboos. There was a palpable sense of meaningfulness and fulfillment. The shattered pieces of his identity are joined through murder. For once, he was fully living and in control of his actions.

The central aim in this paper has been to present ideology discourse analysis as a tool of literary criticism and literary analysis of the fictional text. To this end, it adopted an extract taken from Native Son by Richard Wright. In order to see into the mind and psyche of the black main character, IDA helped peel the thick layers of appearances and shams making
ideas as important as actions. If one understands the why, then one can afford to ponder on the how. The attempts to study the ideology of the black hero encompassed some of the facets of his existence and conflicts. What does he think of the world? Where does he situate himself, a doer or a viewer? To what extent does he willingly relinquish power to be dominated and debased by the other? How does his ideology trigger off his actions? Johnstone argues that “ways of talking produce and reproduce ways of thinking” (45). By studying the black hero’s speech and verbal reactions, the paper tried to answer these questions and to understand what lies behind the surface message.

As shown above, the methodical and detailed accounting of Bigger’s ideas and thoughts allowed for a consistent and structured conceptualization of his ideological modalization of power and resistance in the world of the novel. A categorization of the black hero's ideological constructs allowed for a discernible understanding of his mind and character. The combination of discourse ideology analysis and literature augmented the critical eyes potential to delve deeper into the text and its significance.

References


—. Rhetoric . s.d.


The Impact of Social Media Communication on Learners’ Academic Writing in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Situation: the Use of Informal Phraseology.

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Abstract
The present research work analyses the main causes that drive foreign language learners of English to use informal language in their academic writing. Indeed, we have proceeded with a classification of such informal expressions which are incorporated in the learners’ written production of English with respect to their types, rates of recurrence and possible origins. Besides, we have observed that there is a strong correlation between the Second Year Master students’ abusive use of social media communication and their low proficiency in the writing skill. In fact, the major objective of this research investigation is to demonstrate the negative effects of modern social media communication in terms of impoverishment of the students’ mastery of the written record of the foreign language. On the other hand, a descriptive research methodology has been adopted; accordingly, a statistical study of fifty Master dissertations has been undertaken and a general interview of twenty-five second year Master students of English has been organized. Therefore, one of the essential results which we have reached is to present some significant factors that undoubtedly indicate that second year Master students are negatively influenced by social media communication; especially in the elaboration of their Master dissertation. Lastly, we have proposed a number of recommendations with a view to lessen the gravity of the problem particularly in relationship to the requirements that are necessary in writing a Master dissertation.
**Key Words:** informal and formal language, phraseology, social media technology, writing skill, dissertation.

**Introduction**

A great number of learners of English as a foreign language consider grammar as a complicated language; especially because of the lack of a quite formalised grammar when it is being used on a day to day basis. Indeed, the rules of grammar exist, but they are so unspoken or unrecognized that many students tend to believe that the language seems quite illogical. In reality, the origin of this phenomenon is largely due to the distinction that some make between ‘Formal and Informal English’. Yet, these terms mean more to people learning English than to native English speakers. The reason is that native speakers of this language use either formal or informal language innately (without thinking about it); therefore, they do not really ‘explain’ or justify the appropriateness of using either style. Basically, informal English is used when speaking the language, but more formal English is employed when people write English; particularly with respect to contexts of business or when a formal letter is required.

Furthermore, informal English is seen as a friendly means of communication between people; in opposition, it is not viewed as being appropriate within the official administrative or business setting. However, written English tends to be more formal than conversational exchanges; therefore, whenever we write something it is always better to use formal structures and compositions to ensure the use of the most suitable style. As a matter of fact, formal language- even when it is spoken- is often associated with the conventions expected of standard written English. At its most extreme, formal language is signalled by complex, complete sentences, impersonality, avoidance of colloquial vocabulary, and a consistent preference for learned words, often derived from Latin. Contrarily, informal language is characterized by a simpler grammatical structure (i.e. loosely-connected sentences and phrases), personal evaluation, and a colloquial or slang vocabulary.

1. **Comparison of Formal and Informal Language**

The impact of formal and informal language affects the interlocutors in relatively different manners. Indeed, to some people the dissimilarities are very subtle, and the need to use a more formal style or vocabulary is non-existent. On the collective level, the type of language that is used in a society, whether it is formal or informal; is directly dependent on the culture and customs that are the most prevalent. In the age of television and the Internet, the need to communicate at the level of an audience has degraded the degree of formality needed in order to speak. Although the increasing amount of informality used has greatly impacted society’s standard language, it has left the professional world virtually unaffected. In fact, the art of speaking formally is fading fast; nevertheless, it is important to remember that even though the main goal of any society is to communicate to the masses as easily as possible; there is still a need to hold on to some formality within society’s language skills.

On the other hand, more emphasis needs to be placed on the necessity within each society to use a more formal language. This may seem to be insignificant or even a
grammatically clean newspaper, but it only further reinforces the acceptability on informal language in a professional setting. For instance, the use of nicknames at school (especially with regard to teachers) may cause the students to perceive from an early age that respect is not so important in school and that it is an informal place as compared to going to a mosque. On the contrary, the formality used in business and medicine is a sign of respect to both parties. The difference being is that doctors, writers and businessmen are perceived by society to perform and communicate at higher standards than society as a whole. In fact, it is amazing to observe that for some unknown reason the society is pounded by informal language while the commercial, governmental and medical fields have not deteriorated even though such professions are surrounded and impacted by informal language all the time.

Generally, we can observe that there is an overall increase in the use of informal language and the overall tendency indicates that the process is not eligible to change or slow down in the future. The main reason is that professionals usually carry more sophisticated degrees of education than the whole of society and that the type of education received is very formal and professional. Indeed, a simple comparison of the level of informality that is used in the United States and England (as far as the English language is concerned) displays disparate levels between the two speech communities.

As a matter of fact, it is actually uncommon and possibly offending in Great Britain to use a person's first name until a comfortable relationship has developed between two persons. However, while English-speaking people may not be offended by the use of terms of endearment, to use very informal language would be really insulting unless the relationship was understood by both people to be on an informal basis. For instance, the use of Chan form, which is an informal ending much like native speakers of English use terms of endearment like 'honey' or 'dear', is perceived to be quite acceptable in the American speech community. Nevertheless, the English language speakers do not regard Chan as having the same level of informalality as expressions of phatic communion.

2. Contrastive Analysis of Some Informal and Formal Expressions

The difference between formal and informal English is not really a difference between correct and incorrect, but rather a dissimilarity of what is known as register. Indeed, a register is a variety of language which is related to a particular subject matter of area of activity. In other words, a register is actually a set of terms and expressions as well as syntactical features that may be said to characterize that specific area of language. Besides, there are many registers: technical, academic, mathematical, scientific, etc. Generally, we can also speak of a 'formal' and 'informal' registers in English. For instance, in writing academic reports and the like, it would be normal to draw most of the vocabulary and expressions from the formal register, and few, if any, from the informal. Certainly, this entails avoiding colloquial or slang expressions in any writing assignments. In reality, the question of register is far more complicated than indicated here, for example, there are many degrees of formality and informality. However, below are listed a few cases which may be of practical assistance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Formal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They did an experiment.

The experiment was carried out/performed.

Then, the Drive Manager goes through some steps to install the programme.

The Drive Manager then performs/executes a series of functions/operations in order to install the programme.

One after the other...

At regular intervals...

They found out what the important things were.

They determined/discovered/identified the important properties/characteristics/issues.

You can find out all about the survey on page seven.

Details of the survey are to be found on page seven.

We think you should discuss the research findings at the next departmental meeting.

It is recommended that the research findings are discussed at the next departmental meeting.

Doctors have come up with a new method of curing the disease.

Doctors have created/established a new method of curing the disease.

Safety officers are looking into the problem.

Safety officers are investigating the problem.

The cost of cleaning services has gone up 25% over the last three years.

The cost of cleaning services has risen by 25% over the last three years.

A lot of...

Many/much/a great deal of...

Enough...

Sufficient...

We don’t think it is a good idea to do anything at the moment.

It is suggested that no action should be taken at this stage.

Many thanks to the staff at “Computers R Us” for their help on the technical side.

Thanks are extended to the staff at “Computers R Us” for their technical support (slightly less formal: we would like to thank...).

You need to get the patient’s help when...

When conducting these auditory tests, the active participation of the patient being

94
doing these hearing tests. tested is required.

There were no big differences between the three different groups we tested. No significant differences emerged between the three different groups tested.

This seemed to fix the problem. This appeared to rectify the problem.

This shows that... This demonstrates that...

Numbers are going up. Numbers are increasing.

They put the plan into action. The plan was implemented/carried out.

This let them keep the same temperature during the whole experiment. This allowed/permitted/resulted in/ensured a constant temperature throughout the experiment/for the entire experiment.

These results are because of factors like weight, age, etc. These results are dependent on factors such as weight, age, etc.

In what ways do schools in our towns benefit pupils because they still near to their homes? What are the advantages of schools in close proximity to pupils’ homes?

Because the problem always sometimes might happen... It is highly probable that the students will face the problem of...

**Table 1. Contrastive Analysis of Some Informal and Formal Expressions**

On the whole, a general overview of the different informal expressions that are introduced by Master students in their dissertations indicates that there are seven major types of informal expressions and/or syntactic structures:

1. Contractions of the negative forms.
2. Colloquial expressions.
3. Ellipsis of the third person singular “s” in the simple present tense.
4. Jargon or slang used by native speakers of English.
5. Absence of subject-verb inversion in the interrogative form.
6. Expressions borrowed from the spoken record of the English language.
7. Poor or total absence of punctuation in a whole paragraph or even an entire page.

**2.1. Statistical Analysis of the Most Common Types of Informal Expressions**
In this part of the investigation we have adopted a simple procedure which consists of presenting some statistics of the most common informal expressions that are use by Master students in their dissertations. Indeed, we have analysed fifty (50) Master dissertations with respect to the type, rate (number of dissertations) and percentage of the informal expressions or linguistic structures that are generally used by the second year Master students in the elaboration of their dissertations at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. Indeed, the study has resulted with a number of interesting outcomes that are displayed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Informal Expressions/Structures</th>
<th>Number of Dissertations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractions of the Negative Form.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressions from the Spoken Record.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis of the Third-Person Singular “s” in the Simple Present Tense.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor or Absence of Punctuation.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of Subject-Verb Inversion in the Interrogative Form.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colloquial Expressions.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jargon or Slang Used by Native Speakers of English.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Statistical Analysis of Informal Expressions

3. The Impact of Social Media Communication on Students’ Writing Products
3.1. The Analysis of Students’ Interview
It is evident that the limited scope of the present research work does not allow a thorough analysis of the correlation that exists between the use of informal language in the students’ Master dissertations and the abusive exposure to social media communication tools. However, in an attempt to prove at least the link between the two phenomena, we have organized an interview that took the form of a general discussion with twenty-five second
year Master students who have provided us with some interesting information about their utilization of social media communication tools. Indeed, we have asked them four major questions:

- Do you use social media communication tools?
- What is your most preferred type of ICT tools?
- Can you indicate the usual amount of time that you devote to social media communication?
- Do you think that the extensive use of social media communication can have a negative impact on your writing products in the English language?

3.2. Findings and Interpretation

The First Question: we have observed that the Master students were genuinely surprised that we had asked this question. Indeed, all of the twenty-five students deeply believe that social media communication represent nowadays a natural and necessary element in their life. They obviously can not imagine life without the daily use of social media communication. To our astonishment, we have been informed that very often students of English communicate through the social media in this language.

The Second Question: we have proposed to the students the tools that are mostly used by the majority of people namely, Short Messages, Face-book, E-mails and Chat-rooms. The answers that we have obtained are quite logical since all of the students have indicated that they have Face-book accounts, E-mails and they daily send and receive a large number of short messages through their mobiles. However, the use of Chat-rooms is less popular because only three students have recognized the organization of regular chat-rooms through their lap-tops with native speakers of English.

The Third Question: the answers of the students are really significant as long as they denote a kind of ‘addiction’ to social media communication. In fact, all the students have declared that they daily spend an average period of three hours using the different types of social media communication. The two famous tools are respectively Face-book and E-mails. Therefore, we can logically deduce with respect to this long period of time (sometimes more than five hours) that such ‘exposure’ to social media tools would have an impact on the students’ use of the foreign language. Moreover, it is known that the kind of language which is used through social media tools is usually derived from spoken language and is characterized by numerous unorthodox and incorrect features such as: shortened structures and words, mixture of letters and figures in spelling the words, phonetic representations of words, incomplete sentences, etc. Consequently, it would be difficult not to recognize at least that the practice of this kind of distorted language for long periods of time would necessarily and negatively impact on the students’ academic writing.

The Fourth Question: this question has divided the twenty-five students into two distinct groups. The first group of Master students is not actually conscious that the abusive use of social media communication tools can negatively affect their use of the English language especially the written record. In addition, the students of the first group do not believe that their writing products are undermined by social media communication because they claim that they are able to separate the two processes (communication through the social media and academic writing). Contrarily, the second group of students strongly believe that their
academic writing is negatively influenced by social media communication. In reality, they are aware that their writing skills in English have been ‘impoverished’ by the extensive use of social media. As a matter of fact, some of the students have revealed that very often they unconsciously spell certain words in their academic writing in the same manner as they do in their short messages, and also the formal structures of their sentences are either oversimplified or wrongly elaborated. Besides, they are sometimes inclined to employ many expressions which they borrow from colloquial and slang vocabulary when they are unable to find the appropriate words.

**Conclusion**

In summary, it has been demonstrated, firstly, that formal language is definitely a significant component of native and also non-native proficiency in academic writing. However, it must be indicated that even certain forms of informal language, when their use is designed to produce a concise and unobtrusive style, can equally be suited to the objective presentation of facts. Secondly, we have tried to put forward that the solution to such problem can not be simply reduced to the exposure and comparison of lists of words and expressions in formal and informal language. On the contrary, it is more effective to concentrate on more abstract characteristics of phraseology that English language students must acquire. Thirdly, we must recognize that the adoption of a quantitative approach on a restrained scale (in terms of the limited number of dissertations and the small number of interviewees) does not allow the generalization of the results which have been obtained.

However, we ‘hope to have shown that valuable insights are yielded by quite small quantities of data’. On the whole, we think the question of the mastery of formal language in students’ academic writing, especially in the elaboration of Master dissertations; is of significance and does constitute an essential requirement of the writing skill in the foreign language. Indeed, we hope that the present contribution would provide a firm basis for future exploration.

**General Recommendations**

1. It is evident that all academic work should generally be presented in a reasonably formal style, and should not normally use a lot of everyday language.
2. However, one should also ensure that academic writing should not be excessively ‘stuffy’ and too complicated, because the presentation and explanation of a problem in a clear, simple and concise manner is equally one of the requirements of good scientific writing.
3. The whole question of style is obviously open to a certain amount of discussion in the academic world, especially in relationship to the determination of the rate of use of certain formal words (pronouns) or structures, namely the ‘I or We’ dichotomy or how much one should use ‘the passive construction’.
4. Students should not clutter up their work with memorized idioms and quotations.
5. Certainly, students should avoid the use of colloquial expressions and slang; nevertheless, it is possible to introduce a limited number of these forms of language in dialogue writing and only when it is necessary.

6. While variety is desirable in both vocabulary and sentence structure, simplicity is also essential. In fact, useless long words, the utilization of proverbs and complicated sentences should be avoided.

References

Islamophobia and Ethnic Profiling in Aym Zighen’s Still Moments: A Story About Faded Dreams and Forbidden Pictures

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Abstract

Since 9/11, Western discourse has propagated the view that cultures are shut off from each other and that civilizations are separate monolithic entities that are classified into friends and enemies. Thus, civilizational conflicts prevail on a scale that has never been seen before. Aym Zighen’s *Still Moment* discusses seminal issues that are central to understanding the socio-political struggles that mark our contemporary world. This autobiographical narrative depicts Islamophobia and ethnic profiling in post-9/11 United States. Through the protagonist, an Algerian brown-skinned photographer, who is profiled as a terrorist, the narrative shows how Muslims are seen through exclusively religious and ethnic lens. They are marked out as different, as ‘Others’ who threaten the Western ideals and cherished values. This paper, which borrows from the discourses of postcolonialism and Islamophobia, evinces how Zighen’s narrative questions the very existence of civilization, which is the widest community where equality is evidently the most fundamental right. The “Us” and “Them” mentality creates a hostile world. It shuts our unity and renders our dream of a peaceful life null.

9/11 attacks heralds a new world order, and they inaugurated a new era known as the clash of civilizations. This clash is mainly between the West and Islam, which is seen as the arch-enemy of the West and its cherished values. In fact, Islam has always been misrepresented in Western discourse even before 9/11. In his discussion of the Orientalists’ misrepresentation of Islam, Edwards Said (1997, p.55) states that “Islam represents a resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the threat of a return to the Middle ages but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order in the Western world.” In the 2003 preface to his book Orientalism, Edward Said refers to the twenty-first century Orientalism as “belligerent neo-Orientalism”(xxi).

After 9/11, a new version of orientalism has emerged, which is known as neo-Orientalism. This neo-orientalism creates a distorted image of Islam. Thus, Arabs and Muslims become stereotyped and dehumanized in Western discourse. They are seen as extremist terrorists, and violence is thought to be deeply rooted in the Arab-Islamic world. Mubarak Altwaiji states:

Neo-Orientalism is more tied to the post-9/11 American cultural changes and the retaliation that took place after the attacks. The 9/11 attacks and the so-called ‘war on terror’ brought the Middle East and the classic Orientalist discourse, with its binary division of ‘us’ and ‘them’ into focus once more. Therefore, representations of Arab Muslims become more prevalent in post-9/11 politics, and terrorism becomes the most available term for labeling this group of people(314).
Neo-orientalism can be widely defined as the West’s construction of Islam as a global and existentialist threat to the West. It is manifested through the phenomenon known as Islamophobia. Neo-orientalism propagates the view that Muslims incarnate the mysterious fearsome evil forces which menace the West’s peaceful existence. They are seen as the greatest threat to America’s security and its life style.

Since 9/11, many hate crimes have been committed against Muslims. A lot of Muslims and Arabs were threatened by phone, email, or by other means. In this regard, Atta ul Mustafa states: “Every discourse, official or public, now seems to be filled with hate and fury for Muslims who are under strict vigilance of intelligence agencies like the FBI and CIA”(4). Muslims are always targeted and seen as a global threat to Western civilization. In fact, many atrocities have been committed against them not just in America but even in their own countries. The US, for instance, invaded many countries to perform its salvic role of cleansing the world from the terrorists, because, according to Daniel Pipes, “Muslim countries have the most terrorists and the fewest democracies in the world”(319, qtd in Mubarak Altwaiji, p.319). Entrusted with the sacred mission of exterminating the brutes and the terrorists, the West committed gruesome violent acts against Arabs, Muslims, and blacks.

The new war becomes, to use Robert Fisk’s words, a war for civilizations. In order for the West to survive, they need to sacrifice “Them”, because they could become competitors, and they would constitute a real threat to the West’s safety and what they glibly call civilization. Also, any reluctance on the West’s part to fully commit to this basic struggle would inadvertently help the Others to produce their imperfect hereditary lines at the expense of the West’s own perfect progeny, which would be unthinkable.

Zighen’s Still Moments is divided into 9 chapters, each chapter opens with an epigraph. This autobiographical narrative shows the dire life conditions of Arabs, Muslims, and blacks in the US in the post-9/11 era. It is a very disturbing narrative of Islamophobia and ethnic profiling.

One day, while at home, Aym received a call from the FBI. The caller mentioned that they received a report saying that he took pictures of trains on railroad 66. The FBI agent insisted to meet Aym at home despite the latter’s proposal to meet him in the office. For a moment, expressions were blocked, and words fail him. A deep anxiety shakes him at the core, and he wonders which secrets the FBI wants to divulge. He says: “Except for the mess of books, articles and pictures in my office, I had nothing to hide. The intrusion into my private life would be a humiliating experience”(3). However, Aym consents to live these moments of humiliation and shame in the privacy of his home. He was very terrified, but he did not inform his children about the call. He was also unable to tell what happened to his parents. Before being called by the FBI, Aym was interviewed by a police officer on route 66. But it was the FBI call, which deeply disturbed him and prevented him from going on with life as usual.

Aym expected to be interrogated for more deeper and serious reasons than taking photographs. He felt deeply degraded. He says: “It was very hard to accept the change from my role as a silent spectator to the events that followed the 9/11 attacks to the role of a suspected terrorist. I remained in the basement as I struggled to find a logical explanation for this suspicion”(3). The suspicions are groundless, but they can be explained by the words of Mouloud Feraoun, which are used in the epigraph of the first chapter. The
epigraph reads: “Each one of us is guilty for the sole reason that we belong to a category, a race, a people.”(1). The police officer sees Aym through the visible marker of difference which is the skin color. His brownness, which indicates his non-Americaness, is the main reason of being subject to racial profiling. Leadership Conference Education Fund defines racial profiling as “any use of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin by law enforcement agents as a means of deciding who should be investigated” (Qtd in Graig Considine 12).

The incident evokes a fleeting memory of a similar event in Algeria. when he was captured by the police taking pictures during the dark decade. He says: “I found myself having to prove that pphotography was a hobby and that I was not spying for a foreign agency or government. However, this time, something was definitely different. As I was to find out later, my skin color made my taking pictures appear suspicious”(4). In the US, taking pictures makes him a suspect because his skin color and origin fit the stereotypical profile of a terrorist.

Aym was deeply shocked by reducing people to their race and skin color. The incident has called the whole Western civilization into question. It enables Aym to know the verity that American civilization is hollow at the core. Zighen admits: “On the one hand, the blatant racial discrimination has shattered my optimism. On the other, it has opened my eyes and allowed me to see firsthand the sad reality of racial profiling and the beast that feeds on it.” (xiv). To his dismay, the American civilization rejects difference and resents Otherness. It condemns outsiders like himself to its fringes.

Contrary to “us” and “them” rhetoric which depicts Muslims as others who are threatening to the West’s peaceful existence, Aym opposes this dualistic outlook which dominates Americans’ life. Aym expresses his humanistic attitude and sympathy with the victims of 9/11 attacks, and he shared Americans’ tears and sadness. In his comments on 9/11, Aym says: “The scenes of the airplanes ripping through the towers and the ensuing destruction had stunned me. The TV images were unbelievable, beyond comprehension. When I first saw them in the workplace cafeteria, tears had filled my eyes. Just like in Algeria, civilians in America had fallen victims to indiscriminate violence”(6). Though the dramatic events of 9/11 moved him deep to the core, and though he felt warm sympathy towards its victims, this does not prevent accusations from being leveled against him for the simple reason that he belongs to a different race, culture, and religious sect.

When Aym came to America, he noticed how much skin separated people, but he had never felt that he was concerned with this issue. He says: “deep in me, I knew that associating a skin color with actions was preposterous. Both brain and skin, two distinct organs, could not share the same function in a human body. And I continued to believe that most people did not judge others by their skin color and that the official claims of justice, equality and opportunity for everyone were genuine”(7-8). The bitter reality that Aym came to know too late is the deepening of the various fault lines between people by religion and color. He finds that America looks unfavorably on the ‘Others’ and his ideal world becomes insanely irrational.

The color of skin makes “Us” distinguishable from “Them.” Aym’s vigorous intellectual inquiry led him to the conclusion that the suspicions hurled at him are because of the color of his skin, which makes him seem radically different from them. He says: “I realized that [...] a person with my TNT profile must have seemed even more unusual to drivers and passengers on Route 66. (Oops, I forgot to explain TNT. No, it is not the acronym
for Trinitrotoluene, an explosive chemical compound. It means Tall and Naturally Tanned)(14). Because he was TNT, people were eying him with great distress. Aym’s flaw, which is the color of his skin, cannot be smoothed over or erased. Thus, he is doomed to suffer in America because of this imperfection.

After his earth-shattering experience, Aym starts to view things under a totally different light. It felt like his world shifted in that moment, and he started to change his perspectives. He imagines Americans’ look of pure venom, and he feels scrutinized like an insect in a research laboratory. He even ponders the possibility of dishonest and false-hearted treatment of him by the Americans before the FBI call. After being called by the FBI, while shopping in stores or walking in streets or parks, I found myself scrutinizing and analyzing the way people looked at me, wondering if their greetings were sincere and whether they noticed my complexion. I once went as far as imagining them attacking me as I walked by them. Another time, I even refrained from greeting people because I was afraid to attract the attention of a vengeful person (8).

The incident makes Aym more remote and detached. He starts to imagine that people are eying him with great distress. Thus, he tries to avoid people’s scrupulous look and their Islamocritical gaze, which might ignite their flames of hostility against him and spur their hate crimes, because he is a Muslim with a brown complexion.

Aym no longer harbours the elusive hopes of safety and security. A voice whispers to him things about the dark reality that was hidden from him before, and it echoed loudly within him; “You thought you were safe here in America” (4). The incident provokes in him an intense fear and shivers of horror. His aspirations vanished, and he becomes bitterly disappointed by the reality that America is not a livable place for “Them.” He says:

I felt doubly targeted. As I continued to worry, my belief in America as a safe heaven started to fade, my optimistic outlook on life began to blur, and my dream of a glowing future in my new country dimmed. My journey from North Africa to North America seemed somehow less exciting, and a strange feeling of fear, an inch below panic, started to creep into my mind”(9).

Aym tried to get rid of his emotional stress, to consign his fears to oblivion but in vain. What happens enable shim to see the realities behind appearances. He discovers the bitter reality that civilization is a fragile surface over an abyss. Thus, his beautiful world literally exploded around him.

Aym and his wife left Algeria when it began to slide into a horrific civil war. They headed for America because of the repression, violence, and injustice that plagued the country. His journey is also to fulfill his academic dreams. He avows that “Once [he] became a citizen, [he] felt that I had gained the biggest citizenship possible on this rotating planet”(36). In the US, he expected to find more freedom, opportunities, and he was hopeful to achieve all their dreams there. Soon after stepping foot in America, Aym could
pull himself up from lowly beginnings. However, the FBI event makes all his dreams seem ephemeral.

When interrogated by the police officer, Aym was cautious not to point his camera at him, because it could be mistaken for a gun, and thus, ultimately leads to his murder by the police officer who was armed to the teeth. Aym finds the scene reminiscent of Bruce Springsteen’s song ‘American Skin’ in which “a black mother tries to get her young son to make her a promise: to understand the rules, to be polite, never run, and keep his hands in sight“(15). This tear-inducing song, about racial and ethnic profiling, voices his exact feelings. It was composed in reaction to the murder of a black Guinean boy by four police officers in New York. The boy, who was stopped in front of his apartment, puts his hands in his pocket searching for his wallet, but thinking that it is a gun, the police men fired 41 bullets at him. Tzvetan Todorov points out how fear of the Others reverses the constructed binary opposition civilized/barbarian. He writes: “The fear of barbarians is what risks making us barbarians. And we will commit a worse evil than that which we initially feared”(Fear of the Barbarians 6). After 9/11, fear of the Others, who are seen as the fount of evil, has become deeply implanted in Americans’ heart. This results in the policy of racial profiling which has run amuck, inflicting wounds and pains without measure.

Aym was puzzled by the sentence subject “we” that is used by the police officer. It bespeaks the utter failure of the melting-pot theory, which Aym has already kicked to pieces. The police agent’s statement that Aym does not fully belong there wreaks a havoc in his nervous system. It “hit [him] like a rock”(16). This remark about his origin which is loaded with racist and supremacist ideas, makes Aym feel as an outsider. It clearly reveals America’s antagonistic rejection of difference. In fact, Muslims are seen as shadow shapes flitting over the globe. The question “‘where are you from?’ had discomforted [him]”(17). It interpolates Aym as not belonging to America, which is associated with whiteness. His non-belonging is evident in his skin color. The question evinces racial profiling and the failure of the so-called civilization, which is defined mainly by difference and not sameness. In fact, cultural conflicts ensue when one civilization or the other or both are yet insufficiently evolved to merge and become a single larger component.

Aym felt paralysed, unable to voice his upbraids. He quotes, as an epigraph for the fourth chapter, the following famous statement by the Algerian writer Tahat Djaout: “Silence is death. And if you speak, you die. If you are silent, you die. So speak and die”(23). However, Aym prefers to keep silent when the authority speaks even if silence is universally interpreted as a production of weakness and disempowerment. Aym’s silence signifies the absence of agency in the face of what Gayatri Spivak calls “epistemic violence.”

Aym tried not to give the matter the might it deserves, but being lonely without anyone who can protect him from the FBI is an unpleasant feeling. He says: “I did not know to whom I could turn for protection when a government was putting my liberties at risk. The word ‘liberty’ made me think of the ACLU, the American Civil War Liberties Union ”(34). In the ACLU, Aym spoke to an assistant counselor who promised to help. So, he was assigned a lawyer, but the latter’s silence, at the beginning and his reluctance to defend him against such kind of treatment and discrimination disappointed him. He quotes Djaout’s The Watchers to show the lawlessness of the American government. The last chapter opens with the following epigraph: “the law has never defended just causes-in fact, it has nothing to do
with justice or truth”(63). But later, his lawyer intervened and said that Aym’s interest in photography is purely artistic.

The West, for Aym’s wife, crystalizes the fallacy of the American values of equality and justice. She asks: “Why is the government then going only after terrorist suspects and never after suspects of hate crime? I have not heard of the FBI arresting one single suspect of a hate crime. Are they trying to prevent hate crime? Or will they show up after a crime has been committed? [...] Then keep fooling yourself about having rights in America, if you want”(35). The hostility that swamps many Americans makes them commit horrid crimes against innocent people for the simple reason that they are Muslims or non-Americans. These heinous hate crimes have never been questioned by the FBI, which sits back and averts its eyes when the victims are Muslims. When an act of violence is committed by an American, it is not terrorism, but when the same act is committed by a Muslim, alarm bells start to ring in the west.

Aym longs for a transcendence of racial difference, and he wishes that people's worth do not depend on their physical features. He says: “I would like to believe in M. L. King J.R's dream in which people would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character”(37).

Aym’s lawyer asks the FBI police officer: “If my client was Swedish looking, nothing would have happened? Was it a case of profiling?”(43). In agreement, Agent Mike replied “Sure”(43). The officer's response that the incident is a case of profiling deeply shocked Aym. This response, according to him, “proved that this whole incident was a government’s blatant violation of the US Constitution, which is supposed to protect people from discrimination based on race and national origin. Not only did it trample the Constitution, it was a human rights violation too and amounted to a collective punishment for people with my complexion”(44). In theory, people are equal before the law and the American Constitution forbids discrimination and ethnic profiling, but in reality, humanity is stripped of the ornament of civilization, which basically respects people regardless of their differences. The practice of ethnic profiling makes some Americans liable to evil and destruction. According to Tzvetan Todorov, “Another way of progressing towards civilization consists in behaving so that the laws of the country you live in treat all citizens equally, without distinction of race, religion or sex; the countries that maintain these differences, whether in the form of legal privileges or of apartheid, are on the contrary closer to barbarity” (The Fear 23)

Photography, which is a hobby, encompasses “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness”, which are enshrined in Thomas Jefferson’s preamble to the American Constitution. Aym thought about quoting the preamble to defend himself and to show the police officer’s violation of the American values of liberty and freedom. Aym realises that the slogans of the American constitution sound empty and that Americans become peripheral to humanity, preferring to shrink to ‘one-ness’ and ‘us-ness’. Aym says:
I started to think that I was in the wrong too: I was guilty of having believed in the powers of the Constitution. I should not have believed in the powers of the Constitution. I should not have believed that the more than two century-old ink scribbling, imprisoned in a piece of paper, could protect me from the abuses by other humans, for it was not made of steel. Like my wife, I should have been skeptical of official claims and rhetoric, and I watched helplessly as my belief in the Constitution crumbled. Yet I still wished its words to come alive, jump off the original paper, and fly to Central Illinois to my rescue(45).

The American Constitution preaches to iron out difference, but Aym discovers that America does not live up to its founding ideals. Despite its bombastic claims of being civilized, America does not respect others’ freedom and specificities, which is one of the touchstones of civilization. The reality is that equality is not a total equality. It simply means that Americans are ‘more equal than the others’. Aym realised “that the words ‘human rights, democracy, freedom, justice, equality, land of opportunities, liberty, melting pot, checks and balances, support for the troops, fairness and balance, country, homeland, way of life’ were devoid of any meaning?”(45).

In the years he lived in the US, before the FBI affair, Aym thought that he was living in a civilized country which is a melting pot of cultures where race, religion, and nationality do not matter. He thought that he was in a land where all distinctions vanish, and he took his hopes for reality. Later, his ideal world comes to wear a dismal aspect. Despite living for 18 years in the US, as an American citizen, and despite his “educational and professional accomplishments, [he] was surprised to find out that [he] was no longer submerged in American life and culture. Instead, [he] found [himself] floating at the top of the melting pot called America, sticking out as a target for ethnic profiling and random racist violent crime”(45). The terrible reality is that the West always points it accusing finger at ‘Others’. Aym found himself in a land which does not truly shelter the strangers. The cruelty of that environment that he is hurled into fills him with contempt. He found that there is a chasm between “Us” and “Them” despite the common set of traits that bind humans together. The “Us” and “Them” categorization of people is likely to engender heinous acts that will never die down. This is suggested in the epigraph of the seventh chapter by James Madison; “If tyranny and oppression come to this country, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy”(49).

Fury wells up inside him as the FBI wanted to ferret out the secrets of his life. He felt obliged to reveal all that has been shrouded in secrecy, both his personal and professional information. He views this not just as a humiliation but also a trampling on the legal standard of “innocent until proven guilty.” When asked by Agent Robert about his children’s names, Zighen could not answer for he was very scared about the future, the future of children whose father was interrogated by the FBI. Aym says: “To pronounce their names would be to sully their beautiful innocence and their young lives. I did not want them to be mentioned in the files the FBI has on me. Instead I just wanted to scream, ‘I just love photography. Stop dissecting me like a laboratory animal’ But even the words ‘You cannot
do this to me’ stayed inside my mind”(48). To give the names of his children would run the risk of staining their reputation forever, because they will always be described as the children of the terrorist. Aym was tormented by these dark and explosive thoughts.

The interrogation culminates in the question whether Aym is a terrorist or belongs to a terrorist organization. Aym says:

I had not answered the question that shamed, degraded, and humiliated me into complete silence. I thought that being asked whether I was a terrorist was the worst accusation and insult ever hurled at me. I felt ashamed, because if people saw a terrorist in me, then there must be something wrong with me. I felt degraded, because despite my accomplishments, in life they still saw me as a terrorist (51).

Accused of being a terrorist, Aym felt that the heavens will fall upon his head. He came to know the true version of America. His dreams crash on the hard rock of bitter realities, and his hopes have melted away. Despite his intellectual credentials, his academic profile was not considered. Aym “ felt humiliated because [his] humanity was not recognized”(52). The police agent fails to recognize their human kinship, meaning that they are members of the same human community, and they belong to the same human race. He felt dehumanized, depersonalized, and treated with an utter disregard for his sentiments. According to Todorov, “Barbarians are those who deny the full humanity of others. This does not mean that they are really ignorant or forgetful of their human nature, but that they behave as if the others were no human, or entirely human”(The Fear 16). Aym was seen as a venomous creature who has come to spoil and ravage America. He, sadly, remarks that he has none of the qualities of the terrorist which would impel irrational violence and congenital barbarity. He asks:

How could I be a terrorist? Where is the state of mind of the terrorist in me? Where is the anger that would blind my eyes from seeing the suffering of others? Where are the political propaganda and the religious arguments that would have made me a violent person? Where is the illogical reasoning to me that would justify violent acts against people I know or do not know (52).

Aym does not even have this atavistic aversion to modernity, or an instinctive recoiling from those who are different.

Deep inside him, Aym believes that his color and his accent are not plausible reasons that make him seem locked outside the gates of civilization. They also do not mean that he is inherently violent. He says that “like many things in life, terrorists come in different colors, shapes, attitudes, and disguise”(52). The reality is that being a brown Muslim makes him seen through a eurocentric prism as a violence monger who is hatching a plot to destroy America.

Aym comes to know the veneer of civilization that is supposed to accept the Others within its borders and to give them the same rights as the natives. He vents his diatribe against the policy of racial profiling. He also blames media for propagating conspiracy theories which ignite the clash of cultures. He says:
What I deeply believe is that the shame and humiliation should be reserved for those who issue laws to profile others, those who blindly apply them, and finally those who allow such laws to be passed. Yet, the worst shame should be on those who spread and promote such racist ideas through media and government policies and then turn around to profit from them, either through remunerations, product sales, or service contracts (52).

In addition to conspiracy theories, which have a major role in spreading anti-Muslim hate crimes, media have made people more credulous than before. It reinforces and confirms the already existing anti-Muslim bias, and it has played a great role in the persistency of paranoia about Muslims and Islam. In a conversation between Zighen and his wife, the latter says: “Don’t you think a general paranoia is taking over the country and fear is being spread among citizens?” (38). Aym responds that: “It’s a good tool of control and manipulation” (38). In fact, fear of the Others becomes a psychopathological case in the West. It tears down barriers between people, and it makes them live in a hellish world that reeks of inhumanity and barbarity. Todorov states that “Fear becomes a danger for those who experience it, and this is why it must not be allowed to play the role of dominant passion. It is even the main justification for behavior often described as ‘inhuman’” (The Fear 6). In the same vein, Todorov writes: “In the West, fear has moved in: it makes every Muslim look like a potential terrorist and incites us to trample on his rights. If we think he is a deadly danger, any and all means of combating him are legitimate” (10). This fear of the Other is fed by media and conspiracy theorists who fabricate discourses that serve some selfish interests and political aims. It makes those who feel threatened by the Others act their fiction of the clash of civilization, and this shatters people’s unity and makes “US” cut off from “Them.”

The incident weighs heavy on Aym’s heart. Though it leaves him drowning in a deep sorrow, he could control his tears during these gloomiest moments. He tries to sweep his worries aside and keep cool. He states: “The pain in my heart grew, and a knot formed in my throat, but my eyes remained dry at all times. It was not time for tears and I needed to steel myself against any terrible ordeal that might lie ahead. My salvation required that I control my anger and pain and show my strength” (53).

Aym wants to burst into criticism, anger, and outright opposition to that racist treatment. He wants to show the police agent their bigotry and falsehood, but he kept silent because he was afraid of the result. He says: “Worried that I might anger the federal agent, I refrained from protesting against the FBI policies of ethnic profiling and telling him that he was an accessory to a repressive system. All I wanted was to get out of that office, be with my family, and take more pictures of railroad tracks, telephone poles, and spider webs” (53). Aym was afraid to express himself freely; instead, he practiced self-censorship. He thought about many things which reveal America’s fake ideals. America’s defense of human rights is “full sound and fury, but it signifies nothing”. Aym remarks that the Bush Administration’s claim to value freedom, democracy, and human rights appeared to [be] a scratch-thin superficial veneer. Walking the talk was not Bush’s forte.
Furthermore, his rhetorical claims were only mesmerizing catchwords relayed by willing news organizations for national consumption. ‘Marrying the devil or at least sleeping with him’ seemed to fit the Bush Administration’s relation with most of the North African and Middle Eastern countries. Once more, money was louder, and it prevailed over human rights and justice (57).

Aym did not dare criticize America’s policy. He finds it pointless to show skepticism at the foreign and domestic policies of Bush. He says: “If I openly criticized Bush’s foreign policies, I imagined hearing the federal agent say: ‘You don’t like America’ and ‘You hate our freedom’”(63). So, Aym could not practice his freedom of speech because he knows that there is a zero tolerance policy towards people like him.

At the end of the investigation, Aym, jokingly, asks Agent Robert, the police agent, if he can get a card which allows him to get pictures. But before he was released, the lawyer an Agent Robert made a connection between UBL initials in Zighen’s notepad and Usama Bin Laden. Aym explains that UBL simply means Ultimate Band List e-store. Aym realizes that he cannot be fully integrated and that he cannot cross the boundary line drawn by the West.

Conclusion

Still Moments, which is extremely relevant to the time we live in, is a commentary on Post 9/11 America and a straightforward indictment of America’s racial profiling after this dramatic event. Aym’s narrative, which is ideologically laden, reveals the polarized world of “Us” and “Them” that is created by the US after 9/11. This event results in the demonization of Muslims and blacks who are seen as terrorists. Americans’ views have become biased against Muslims, and they accent to irrational vulgar accusations. Their adamant rejection of the others who are different results in heinous violent acts.

Media and conspiracy theories create an atmosphere of fear that cluttered Americans’ mind. Mistrust and fear from the others makes cross-cultural dialogue and communication impossible. Civilization, which is inclusive of all cultures, is still in the process of becoming. It is one that views all humans as colors in the spectrum of the complete human race. For civilization to be realized, one should escape the boundaries of his/her “one-ness” and recognize the full humanity of those who are different.
References


Exploring the Content Validity of Translation Tests at the University of Gabes: Translation and Intercultural Communication

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Abstract: This article investigates the assessment practices of translation competence at the University of Gabes (UG). Specifically, it evaluates the content validity of translation tests. Language is the social legacy that an individual acquires from his group and the vehicle that transfers culture. From this perspective, developing language learners' translation competence entails teaching them to become bicultural in addition to being bilingual. Exploratory research design and qualitative research instruments were used to probe foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions regarding the role that cultural knowledge plays in developing students' translation competence. This paper explores translation teaching practices and takes a deep look into the content validity of administered translation tests. The study findings show a deficiency in the content validity of analyzed translation tests and highlight the importance of instructing EFL learners on the culture of the target language. A teacher training program is recommended to help instructors solve culture-bound problems in students' translation practices.

Keywords: Translation, culture, intercultural competence, assessment, testing, content validity.
I. Introduction
Translation research answered many questions related to the pedagogical value of translation compared to other language learning methods. There were attempts to make translation an attractive language learning method that motivates students (Pym, Malmkjær & Gutierrez-Colon, 2013). Most of these attempts ended up to the conclusion that translation teaching has to be associated with culture instruction within language classrooms. Also, students have to be instructed on sentence structures and vocabulary, strengthening their grammatical competence, shaping their own ways of thinking and correcting common mistakes that otherwise remain unnoticed (Dagilienė, 2012). The focus on the cultural dimension makes the difference between a professional translation and an interpretation. A professional translation does not focus on vocabulary use, yet it focuses on the cultural implications of certain symbols. Culture instruction has been the focal point of many studies that looked into ways to improve translation competence, yet a well established pedagogical approach to the teaching of translation is still struggling to emanate. The emergence of such an approach requires an exploration of the current teaching and assessment practices of translation, specifically, an exploration of the content validity of the administered translation tests. Once we have translation tests with items representative of the content domain it intends to cover, we can claim that an accurate teaching method has already been established. Concisely, testing is a critical aspect of teaching that aims at collecting, interpreting and analyzing students' performance, usually after providing them with input. If the provided input is valid; that is, if it covers the targeted domain of knowledge, the content of the test used to assess students on their grasp of the input will, also, be valid; consequently, we attain content validity.

II. Language, Culture, and Translation
1. The relation between language and culture
It is commonly accepted that language is “culture expressing itself in sound” (Folklorist Crats Williams as cited in Ovando, 1990, p. 341). This explains the insistence of Tunisian Amazigh on teaching their children the mother tongue Tamazight. It is through learning the mother tongue that nations maintain and retain their cultural identity. This affirmation has long been advocated by an important number of influential linguistic figures; among these linguists is Brock-Utne (2005). Brock-Utne (2005) argues that learning a language is closely associated with learning a culture. Moreover, he demonstrates that, due to cultural differences resulting from diversity in geographical belonging, the English language has only one word for “banana”, for example, whereas, in Kiswahili, the national language of tropical Tanzania, there are around twenty words for different types of bananas. In other words, language is the symbolic representation of a nation’s culture, which makes from culture and language inseparable entities.
Language and culture are intricately interwoven acquired systems. This made Hongwei (1999) claim that “it is no exaggeration to say that language is the life-blood of culture and that culture is the track along which language forms and develops” (p. 121). This claim may be proven by the fact that a dead language is a language which is no longer the medium through which a specific society convey its thoughts and transfer its customs, beliefs, and traditions. Kim (2003, p. 1) supports Hongwei's (1999) claim by stating that without culture, language cannot exist, and that language is highly influenced by the cultural environment within which it develops. If we study the example of the connotation of the
French word “frère” as used in Tunisian-Arabic, we will notice that the word diverges from its denotative meaning, i.e. “brother”, to refer to a person who has a strange lifestyle compared to the lifestyle adhered by most of the members of Tunisian society. Therefore, the language we speak; our mother tongue, is the expression of our thoughts and consequently the expression of our “mental culture” (Hongwei, C., 1999, p. 121). The expression ‘mental culture’ is derived from Hongwei’s (1999) classification of cultural aspects into material, institutional and mental. He explains that language makes part of the institutional culture and that it is used as a vehicle to transfer people’s mental culture; that is, “their thought patterns, beliefs, conception of values and aesthetic tastes” (Hongwei, 1999, p. 121). Sapir (1929, p. 209, and 1929, p. 27 as cited in Wardhough, 2006, p. 220) said that “no two languages are sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality”, and consequently as representative of the same culture. This claim puts into question the validity of translation practices.

2. The relation between translation and culture

The availability of a huge number of definitions to the term ‘translation’ highlights the complexity of the process. Translation cannot be described as a simple, uncomplicated practice. It is “concerned with reproducing in the TL (i.e. target language) the closest nature equivalent of the SL (i.e. source language)” (Nida & Taber, 1974, p. 2). This is reminiscent of Sapir’s claim that there is no other language than the native language of a particular society which is able to express its culture in the most appropriate way. In other words, translation practices are not looking for sameness in meaning when converting a text from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL), yet they are looking for cultural equivalences, or what Guo (2012) calls “signifier equivalence” (p. 343). In this respect, a good, or successful, translation is described as a translation which promotes understanding among different cultures; a translation which is able to overcome not only linguistic barriers but also sociocultural barriers. Guo (2012) claims that “translation not only involves translator’s or interpreter’s linguistic competence but also calls for the acquaintance with the respective culture” (p. 343). In brief, translation is more than a conversion of words; it is a transmission of cultures.

Newmark (1988) classifies translation practices into two types: semantic translation and communicative translation. Semantic translation focuses on the semantic and syntactic aspects of a source text (ST). Its aim is to convey the content of the text regardless of the intention of the writer. Communicative translation, on the other hand, tries to verify that the intention of the writer of the ST is conveyed through the translated text (TT). The difference between these two methods of translation is that the communicative method provides the translator with more freedom “to add or remove certain lexical items in order to make the thought of the ST clear to the reader” (Al-Sulaimaan, 2011, p. 7). The latter type of translation is characterized by subjectivity (Al-Sulaimaan, 2011).

As early as the nineteenth century, the debate over the definition of Translation ended up to the conclusion that the main purpose is to attain cultural equivalence between an SL and a TL (Annenkova, 2012; Guo, 2012; Janfaza, Assemi & Dehghan, 2012; Al-Sulaimaan, 2011). Goethe (1891, cited in Robinson, 1997) wrote:

"There are two maxims for translation, the one requires that the foreign author be brought over to us so that we can look upon him as our own; the other that
we cross over the foreign and find ourselves inside its circumstances, its modes of speech, its uniqueness” (p. 222).

In this sense, translation goes beyond structures and sentences. It becomes a cross-cultural communication activity. The translator is no longer considered as someone who replaces a text in one language by another in a different language. A translator is now perceived as “a cultural mediator” (Annenkova, 2012, p. 97).

III. Culture Instruction in Translation Classes

1. The status of culture instruction in translation classes

Due to the interwoven relationship between language and culture, some researchers argued that translation classes cannot be conducted without instructing on the culture of the target language. Culture instruction is perceived as the corner-stone of a language classroom. Rivers (1981) identified seven cultural aspects that a foreign language teacher should focus on; these are:

“making students aware of the way people act, the effect of social variables such as age, sex and social class on the way they speak, how people in the target culture conventionally act under different circumstances, culture in the most commonly used words and phrases, being critical about the target culture, developing skills necessary for locating and organizing materials about the target culture and empathy towards its people” (Gonen & Saglam, 2012, p. 27)

However, there was a controversy about whether culture can be taught within a language classroom. Researchers like Krashen (1982), Robinson and Nocon (1996) and Byram and Kramsch (2008) assert that culture cannot be taught in a classroom. They believe that the learning of culture is only achieved through real-life situations which a learner may experience when dealing with native speakers of the target language. Dai (2011), on the other hand, assists Rivers (1981) and argues that culture can be taught within classrooms, and suggested three practical techniques to do so. The first technique is varying the sources of information through encouraging students to look for the target knowledge, by searching the internet for example, then making them select and decide upon the most relevant material they need. The second is conducting various activity types to make students familiar with different levels of difficulties and learn how to deal with them. The third and final technique is creating a positive classroom interaction; such a positive sphere would result in “a wide verity of opinions, values, many different experiences, and cultural background” (Dai, 2011, p. 1033).

It was only with the emergence of the functionalist and the communicative approaches that culture instruction became perceived as an important component of translation teaching. With the functionalist and communicative approaches translation is no longer perceived as the act of substituting words of one language by their equivalents in another language, but as a teachable art (Rienemann, 1989 in Kuşçu & Ünlü, 2015). In order to pedagogically involve culture instruction into language classrooms, specifically into translation classes, the PPP (i.e. Presentation, Practice, Production) lesson structure was introduced (Kuşçu & Ünlü, 2015). The
three phases structure is as follows: Phase one is Presentation and it focuses on promoting learners’ comprehension of a learning situation, phase two is Practice and it is when learners make use of the content provided by teachers. The third phase is Production during which students try out the newly acquired knowledge. Culture instruction is highly appreciated by many researchers like Kuşçu & Ünlü, 2015, Dai, 2011, Gonen & Saglam, 2012, Annenkova, 2012, but is it taken into consideration during the assessment practices of the translation competence? This has to do with the content validity of translation tests.

2. The content validity of translation tests with respect to culture instruction

Content Validity refers to the extent to which the content of a test, or any other form of assessment practices, is representative of the domain of knowledge it is expected to cover. It is considered as the most fundamental consideration in developing and evaluating tests. Without content validity evidence we are unable to make a statement about what test takers know and what they can do.

In order to develop a translation test with content validity, a test maker needs, first, to clearly state the purpose of the test which entitles a clear definition of translation competence. According to Al-Qinai (2000), there is a tendency among EFL translation teachers to judge translation competence based on students' end-product, whereas translation is a whole process. He argues that it is not fair to evaluate translation competence while ignoring the procedures undertaken by language learners to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers they handle throughout the translation practice.

Once a test maker has a clear and accurate definition of the assessed competence; i.e. translation, the need to decide upon the aspects that the developed test has to cover comes to the fore. Based on the above definition of translation as a cross-cultural communicative practice, a translation test should measure test takers’ ability to transfer the culture of the ST to the TT. In other words, the test has to provide the test taker with tasks that are specifically designed to elicit the desired behaviors. Employing samples of test items that corresponds to the test specifications and that facilitates the estimation of the test taker translation score is the last step in establishing a translation test's content validity. The main question in validity is “to what extent is a score on this test reflective of a test taker's understanding of a target domain?”

The study at hands relies upon Suleiman’s (1999, p. 45 in Al-Sulaimaan, 2011 ) definition of translation as “an art and skill, [it] is an integrated process which involves comprehension, analyzing, reformulation of text by incorporating the contextual, semantic and socio-cultural aspects of source language and target language text”. In order to conduct an exploratory study that investigates the content validity of translation tests at the University of Gabes (UG), three research questions would be answered; these are:

1. How important is to instruct on the culture of a foreign language within a translation class, according to the participating EFL teachers at the UG?

2. To what extent do these perceptions influence EFL teachers’ practices of translation teaching and assessment?
3. How valid is the content of the administered translation tests, at the UG?

IV. Research Design
The author adopted an exploratory research design in order to investigate the content validity of the translation assessment practices at the UG. The research was implemented from October 2018 to January 2019 at the Higher Institute of Language of Gabes (ISLG). Qualitative research instruments were employed throughout the process of investigation that consisted of three steps; the first step focused on detecting EFL translation teachers' perceptions of the role of culture instruction in translation classes by means of a structured questionnaire. The second step was observing these same teachers’ classroom practices of translation instruction, while the third and last step was about the analysis of two translation tests that were conducted following the researcher's observation of translation teaching practices. The study followed inductive reasoning of inquiry whose aim was to come up to a conclusion regarding the content validity of the analyzed translation tests based on the collected data.

1. Research subjects and setting
A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the research population which consisted of three groups of EFL students, studying translation, at the ISLG. These two groups comprised around 60 students, in addition to their translation teachers. The sampling technique was useful to eliminate the population inappropriate to the study; however, it was not possible for the researcher to investigate the classroom teaching practices of all of the EFL translation teachers at the ISLG because of time constraints.

2. Research instruments
Data triangulation was used to boost the validity and reliability of the study results. Thus, three research instruments were employed; these are: (1) a teachers’ questionnaire (Appendix A), (2) a classroom observation-protocol (appendix B), and (3) a test-analysis protocol (appendix C).

a. Questionnaire design
The questionnaire used in the study was adopted from Gonen and Saglam’s (2012) article “Teaching Culture in the FL Classroom: Teachers’ Perspectives”. It consists of three parts. Each part is studying the participating teachers’ perceptions of culture instruction in translation classes from different angles. Part A is made of statements asking participants to tell about the extent of their familiarity with the culture of the foreign language they are teaching; i.e. English. Part B has statements exploring teachers’ perceptions of the role of culture instruction within translation classes. Part C investigates their perceptions regarding their classroom practices of culture instruction during translation sessions. Two teachers of translation, who did not take part in the actual study, were consulted for clarity of items following which necessary changes were made on the questionnaire.

b. Classroom observation-protocol
The protocol has been taken from (Intel, nd) and it consists of three parts, as is the questionnaire, the first part is a table within which background information can be recorded. This information includes the date and the duration of the observation, institute name, teacher name, instructed subject and the number of students. The second part
contains observation notes about the lesson structure, the interaction between teacher and students, interaction among students, as well as notes regarding the use of technology and any other resources. The final part is designed to make general reflections about the lesson such as the overall teaching approach and students’ reaction to, and interaction with the provided input.

c. Test-analysis protocol
The protocol looks into the different parameters which create the content validity of translation tests. These parameters are basically the ones that measure the extent to which a translation test is reflective of the test takers’ competence in translation. The number of protocol sections is equivalent to the number of test items.

3. Research procedure
The data were collected and analyzed following the two-step procedure:

- The questionnaire was administered to the participating EFL teachers at the ISLG. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively, by calculating the means and the percentages. To address the second research question, a classroom observation protocol was carried out to compare the EFL teachers’ perceptions of their classroom practices of culture instruction within translation classes.

- Following the completion of the questionnaire and the classroom observations, qualitative data gathered through the analysis of the conducted translation tests. The data were transcribed, interpreted and concluded in order to answer the third research question focusing on the content validity of the translation assessment practices at the UG.

V. Results and Discussion
1. Teachers’ perceptions of the status of culture instruction in Translation classes
To investigate teachers’ perceptions regarding the status of culture instruction in translation classes, a questionnaire was administered to three EFL teachers at the ISLG. The first part of the questionnaire explored the extent of the participating teachers’ familiarity with the culture of the English speaking countries. The descriptive results gained are represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. EFL Teachers’ Familiarity with the Culture of the English Speaking Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items from the questionnaire</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. History, geography,</td>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>Sufficiently</td>
<td>Not sufficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>political system</td>
<td></td>
<td>familiar</td>
<td>familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Different ethnic and</td>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>Sufficiently</td>
<td>Not sufficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>familiar</td>
<td>familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Daily life and routines,</td>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>Sufficiently</td>
<td>Not sufficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living conditions, food,</td>
<td></td>
<td>familiar</td>
<td>familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youth culture</td>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>Sufficiently</td>
<td>Not sufficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>familiar</td>
<td>familiar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the participating teachers answered by "sufficiently familiar" to five out of ten cultural features listed in the first part of the questionnaire. These cultural features are history, geography, political system, different ethnic and social groups, daily life and routines, education, professional life, and values and beliefs. All of the participants responded to "familiarity with English speaking courtiers' international relations" by "not sufficiently familiar". For the other four items, there was a divergence; two out of the three teachers taking part in the study claimed that they are very familiar with the literature and the other cultural expressions of the English speaking countries like music, drama, and art, while one claimed that he is sufficiently familiar; this same teacher considered himself sufficiently familiar with the English speaking countries traditions, flocks, and tourist attractions, in contrast to the other two teachers who considered themselves as not sufficiently familiar. Concerning the degree of familiarity with youth culture, the three participants had three different stances: very familiar, sufficiently familiar, and not sufficiently familiar. One cannot analyze the finding presented in Table 1 without taking a look at the profiles of the respondents provided in Table 2.

Table 2. EFL Teachers' Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 1 demonstrates that the extent of familiarity of T3, who is the most experienced translation teacher, with the culture of the English speaking countries is the least among the participating teachers. This means that familiarity with the cultural aspects of a foreign language is not necessarily the result of teachers’ teaching experience. In this case, enhancing familiarity with cultural aspects of a foreign language may require a teacher training program due to the importance of cultural awareness in the process of foreign language teaching in general, and to translation teaching in particular. According to (House, 2014) “translation is not only a linguistic act, it is also an act of communication across cultures” (p.3). In other words, while teaching, teachers have to be aware of the interdisciplinary nature of translation practices and the importance of familiarity with the culture of the foreign language.

The second part of the questionnaire studied teachers’ perceptions of the role of culture instruction in translation classes. As shown in Table3, the findings revealed teachers’ agreement with the idea that the more students know about the foreign culture, the more competent they become in translation. On the other hand, they have all disagreed to the claim that it is not possible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way. These findings are in contrast with Krashen (1982) argument that culture cannot be learned in a classroom and that it should be learned in its natural context, assuming that no matter how teachers try; a classroom can never reflect the features of a natural context appropriately. The study findings support Byram (1988), Bada (2000), and Byram and Kramsch (2008) arguments for culture instruction within language classrooms.

**Table 3. Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of Culture Instruction within Translation Classes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items from the questionnaire</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In an FL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the FL</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The more students know about the foreign culture, the more competent in translation they</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
become.

4. When speakers of different languages meet, misunderstanding arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.

5. Foreign language teaching should enhance students understanding of their own cultural identity.

6. The cultural dimension of translation classes should be expended.

7. All the English speaking countries’ cultures are equally valid to be represented in an English syllabus.

8. The study of culture in translation classes can hinder progress in linguistic accuracy.

9. The development of cultural awareness should be kept only for the most advanced levels.

10. Teaching culture motivates students.

11. Combining language and culture helps learners to improve their language skills.

All of the participating teachers agreed that misunderstanding arises equally often from linguistic and from cultural differences. Also, they all expressed their belief in the role of culture instruction in boosting learners’ understanding of their cultural identity, which means that ISLG translation teachers are aware of the definition of translation as the ‘mirror’ of cultures. However, T3 disagreed to the saying that the cultural dimension of translation should be expended and to the saying that the teaching of culture is as important as the teaching of foreign language. In spite of that, he agreed that the teaching of culture motivates students and that combining language and culture helps learners to
improve their language skills. T3 has disagreed with the idea suggesting that the development of cultural awareness should be kept only for the most advanced levels. One reason behind what seems contradicting perceptions of T3 could be his perception of culture instruction as an important aspect within translation classes, yet he does not consider it a priority. This point can be proved by his agreement with the claim that culture instruction in translation classes can hinder progress in linguistic accuracy. By way of explanation, T3 prioritizes linguistic accuracy over culture awareness, especially that culture instruction may be demanding for both teachers and students according to this teacher who agreed that all the English speaking courtiers’ cultures are equally valid to be represented in translation class by means of a text administered for translation practice. The other two teachers agreed, also, to the last idea; however, they had an opposite view regarding the other mentioned points. In one word, one can claim that EFL translation teachers at the ISLG perceive the important role that culture instruction plays in the development of students competence in translation practices in spite of the fact that some of them do not prioritize it.

2. Teachers’ perception of their translation teaching practices in relation to culture instruction

To find out about the participating teachers’ perceptions of their translation teaching practices, in relation to culture instruction, the questionnaire incorporated a third part. Teachers’ self-report regarding how often they practice culture instruction activities is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Teachers’ Perceptions of their Translation Teaching Practices in relation to Culture Instruction

| Q1. I ask my students to think about the image that the media promote of the foreign country. | T1, T2, T3 |
| Q2. I tell my students what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture | T3 T1, T2 |
| Q3. I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s) | T1, T2; T3 |
| Q4. I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign culture | T3 T2 T1 |
| Q5. I use videos, SD-ROMs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture. | T1, T2, T3 |
| Q6. I ask my students to think about what | T1, T2, T3 |
would be like to live in a foreign culture.

Q7. I talk to my students about my own experiences in a foreign country (if I have any)

Q8. If I have the chance, I invite a person originating from a foreign country to my classroom.

The findings indicate that participating teachers do not devote extra time to teach culture. They were trying to implement relevant aspects of the target culture whenever they had the occasion. These are the same findings revealed in Gonen’s (2012) and Serau’s (2005) studies.

A closer examination of Table 3 shows that Q2, Q3, and Q7 are teacher-centered activities, through which teachers define the cultural content of the English language; whereas, Q4 and Q6 are student-centered activities through which teachers engage students to develop their knowledge about the target culture/language. The participants’ responses demonstrate that they are using teacher-centered activities more often than student-centered activity, although student-centered activities boost learners’ motivation to learn.

As for the activity that teachers practice the least frequently, it is inviting a native speaker to the translation session. One reason for this is the difficulty of finding a native speaker in their immediate context. Moreover, all of the teachers taking part in the study claimed that they are using different sources of information, in order to expose their students to different aspects of the foreign culture/language. They have all claimed that they are always asking learners to think about the image that the media promote for the foreign country and that they are sometimes making use of videos, SD-ROMs or the Internet. These techniques are beneficial to foster learners’ understanding of the foreign culture of English speaking countries.

3. The effect of teachers’ perceptions on their classroom practices of translation teaching and assessment

a. The effect of teachers’ perceptions on their implementation of culture instruction in translation teaching

The questionnaire findings made it clear that long experience does not lead to an accurate perception of the important role that culture instruction plays in the development of EFL learners’ translation competence. However, these findings did not tell how teachers’ perceptions affect their classroom teaching practices of translation. Thus, a classroom observation-protocol was implemented. The observation results showed that in spite of teachers’ awareness about the ‘blessings’ of culture instruction, they do not devote extra time to instruct on the culture of the English speaking countries. All of the observed translation lessons did not respect the PPP lesson structure; teachers were only providing students with an ST and ten minutes to read it. Following that, the teacher selects a student to divide the text into units of meaning, after which the process of translation starts; one of
the students suggest a translation of the English text to the Arabic language, her/his mother
tongue, meanwhile, the teacher corrects the mistakes and gives hints about the culture of the
foreign language, while focusing on building correct sentence structures and on
overcoming linguistic barriers when transferring a text from the source language to the
target language. Appendices D, E, and F represent samples of the source texts upon which
translation activities were based. The observation results show that the participating
teachers instructed on the culture of the target language scarcely, despite their
disagreement with the claim that it is not possible to teach the foreign language and the
foreign culture in an integrated way. One of the seldom occasions that T1, for example,
instructed on the culture of the English language was while translating the following
sentence taken from the second text (Appendix E):
"Walter’s 40-year-old wife, Ines, who had been sleeping in the back of the car, went into the
shop to buy some cookies".
T1 reminded his students that the term "cookies" is a culture-specific term derived from the
Dutch word "koekje" and it means "little cake", and because the food culture of the Arab
world has no "cookies" we need to translate the word into "حلويات"; an Arabic word which
means having the taste characteristics of sugar. At this point, there seems to be a mismatch
between teachers’ perceptions and their classroom practices of translation teaching, and a
re-emphasis on the fact that although the participating EFL teachers perceive the
importance of culture instruction, still, they do not prioritize it.
The match between teachers’ perceptions and their classroom practices comes to the fore
only in relation to the types of translation activities employed throughout the lesson, most
of which were teacher-centered. Teachers took control over the translation practices. They
were the only ones to decide upon what translation can be considered as the most accurate
one and what terms are better to use when transmitting meaning from an ST to a TT.
Students’ interaction with the teachers was limited to suggesting a translation of textual
units of meaning, most of which teachers withdraw or modify, while students’ interaction
with one another was seldom. Gonen (2012) suggests that one solution to enhance
students’ motivation in a foreign language classroom is instructing on the culture of the
target language; a suggestion to which all of the participating teachers agreed while
responding to the questionnaire items.
The same as the questionnaire’s findings, the observations’ findings proved that EFL
translation teachers at the ISLG prioritize linguistic accuracy over culture awareness;
however, they do not hesitate to implement culture instruction whenever they have the
occasion. This practice upholds Gonen (2012) and Sercu’s (2005) claim that culture
instruction is an occasional practice within language classrooms.
   b. The content of the observed translation sessions
Before assessing the content validity of translation tests at the ISLG, the researcher looked
at the content of the observed translation sessions she attended. During these sessions, she
asked the observed subjects (i.e. translation teachers) about their definition of translation
competence. T1 answered that it refers to "students’ ability to transmit the message of the
ST into the TT without affecting the ST author’s intentions". T2 and T3 answered that
translation competence encompasses a number of sub-skills like linguistic, semantic and
syntactic skills. These definitions did not mention that translation is actually a process that
involves comprehension, analysis, and reformulation of texts while taking into
consideration the contextual, semantic and socio-cultural aspect of both source language and target language. The observed translation sessions revealed that EFL teachers at the ISLG tried to engage students in a process of negotiation of meaning throughout the translation practices they conducted. Yet did they take this process into consideration while assessing their students' translation competence?

c. The content validity of the administered translation tests
Two translation tests, administered during the first semester, were subject to analysis in this study (look at Appendices G and H). The content validity of these tests was measured based on two criteria: (1) the content validity of test items, and (2) the content validity of rating scales.

- The content validity of test items
Notably, both tests, which were used by the three participating teachers, contained only one task administered without any assignment. Also, the texts had no titles. The task of the first test consists of an English text of 24 lines following which the author’s name and the source are provided. The task of the second text has 22 lines in the English language followed by the name of the author.

Students who were not attending the translation sessions had to ask about the target language; that is, the language to which they were supposed to translate the English text. Those who were attending knew that they need to translate the text into Arabic.

A quick look at the content of the texts showed that the first text is about economy while the second is literature. Students have dealt with these text types throughout the translation sessions. The content validity of the administered tests is not violated from the perspective that the tests tasks encompassed English texts containing all the linguistic and cultural features of the source language. In other words, the items of the test are representative of the domain of knowledge they are expected to cover. On the other hand, the violation of the tests’ content validity is apparent in test-makers overlook of providing test-takers with assignments which highlight translation practice as a process. The fact that no one among the participating teachers thought about providing an assignment, means that these teachers are actually measuring their students' competence based on the final product, despite their acknowledgment that translation practice is a process within which culture knowledge plays a crucial role.

- The content validity of rating scales
Interestingly, out of the three teachers who took part in the study, one did not use a grading scale (i.e. T3) to measure his students' competence. When asked about the reason behind it, he claimed that he was experienced enough to tell how competent a student is through consulting the TT s/he produced. The other two teachers used the same grading scale consisting of five items; these are:

- Student’s comprehension of the source text.
- Student’s ability to deal with linguistic features such as sentence structure.
- Student’s vocabulary knowledge.
- Students’ ability to deal with culture-specific terms.
- The degree of correspondence between the TT and the ST.

This grading scale reflects teachers’ perception of translation as a multidimensional process and boosts the content validity of the administered tests to a certain extent. Still, it barely
recognizes the cultural dimension of translation practices. In brief, the observation findings, in addition to the findings of the test analysis, revealed that the content validity of the translation assessment practices at the ISLG is relative, specifically due to the ignorance of the cultural dimension and culture instruction within translation classes.

VI. Conclusion

This study tried to shed light on the content validity of translation assessment practices at the UG, specifically at the ISLG. The findings indicated that the content validity of the administered translation tests is relative and explained that by teachers’ overlook of the cultural dimension of translation during practice, though most researchers consider it the most important aspect and recommend culture instruction in translation classes. Also, the study reveals an urgent need for a more pedagogical teaching and assessment methods of translation competence, as the participating teachers seemed confused on how to teach, assess and even measure their students’ test performance. In brief, a teacher-training program is highly recommended.

References


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### Appendix A

**Survey to Teachers**

We would like to invite you to participate in a research study about translation teaching called "Exploring the Content Validity of Translation Tests at the University of Gabes". The research is being conducted by Ameni Bahar, a Ph.D. student at the University of Sousse and ESP teacher at the University of Gabes (email: amanibahar76@yahoo.com, Phone 21 492 725). This survey is aimed at teachers who live in Tunisia and who teach translation at the University of Gabes.
You will be asked to complete a survey about your beliefs about effective translation teaching. You will also be asked to give us some details about your background. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. This survey is anonymous.

Please put a tick or write your answers where appropriate.

1. Gender: Male ______ Female _______
2. Age: 21~30 _____ 31~40 _____ 41-50 _____ over 50 ______
3. How long have you been a translation teacher? _______

4. Please tick the appropriate level of your familiarity with the following cultural aspects of the English speaking countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very familiar</th>
<th>Sufficiently familiar</th>
<th>Not sufficiently familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. History, geography, political system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Different ethnic and social groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youth culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Education, professional life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Values and beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. International relations, with students’ country and other countries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Please express your opinion about the following points. Tick one of the five options (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In an FL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the FL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way.

3. The more students know about the foreign culture, the more competent in translation they become.

4. When speakers of different languages meet, misunderstanding arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.

5. Foreign language teaching should enhance students understanding of their own cultural identity.

6. The cultural dimension of translation classes should be expended.

7. All the English speaking countries’ cultures are equally valid to be represented in an English syllabus.

8. The study of culture in translation classes can hinder progress in linguistic accuracy.

9. The development of cultural awareness should be kept only for the most advanced levels.

10. Teaching culture motivates students.

11. Combining language and culture helps learners to improve their language skills.
6. How often do you practice these culture teaching activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I ask my students to think about the image that the media promote of the</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign country.</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell my students what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign culture(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use videos, SD-ROMs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask my students to think about what would be like to live in the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to my students about my own experiences in the foreign country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if I have any)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have the chance, I invite a person originating from the foreign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>country to my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Classroom Observation Protocol

## Part 1: Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Observation Start Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Date (DD/MM/YYYY)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of the Observation (Minutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Name</td>
<td>District / Local Authority / Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Name</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>Number of Boys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher's stated goals for the lesson: (If possible, speak with the teacher before the observation begins and complete this section with the following information: What is the teacher planning to do? How does the lesson/activity fit in with the unit that the class has been doing before? Are there particular outcomes the teacher is hoping for?)

Physical Arrangement: (Draw or describe the physical arrangement of the classroom)

Technology: (Describe the technology resources present in the classroom and include the number of each. Fixed technology resources, like desktop computers and projectors, can be included in the diagram of the classroom above.)

## Part 2: Observation Notes

In this section, please take detailed notes in real time as you observe classroom activities.

The following questions serve as guidelines for what you will document during the classroom observation. Your descriptions of all the classroom activities should include answers to questions 1–6. For each topic/section, please note what you observe in the left-hand column; you may use the right-hand column to note your hypotheses and conjectures about what you think.

### Structure of the Lesson

Describe the structure of the lesson that you observe. What is happening in the classroom? What are the teacher and the students doing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You See</th>
<th>What You Think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Intel Guide to Monitoring eLearning Programs

## Part 2: Observation Notes—continued

### Interactions Between the Teacher and Students
How do the teachers and students interact? Try to capture examples of the type of questions teachers ask students and how students respond, as well as the questions students ask teachers and the teacher’s responses.

In addition to questions, please also note the other ways in which the teacher and the students interact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You See</th>
<th>What You Think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Interactions Among Students
Do students have an opportunity to interact with one another? If so, how do they interact? Do they work on a task together? Do they provide feedback to one another?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You See</th>
<th>What You Think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Use of the Technology/Device
Is the technology/device being used as part of the activity? If so, how and for what purpose? Are teachers or students experiencing difficulties in their use of the technology/device? Are they able to troubleshoot?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You See</th>
<th>What You Think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Use of Other Resources
What other resources does the teacher use? (Note the materials that the teacher uses during the lesson, chart paper, blackboard, visual aids, computers, etc.) What, if any, other technologies are being used in the lesson?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You See</th>
<th>What You Think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Other Observations
What else is characteristic of what the teacher does? What else do students do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You See</th>
<th>What You Think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Part 3: Reflections on the Lesson

Please reflect on the lesson and complete the following questions as soon as possible after the observation.

1. What is the teacher's overall approach to classroom instruction (facilitator, classroom manager in control, teacher as co-learner, etc.)?

2. Did the students seem to be clear on the procedure of the activity or confused?

3. What components of the lesson/activity did students seem enthusiastic about? Include specific examples of student comments and actions to illustrate.

4. How did the students respond to the technology used? (Did they seem bored, interested and involved, etc.)?

5. Was there something about the technology that seemed difficult for the teacher or students to do? Did any glitches with the technology impede the process of the lesson?

6. What other reflections do you have about the lesson?
Appendix C

Test Observation Protocol
Teacher: ...........................................................................................................
Students’ Number ................................................................................................
Timing: .............................................................................................................
Test Items:
1)
Appendix D

Text 1: Back to school for red-faced council (17/2/2016 The Guardian)

Council workers were called back to Grammar School Lane, home of Yarm preparatory school, to replace the recently erected and incorrectly spelt sign. The sign, which read Grammar School Lane, had been in place for more than a week, according to the head teacher, Gillian Taylor. But sharp-eyed youngsters at the private school - for children aged between four and 11 - spotted the mistake. Mrs. Taylor told the Press Association: "We thought it must have been April 1, but sadly it wasn't. 
"The sign was up for quite a number of days and it caused quite a lot of amusement for children, staff and parents. We saw the sign and thought 'no, it can't be,' and then you look again just to make sure. Fortunately the children spotted the mistake quite quickly, but it must have been a good eight or nine days before the council removed it." Mrs. Taylor added: "If the council wants any help in spelling then I'm sure the children can help."

Appendix E

Text 2: “Husband accidentally leaves wife behind at petrol station” (18/1/2016 Mailonline)

An Argentinean tourist 'forgot' his wife at a petrol station and drove 60 miles before realising she was missing, according to media reports in Brazil. The couple was returning to Argentina after a holiday in Bombinhas, in Brazil’s state of Santa Caterina. The husband, only identified as Walter, stopped at a station in Passo Fundo to refuel the car and go to the toilet. Walter’s 40-year-old wife, Ines, who had been sleeping in the back of the car, went into the shop to buy some cookies. When she returned to the parking lot, her family was gone. The husband drove 60 miles before realizing he had left his wife at the station. Her husband had apparently driven off after filling up the car. The couple’s 14-year-old son, who was playing on his mobile phone in the front seat, also did not see that the mother was missing. The woman started crying nonstop and approached the petrol station’s manager Edgar Francisco Marques to seek for help. 'She was panicking. She said her husband had left her at the station,' he said. 'I thought it was joke and that the man had just gone for a walk and would return soon.' 'But then I realized she was not joking. We had to calm her down and give her water. She would not stop moaning.'

Appendix F
Text 3: “Statues mistaken for roof jumpers in Hong Kong” (13/11/2015 Newsweek)
An art project went awry in Hong Kong, as police responded to reports of attempted suicide throughout the city, arriving to find that they were merely statues. Hong Kong police received calls at 9 a.m. and 2:20 p.m. regarding people standing precariously near the edges of tall buildings. When officers investigated the scene they found statues placed on these buildings as part of a public art project. The statues were a part of British artist Antony Gormley’s acclaimed project Event Horizon, which features 31 statues placed throughout Hong Kong in the largest public art project ever installed in the city. Gormley reportedly received blessings from both the landlords and the local government to install the statues and police were also made aware of their presence. These precautions have historically done little to prevent confusion, as the project has been installed in London, New York and Brazil where similar incidents of mistaken suicide attempts were reported.
Appendix G
In the organization of industrial life the influence of the factory upon the physiological and mental state of the workers has been completely neglected. Modern industry is based on the conception of the maximum production at lowest cost in order that an individual or a group of individuals may earn as much money as possible. It has expanded without any idea of the true nature of the human beings who run the machines, and without giving any consideration to the effects produced on the individuals and on their descendants by the artificial mode of existence imposed by the factory. The great cities have been built with no regard for us. The shape and dimensions of the skyscrapers depend entirely on the necessity of obtaining the maximum income per square foot of ground, and of offering to the tenants offices and apartments that please them.

This caused the construction of gigantic buildings where too large masses of human beings are crowded together. Civilized men like such a way of living. While they enjoy the comfort and banal luxury of their dwellings, they do not realize that they are deprived of the necessities of life. The modern city consists of monstrous edifices and of dark, narrow streets full of petrol fumes, coal dust, and toxic gases, torn by the noise of the taxicabs, lorries and buses, and thronged ceaselessly by great crowds. Obviously, it has not been planned for the good of its inhabitants.

ALEXIS CARREL  Man, the Unknown
Appendix H

There was no doubt about it. We were completely lost\(^1\). It was impossible to distinguish one forest path from another\(^2\); so we all sat down on a fallen tree-trunk\(^3\) to fill our pipes and think what we should do next. At this point\(^4\) Harris took charge\(^5\).

« You leave it to me », he said, pulling his watch from his waistcoat pocket. « What we want to do is find the north. It’s as easy at ABC\(^6\). All you do is to point the hour hand at the sun, then draw a line half-way between the hour hand and the figure twelve, and that’s the north. »

« But what do we do with the north when we have found it ? »
I asked him. « Look at the map and see how far the next town is from here. »

« What do you mean, from here\(^7\) ? »
« Why\(^8\), from where we are now », he answered.

« But where are we ? »

This puzzled him for a few minutes, but he soon brightened up and said:

« Oh\(^9\), we can guess that. We know where we came from and how long we’ve been walking. »

« That’s the only thing we do know », George exclaimed.

« The best thing we can do is go straight back to that village and catch a bus. »

\( by \) Jerome K. Jerome
Gender differences in politeness and power in Tunisian political interviews

By Abdelalim Bouajjar, Higher Institute of Languages in Tunis

This study aims at investigating the interplay between politeness and power in Tunisian political interviews. Particularly, it examines how different genders, Tunisian male and female interviewers and interviewees, display power in their turns. It, also, inspects how different levels of politeness affect this power display. The study relies on a sample of sixteen Tunisian political interviews, and it, basically, uses Browns and Levinson (1987)’s politeness framework in its examination of politeness and power, in interviewers and interviewees’ turns. Besides, Holmes (1992) and Harris (1991)’s accounts are employed to categorize questions and answers and to determine the levels of politeness and power displayed in them by Tunisian interviewers and interviewees.

Keywords: gender differences, politeness, power, news interview

1. Introduction

Since Robin Lakoff (1973)’s seminal work on the relationship between gender and language, and her initial dominance approach, the issue of gender and language has attracted so much attention. Starting from the latter’s dominance approach portraying women as being, by default, polite and powerless to Janet Holmes (1992; 1995) and Deborah Tannen (1990; 1994)’ difference approach to gender assuming that men and women use language differently for different interactional objectives and, eventually, reaching Sara Mills (2003)’ performative approach, which argues that women can perform different linguistic identities in different contexts, the issue of gender and language continues to be an interesting field of research for researchers from different disciplines: sociology, psycho and sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics and communication and media studies.

Research on this issue has, initially, formed a general stereotype about women, men and
language. This stereotype assumes that women are being more polite, less assertive and less powerful than men in their talk, in both formal and informal contexts. Such assumptions are held by Holmes (1992; 1995), Tannen (1990; 1994) and Mullany (1999; 2001) and several others. This consensus, however, has been challenged by other researchers. Macaullay (2001), for instance, argues that female interviewers are being more assertive and powerful than male ones in their questions. Mills (2003) and Bayles (2009), on the other hand, have criticized the difference approach and its stereotypes, and have argued that women are able `to perform different linguistic gender identities whenever they want`` (Bayles, 2009, p. 13).

Nonetheless, the difference approach remains the most dominant and applicable in gender and language studies, and researchers, like Mullany (2004), Bright (2002), Xia (2013), Bamman, Eisentein and Schnobelen (2014) and Jinyu (2014), along with others, continue to detect men and women` language differences in a variety of contexts.

2. Linguistic politeness

The sociolinguistic issue of linguistic politeness has been brought into the surface and the field of sociolinguistics and pragmatics since the earlier works of Durkhaim (1915) and Goffman(1967), Chiappini (2002). Yet, it is the publication of Brown and Levinson (1978)`s comprehensive and pivotal work on linguistic politeness that has triggered researchers` actual interest on this interactional socio-pragmatic phenomenon (Chiappini, 2002; Watts, 2003).

2.1. Definitions

Although linguists seem to have different conceptions of the notion of linguistic politeness, they all revolve around the idea of taking into consideration other people´s feelings (Holmes, 1995; Watts, 2003). For instance, while Lakoff (1975, p. 64) defines politeness as a device that aims at reducing ``friction in personal interaction`` (p. 64), Leech (1980, p. 19) views it as ``strategic conflict avoidance which can be measured in terms of degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation and the establishment and maintenance of comity`` (p. 19). More recent accounts of politeness, like Scollon and Scollon (2001) Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2008), do not deviate from the prospect of maintaining good rapport. Culpeper (1996, 2005)`s impoliteness account, as its very name suggest is, however, an exception.

It should be mentioned, here, that amidst all the notions or conceptions of politeness, only two have been viewed as the most influential ones in the field: Leeche`s politeness maxims, and Brown and Levinson (1987)`s pioneering framework of politeness (Cutting, 2002; Watts, 2003; Chun, 2007). This study mainly focuses on the latter approach since it is the main framework of analysis in this study.

2.2. Brown and Levinson (1987)`s account of politeness

Brown and Levinson`s frameworks of politeness is highly praised by so many linguists as the most comprehensive approach in the field. This assumption is highly shared among Holmes (1992), Yule (1996), Eelin (2001), Mills (2003), Bayles (2009) and Haugh (2009). Eelin (2001, p. 3), for instance, affirms that `` the name of Brown and Levinson have become almost synonyms with the word `politeness` itself``. Similarly, Mills (2003) states that their `model of politeness has influenced almost all the theoretical and analytical work in this field``(p. 57). In short, most researchers in sociolinguistics, pragmatics and interactional studies do agree that their
approach provides a sufficiently stable and solid basis on which research in the field can be carried out.

Brown and Levinson (1987)’s theory of politeness is commonly referred to as the Face-Saving theory (Chiappini, 2003; Watts. 2003). A theory that aims at softening and at mitigating the potentials for aggression in interaction by seeking “to disarm it” and at making communication between “potentially aggressive parties” possible (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 1). This end is achieved through an intricate system of strategies and sub-strategies that are oriented to an interactant’s positive or negative face (ibid). All their theory is built around this notion of face, which assumes that every individual has two types of face: positive face and negative face (ibid). An individual’s positive face is the need to be accepted and that his/her needs or wants are approved of and attended to, whereas a person’s negative face is the need for independence, freedom for action, and from imposition (ibid). They, also, advance that participants should attend to the different face needs of their interlocutors through the use of different politeness strategies that serve either to maximize the addressee’s positive face; positive politeness, or to minimize the threat on the addressee’s negative face; negative politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) subscribe fifteen positive politeness strategies and ten negative politeness strategies that address the hearer’s positive and negative face, respectively. All these strategies amount from certain “super strategies” or “super wants” that function as the main mechanisms of negative or positive politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 103).

3. Power and politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987), Mullany (2004), Alguwaidi et.al (2014), and Afroozeh (2015) agree on the assumption that there is an association between power and politeness, in interaction. They, both, “occur in a context simultaneously” (Alguwaidi et al, 2014, p. 423). However, and unlike politeness which is a constant and omnipresent variable in interaction, power is dynamic and it is not at play at all contexts, or interactions (Mullany, 2004; Alguwaidi et al, 2014; Afroozeh, 2015). This understanding of power, Mullany (2004) argues, is different from that of Brown and Levinson (1987), which considers power inherent in all kinds of interaction.

It is paramount to define power in its relation to interaction, here. Brown and Levinson (1987) define power as “an asymmetrical dimension of relative power” (p. 77). By asymmetrical, they mean that, in an interaction, power is not reciprocal, but rather possessed or exercised by only one of the interactants over the other interactant. Mullany (2004) and Alguwaidi (2014) argue that, for Brown and Levinson (1987), this asymmetric aspect of power is inherent in all types of interaction. This assumption is challenged by Harris (2001), Mullany (2004) and Alguwaidi (2014) who argue that power can be dynamic and negotiable throughout the ongoing interaction.

Still within the prospect of power in interaction, Mullany (2004), Victoria (2009), Afroozeh (2015) and Alguwaidi (2015) assume that power and politeness are very interconnected in interaction. It is noted, however, that there are two basic claims in this respect. Some claim that power affects politeness and that it plays an integral role in the selection of politeness strategies by interactants; an understanding that is basically advocated by Brown and Levinson (1987), and that is adopted by several researchers in their studies, like Harris (1992), Mullany (1999), Reez-Miller (2000), Afroozeh (2015) and Alguwaidi (2015). Others, like Mullany (2004) and Victoria (2009), argue differently. For them, power can be manifested and displayed through politeness, particularly in workplace meetings. Politeness, in such a context, is
not an add-on or a cushioning device for a smoother application of power; it is a pre-condition within which power can be exercised" (Victoria, 2009, p. 129).

Having said that, politeness becomes a tool for "the exercise of power" and, at the same time, to mitigate the exercise of that power (Victoria, 2009, p. 137). Lower ranking employees, for instance, can contest, exercise and take over power from their superiors (ibid). They do so through the use of certain politeness techniques; mainly in-group politeness markers and non-imposing language (ibid). Superiors, on the other hand, resort to politeness to "mitigate the exercise of potentially face-threatening power over their subordinates" (Victoria, 2009, p. 130). By doing so, in corporate meetings, lower ranking employees and their superiors "harness the collective power of the team" and empower the "collective face of the organization" or company (Victoria, 2009, 137).

This understanding of politeness in its relation to power is, also, shared by Mullany (2004) who, similarly, argues that an individual`s relative or less power is not an indicator of politeness, particularly in business meetings. It is important to highlight that this understanding of power and politeness contradicts with Brown and Levinson (1987) `s claim that being polite, in interaction, is the task of the powerless, or those who have less power than the other party (Victoria, 2009).

4. Power and politeness in men and women`s talk

Before dwelling on power and politeness in men and women`s talk, it is important to note that, over the last 40 years, the issue of language and gender has been dealt with from the perspective of three main different approaches: The deficit/dominance approach, the difference approach, and the performative approach (White, 2004).

4.1. The deficit/dominance approach

This approach, to language and gender, is mainly adopted by Robin Lakoff in her seminal work on language and woman`s place (1973). It, simply, postulates that the linguistic identity of women is submerged: their indirectness while talking reflects their powerlessness and their inability to make demands. Lakoff (1973), also, condoles that men are direct and that they have the prerogative of power over women.

4.2. The difference approach

This approach has been introduced by Deborah Tannen (1990; 1994) and Janet Holmes (1992; 1995). Both researchers argue that men and women use language differently, and that each one`s talk has its own characteristics and features. Women, for instance, prefer `small talk`, they are more indirect, more polite, less assertive and are less powerful in their talk than men, in both formal and informal contexts. Men, on the other hand, prefer `tough talk` and they are more likely to display assertiveness, directness and power.

4.3. The performative approach

The performative approach to gender is devised by Sara Mills (2003). It, simply, suggests that gender and all practices that are related to it are merely a performance (Mills, 2003). Gender, within this approach, should be looked at as fluid and dynamic, not immutable or stagnant, and people can perform different language styles in different encounters as much as they wish (Mills 2003). By doing so and just as Bayles (2009) puts it women become able "to perform different
linguistic gender identities whenever they want’’ (p. 13).

4.4. Power and politeness in men and women’s talk: some empirical studies

First, it is crucial to state that there is no consensus among linguists about the relationship between language and gender, and more specifically between gender and linguistic politeness (Macaulay, 2001).

Several feminists researchers, particularly Holmes (1992; 1995) and Harris (1990, 1994), agree on the assumption that women are being more indirect in their talk. However, they, Holmes and Harris, at the same time contest the traditional assumption that indirectness reflects powerlessness. Tannen (1994), for example, assumes that indirectness is inherent to both men and women’s speech and not only to women’s. She, also, argues that to get one’s demands met through making an indirect request is an indicative of power rather than powerlessness. Therefore, indirectness can be the prerogative of the powerful (ibid).

More importantly, Holmes (1992), based on her analysis of men and women’s ways of talk in formal contexts, showcases that women are being cooperative, facilitative and other-oriented, unlike men whose discourse is characterized of being, typically, competitive and verbally aggressive. Those findings provide ample support for earlier assumptions held by Gilligan (1982), and Tannen (1990). They, both, postulate that women’s talk is facilitative, responsive, and other-oriented, whereas men are known for their challenging utterances and assertive disagreements: strategies that serve to claim the floor and to dominate the talking time (ibid). To quote Holmes (1992)’s words, ‘‘women are more polite than men’’ (p. 8) and that is due to the fact that men and women use language for different purposes: ‘‘women use language to establish, nurture, and develop personal relations’’, that is the affective function of language, whereas men ‘‘ see language more as a tool for obtaining and conveying information, especially in formal contexts’’ (p. 2).

Macaulay (2001) has, also, examined men and women’s talk in news interviews. The findings of her study contradict with Holmes (1992) and Tannen (1994), and they suggest that women’s indirectness does not reflect facilitation. Her findings, particularly, reveal that women rely on disputable assertions to provoke a salient response from their interviewees. Women, also, use 14% more indirect requests than men; however, their indirect requests are considered to be, not only, more polite than men, but, also, more provocative. Thus, they reflect power (ibid).

On the other hand, Mullany (1999), in her study about sex differences and politeness in news interview context, states that the findings of her study are consistent with Goodwin (1980), Tannen (1990, 1994), Holmes (1992, 1995). Her findings suggest that women interlocutors are being more cooperative than men because they significantly attend to their addressees’ face in both political and non-political settings. They, also, reveal that face-threatening utterances and on record strategies are distinctive of males’ speech, more than female ones, which displays their competitiveness and their continuous claim to the floor, in the news interview context (ibid).

Mullany (1999) ‘s findings might represent a continuity to earlier assumptions that conceive of women’s behavior as being cogently linked to politeness. Those assumptions are so widely held by many other researchers, such as Holmes (1992, 1995) and Tannen (1990, 1994), that they have formed one of the main stereotypes that characterize women’s language (Mills, 2003).

4. The news interview
Wehner (2000), Mullany (2001), Clayman & Heritage (2004), and Andone (2009) all commonly claim that the news interview is an interactional encounter or arena. This encounter, or “social event” (Wehner, 2000, p. 1), sheds light on recent newsworthy political or public event. The discussion or the interaction surrounding this covered event is typified as being highly formal in character and is, mainly, carried in question-answer sequences (Mullany, 2001; Clayman & Heritage, 2004). The interviewers question and interrogate public figures and government officials, and they hold them accountable for their actions and for issues of public concern (Clayman and Heritage, 2004). This takes place under the watch and oversight of the audience (ibid).

5.1. Turn-taking system / question-answer structure.

The news interview is typically and strictly made up of Q-A sequences (Greatbatch, 1988; Mullany, 1999; Bull, 2003; Clayman and Heritage, 2004) It incontestably delegates both IRs and IEs with two different tasks: an IR who asks questions and an IE who provides answers (ibid). Abiding by this strict format contributes in the shaping of a remarkably recognizable form of interaction (Clayman and Heritage, 2004). This form of interaction, manifested in Q-A sequences, allows the viewing, and, especially, the hearing, audience to discriminate between a “news interview” and a “chat show” (ibid). A chat show is more conversational and the Q-A format is quite loose and rarely abided by in it: participants simply talk rather than do “news interview talk” through a Q-A format (Clayman & Heritage, 2004, p. 96).

The strict question-answer format, of the news interview, gives the IR the prerogative of having the upper hand in managing the interaction (Mullany, 1999; Clayman and Heritage, 2004). He or she is in power position to set the question agenda to which the IE provides responses, and to evaluate and assess those responses as being, for instance, direct or evasive (Clayman and Heritage, 2004). If there is more than one IE in the platform, he or she is the one who decides which of the IEs can chime in by gearing a particular question to that particular IE (ibid) The IR is, also, in control of topic shifts and assumes the responsibility of smoothly sealing the interaction (ibid).

6. Methodology

This section, first, describes the corpus of this study. Then, it provides a thorough description of the framework of analysis, the method of analysis and the research instruments and procedures applied.

6.1. Corpus description

The corpus of this study is, on one part, male and female politicians and, on the other part, male and female IRs. What is mainly examined is the speech of these interactants as they join together to make news talk. This study does not just restrict itself to the news interview talk, but rather to a certain form of news interview: dyadic political interviews.

Eleven different political programs from five different radio stations and two TV channels were opted to as the main source of data. These programs date from 16th September 2011 to 24th October 2013. Most of the programs were downloaded from the official websites of the radio stations and TV channels. Only two or three were downloaded from YouTube. Of the main features of these programs is that they are conducted by fourteen IRs: seven male, seven
female, and they host sixteen different IEs: eight males and eight females.

On average, five to six minutes of news interview talk is analyzed from each interview. It should, also, be noted that the Openings and the Closings of the interviews are spared from transcription and analysis, and that the selected segments, to be analyzed, are characterized by more or less quick Q-A sequences. Tow logics are behind those decisions: first, the quite length of some interviews that would take much time to transcribe and analyze; second, the skipping of openings and closings was due to the fact that this research, mainly, focuses on the Q-A sequences where interlocutors start exchanging turns and dive into the "interview proper" (Claymen & Heritage, 2004, p. 95)

**6.2. Framework of analysis**

The main framework of analysis, in this study, is Brown and Levinson (1987) 's politeness framework. This framework is known among researchers as being, purely, hearer oriented (Watts, 2003; Bayles, 2009; Chiappini, 2003). That is, the speaker, or the Model Person, is the one who assumes the obligation of attending to the hearer’s face needs (ibid). In the news interview context, this Model Person is the IR, and it is his/her responsibility to attend to the guests` face wants through the use of the appropriate politeness strategies that serve to mitigate the FTAs. Having said that, it follows that not all interactants` polite behavior is going to be examined according to their framework: only M and F IRs` speech is going to be, minutely, assessed, measured, and compared through Brown and Levinson (1987) `s framework.

Brown and Levinson (1987) postulate that distance and the power relations that exist between participants are the key determinants of the degree of linguistic politeness that interactants exhibit towards each other (Chun, 2007). Those two factors, distance and power relations, also, determine the type of face to which awareness should be directed (ibid).

In the news interview context, a formal context, participants are distant from each other. They have ``transactional roles``, and pre-assigned functions: an interviewer who asks questions, and an interviewee who supplies an answer (Greatbatch, 1988; Clayman, 1991; Holmes, 1992). Therefore, IEs` degree of linguistic politeness is to be assessed and measured according to the attention they pay to their IEs` negative face, and not their positive face. A participant, i.e. the IE, expects his/her counterpart interlocutor, i.e. the IR, not to impose on him/her, to display deference, and to respect his/her need for independence and freedom of action (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Yule, 1996; Chun, 2007).

More importantly, it is the interviewer who is in power position in the news interview context (Mullany, 1999; Clayman, 2004; Andone, 2009). The strict question-answer format gives him/her the prerogative of having the upper hand in managing the interaction (ibid). He or she is in power position to set and ask the question agenda to which the IE provides responses, and is in power to question and to evaluate IEs` responses as being direct, indirect or evasive (ibid).

The power and distance relations between the IR and the IE are regulated through politeness, in the news interview context. Politeness, this study assumes, has, fundamentally, two functions. First, it mitigates the IR`s power. Second, it acknowledges the IE`S distance and displays awareness to his/her face wants: basically, not to be imposed on. Thus, the use of politeness strategies to display politeness, in the news interview context, is not motivated nor is it an indicative of powerlessness. It is, actually, a prerequisite for a smooth interaction in the question-answer exchange between the IR and the IE: it keeps ``the wheels`` of the news interview talk ``well-oiled`` (Victoria, 2009, p. 138). Thus, being powerful and polite, here, is a
matter of choice, strategic decision and a "manipulative resource to gain compliance and cooperation" (Victoria, 2009, p. 130) and to get answers from the IEs (Clayman, 2004).

6.3. Method of analysis: conversation analysis and categorization

Since this study focuses on interaction, basically, news interview interaction, the most applicable method of analysis is conversational analysis (henceforth CA). CA was the pioneering production of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Shegloff and Gail Jefferson (Clayman and Heritage, 2004; Stivers and Sidnell, 2010). This method has had its original roots in sociology, focusing on ordinary casual conversations of people, and it was not until 1972 that it has started to find its utility and applicability in different disciplines such as communication studies, political science, sociolinguistics and mass media studies (ibid).

CA, strictly, focuses on social interaction and has its own understanding and approach to it. It starts from the premise that social interaction is an inherently and minutely structured and ordered form of talk (Clayman and Heritage, 2004; Have, 2007; Stivers and Sidnell, 2010). This orderliness, according to conversation analysts is the natural outcome of the reciprocal means of reasoning and of operating that interactants possess (Korobov, 2001; Stivers and Sidnell, 2010).

Just in harmony with this structural view of language, CA, also, has a structural focus on interaction. What is focused upon in a CA study is the sequential organization of turns between participants and how participants, in a given instant of talk, manage to react and interact successfully to each other’s turns: how to co-form a recognizable adjacency pair (ibid). An adjacency pair is defined as two adjacent sequential turns or utterances that are performed by two or more interactants (Jefferson, 1995; Have, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). Those two successive utterances have a normative relationship: that is the first utterance requires a specific kind of response from the other interactant. For instance, a question requires an answer (ibid). To have a smooth adjacency pair, the hearer, first, needs to identify the action that is performed by the speaker in his/her turn and the practices that are involved in its making. This process determines what the hearer’s reply or response to the speaker will be, in his/her turn (ibid). Using Sacks, Shegloff and Jefferson (1974)`s own words, ``it is the parties understandings of prior turns that is relevant to their constructions of next turns`` (p. 729).

What to be concluded is that CA’s structural focus on turns does, by default, involve the focus on the actions and the practices that are involved in their making. The actions that performers do, in their interaction, are multiple and can be very challenging to track and cover in one single study (Sidnell, 2010), that is why it is noticed that different studies limit their scope of research to a limited number of actions to investigate and examine. It is, also, common among conversation analysts to rely on coding schemes or categorization frameworks to code interactants’ actions differently (Psathas, 1994; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; Antaki, 2011). For instance, as Arundale (2009) argues, Goffman was the first to classify interactants’ contributions to talk into FTAs and FSAs, and, then, Brown And Levinson have followed his lead.

In news interviews contexts, coding schemes has, also, been entwined with CA. For instance, Clayman and Heritage (2004), in their examination of the Q-A format of the news interviews have categorized IRs questions and IE’s answers differently. Questions, as an example, are categorized, broadly, as being hostile or non hostile; each broad category has its own subcategories. In another study, Mullany (1999) has classified IRs` questions differently: facilitative, supportive, critical and challenging. The studies that have resorted to codings in examining IEs` answers are several as well. Harris (1991), for instance, in her focus on
politician’s answers, has classified their answers into direct, indirect and challenging. The same account has been used by Mullany (1999). Bull (2003) and Clayman and Heritage (2004), also, have their own coding schemes regarding IEs’ answers.

In this study, using CA as the method of analysis, what is focused upon is the question-answer structure or format of the news interview and the actions that are performed within this format. Coding systems are applied to categorize those actions and IRs and IEs turns into different categories that are related to politeness and power. Those coding schemes or frameworks can, also, be thought of as the research instruments of this study. Equally important, the coding schemes would yield, later on, to a quantitative analysis of the data, as it has been the case in several cases applying coding within CA (Psathas, 1994; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; Sidnell, 2009).

6.3.1. Coding schemes/ research instruments and their application
The coding schemes that are applied in this study, basically, aim at examining IRs and IEs questions and answers in relation to politeness and power. First, IRs turns, following Brown and Levinson (1987)’s ten negative politeness strategies, are categorized into FTAs and FSAs. Second, IRs questions are categorized, following Holmes (1995)’s account, into supportive, critical and antagonistic. Finally, IE’s answers, based on Harris (1991)’s typology of replies, are coded into direct, indirect and challenging. All those categories are, first, assessed in relation to politeness: they are aligned along a continuum that ranges from polite to non-polite. Then, they are examined in their relation to power: how the IRs and IEs polite conduct, in the news interview context, is related to power display and power downplay.

6.3.1.1. Brown and Levinson’s ten negative politeness strategies
Negative politeness strategies are going to be the main instruments of assessing the linguistic politeness of IRs. Brown and Levinson (1987) prescribe ten different negative politeness strategies, and they are all used to measure linguistic politeness in this study. These politeness strategies are as follows: 1- Be conventionally indirect, 2- the use of hedges for not assuming willingness to comply, 3- Be pessimistic about the ability to comply through the use of the subjunctive, 4- Minimize the imposition, 5- Apologize, 6- Impersonalize the speaker and the hearer through avoidance of the pronoun I and you, 7- Give deference through the use of titles-, 8- State the FTA as an instance of general rule, 9- Nominalize to distance the actor and add formality, and 10- Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not debting the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 19987).

Those strategies function as politeness markers. They are considered as mitigating or redressive devices that serve to downplay IR’s power and to display awareness to the distance between the IR and the IE, by softening the Face Threatening Acts (FTA’s). They operate to classify IRs turns into two different categories. If the IR, makes use of one of the negative politeness strategies in his/her contributions to the exchange, he/she is viewed as paying attention to his/her addressee’s negative face and as trying to mitigate his/her power and to counteract the FTA. In a more technical term, he/she is making a Face Saving Act (FSA) and is downplaying power and displaying polite behaviour. However, if the participant’s contribution to the exchange is negative politeness strategies-free, he/she is emphasizing his power and is deemed as imposing on the addressee, and, therefore, paying no attention to his/her negative face wants. In this case, the IR is making an FTA and he/she is displaying more power than polite behavior.

In short, the power and politeness factors or variables, in respect to the IR and the IE, seem to have a negative variation or correlation. Simply, if one variable increases the other, by
default, decreases: if power is up that politeness is down and vice versa. This negative variation is only valid when it is the IR, the IE`s face and the interactional interplay are at focus. Thus, when the focus is geared toward, what this study calls `the news interview face` or `the audience face`, a new correlation relation takes shape.

Just as business and board meetings have collective face or a company face (Veronica, 2009), it can be argued that the news interview talk have a face of its own as well. This face can be referred to as `the news interview face` or, more appropriately, `the audience`s face`. It is referred to as such because the raison d`être of the news interview is the audience: the IRs, in particular, and the IEs are `producing their talk for the overhearing audience`( Clayman and Heritage, 2004, p. 123). This audience expects the news interview to be confrontational and adversarial, and not cold-heated or amiable and sociable as in chat-shows (ibid). This expectation is what makes up the audience`s face or the news interview face, and it is what IRs need to attend to and empower by displaying confrontational and adversarial behavior; that is displaying more power and downplaying politeness.

When this audience or news interview face is at play, a new relation of correlation takes place. This relation is between power and audience face. Correlation between those two variables is a positive one: they both change in the same direction, they both either increase or decrease. This means that when the IR displays more power, he/she is being confrontational and adversarial, and thus he/she is empowering the audience` face. However, if the IR is being more polite and less powerful, he/she is not empowering the audience`s face. In short, power display leads to face empowerment and power downplay leads to face non-empowerment. Using more Brown and Levinson (1987) terminology, more FTAs suggest more power and, thus, more empowerment to audience face, and more FSAs suggest, by default, the opposite.

This first research instrument, Brown and Levinson (1987) `s ten negative politeness strategies, is the backbone of this study. It is their application that renders politeness and power relations, between the IR and the IE, easy to detect and analyze. Equally important as well, it is those very politeness strategies that make power and face empowerment relations easy to discern: their use or non use determine the level of power, which in turn determines whether the audience`s face is empowered or not.

The other two research instruments, Holmes (1992) `s inventory of questions and that of Harris (199) `s replies, which function to categorize IRs` questions and IEs` answers into different categories, are, also, politeness related. The different questions and answers that, both, IRs and IEs produce are dealt with in the lights of politeness and are, thus, organized along a continuum that ranges from polite, less polite to impolite.

6.3.1.2. Holmes (1992) `s classification of elicitations

Holmes classifies elicitations into three main categories. Each category has its own set of defining features and characteristics that distinguish it from the other categories. In more technical terms, just like in any other coding scheme, categories must be discriminable and exclusive (Harris, 1991; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; Edwards, 2003). The different features, of all the three elicitations, are going to be projected on the IRs questions so as to determine the type of every question that IRs produce. Following Holmes (1992)´s typology, IRs´ questions are either supportive, critical or antagonistic. The defining features of each elicitation are now detailed.

6.3.1.2.1. Supportive elicitations
Supportive elicitations generally imply `` a positive response to the content of the representation`` (Holmes, 1992, p. 138). They invite the speaker ``to expand or elaborate`` on some aspect of the point that he/she has just made (ibid). They, also, consist of ``comments which drew out the implications of the presentation in other areas and made links to further materials which supported the speaker`s point of view`` (ibid). Following the lead of Holmes (1992), and another similar study carried by Mullany (1999), this type of elicitation is viewed as an explicit positive politeness strategy.

6.3.1.2.2. Critical elicitations

Critical elicitations are `` somewhat more critical in tone, less whole-heartedly or explicitly positive`` (Holmes, 1992, p. 139). They are made up of `` modified agreement or a qualified disagreement`` and might show a `` degree of negative evaluation or skepticism, though it is usually qualified`` (ibid). Those elicitations are viewed as paying less attention to the addressee`s face needs and, therefore, less polite (Holmes, 1992; Mullany, 1999).

6.3.1.2.3. Antagonistic elicitations

Those types of elicitations are ``overtly antagonistic to the content of the presentation. Such utterances generally involved challenging, aggressively critical assertions whose function was to attack the speaker`s position and demonstrate it was wrong`` (Holmes, 1992, p. 138). They are classified as the most impolite of the three because they show, absolutely, no heed nor attendance to the IE`s face (Holmes. 1992; Mullany, 1999).

6.3.1.3. Harris (1991) `s account of answers

Harris (1991) has examined the speech of politicians in political interviews and focused on the replies that politicians gave given the IEs while being interviewed. After such examination, Harris (1991) has argued that IRs` replies can be categorized into three main categories: direct, indirect, and challenging. Each category, within his coding scheme, has its own defining features that make it discriminable and exclusive from the others (Harris, 1991; Edwards, 2003

6.3.1.4. 1. Direct answers

Direct answers dutifully and clearly provide an answer to the posed question. They clearly express `yes`, `no`, or `of course` to a yes/no question, and include `copy type` answers when the question requires polarity choice or the selection of one disjunct (Harris, 1991). They, also, involve the kind of answers that supply a value for the missing variable found in a WH question (Mullany, 1999; Wehner, 2000). Direct answers are the most polite type of answers (Mullany, 1999). They are explicit and to the point: no evasiveness is detected in their use (Harris, 1991; Mullany, 1999; Wehner, 2000). They sufficiently fill in the gap left by the question, and do not contain any manoeuvres to sidestep it (ibid). Therefore, they do not represent any threat to the interviewer`s face needs nor to the agenda of questions, which makes them eligible to be viewed as polite (ibid).

6.3.1.3. 2. Indirect answers

Indirect answers are responses which require inference (Harris, 1991). They pre-requisite either the selection of some intermediate position between `yes` or `no`, or the inference to the value of
the missing variable of a WH question (ibid). They, also, include responses which do not violate cohesion, topic coherence, and the presuppositional framework of the question, but from which no inference to neither ’yes’ or ’no’ can be made (Harris, 1991; Mullany, 1999; Wehner, 2000).

Politicians are endeavoring not to be straightforward and clear when providing an indirect answer (ibid). They try to make their turn be recognizable as an answer by maintaining coherence, cohesion, and the presuppositional framework, while covertly evading the question (ibid). This type of answers, that provides hard-to-decode responses, is classified as impolite because it does not attend to the interviewer’s face wants: interviewers, instead of receiving a more or less clear answer, have to resort to inference (Mullany, 1999; Wehner, 2000).

6.3.1.3.3. Challenging answers

Challenging answers are by definition evasive (Harris, 1991). They challenge either one or more of the presuppositions of a question, or the illocutionary force of a question (ibid). They, also, challenge the position of the interviewer as being in the power position (Mullany, 1999; Heritage and Clayman, 2004). Having said that, it follows that those challenging answers do not supply any answer to the posed question, they, rather, overtly evade it (Harris, 1991; Mullany, 1999; Wehner, 2000). Thus, they represent a direct threat to the interviewer’s power position, and pay, absolutely, no attention to his/her face wants (Mullany, 1999). For those reasons, this type of answers is classified as the most impolite of all the three (Mullany, 1999).

To sum up, as far as questions are concerned, they are categorized as the following in relation to IR’s politeness: supportive questions are polite, critical ones are less polite and antagonistic ones impolite. Answers, however, are coded as follows, in their relation to IE’s polite behaviour: direct answers are polite, indirect ones are impolite and challenging answers are the most impolite.

Given the interplay that exists between power and politeness, according to several researchers like Brown and Levinson (1987), Mullany (1999; 2004) and Victoria (2009), this classification of IRs questions and IEs answers in relation to politeness yields to their, subsequent, classification in relation to power. Correlation between questions and answers’ level of politeness, here, is similar to the first correlation between politeness and power; that is, it is a negative correlation. Simply, if one variable increases the other, by default, decreases: if politeness in questions and answers is up, then power is down and vice versa. More specifically, if the question or the answer is polite, then less power is displayed; however, if the question or the answer is less polite, then more power is displayed.

After explaining how politeness, in questions and answers, correlates with power, what is left is demonstrate is what each type of question and answer displays in terms of power. To start with questions, supportive questions display a high level of politeness, and thus, they display no power. Critical questions display less politeness and, consequently, more power. Antagonistic elicitations, however, are the most powerful because they display no polite behavior at all. The same procedure is applied on answers; direct answers are the most polite and, thus, show no power; indirect replies are less polite and they reflect a degree of power, whereas challenging replies stand out as the most powerful since they display no awareness to the IR’s face wants.

It should be noted, here, as well, that the application of all the three research instruments, coding schemes and procedures, is followed by a process of quantification. In other words, they yield to quantitative analysis.

6.3.1.4. Coding and quantitative analysis
Psathas (1994), Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998), and Schegloff (2009) argue that coding, in CA, commonly leads to quantification. Psathas (1994), for instance, states that users of coding ``collect data in coded form`` and transform it ``into various kinds of quantitative tabulations`` (p. 15). Schegloff (2009), similarly, states that `the data for quantitative and statistical analysis are the product of coding the raw data` (p. 390). So, data is first coded into different categories, and, then, those coded forms are transformed into frequencies and statistics that can be tabulated or demonstrated in figures (ibid). The analysis of those statistical tabulations makes the findings more numerical and, thus, more exact and reliable (Psathas (1994: Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; Schegloff, 2009).

The same procedure applies in this study. After the coding of IRs and IEs questions and answers into different categories, those categories are transformed into frequencies and statistics. The frequent use of each category, by both genders, is, in a later phase, compared against one another, which allows for decisions concerning the use of a specific category to be taken. More specifically, statistical tabulations, of IRs and IEs` coded discursive behaviour, make the comparison between the two genders` polite and power behaviour easy to detect, and, thus, findings easy to illustrate. For instance, the analysis of the statistical distribution of FTAs and FSAs between the two genders would showcase which gender, as an IR, is being more polite than the other. Another example, the statistical distribution of direct, indirect and challenging answers would reveal which gender, as a politician, displays more power and less politeness in its answers. The same for IR`s questions: a statistical tabulation that shows the statistical sharing of supportive, critical and antagonistic questions would demonstrate which gender resorts to power more than politeness, in its questioning of IEs.

7. Results

The figures and tabulations presented, throughout this section, reflect the results arrived to after the implementation of the different coding schemes, i.e. research instruments, on IRs and IEs` respective questions and answers. More specifically, they reflect the quantitative aspect of the study: they demonstrate the statistical use or distribution of the different coded categories by Tunisian M and F IRs and IEs.

First, figure 1 and 2, below, demonstrates the frequent use of FTAs and FSAs for Tunisian M and F IRs. Particularly, it showcases the difference in the distribution of those categories between the IRs.
The above figure clearly demonstrates the vast gap in the use of FTAs and FSAs for women IRs. It reveals that Tunisian F IRs have an obvious tendency to use FTAs more than FSAs: 67.16% versus 32.83%, respectively. This, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), suggests that F IRs are displaying less polite behavior, and are displaying more power, instead.

The same pattern is revealed when investigating Tunisian M IRs` frequent use of FTAs and FSAs. They are, as well, considerably, inclined to use more FTAs than FSAs in their turns towards their IEs. Just as it is shown in Figure 2, 69.38% of M IRs` turns are FTAs, whereas only 30.61% are FSAs. Just as it has been noted about F IRs, M IRs are, also, showing less politeness towards their IEs and are, instead, displaying more power.
Since FTAs and FSAs are related to the use or non-use of negative politeness strategies, as it has explained in earlier sections, it adds to the findings of this study to state that both Tunisian M and F IRs mostly use two politeness strategies in mitigating their FTAs. Those two strategies, as indicated in Table 1, are hedges and giving deference.

Table 1

The Uses of Negative Politeness Strategies and Their Statistical Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative politeness strategy</th>
<th>Giving deference</th>
<th>Impersonalizing the hearer and the speaker</th>
<th>The use of Hedges</th>
<th>Total number of strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of uses</td>
<td>36, 11%</td>
<td>1, 38%</td>
<td>63, 88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moving to IRs questions, Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the frequent use of supportive, critical and antagonistic elicitations. To start with F IRs` elicitations, Figure 3 showcases that they have an evident inclination for critical elicitations, whose share of frequent use is 47.76%: almost as twice as other elicitations. Figure 3, also, indicates that F IRs use more supportive elicitations or questions than antagonistic ones: 29.85% and 22.38%, respectively.

Figure 3. Statistical distribution of elicitations for F IRs.

Looking at Tunisian M IRs` sharings of elicitations reveals that they differ, quite slightly, from that of their F counterpart. As illustrated in Figure 4, below, M IRs, also, have a propensity for using critical elicitations more than any other type. 53.06% of their elicitations are critical, and the rest is distributed as follow: 26.53% support...
portive and 20.40% antagonistic. It is noted here, similarly to F IRs, that Tunisian M IRs are being more supportive than antagonistic in the questioning of the IEs.

![Figure 4](image)

Figure 4. The statistical distribution of elicitations for M IRs

Above figures and results focus on the IRs discursive practices while questioning the IEs. This last part of the results, however, is about the IEs, i.e. the politicians. It reveals, through the figures 5 and 6, the distribution of direct, indirect and challenging answers.

![Figure 5](image)

Figure 5. The statistical distribution of types of answers for F IEs

Figure 5 showcases the vast gap between the frequent use of the direct answer type and the other types. It, clearly, demonstrates that F IEs have a remarkable tendency to use direct answers in their response to their IRs’ questions. They use them almost four times more than indirect answers and five times more than challenging ones. To state it in numbers, 70.37% of answers are direct, whereas only 16.66% and 12.96% are, respectively, indirect and challenging.
The same pattern is noted when analyzing the answers of M IEs, especially for direct answers. As it is shown in Figure 6, M IEs, also, have a notable tendency for being direct in answering the questions of their IRs. Roughly, three quarters of their answers are direct: 74.19%. Similarly to F IEs as well, M IEs resort to indirect answers more often than challenging answers: 19.35% of their answers are indirect, whereas only 6.45% of them are challenging.

![Figure 5. The statistical distribution of types of answers for M IEs](image)

All the statistical models and their descriptions above, only, reveal the distribution of FTAs and FSAs, questions and answers for both M and F IRs and IEs. No comparison between the two groups’ frequent use of any category is detailed. No inferences or interpretations to politeness and power have been inferred to or concluded. All that is left to the upcoming part of the study; the discussion, where comparisons between the two genders’ frequent use of categories are drawn and inferences to politeness and power are made.

**Discussion**

To start with Tunisian IRs’ account of FTAs and FSAs, the findings, shown in Figure 1 and 2 above, indicate that there is a very slight difference between M and F IRs. First, they both have a higher frequency in using FTAs than FSAs; almost as twice as often. This suggests that both genders are displaying less awareness to their IEs negative face. In more technical words, politeness is low and it is less displayed in their questioning of their IEs. Subsequently, given the negative correlation that exists between politeness and power, it becomes evident that both genders are displaying more power, in their questioning, than they display politeness.

This orientation toward displaying power is, almost, equally shared by both genders. 67.16% of F IRs turns and questions are FTAs, and, almost, the same sharing is noted for M ones: 69.38%. This interesting finding strongly suggests that Tunisian men and women IRs do not differ in their questioning of IEs, which is, first, a challenge to the difference approach adopted in several gender studies. Second, this finding is a challenge to earlier assumptions, generalizations
and stereotypes about women’s linguistic behavior: assumptions that typify women as being more polite and less powerful than men. In fact, the opposite has been revealed in this part of the study: Tunisian F and M IRs display, roughly, the same level of politeness and power in their questioning of IEs. It should be noted, here, that the difference between the two’s sharings of FTAs is so slight that it can not be relied upon to make any different interpretations or assumptions.

That is how politeness and power negatively correlate, and how Tunisian M and F IRs are more of equals in terms politeness and power, while questioning their IEs. However, when another factor or variable is added to the equation, a new relation of correlation takes place. This variable or factor is, what this study opts to call, ‘the news interview face’ or the audience face’. This face, as it has been explained earlier, is the upshot of the expectations that the audience has of the news interview and that the IR, in particular, needs to take into consideration and empower. Those expectations are, as Mullany (1999), Bull (2003), and Clayman and Heritage (2004) argue, the confrontational, argumentative and more or less hostile activity type of the news interview: elements that need to be empowered in news interview talk so as to make it distinct from other genres, such as talk shows (Clayman and Heritage, 2004)

This news interview or audience face seems to correlate with IRs’ power, in their dealing with IEs. They have a positive correlation, which means they both go in the same direction and vary correspondingly: if power is up and high, then the audience face is up and it is empowered; if it is down or downplayed, then, the audience face is not being empowered. In this study, given the earlier finding that both Tunisian M and F IRs are both inclined into a display of power and that both are, almost, identical in this orientation, it follows that both, also, share an inclination into empowering their audience’ face. Both M and F IRs attend to this face and its need to have a confrontational and argumentative news interview talk.

Moving now to IRs questions, the findings of this study suggest that Tunisian M and F IRs do not have a remarkable difference in the type of questions they ask their IEs. The findings, first, reveal that both have an obvious tendency towards the use of critical elicitations, with a slight advantage to M IRs whose 53, 06% of questions are critical, whereas 47, 76% for F ones. This finding, however, does depict M IRs as being slightly more critical, less polite and, subsequently, more powerful in their questions than F IRs. The second finding corroborates the first one. It shows that F IRs are not just less critical, but, also, more supportive in their questions: 29, 85% of their questions are supportive, as opposed to 26, 53% for M IRs. The difference, yet, is less than 2 %, thus, it is not significant and not very revealing. The same is noted when analyzing IRs’ reliance on antagonistic elicitations; however, this time with a slight advantage to F IRs who have a 2% lead over M ones. This finding, may as well, depict F IRs as being more antagonistic, impolite and, thus, more powerful.

All in all, the analysis of the distribution of elicitations for Tunisian F and M IRs does not reveal remarkable and significant differences between the two genders. Thus, it does not yield to make any valid and reliable decisions or generalizations. The analysis of answers, however, may prove to be the opposite.

Initially, the analysis of IEs’ replies suggest that there is no major dissimilarities between F and M IEs frequent use of replies. Both genders, of politicians, have a considerable tendency to be direct in their replies: 70, 37% and 74, 19 % of, respectively, F and M IEs’ replies are direct. This suggests that both M and F IRs are being more polite in their answering of IRs’ questions, and are, subsequently being less powerful; since politeness and power correlate negatively.
However, as it is noted, the difference in the use of direct replies between the two genders is not that significant. The same is noted with indirect replies: 16, 66% of F IEs` replies are indirect, whereas 19, 35% of M ones are as such.

The analysis of the distribution of challenging answers, on the other hand, has proven to reveal more interesting and informative findings. It showcases that F IEs are being more challenging in their replies: they are, actually, being as twice as challenging as M IEs; 12, 96 % as opposed to 06, 45 %. This makes F IEs stand out as being clearly more challenging, more impolite and, subsequently, more powerful than M one in answering their IRs questions. They are viewed as being more powerful because of the negative correlation between politeness and power.

Those are the findings of the study and the differences they reveal between Tunisian M and F IRs and IEs, in terms of politeness and power. They suggest that both genders, barely, differ in their display of politeness and power in news interview talk. The only exception and notable disparity, between the two, is that F IEs, clearly, display more power than M ones in their replies: they are being as twice as challenging as M IEs and are, thus, being more powerful.

**Conclusion**

This study has revealed multiple findings concerning the issue of gender differences, politeness and power. It has proven that gender does not play a significant role in power and politeness display. It has, basically, revealed that Tunisian M and F IRs and IEs display, roughly, the same levels of power, as well as, politeness in their news interview talk. In fact, this study bears evidence that Tunisian F interviewees are being more powerful and, considerably, less polite than their M counterparts. This may represent a challenge to the validity of the gender difference approach to language; an approach which assumes that men and women use language differently, and that women are being more considerate, more polite and less powerful than men in formal contexts. Such assumptions are held by Holmes (1992; 1995), Mullany (1999; 2001), and are still, recently, visible in the works of Mullany (2004), Bright (2002), Xia (2013), Bamman, Eisentein and Schnobelen (2014) and Jinyu (2014).

More particularly, the validity and the applicability of this approach is questioned in the Tunisian news interviews context; when trying to detect differences in terms of politeness and power, in F and M IRs and IEs` questions and replies, and attribute them to the gender variable. A variable that, this study has proven, plays no vital or conspicuous role in power and politeness display among M and F IRs and IEs.

Eventually, this study does not yield to further generalizations about gender, politeness and power in the Tunisian news interview context. Its scope is limited to news interviews as one of the forms of highly institutionalized talk. Thus, it aspires to stimulate further gender, power and politeness research in other forms of institutionalized talk, like parliamentary sessions, electoral campaigns and political debates, in the Tunisian context of course. Such studies may reveal interesting findings about gender, power and politeness relations, which would in turn enrich this field of research and allow for further generalizations to take place.

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**Language/cultural planning in contemporary Britain: Self-fashioning or the fashioning of ethnic identity**

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**Abstract:**

This article investigates the various strategies of assimilation that the contemporary British governments used in dealing with its ethnic minorities. It is suggested that the ideological and procedural “arsenal” of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s politics of assimilationism was strategically substituted with a more comprehensive assimilatory approach of the 1980s and 1990s called “integrationist multiculturalism”. Culture/language planning played a paramount role in such
“piecemeal social engineering project” (to use Karl Popper phrase). Yet, arguably, what seemed to be an official progressive recognition of the British ethnic minorities and their rights, through the celebration of their cultural differences and diversities, is in many respects, a firm process of cultural fossilization and stigmatization. Thus, the politics of multiculturalism are best understood as a strategy of socio-economic and political containment of the increasing ethnic militancy of the 1970s and 1980s. The article critically appraises the role of cultural and linguistic planning in shaping the ethnic cultural identities of the various British ethnic minorities with a particular focus on integration-related political and cultural discourses. It also argues that the politics of language planning are based on an erroneous conception of cultural identity as a fixed essentialized subject position throughout the various models of accommodating ethnic and cultural differences.

Keywords: Language planning, cultural planning, integration, identity.
I start with a brief account of the concept of cultural identity. This is because the concept of identity and that of culture are paramount in the arguments pushed in this work. The second part treats the possible encounters between the concept of cultural identity and that of language and language planning. I investigate the political, cultural and social outcomes resultant from such “cultural engineering” on minority socio-cultural groups. The last section of this article scrutinizes the cultural and linguistic politics adopted by the various British governments as strategies of integrating their ethnic and cultural minorities. A special focus will be laid on the role of English language learning in bestowing the British ethnic minorities with equal access to the British mainstream society and citizenship.

**The elusive concept of cultural identity:**

Cultural identity is a complex and elusive concept par excellence. The very stuff of defining the concept is demanding and precarious. Identity has been a very tricky and multi-semiotic concept. It seems that the way of defining the concept is constitutive of the concept itself. Virtually, the over-use of and over-research on this concept rendered it quite redundant. It has arguably become an all-inclusive concept that includes everything and excludes nothing. This over-generalist nature of the concept seems to destroy its very usefulness as an analytical concept. However, the concept of identity is closely related to that of culture. Identity is expressed in various cultural forms, and culture is in many respects constitutive of identity. Cultural identity has come to the fore as vital for any social or political community. Hence, the concept of cultural identity has been approached from different perspectives.

The British cultural critic Stuart Hall has identified two central definitions of cultural identity. The first understanding believes that cultural identity is a shared collective culture. This definition stresses the commonality of the shared experiences of a given cultural or ethnic group. In this perspective, different groups share a common cultural identity that reflects the historical and cultural affinities within a certain ethnic group. Thus, despite the conspicuous differences and diversities that such group generates, this common cultural identity is the ultimate source of unity: a hidden or latent unity. It represents the essence of such a cultural community that differentiates it from other groups. This is the meaning that seems hegemonic when we refer to, say, the British identity, American identity, or Indian identity. We construct a somewhat homogenous block or a framework of reference that ultimately serves to entrench specific cultural traits related to a cultural group. Hall emphasizes that this conception of cultural identity has been cherished by those working within the postcolonial theory. Postcolonial writers tend to highlight the collective and shared character of cultural identity which guarantees an acceptable degree of group cohesion or unity. Postcolonial writers seem to search for such “valuable” cultural identity to second their theses of cultural unity and distinctiveness. Such version of cultural identity, Hall contends, “continues to be a very powerful and creative force in emergent forms of representation amongst hitherto marginalized peoples” (Hall, 1989). Hall quotes the popular postcolonial cultural theorist Frantz Fanon in reference to this version of cultural identity.
Within postcolonial communities, the rediscovery or even the creation of such identity is object of “passionate research…directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others” (Fanon in Hall, 1989: 69).

Yet, the issue of the re-discovery of cultural identity is not that tenable. I believe that there are no constitutive essences of what an identity is or what it means. The process is best seen as one of invention rather than discovery. Following the premises of the social constructivist perspective, we may safely argue that identity is a socio-cultural construction that meets the needs of a given social or cultural community. Just like Benedict Anderson (1983) who believed that nations are imagined communities, I consider cultural identities as imagined identities as well. This imagined-ness allows the construction of different cultural identities by different social agents to serve different aims. It also stresses the fact that identity formation or identification is a dynamic rather than a static process. Thus identity is a process, not an event or a pre-given entity. Hall elegantly commented on this transformative nature of cultural identity. He contended that

Actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being; not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves (1996: 4 emphasis is mine).

What Hall and other social constructionist theorists seem to emphasize is that cultural identity is a dynamic process but not an essentialist one. This bestows the concept with considerable flexibility and adaptability; two aspects that every cultural community needs to create social and cultural coherence while preserving a constant mechanism of self-identification, and self-fashioning. In this vital process of cultural identity formation, language looms large as a major player in the field of the conceptualization of identity. I will explore the relationship between the concept of language and that of identity in more details in the subsequent section. Now it suffices to evince that no identity is realizable without a system of communication and representation where language is absolutely indispensable. The differential realization of identity and its multiple colors paves the way for the second understanding of the concept of cultural identity. I briefly explain it below.

The second conceptualization of identity is the most salient one within the postmodernist theory. It argues that identity is rather the cultural and ideological work of the discovery and creation of difference. Thus identity is positional and situational since it is the end product of historical as well as relational experiences. It is neither essentialist nor fixed; it is rather positional and strategic.
In this context, identity is governed by the rules of change and transformation that result from a continuous contrast with someone else’s identity. It is the work of difference; the politics of difference. So, cultural identity is always a provisional and the unstable effect of marking differences. It is a negative construction rather than a positive one. By negativity, I mean that cultural identity is defined by what it is not more than being the outcome of what it is. Hall argues that “Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself” (1991:21). Consequently, the “[O]ther” has a crucial part in the social and cultural construction of the “I”. The project of construction is a bilateral one that succeeds only by the concerted efforts of both the insiders and the outsiders. This collective and reciprocal enactment of identity would result in the creation of a multiple, fractured and multidimensional concept of cultural identity. Social agents perform different subject positions in their social structures. This depends on the different affiliations that they may privilege at different times and in different socio-cultural contexts. Being context-governed, people are identities bearers. They do not have a single identity. Jay Lemke observes:

we are always ourselves, but who we are, who we portray ourselves as being, who we are construed as being changes with interactants and settings, with age of life. Identities develop and change, they are at least multi-faceted if not in fact plural. Their consistency and continuity are our constructions, mandated by our cultural notions of the kinds of selves that are normal and abnormal in our community, (2008: 19).

To recapitulate, cultural identities are positional and dynamic. They are equally multifaceted and socially constructed. Social identities are multiple and collective, and while individual identity is personal and stresses sameness, social identity is rather the marker and marker of difference. As seen before, socio-cultural identity is constructed against a real or imagined other. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2004),

social grouping is a process not merely of discovering or acknowledging a similarity that precedes and establishes identity but, more fundamentally, of inventing similarity by downplaying difference. [...] The perception of shared identity often requires as its foil a sense of alterity, of an Other who can be positioned against those socially constituted as the same. (p. 371)

It is the aspect of the social constructed and invented nature of the concept of cultural identity that allowed considerable socio-cultural and political engineering. Such engineering was initiated by various British academic and political circles under the umbrella of the politics of ethnic integration. Whether the preferred model of integration was assimilationist (monoculturalist) or pluralist (multiculturalist), different values and principles have been cast as
constitutive of the British national identity. One fundamental aspect of such Britishness has been the English language.

**Cultural identity and the politics of language planning:**

Even though a multicultural state attempts to create an egalitarian framework in which all cultures are treated equally, there is a tendency to prioritize one at the expense of others. The state may prohibit racial discrimination and race-related marginalization. It may equally avoid the establishment of an official religious system. However, multicultural states cannot be neutral when language-related matters are under consideration. The multicultural state will necessarily establish one specific language as the dominant means of communication in schooling and in its delivery of public services. The linguistic preference, whether unintentional or intentional, would translate into cultural, political and economic disequilibrium in the relations of power between the different cultures constitutive of a given polity. After all, language is considered as a paradigmatic marker of culture. Moreover, language/cultural planning has a symbolic dimension. It is a symbolic organization of the social and cultural aspects of society. The culture or language that is projected as dominant publicly will empower its speakers and holders and constrain others.

A crucial question needs to be tackled whenever language or identity is under scrutiny. Here it is: Why is language so central to identity? A possible answer was forwarded by the British socio-linguist John Edwards in his masterpiece *Language and Identity* (2009). In the introduction of his book, Edwards commented that "identity is at the heart of the person, and the group, and the connective tissue that links them. People need psychosocial 'anchors': it is as simple as that" (Edwards, 2009, p. 2).

It seems that identity is the socio-cultural glue that gives any community its raison d'être. Thus, identity is an individual need; a need for belonging to a certain social and cultural community. But also, identity is a collective need when it is attached to culture. Edwards adds that it “is also clear that identities very rarely exist singly: on the contrary, we all possess a number of identities – or facets of one overarching identity, if you prefer – the salience of which can be expected to wax and wane according to circumstance and context. (2009: 2). Identities are the product of various social and cultural subject positions and structures. The close relationship between identity and language urged social theorists like John Joseph (2004) to argue that no study of language is possible without the study of identity. Joseph (2004) observed that

> Any study of language needs to take consideration of identity if it is to be full and rich and meaningful, because identity is itself at the very heart of what language is about, how it operates, why and how it came into existence and evolved as it did, how it is learned and how it is used, every day, by every user, every time it is used. (p. 224)

I agree with Joseph on the centrality of language in understanding identity, but I add that no study of identity is complete without the consideration of language and culture. As I mentioned
elsewhere, I take culture and language to be identical given the integral relationship between the two concepts. I briefly consider the theoretical trajectories of both language and culture. The popular anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) defines culture as “a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life”. (p. 89). This very definition can be easily applied to the definition of the language itself. Thus, language is also a system of communication that is pregnant with symbols, knowledge, and worldviews. I perceive the relation between the two concepts as content (culture) and container (language). They are virtually inseparable.

The relationship between language and culture has been the concern of numerous studies, both in anthropology; cultural studies and language studies (Edwards, 2009 and Joseph, 2004). Language is the ultimate and the most crucial human invention. Robert Bunge (1992) notes that "language is not just another thing we do as humans - it is the thing we do. It is a total environment: we live in language as a fish lives in water" (p. 376). Hence, language is vital to cultural expressions and cultural formations. Language planning is also cultural planning that is intended to serve a number of social and political aims. This emanates, I think, from the close relations between language and culture. The representations, perceptions and cultural beliefs or values of any human society are encoded in the language itself. For Joshua A. Fishman (1991), language is always linked to a given ethno-culture which makes such an alliance (culture and language) vital in formulating and expressing the worldviews of that culture. This intimate and intricate link, conceived between language and culture, implies that the ethnic identity is only expressible with/within a certain linguistic and cultural system of a given ethnic community. After all, humans are linguistic and cultural beings. Hence, the concept of “languaculture” has gained plausible currency in sociology, linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies as a concept that encompasses the close relations between language and culture. (Agar, M. 1991 and Risager, K., 2005).

Clearly, language and culture are intricately related and inter-dependent. Language is constituted by culture, while culture is influenced by language. Understanding the nature of the possible relations between language and culture is vital in the process of learning another language and mastering another culture. As such language is not a mere tool for the exchange of information, but it is a symbolic system with the discursive power to create and shape symbolic realities. These realities may include different values, perceptions and above all identities. The process of identity creation is organized around the concept of discourse and the practice of discursive formation. Language, being the system of symbolic creation and representation of culture, is essential to cultural identity. People seem to live with and in languages.

Thus, as far as minority groups are concerned, different ethnic and cultural communities while integrating into the mainstream culture of the destination society keep using their mother tongue. This linguistic choice is represented as an act of cultural identification and resistance of the
cultural and linguistic hegemony of the host society. Also, national minorities such as aboriginal communities in countries like Canada and Australia or Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, tend to preserve their native cultural system mainly via the use of their national languages. Language turns out to be an act of identity assertion in multicultural, multiethnic and multinational societies. Moreover, linguistic differences are also often considered as the marker and maker of another culture. Ethnic and cultural communities shape their distinctive identities via the use of their specific languages within a multi-linguistic framework.

In their crucial book *Raciolinguistics: how language shapes our ideas about race*, the anthropologist Samy Alim *et al* (2016) investigate the intricate relationship between language, racial identity, and power distribution. In this book, Alim examines how language shaped racial identity and vice versa. He took the example of the ex-American president Barack Obama as a critical case study. According to his arguments, Obama was switching from one linguistic variety to another in his public political speech to meet the expectations of his diverse audiences. He tended to use a “black preacher style” when addressing black audiences while using normal standard English in his speech directed to the general American audiences. These multilayered strategies are the outcome of the specific cultural and racial nature of the ex-American president Barack Obama. Obama was caught between different sources of identifications which he needed to balance against each other so that to make his electorate feel comfortable as much as possible. He wanted to appear as a normal American citizen. Samy Alim thought that Obama “was caught between discriminatory discourses of race, language, citizenship, and religion, and he needed to navigate between them in order to not be seen as “the African, Muslim boogeyman” that the far right made him out to be. Language and race work together here in very important ways.”(2016).

This alliance between language and race has been approached in what came to be called Raciolinguistics; a new field of linguistic and racial studies that investigates the crucial intersections between race, langue, identity, and power. From a Raciolinguistic perspective, American society, based on the case study of Obama, was far from being post-racial. It was proved to be hyper-racial and hyper-racializing. Then, it follows that language plays a crucial role in the constitution of group consciousness and the symbolization of collective cultural and ethnic identity. Obama then planned his speeches to meet some specific cultural and political aims. There was considerable language and cultural planning in his linguistic performances.

I briefly account for the major components and processes included in the discourses and politics of language/culture planning. Language planning policy is what a government does officially through legislation to determine how languages are used and which ones are to be hegemonic in the public political sphere. Thus governments cultivate and promote the language skills needed to meet national priorities and mainstream cultural paradigms.

In general, language planning is a process designed to affect language use within a particular speech community. Language/ culture, planning is usually undertaken by the government and the
relevant official agencies. A central argument of this article is that the discursive construction of the cultural ethnic identity is to be understood as part of language planning. Language and cultural planning is thus a process of identity management in which the presentation of cultural identity is filtered through the various mechanisms of representation and articulation.

Relevant research has outlined four varieties of planning. Those planning strategies include:

1) Status planning: Where the government considers the environment in which language/culture is used, e.g. which language is the ‘official language’ of the polity; the status of the language. What is under focus are the place and functions of a given language.

2) Corpus planning: This most vital strategy where the process of modifying or imposing particular versions of linguistic and cultural views is actively pursued. Technically, the focus is on language structures such as morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures.

3) Acquisition planning: This is perhaps the most crucial step of the entire process of language/culture planning. It is the moment when the whole cultural, ideological and political repertoires are put into action. Acquisition planning is thus concerned with language distribution, which can involve providing opportunities to use a particular language to increase the number of its users. Importantly, this process of a language promotion is often associated with a less visible one of demoting another. The acquisition planning controls language spreading and growth, which are two ideological operations par excellence.

4) Prestige planning: Acquisition planning step would automatically alter and/or promote the image of a language at the expense of others. There is an underway cultural, political and social construction of a “prestige” of a language (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997 and Spolsky, 2004). In the case of Britain, the English language seems to enjoy such hegemonic prestige with some differentiated extents according to the dominant integration paradigm of the day. For instance, the hegemony of the English language during the assimilationist era was absolute compared to its position during the multicultural period. I will refer to those varieties in my scrutiny of the relationship between language/culture planning and the various models of integration that post-war Britain has witnessed.

The political engineering of cultural identity: case study British ethnic identities

The British national identity or Britishness has been the organizing discursive formation and rhetoric of how the British polity treated its ethnic and cultural minorities. The central aim was how to integrate the different cultural and ethnic structures into a unique and cohesive British socio-cultural fabric. Different approaches to integration have been applied to cope with the multi-ethnic character of post-war Britain. In this process of self-definition and other integration,
the English language has played a pivotal decisive role. The former British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed the need to consider the English language as constitutive of the meaning of the national identity, being a source of unity and cultural identification. In 2006, as part of his ‘Our Nation’s Future’ speeches, the New Labour leader Blair firmly placed the English language at the very heart and essence of Britain’s national identity. He declared that

We should share a common language. Equal opportunity for all groups requires that they be conversant in that common language. It is a matter both of cohesion and of justice that we should set the use of English as a condition of citizenship. In addition, for those who wish to take up residence permanently in the UK, we will include a requirement to pass an English test before such permanent residency is granted (Blair 2006).

Hence, it seems that language is a fundamental aspect or value of the British national identity. It is equally a gatekeeper of citizenship rights and responsibilities. Blair was not by any means unique in celebrating the English language as a prerequisite to obtain British citizenship and uphold the British identity. This type of discourse has always been ubiquitous either explicitly or implicitly in the various approaches of integrating the new immigrant and ethnic minorities.

Theoretically speaking, two major paradigms of integrating ethnic minorities into mainstream societies have been identified by different political scientists and cultural critics. Those different models are roughly categorized into a monocultural approach or alternatively called the assimilationist model, and another multicultural approach or pluralist model. However, my ethnographic analysis of the British race-related history could be methodologically divided into three major historical moments. The first era extends during the 1940s and the 1960s, which was largely dominated by what can be termed racial laissez-faire politics. We can call it the assimilationist era as well. The second period covers the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s during which the politics of multiculturalism and ethnic pluralism were championed. The last one took shape during the 2000s until the 2010s. This last period can be named the integrationist model where an intricate balance social cohesion and cultural diversity has been sought. Importantly, the politics of language and cultural planning has always been present with different paces and depths.

I account for the major principles and discourses of those broad race-related approaches in the following few paragraphs. Yet it is important to notice that within the British context, different variants of those approaches were used in different historical moments though intersections between them were also noticed (Parekh, 1998).

The immediate post-war era witnessed the emergence of what can be termed the racial consensus which was based on some fundamental theoretical conceptions largely derived from the teachings of the Chicago School of sociology in America. The underlying explanatory
assumption is that the immigrants were bearers of alien cultures and they may disturb the serenity 
and stability of the host community. However, given enough time and tolerance, they will 
assemble into the socio-cultural fabric of the destination culture and socio-cultural order is 
finally restored. Within the British context, such ideological convictions were largely governed 
by economic considerations. Immigrant minorities, largely South Asians, came to Britain as an 
economic necessity to contribute to the reconstruction plans after the war. Christina Julios (2008) 
argued that such an era was characterized by what could be termed the racial laissez-faire politics 
the aim of which was to keep the status quo. As explained earlier, such race-related policies were 
built on a deep assumption that assimilation of immigrants will ensue naturally with no need for 
any substantial interventionism. In that project, the mainstream British language and culture were 
depicted as the norm while those of newcomers were seen as a deviation.

Hence, Britishness was not an urgent issue since Englishness was constructed as the essence 
of the British national identity; Englishness with a very emphasis on English culture and 
language. In fact, the British national identity was conceived as secure since it indulged in the 
different colonial and imperial discourses of supremacy and Eurocentrism. That was a legacy of 
the days of the Empire par excellence. The British people felt no need to identify and define their 
identity since they underestimated the ethnic and cultural challenges posed by the early pre- and 
immediate post-WWII war immigration. It seems that the British knew who they were. The 
former Conservative leader Lord Norman Tebbit articulated such general “structure of feeling” 
when he affirmed that ‘Nobody used to talk about Britishness in the 1940s and 1950s, it is a 
phenomenon of large numbers of non-British people coming into the country’ (BBC News 2002). 
Political and cultural institutions like the unwritten constitution, the two houses of the Parliament 
and the Monarchy were regarded as the very essence of what it means to be a British. Paul Ward 
confirmed that:

Between 1876, when Disraeli gave Queen Victoria the title of Empress of India, and 1953, 
the monarchy was fundamentally entwined with the idea and reality of the British Empire. 
They were seen together as forming two basic foundations upon which Britishness could be 
built … The coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, after the loss of India from Empire (though not 
from the Commonwealth), continued to link monarch to Empire … The monarchy was seen as 
a device to maintain the loyalty of the dominions and colonies (2004: 14).

It follows that the institution of the Monarchy is a symbol of unity, not only within Great 
Britain but also within the Empire. The immigrants, who came to Britain immediately after the 
end of the Second World War, were in fact, joining their fellow subjects in their collective 
“Mother Country” Britain. However, those newcomers were not welcomed culturally though they 
were perceived as an economic necessity to contribute to the realization of the reconstruction 
plans. They were subject to hostile sentiments and their needs were ignored. According to 
Christina Julios (2008) “Those who were allowed to settle in Britain were largely expected to 
learn the English language, adapt to the country’s customs and become part of British society’s
The Assimilationist discourses were hegemonic and the comparatively insignificant number of immigrants was no real challenge to the Anglo-Saxon Christian White British population.

Thus, it was believed that the immigrants had no alternative but to assimilate. Yet, in response to the increasing number of immigrants and the general public malaise, the British governments of the day sought to curb the number of immigrants as much as possible. In 1962 a new Commonwealth Immigrants Act was introduced which marked a serious official attempt to manage immigration and limit the conventional immigration-related open door policy. This act was to realize three basic objectives: to control unbridled immigration, to legalize the deportation from the United Kingdom of certain Commonwealth citizens convicted of legal offenses, and to impose new qualifications required of Commonwealth citizens in order to become British citizens (Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962, Chapter 21, 1). Yet, 14 years earlier, an important act was introduced which delineated the required aspects of those who can claim British citizenship and enjoy its benefits. That act was named the British Nationality Act of 1948. Noticeably, the act stressed the need to master the English language and to comprehend English culture in order to grant citizenship to the new immigrants. Equally, newcomers must swear an oath of allegiance to ‘His Majesty King George the Sixth His Heirs and Successors’ (British Nationality Act 1948, second schedules, quoted in Julios, 2008: 87).

The cultural, linguistic and political planning was intended to assimilate “alien” ethnic minorities within the mainstream definition of culture. Immigrants needed to assimilate into the mainstream socio-cultural fabric and immerse their identities in the hegemonic white identity. The task of educating new immigrants and their children how to become British and assimilate into the British culture was carried out by the British educational discourses. The Education Act or Butler Act of 1944 was a step in the acculturation process. Education, being a major socializing tool, helped in immersing the immigrants into the mainstream cultural identity.

Though the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was a crucial step in controlling immigration, the earlier Education Act or Butler Act 1944 was in many respects the most spectacular embodiment of the politics of language and cultural planning geared to assimilatory targets. Without delving into the details of the act, it was regarded as fundamental in the British public education. Yet, as far as new immigrants are concerned, the Act was a clear instance of the Laissez-faire race-related ideology of the day. It paid no special consideration to the specific needs of the newcomers. Newcomers were simply expected to assimilate through learning the dominant language and adopt the dominant culture. Although the act stated in detail the education-related policies of the government, it paid no attention to the educational needs of the British ethnic minorities. Perhaps, that is a clear expression of the strategy of avoidance or negligence which the British governments adopted during the heydays of assimilationism.

In general, theories of cultural deficiency postulated that the educational underachievement of ethnic minorities was mainly the outcome of their cultural incompatibility with the British educational system in particular and the British culture in general. The perceived “backward” and
rural character of the countries of origin was represented as the dominant factor in the explanation of the educational failures of ethnic minorities. The same assumption was invoked in almost explaining every aspect of the lives and performances of ethnic minorities (Gillborn, 1990 and Tomlinson, 1984). In education, the followed approach was assimilatory the aim of which was to adapt the ethnic pupils to the dominant cultural patterns that were thought to offer them social and economic mobility. Yet, the overall pattern was to delineate those immigrant pupils as a problem or a burden that needed a solution. In general, the new immigrants were thus met with increasing hostility and antagonism from the white British population. Christina Julios wrote that

"Those who succeeded in overcoming such barriers to entry were largely expected to master the English language, embrace British customs and quickly become immersed into society’s everyday life. Adequate educational and social support was, nevertheless, not forthcoming. After all, this was a predominantly English-speaking white Anglo-Saxon British society whose public discourse was ultimately geared towards the preservation of the status quo. (2008: 90)."

With the increasing number of immigrants and their rising visibilities and demands, laissez-faire policies and avoidance strategies were no longer possible. A new model of integration took place which could be termed the multicultural or cultural pluralist model.

The racial consensus moved from the politics of assimilationism described above to opt for those of cultural pluralism or multiculturalism. The new consensus aimed at integrating the British ethnic minorities by recognizing their cultural systems and socio-political rights in order to lessen their increasing radicalism. The post-war racial politics of laissez-faire seemed to reach its end by the onset of the 1970s with the increasing number of ethnic minorities and their offspring in Britain. The third generation of the newcomers considered themselves as full British and sought the benefits of British citizenship. They were less ready to accept the position of second class citizens as their parents did. They organized themselves into anti-racist movements to fight against what they perceived as the racism of the white majority, but equally to churn out and resist the mechanism of the less visible and acknowledged “institutional racism”. In many respects, antiracism generated multicultural politics.

However, the antiracist movement was the outcome of a number of interrelated but complex factors the common threads among which are racial discrimination and marginalization. The various legislative acts that were introduced during the assimilationist phase culminated into the emergence of ethnic resistance movements. Anti-racist movements like Rock Against Racism (RAR) and Anti Nazi League (ANL) stressed the cultural dimensions of racism and discrimination. They represented a new development in the anti-racist movements since they moved “beyond the confines of the formal politics into the realm of popular discourses, and because each articulates in a different way with a class politics” (Gilroy, 1987: 128). Unlike the
preceding movements and organizations like the Coordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CCARD) and the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), which were reactions against racism within the legal and political frameworks, Rock Against Racism (RAR) and Anti Nazi League (ANL) expressed the new “structure of feeling” of the 1970s that stressed the importance of popular culture as a powerful force of resistance.

Equally, the Rock Against Racism (RAR) and the Anti Nazi League (ANL) were virtually considered as the spokesmen of the ethnic youth: the second and the third generations of ethnic populations. That is crucial, I believe, since those new generations considered themselves as full British citizens, not sojourners as their ancestors used to think. The two movements had additional importance as they represented a defense line against the racist political movements the most important of which was the National Front with its racist journal *Spearhead*. The Rock Against Racism (RAR), for instance, employed musical discourses to mobilize and radicalize ethnic minorities to fight for their rights. The movement’s issue of its magazine *Temporary Hoarding* (1977) publicly articulated such anti-racist overtones. It went as follows:


This type of militant discourses could be historically understood when situated within a largely anti-immigrants’ hostile context. Enoch Powell's 1968 speech in which he predicted "rivers of blood" if black immigration persisted was a leading racist and anti-immigrant discourse which indulged into nationalist utopian discourses and constructed the British identity as a pure, monolithic and ahistorical one. His speech represented immigrants and their offspring as a problem and a threat to Britishness and the British polity in general. Aided by the nationalistic media, the immigrants were depicted as “unprincipled scroungers and muggers” (Husband, 1982: 161). Those racist discourses coupled with the socio-economic and political marginalization ushered into a new escalation of ethnic and anti-racist resistance. The 1980s witnessed a number of race riots that took place in the most deprived inner British cities. For instance, the Brixton riots of 1981 in London rendered such ethnic disadvantage publicly visible and hence politically recognized. Despite the various interpretations of the events (Mason, 2000)-being, for example, the pure product of criminality-, there was an increasing tendency to consider them as legitimate reactions against the racist and discriminatory propensities of both the British state and the British society. As Lord Scarman and his subsequent official report (the *Scarman Report*) noticed, the riots could be read as the logic and natural outcome of the economic and social deprivation in the British inner cities where the overall majorities of the British ethnic population reside (Scarman,1981).

I consider that the Brixton events were a turning point in the history of the British politics of integrating ethnic minorities. They marked the apex of ethnic radicalism and militancy. Also, the
riots challenged the color-blind socio-economic policies that were pursued during the assimilationist era; there was no room for more laissez-faire racial politics of immediate post-war Britain and after. Moreover, the events signaled the onset of what came to be called multicultural politics in Britain and the end of the long-established assimilationist model of integration. As Gillborn explained: “The cultural variety, social cohesion and active resistance of ethnic minority groups ensured the failure of the “flattening process” [embodied in the assimilationist ideal-DM]” (1990: 147).

The concept of multiculturalism—whether a lived experience or a political ideology—has been defined differently by different authors and theorists. However, generally, multiculturalism entails the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity. It also demands the official consideration of ethnic minorities’ cultural systems beyond the traditional politics of tolerance. Multiculturalism is not simply a question of tolerance but fundamentally one of recognition (Taylor, 1994). Without delving into the large literature on multiculturalism and multicultural politics, the idea of multiculturalism is dedicated to the possible (maybe best) ways to understand and respond to the cultural and religious challenges associated with diverse ethnic minorities. The word has often been used in its descriptive dimension to churn out aspects of cultural and ethnic diversities in multicultural societies like Britain.

However, we need to appraise its prescriptive dimension as well. Since it is this prescriptive aspect that turns multiculturalism into an ideological and political concept rather than a social and cultural one. As stated earlier, multiculturalism is concerned mainly with the politics of recognition. Yet what is to be recognized is the most crucial aspect of multiculturalism. It has been widely argued that multiculturalism is closely linked to the “politics of identity” and those of “difference” (Gutmann 2003, Taylor, 1994 and Young 1990). Hence, multiculturalism is concerned with identity and difference management in which culture and language play paramount roles. To a considerable extent, multiculturalism is another dimension/extension of multilingualism and vice versa. As Sarah Song argued, “language and religion are at the heart of many claims for cultural accommodation by immigrants” (Song, 2017). So issues of language and cultural planning are prime in the new multicultural settlement. The British ethnic minorities asked for the recognition and promotion of their cultures and languages. Now, the British authorities seemed to move from the language planning paradigm to the “multi-language” planning one. However, based on my analysis of the developing multicultural discourses in contemporary Britain, this process of planning has become a multilateral process in which ethnic minorities themselves had a crucial say.

To this end, the 1985 Swann Report was a fundamental document in reflecting and constructing the new multicultural character of 1980’s Britain. The lengthy report (more than 800 pages) investigated the educational conditions of namely ethnic pupils within the British educational system. The report worked within the ideological assumptions that Britain was no longer a pure mono-cultural and mono-linguistic community. Accordingly, the British authorities
had to take this novel situation into account when designing educational curricula. Interestingly, the report suggested that the educational underachievement of non-English-speaking ethnic pupils was the outcome of cultural and linguistic planning that was adopted by the British governments during the assimilationist era. The report stated that

Recognising the contribution of schools in preparing all pupils for life in a society which is both multi-racial and culturally diverse, the Committee is required to review, in relation to schools, the educational needs and attainments of children from ethnic minority groups, taking account, as necessary, of factors outside the formal education system relevant to school performance, including influences in early childhood and prospects for school leavers (DES 1985, para. 2, p. vii).

Therefore, the Swann Report considered linguistic diversity as positive and as a cultural “asset” that multicultural Britain had to valorize. That happens by rendering the British educational system multicultural and responsive to the specific needs of its various ethnic, cultural, religious and social minorities. ‘Education for All’ was the emblem of the report which echoed the British multicultural slogan “inclusion for all, exclusion for none”. As such, both minorities and majorities were expected to benefit from the vision and recommendation of the Swann Report.

The report firmly argues that

In our view, ‘Education for All’ should involve more than learning more about the cultures and lifestyles of various ethnic groups; it should also seek to develop in all pupils, both ethnic majority and minority, a flexibility of mind and an ability to analyse critically and rationally the nature of British society today within a global context. The reality of British society now and in the future, is that a variety of ethnic groups, with their own distinct lifestyles and value systems will be living together (DES 1985, para. 2.7, 324).

To secure a successful education to the children of ethnic minorities, the report suggests that the English language has to be taught as a second language to those ethnic pupils. This entails that their first language is to be respected and valorized within the novel multicultural approach. Again, language planning has been opted for as a strategy to encourage ethnic minorities’ cultures. Yet, English is constructed as the major language whose mastery is a necessity to benefit from the belonging to the British community and enjoy the advantages of British citizenship.

Significantly, the Swann Report was engaged to not only the acknowledgment of the multicultural nature of Britain but equally, it demanded that the British people embrace and
promote such multiculturalism. The report turns out, I believe, to be constitutive more than descriptive of the British multicultural character. According to the discourses of the report, such public embracement can take place only when the cultural and linguistic needs of ethnic minorities are adequately met. Thus, it seems that

This report is concerned primarily to change behavior and attitudes. They need to change throughout Britain, and while the education system must not be expected to carry the whole of the burden of that change, schools in particular are uniquely well placed to take a lead role. Britain has evolved, over many centuries, institutions and traditions which, whatever their shortcomings, have been taken as models by many nations, and were indeed an important part of the attraction of this country to the ethnic minorities who are the essential concern of our report. It is because we believe that everyone in Britain has a direct interest in ensuring that those institutions and the attitudes, which inform them, change to take full account of the pluralism, which is now, a marked feature of British life, that we make our recommendations (DES 1985, para. 1.1, 767).

Such far-reaching and utopian discourses of the Swann Report made it a milestone in the emergence of multicultural politics in Britain. It celebrated the multicultural components of the official British educational curricula and asked for their existence when they are missing. The Swann Report’s ideological discursive formations contributed to coloring the recommendations of the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988. The Education Reform Act continued within the same line of thought and provided more ethnicity-friendly procedures. Language was pivotal to the ideological constructions of the act. In important ways, the act, though working within the multicultural framework, gave special prominence to the teaching and learning of English language (Julios, 2008). My quantitative analysis of the act showed the words “English” and “English language” were used just twice in an act of 302 pages.

Yet, it was clear that the English language was depicted as the norm while other languages were represented as additional linguistic competencies that can benefit in raising cultural awareness and sensitivity. By and large, it was evident that multiculturalism gathered momentum during the 1980s and 1990s. For instance, the New Labour Government under Tony Blair made multicultural education its priority and an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant was issued in 1999 to take the needs of ethnic minorities’ pupils into account. Yet, notably, there seemed to be a systematic distinction between the public sphere and the private one within the multicultural paradigm. This distinction harmed cultural and ethnic minorities who were expected to go multicultural privately and comply with the socio-political and even cultural norms of the majority in public. The language and cultural planning that seeks to maintain a strict divide between the public and private spheres in cultural pluralist models of ethnic integration may result in promoting the hegemony of a certain linguistic and cultural community at the expense of the less advantaged ones. As suggested above, such a divide is likely to severely hamper the
natural development of ethnic minorities. Parekh stated one important observation of the cultural and social impact that lingua-cultural planning may have on different generations of the British ethnic population. I quote him at length below to decipher the pertinence of such testimony. Parekh stated:

A couple of years ago when I was travelling by train from London to Hull, I was sitting opposite an elderly Pakistani couple and next to their adolescent daughter. When the crowded train pulled out of King’s Cross station, the parents began to talk in Urdu. The girl felt restless and nervous and began making strange signals to them. As they carried on with their conversation for a few more minutes, she angrily leaned over the table and asked them to shut up. When the confused mother asked for an explanation, the girl shot back: ‘just as you do not expose your private parts in public, you do not speak that language in public (1998: 9)

This observation is crucial and expressive of a number of cultural, political and linguistic implications. Those implications echo the depth of the cultural and linguistic policies adopted by the various British governments in response to the need to integrate their new immigrant and ethnic communities in whatever integration model they opted for. However, by the end of the 20thc and after, Britain witnessed what came to be termed the “multicultural backlash” during which multiculturalism with its race-related policies came under increasing critique and erasure. The British cultural critic Stuart Hall once commented that:

It is perfectly possible that what is politically progressive and opens us new discursive opportunities in the 1970s and 1980s can become a form of closure-and have a repressive value- by the time it is installed as the dominant genre….It will run out of steam; it will become a style; people will use it not because it opens up anything but because they are spoken by it, and at that point, you need another shift (1992: 15).

This prophetic statement can perfectly, I believe, reflect the situation of multiculturalism by the end of the 1990s in Britain. The highly cherished politics of cultural pluralism seemed to run out of steam and people started to question the very meaning and relevance of multiculturalism in contemporary Britain. The multicultural paradigm was eradicated with the increasing cultural fragmentation that Britain witnessed. The race riots of 2001 in the cities of Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham signaled the number of weaknesses that the multicultural paradigm seemed to suffer from. It was argued that the institutionalization of multiculturalism harmed cultural diversity more than benefited it (Malik, 2001, 2002, and Kundnani 2002).

The multicultural politics came under stern attack from a number of politicians, academics and media analysts. In brief, multiculturalism was accused of nourishing cultural and social division epitomized mainly in the increasing residential segregation along ethnic and racial lines. Hence,
the ethnic fiefdoms and enclaves became characteristic of the major inner British cities. The ghettoization model seemed to materialize in Britain with its increasing underclass traits.

Immediately after the 2001 race riots, two national reports were produced (the *Cantle Report* and the *Denham Report*) to understand and recommend on the nature, causes, and aspects of such events. Though identified numerous reasons for the eruption of violence in the northern cities of England during the spring and summer of 2001 – such as the socio-economic deprivation of ethnic minorities in particular, and the entire population in general, irresponsible, negative media coverage of ethnic issues and extremist group practices – the *Cantle Report* and the *Denham Report* shed the light primarily on the question of the increasing ethnic concentration and residential self-segregation. In those two reports, ethnic segregation (in all its dimensions) seemed to be the key cause and a consequence of inter-ethnic friction in Britain. Central to the concept of ethnic segregation discourse was the phrase coined by Ted Cantle and his group: “the series of parallel lives” (Cantle, 2001: 9, the emphasis is mine) that all the communities were leading. The phrase “parallel lives” seemed to sum up all the official discourse of ethnic segregation and community cohesion. So multiculturalism prevented common and mutual lives. Consequently, the governments of the day seemed to be encouraging social/community cohesion in order to make those “parallel lives” meet. The wisdom was to finish off the underlying cause (multiculturalism) in order to curb the negative outcomes (parallel lives).

Another line of criticism considered multiculturalism itself as a containment strategy used by the New Right Thatcher governments and followed by subsequent ones in order to wipe out the increasing ebb of anti-racist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. It was also a sort of socio-cultural engineering that was intended to fragment the unity of such anti-racism and lessen their militant radical activities (Brixton 1981 events). In response to the 2001 race riots in Britain, Kenan Malik argued that “Far from being a response to demands from local communities, multiculturalism was imposed from the top, the product of policies instituted by national governments and local authorities *in order to defuse the anger created by racism*” (Malik, 2001, emphasis is mine). Thus, a more dose of culture was thought to be the solution to the increasing power of anti-racist movements. The case was typical of the conventional imperial policy of “Divide You Rule”. Multiculturalism was then a political ideology that sought to divide ethnic minorities’ more than uniting them and serving their genuine political, social and economic interest.

The most common cause that united ethnic minorities was then fragmented along cultural cleavages. Malik examined the case study of Bradford to evince the impact of the ideology of multiculturalism on Bradfordian South Asian minorities. He commented that the overall South Asian umbrella of the 1970s Asian Youth Movement was subdivided along cultural and religious lines to develop into a Hindu and Sikh Institute of Asian Business, a Hindu Economic Development Forum and a Muslim-dominated Asian Business and Processional Club during the multicultural age (Malik, 2001). The same pattern was registered in other multiethnic and
multicultural British cities. Kundnani (2002) expressed the same idea when he argued that multiculturalism stifled true diversity and hindered the potentials of the British ethnic populations. Kundnani wrote that

Multiculturalism became an ideology of conservatism, of preserving the status quo intact, in the face of a real desire to move forward. As post-modern theories of “hybridity” became popular in academia, cultural difference came to be seen as an end in itself, rather than an expression of revolt, and the concept of culture became a straitjacket, hindering rather than helping the fight against race and class oppressions (Kundnani, 2002).

This brief outline of the major criticisms of the multicultural settlement set the stage for the emergence of an alternative integrationist model which took community cohesion as its ultimate goal. The third ethnic integrationist paradigm has been dominant during the 2000s until the 2010s. Its basic ideological assumption has been the need to create unity out of diversity. The unprecedented race relations riots that took place in a number of British northern cities alarmed the British governments and mainstream society about the lack of cultural and social cohesion within the British polity. Issues of residential segregation and the lack of inter-ethnic communication came to the fore as the pressing problems that needed urgent intervention. The suggested solution was more integrationist politics and a backlash against multicultural ones. Hence, multicultural politics have been represented as the major cause of the lack of social cohesion and the escalation of ethnic violence. Just as Brixton events of 1981 signaled the onset of the multicultural politics, those of 2001 in some northern British cities, paved the way for the emergence of community cohesion and cultural diversity phase in the history of the British race-related politics.

To claim that the race riots of 2001 were the categorical date of the cohesion-oriented discourses’ appearance is rather a methodological time cut. The rejection of the multicultural settlement and the preference of more Anglocentric integration politics have always been present in the British politics and mainstream public opinion. For instance, in the city of Bradford, a local report on the situation of multiculturalism and its results was produced even before the outbreak of the 2001 racial disturbances. The local report was entitled Community Pride not prejudice. Even before the race riots, the report identified ethnic residential segregation as the major trigger of the socio-cultural fragmentation the victim of which was community cohesion. Community Pride not prejudice report was working in response to the legal requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000. The act placed on public bodies a new positive obligation to promote equality and harmony. Also, it provided a legislative framework within which community cohesion can be developed.

Nevertheless, the 2001 race riots and the more spectacular September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States were a major catalyst to the flourishing of social cohesion agenda in Britain. A number of national and local reports were produced to tackle the perceived problem of cultural
and social divisions and set out the best practices and procedures to restore cultural harmony and social cohesion. The *Oldham Report*, the *Burnley Report*, the *Cantle Report*, and the *Denham Report* agreed that, although other complex factors such as racism, unemployment, and cultural marginalization contributed to the lack of social cohesion, ethnic minorities’ cultural separateness and residential segregation had the lion’s share in creating “parallel lives” and mutually exclusive ethnic “comfort zones”. It was widely agreed that multiculturalism was responsible for the ethnic separateness and the resultant ethnic conflicts.

The alternative discourse of governance has been ‘community cohesion”; the *Cantle Report* was its blueprint. Again, there seems a U-turn in British race-related politics. What is named cohesion discourses is in many respects a rejuvenation of the immediate post-war assimilationist politics. The above stated local and national reports agreed (with differentiated extents) that the problem was the cultural differences of the British ethnic minorities. Though some pro-multiculturalism reports such as the *Parekh Report* (Pilkington, 2003) attempted to defend the diverse and multicultural nature of the contemporary British community, the ideological and political tide seemed to favour those discourses that played down multiculturalism and asked for new formulas of integrationism. Immediately after the 2001 riots, a Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT) was set up to investigate the causes of the riots. It produced the *Cantle Report* along with another inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion that produced the other influential *Denham Report*. The two reports framed the political jargon of the then New Labour government. The cultural difference was depicted as the problem that needed an urgent reconceptualization and reconfiguration of the meaning of the national identity in which linguistic politics played a vital role. Important documents, such as *The New and the Old* (2003) and *Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration* (2004), were produced to support the emerging political discourses of community cohesion. The term “multiculturalism” was virtually absent in those official political documents (Grillo, 2005) which evinces that community cohesion politics were to be understood as the antithesis of those of multiculturalism.

Community cohesion politics attempted to promote intercultural contact by mixing public spaces as much as possible so that people from different cultures can communicate and find common value backgrounds. However, to the interest of my arguments in this article, the English language was explicitly represented as a marker and maker of the British national identity. The English language has been considered as the route to achieving this community cohesion, shared common values and a sort of a common national identity. A White Paper entitled *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (2001) identified the agenda of the community cohesion. Among other crucial recommendations, the Paper treated the question of the British nationality and its close relationship to the English language; a relationship that was conceived as intimate and inseparable. Thus the British identity was understood as reflecting the character of the English language and culture. Also, any immigrant desiring to become British and enjoy the benefits of British citizenship had to learn English and prove apt proficiency in its use. The Paper states that
Becoming a British through registration or naturalization is – or should be – a significant life event. It can be seen as an act of commitment to Britain and an important step in the process of achieving integration into our society. Yet, in spite of this, some applicants for naturalization do not have much practical knowledge about British life or [English] language, possibly leaving them vulnerable and ill-equipped to take an active role in society. This can lead to social exclusion and may contribute to problems of polarization between communities. We need a sense of civic identity and shared values; and knowledge of the English language … can undoubtedly support this objective (Home Office, 2001: 32).

So, no British citizenship is granted without the linguistic and cultural knowledge of British society and British identity. Applicants for such a citizenship will need to “produce certificates showing that they have passed a language test, if necessary after having taken part in a suitable course” (Home Office: 2001, chap. 2, para. 2.14: 32). The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002 confirmed such language/cultural planning politics of the “Cohesionist Agenda”. The Act asked for three major requirements that have to be met by any nationality applicant:

- A sufficient knowledge of a “British” language (English, Welsh, or Scottish Gaelic).
- Sufficient knowledge of British culture and way of life.
- Taking up a Citizenship Oath and a Pledge at a civil ceremony that shows his/her loyalty to and acceptance of British identity and polity.

Those types of discourses ushered into a neo-assimilationist agenda that substituted that of multiculturalism. Julios commented that

The making of such criteria a condition for attaining naturalization can be seen as the strongest indication yet of the paradigm shift taking place within government. Requiring would-be British citizens to demonstrate knowledge of the English language, acquiescence with Britain’s way of life as well as the making of a public commitment to our common values and democratic principles indeed reflects a concerted move towards integration and away from multiculturalism (2008: 121).

I share the same attitude of Christina Julios, and I add that the English language has been the main medium through which various strategies of integration were articulated. Language planning was evident in the adopted educational choices. While immigrants and ethnic minorities were encouraged to adopt the British and Anglo-Saxon worldviews along with the English language, mainstream white pupils were discouraged from learning Modern Foreign Languages, and hence foreign cultures. The British educational system seemed to go mono-cultural during the community cohesion era. A Green Paper entitled Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards
reflected such assimilatory, mono-cultural and Anglo-centric agenda when it stated that only English, Mathematics, Science and ICT were essential to the progression in the educational career. Modern Foreign Languages were, thus, relegated to a secondary, if not marginal, position. The English language was represented as a national issue and national priority while other languages were regarded as local and sectional. The Green Paper confirmed this when it indicated that

We would expect all schools to make Modern Foreign Languages, Design and Technology, the Arts and the Humanities available, but how schools provide such entitlement to access in these subjects is a matter for local decision (DfES 2002, ch. 3, para. 17, 4).

This discourse could be read as an official shift from multiculturalism to neo-assimilationism, from multilingual education to a predominantly assimilatory and nationalist one. Despite the fact that subsequent White Papers such as Education and Skills (2005) attempted to restore a certain balance between the national language (English) and other foreign languages (ethnic languages), English was still represented as the normal, the central, and the obligatory while others were regarded as deviant, secondary and optional. This is a case of cultural and social engineering via language planning.

The contemporary British government has produced a guide to those would-be immigrants that shows them how to apply for British citizenship. The guide is entitled “Prove your knowledge of English for citizenship and settling” and it is produced by the British Home office. Expectedly, the English language is cast as a major requirement for belonging. Yet, some exceptions are tolerated by the British authorities. Those exceptions are for those who are aged over 65; people whose future is behind them. Second, the disabled, because of a long-term physical or mental condition, are obliged to provide a completed exemption form or letter from a doctor confirming their physical or mental condition, in order to be exempted from learning English. Ironically, it seems that the English language is represented as the language of the sane, the active and the future-looking citizens while other languages are dedicated to those who have no future or suffer from a certain anomaly.

**Conclusion:**

The importance of language in shaping and expressing cultural identity has been supported by numerous academic researches. People are cultural agents who live in and through their symbolic interactive system (Language). Not surprisingly, the English language has always been deemed as integral and constitutive of the British cultural identity. However, as shown in this article, cultural identity is not that essentialist concept. The concept is elusive and multifaceted. Nevertheless, the British political and cultural discourses of integration seemed to hold fixed and
rigid understandings of the concept of British identity. The concept is thus materialized in a number of procedural policies (like different pieces of legislation) and in an increasing belief that the English language/culture is integral of what means to be a British. Roughly, post-war Britain witnessed three major integration models that reflected the changing character of the British ethnic and cultural demography. A steady move from the assimilationist model to the multicultural, to the community cohesion-related model has been churned out within the British polity. While the laissez-faire approach of the early 20thc and the immediate post-war era sought to keep the status quo in which the Anglo-Saxon white culture had the upper hand, the multicultural approach of the late 20thc aimed to accommodate the needs and interests of the increasingly visible British ethnic minorities. The current community cohesion-oriented approach champions the commonalities of the socio-cultural values and national British identity.

Yet, in all those approaches, the English language looms large as fundamental in understanding, creating and representing Britishness. I argue that the current model of integration is of particular importance. It is so since it tries to strike an intricate balance between two seemingly contradictory values: social cohesion and cultural diversity. Equally, the new model is one that searches for unity within diversity. Language/cultural planning has a crucial role to play in that difficult project.

The current politics of community cohesion are to be understood as a backlash against the ideology of multiculturalism. It seems that community cohesion is a restoration of the old politics of assimilationism. It virtually asked for the same ideological assumptions of the assimilatory agenda: shared national identity, common values, problematic cultural difference, and social cohesion. However, importantly, the politics of community cohesion witnessed a decisive shift in the use of political terminology. It ignored the use of race-related terminology so that to avoid racialized discursive formations. Lewis and Neal note that “what has been particularly apparent has been a partial shift away from affirmations of British multiculture towards a (re)embracing of older notions of assimilationism within a newer, de-racialized, language of social cohesion” (2005: 437).

These linguistic and conceptual choices reflect the delicate nature of the discourses of community cohesion as the new rhetoric of governance in Britain. The community cohesion agenda is reported to uphold a number of fundamental political and ideological assumptions notably, the centrality of the English language in the construction of Britishness, the importance of the British cultural heritage and the relevance of the British historical institutions and civil and democratic values. However, my scrutiny of the various discourses and models of integrating the British ethnic minorities reveals that the same assumptions have been incessantly embedded in the British political and cultural performances. The differences, if any, reside in the extent of celebrating such underlying values in response to the dominant paradigm of integration model, and to the general zeitgeist of the era in question. Interestingly, Christina Julios (2008) compared two identity-related statements of two different British politicians in two different political and
historical contexts to discover that they indulge in the same cultural and ideological discursive formations. The two statements were uttered by the Right Rev. Mandel Creighton, Lord Bishop of Peterborough in 1896 and that of New Labour British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2006. Creighton wrote that:

In fact, nations, as we conceive them, are founded upon a consciousness of common interests and ideas, which are the result of a long and complicated experience. That consciousness separates them from other nations who do not share those interests, and are consequently termed as foreigners (Creighton 1896, 8–9).

In December 2006, more than one country after, Blair explained:

when it comes to our essential values – belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment of all, respect for this country and its shared heritage – then that is where we come together, it is what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. At that point, no distinctive culture or religion supersedes our duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom (Blair 2006)

Both politicians, despite the differences stated above, presented virtually the same set of identity discourses which reflects the hard task of understanding, let alone defining the British identity. This similarity echoes the unfinished journey of creating a workable collective sense of the British cultural identity given the ever-changing nature of the British society. The restless character of Britishness is the result of living with diversity and difference and coping with the national, continental and international challenges of immigration, globalization and international terrorism.

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“Ye kin [re]read the years of my life in them walls”:
Rereading the Psychological in Eugene O’Neill’s Desire Under the Elms

By Mohamed Nejib Hizi

Abstract:
Eugene O’Neill criticism has long been centred on such notions as psychological depth, theatrical innovation, and at best, the playwright’s relation to contemporary thinkers and playwrights. This is due, among other reasons, to the well-known fact that the playwright, despite his disclaimers, relied on several assumptions of psychoanalysis as they were established in the teens and twenties American cultural scene. This interest is still promoted today by some critics, especially psychobiographers, who continue to single out the playwright’s dramatisation of psychological depth and theatrical magnitude as the chief aspect of the drama. While these aesthetic elements are certainly important, they bespeak other historical, cultural and ideological concerns. In outlining the social aspect of O’Neill’s work, certain postmodern critics, taken individually, also overlooked a number of issues. O’Neill’s 1924 drama Desire Under the Elms is such an important work that communicates through the ostensibly self-sufficient psychological depth of its characters a number of wider concerns.

Operating essentially within a New Historicist framework, the present study will attempt to re-read such psychological aesthetics as, depth psychology, psychoanalysis, experimentation, and gothicised patterns, by accounting, in the first place on the politics of the psychological discourse in the play, particularly the sexualised discourse; as well as the different social concerns tacitly communicated in the drama, ranging from gender concerns, preoccupations with the fate of the American family, to reflections about religion in an early twentieth century American context. This research also aims to show the ambivalences shaping the playwright’s dramatisation of these issues, especially in relation to gender, where he both inscribes and subverts certain gendered myths established by Modernism.

Until recently, Eugene O’Neill is still chiefly studied from the standpoint of formalism and the emphasis on the text alone, or from the perspective of psychobiography relating the playwright’s work to his life. A recent documentary on O’Neill (2006) produced by WGBA Educational Foundation and Steeplechase Films, Inc, gathered biographers and scholars like Arthur and Barbara Gelb and Edward L. Shaughnessey, actors like Al Paccino and Robert Sean Leonard, and other figures including directors and theatre professionals to highlight the
playwright’s theatrical magnitude, universal appeal, and “psychic ventilation,” to use Jelliffe and Brink’s expression (*Psychoanalysis and the Drama* qtd. in Pfister 60).

While we cannot deny the importance of the psychological dimension in the playwright’s life and work, the present paper will depart from the premises of the psychological aesthetics in Eugene O’Neill’s 1924 play, *Desire Under the Elms* to discuss what Joel Pfister referred to as “the cross-ideological cross currents that O’Neill channeled and that channeled him into drama” (13). The paper is divided into two parts. The first part expounds the social implications of the psychological discourse itself, by making reference to the historical, cultural and ideological implications of the category of psychological depth. Reference will also be made to the discourse of sexuality that is closely intertwined with the psychological discourse – and as refracted in the drama. The second part will argue how the different psychological aesthetics: monologues, impressionism, gothicised structure, etc. communicate a number of wider social concerns, namely issues about the American family, gender, religion, but also nationalistic concerns, that is to say American concerns. Crucial to note, and as the title suggests, this paper proposes to re-read not only the popular psychological reviews of the drama, but also to re-read several postmodernist writings which have themselves revised these reviews.

Let me begin by the title. “Ye kin read the years of my life in them walls” is taken from a crucial speech, a monologue made by the protagonist of this play, Ephraim Cabot, which occurs exactly in the middle of the play (Part two, Scene Two), a speech in which Ephraim is recounting, to his third wife whose thoughts are only with her stepson as the stage directions tell us, how he came to build his farmhouse and the different tribulations he encountered and the sacrifices he has made to fulfill his God’s purposes as he claims. Apart from the fact that the walls are a chronicle of Ephraim’s achievement, they are also a chronicle of his isolation, which cedes a brooding, aloof atmosphere to the scene. “Ye kin read the years of my life in them walls” also invites an attitude of psychological depth and a sense of determinism through which the whole play is meant to be read at first sight. But a closer reading will also show how this particular line, the offspring of Ephraim’s urgent desire to speak out his thoughts as the stage directions tell us: “He turns away. Abbie looks at the wall. Then, evidently unable to keep silent about his thoughts, without looking at his wife, he puts out his hand and clutches her knee” (236), is also a chronicle of other historical, cultural, and ideological concerns the whole drama communicates. But before addressing these issues, we will look first into the ideological implications of this psychological discourse as articulated not only by Ephraim Cabot but also Eben (his youngest son), and Abbie (his third wife).

In this framework, we also have to outline, briefly, a historical sketch of the emergence of psychological discourse in the 1910s United States, which was intimately in line with an old tradition of psychological realism, pioneered by such figures as Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville. “From cooper to Capote, from Poe to Lowell,” writes Albert E. Stone, in “Psychoanalysis and American literary Culture,” “much of our fiction and verse celebrates the private sensibility, its inner conflicts and social rebellions, its surreal actions and symbolic language. The same is true of O’Neill, Williams, Miller, and Albee” (310). Another more direct influence, is arguably the postulations of psychoanalysis, promoted especially by one central figure, Sigmund Freud. In this respect, Stone also writes of the influence psychoanalysis has greatly exerted on American literary culture, and culture at large, ever since Freud’s lectures at Clark University in 1909: “[T]he influence of psychoanalysis upon American literature, as upon the rest of our culture, has been pervasive, varied and problematical.” As a school of criticism, it had a major influence on
American literary scene: “A number of influential American critics have embraced psychoanalysis as the most appropriate theory and methodology for the deep study of works of art” (309).

The fact that psychoanalysis is itself a “complex cultural phenomenon,” to use Stone’s words (310) attests to one dimension of the historicity of O’Neill’s texts as they reflected to a large degree the speculations of psychoanalysis. “Twentieth century artists and writers, many of them American,” writes Stone, “have been [. . .] swept into Freud’s orbit, their imaginations derivisely altered by his metaphors and models of the human psyche.” “Hence,” he adds, “critics and clinicians confronting texts like Desire Under the Elms or Ushant or The Dream Songs find themselves gazing into mirrors whose surfaces reflect some of the same psychoanalytic assumptions which have energized their own examinations.”

These changes in the critical spectrum have led to what Joel Pfister refers to in his book, Staging Depth: Eugene O’Neill and the Politics of Psychological Discourse, as “pop psychology” (7). The critical discourse of the time, he argues, often read like “pop psychology.” Writing about O’Neill, Robert Edmond Jones, for instance, regards the playwright as one who “dives into the stream of images which has its source in the deep unknown springs of our being” (qtd. in Pfister 7). Or Joseph Wood Krutch who argues in “Drama: The God of Stumps” that the greatness of O’Neill’s art lies in the intensity of his drama, the depth of the psychological and emotional experience of his characters. “Something tempestuous in his nature,” he writes, made him a brother of tempests, and he has sought wherever he could find them the fiercest passions, less anxious to clarify their causes for the benefit of those who have peace than eager to share them, and happy if he could only be exultantly apart of their destructive fury [. . .] The meaning and unity of his work lies not in any controlling intellectual idea and certainly not in a ‘message’, but merely in the fact that each play is an experience of extraordinary intensity (73)

Nineteenth century writers – mentioned by Stone above – he points out, were also heralded for the romantic aspect of their psychological writings as he argues in his book The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne’s Fiction. He argues in the same book that these authors “contributed to the encoding of a psychological identity for the middle-class self and the middle-class family that historically makes Freud’s later invention of psychoanalysis (and its enthusiastic reception in America predictable” (qtd. in Pfister 7). The end result is that when psychoanalytic discourse became popular in the United States, criticism which partook of depth psychology and “‘deep’ literature [. . .] acquired a cultural capital – a psychological capital – that contemporary reviews of [say] Hawthorne’s reviews lacked” (qtd. in Pfister 7-8). D. H. Lawrence’s rendering of Hawthorne’s fictions as ‘classic,’ for instance, is based on the cultural value of modern psychological capital” (qtd. in Pfister 8). And O’Neill’s works of the 1920s and 30s perpetuated pop psychological discourse in the sense that they “both partook of and enhanced the glamour of the pop psychological concerns, concerns that [. . .] he at turns staged as ‘deep’ and as intriguingly theatrical” (Pfister 8).

In reaction to O’Neill biographers and reviewers who contend that O’Neill was writing deep dramas about the human psyche, Pfister argues that the playwright’s psychological drama was in part a fabricated gesture underlying unspoken motives. “O’Neill biographers and critics,” he writes, “notwithstanding their many insights have seldom considered [. . .] that O’Neill’s well-groomed, professional ‘depth,’ rather than the unmediated expression of the playwright’s poetic,
conflicted inner self, may be a calculated pose, a self-image, a conspicuous display of his ‘personal’ wealth of psychological capital that he draws on to underwrite deep dramas” (8). To provide further examples, Pfister cites Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer’s edition of O’Neill’s letters. Although they warn the readers against the ‘danger’ of considering the playwright as a wholly deep dramatist owing that to the fact that he was actually crafting a self-image, so to speak, they end up reproducing the same image of the deep O’Neill, heralding him as “the keeper of an intense flame burning out of sight of most, if not all, others” (qtd. in Pfister 8).

The social implications of ‘depth’ are expounded at length in the second chapter of Pfister’s book, “‘Depth’ as a Mass-cultural Category.” He puts O’Neill’s “investment” of depth in the context of the cultural formation of a “psychological capital” that took shape in the beginning of the twentieth century. In order to understand this investment, he tells us, we should only think of the ‘psychological’ as a “cultural category – often a category so taken for granted and internalized as natural that its social origins and ideological uses are unquestioned and therefore rendered invisible.” It is also a category which came to be represented as a “human essence that is simply discovered rather than created as an idea and made significant in ways and forms that change over time, across cultures, and within any given area” (53). Or even more, a category which “has nothing to do with social power” but one which bears of “clinical, literary, or artistic revelations” (53-54).

In the same context, he makes reference in his notes to the work of historians, sociologists, and anthropologists who, through their cross-cultural investigations, have traced the cultural and ideological inscriptions of what is known as universal emotions (239). Rodney Needham, for instance, argues in “Inner States as Universals” that: “To the extent that inner states may be discriminable as universal natural resemblances, they are in the province of physiology. If inner states are inferred from social expressions, they are social facts like other social facts” (qtd. in Pfister 240). “Anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and cultural theorists,” he concludes “are starting to think that ‘To thine own self be true’ is indeed a highly variable culturally and ideologically produced notion” (240). He aligns with the historian Jean-Pierre Vernant who eschews the psychological as a given, fixed entity and regards it instead as a social category, a marker of historical and cultural change. In light of this, Pfister does not restrict himself, in the study of O’Neill, to the history of the playwright’s family, but to other histories, that of the hothouse family, that of the Irish-American family, that of the early twentieth century psychological family, in one word “the history of the American family.” In doing so, we can “cast historical light on the broader cultural origins of O’Neill’s preoccupation with the psychological” (54).

The 1910s and the 1920s have witnessed the emergence of psychological discourse or more precisely psychoanalysis as a dominant cultural form through which various familial issues came to be approached (54), to the extent the twenties was dogged the “Psychoanalytic Age” (Shmalhausen, Why We Misbehave qtd. in Pfister 54). Why this was the case, why this “literary and cultural ‘mania psychologia’ that gripped the 1910s and 1920s,” Houston Peterson tells us in Melody of Chaos that this was due to “the disappearance of God,” “the mechanization of living and working conditions,” among other reasons, but most importantly he traces “this passion for psychologising” to “the tremendous growth of the science of psychology” and its “army of popularizers” (qtd. in Pfister 54).

Pop psychology was promoted by various public and cultural forms: by magazines, newspapers, novels, the theatre and influenced couples’ expectations about companionate
marriage and audiences who attended O’Neill’s dramas. Audiences who were attending O’Neill’s plays, therefore “wanted to imagine their personal significance in reference to notions of the psychological family.” The psychological identity O’Neill wanted to convey through his drama was one of a white-collar working class or more precisely a “professional managerial class” (55).

In “The New Psychology,” John Burnham provides a historicising of the “new psychology” when he points out that prior to psychoanalysis, twentieth-century intellectuals conceived of the sub-textual self in terms of historical and cultural issues as accounted for by social theory (qtd. in Pfister 243). With the advent of psychoanalysis, writes Pfister, depth was “both privatised and sexualized.” “By the 1920s,” he adds, “intellectuals and artists who had been converted to the privatized, psychoanalytic notion of depth and to modernism’s aesthetic of depth would often classify the socialist idea of the subtextual self as a superficial propaganda” (243).

Hailing the psychological is intriguingly explicit in the interior monologue exchange in SI between Ned Darrell, the neurologist, and Charles Marsden, the ‘repressed’ novelist, when the former pitifies the latter’s incapacity to release himself in his unconfessingly literary work: “his novels just well written surface ... no depth, no digging underneath ... why? ... has the talent but doesn’t dare ... afraid he’ll meet himself somewhere ... one of those poor devils who spend their lives trying to discover which sex they belong to!” (Plays 3:34). Commenting on these lines, Pfister argues: “Marsden’s literary superficiality is represented as a personal failing, attributable to a lack of autobiographical and psychological candor. In short, Marsden has neither confessed nor released himself through his writing. As such, his fiction is classified as a form of denial rather than a therapeutic exercise” (62). Marsden’s response, however, is more intriguingly revealing. It suggests that he almost begins to think culturally and politically of depth in the sense that he seems to envision it as “a mass-cultural discourse that is indeed transforming the way Marsden, Darrell, and members of their professional class imagine their selfhood, identity and desire” (63):

...what is his speciality? ... neurologist, I think ... I hope not psychoanalyst ... a lot to account for, Herr Freud! ... punishment to fit his crimes, be forced to listen eternally during breakfast while innumerable plain ones tell him dreams about snakes ... pah, what an easy cure-all! ... sex the philosopher’s stone ... ‘o Oedipus, O my king! The world is adopting you!’... (Plays 3:34)

The psychological discourse has also its historical and political implications. Russian semiotician V. N. Volosinov, for instance, observes in *Freudianism*, that psychoanalysis is part and parcel of contemporary bourgeois philosophies that sought “to create a world beyond the social and the historical” (qtd. in Pfister 93). “He argued,” Pfister adds, that the world these philosophers created aimed to signify the sexual as the modern essence of all meaningfulness. This meaningfulness has an ideological task. The idea of the oedipal family, for example, obscures the significance of the bourgeois family’s historical and economic position (the ‘castle and keep of capitalism’) by sexualising it, ‘as if thereby, it were made newly meaningful’: ‘The father is not the entrepreneur and the son is not his heir – the father is only the mother’s lover, and his son his rival!’ (93)

*Desire Under the Elms*, is such a play that records O’Neill’s fascination with the Oedipal Complex, though less explicitly than other plays like *Mourning Becomes Electra*. For O’Neill,
“the oedipal model of the family” was regarded as “the deepest inner drama” (Selected Letters qtd. in Pfister 93). Even critics and reviewers who did not expose this ideological work as the one posited by Volosinov, did in fact acknowledge the “too conscious, unsubtle, overt” aspect of his drama (93). The plight behind MBE as Volosinov might argue, Pfister suggests, is to relocate a historical Civil War socio-economic fabric of a family into a twentieth century pop psychological context in order to enable a Theatre Guild audience of 1931 “to mask its own class and economic significance as psychosexual” (94).

Desire Under the Elms is an example of a play that, according to Pfister, “confine[s] history to theatrical backdrop” (93). Equating between it and André Tridon’s Psychoanalysis and Love (1922), he notes that both cultivate an extreme sexualized notion of the primitive self, a “sexualized notion of self-ownership” that is exemplified, for instance, in Abbie’s temptation of her stepson, Ebbie:

Hain’t the sun strong an’hot? Ye can feel it burnin’ into the earth – Nature – makin’ thin’ grow – bigger’ n bigger – burnin’ inside ye – makin’ you want t’ grow – into somethin’ else – till ye’ve jined with it – and it’s your’ n – but it owns ye, too – an’ makes ye grow bigger – like a tree – like them elums – ... Nature’ll beat ye Eben. Ye might’s well own up t’ it fust’s last. (Plays 3:229)

In this naturalised imagery, the passage communicates the idea of how forceful, urgent, innate and even destructive the sexual impulse is, presented here as the essence of human existence. O’Neill, writes Maurice M. LaBelle in “Dionysus and Despair: The Influence of Nietzsche upon O’Neill’s Drama,” “apparently wants the spectator to feel that their human love is one of the secrets of nature” (440). What is presented to Greenwich Village Theatre audiences, consumed by the ravages of corporate capitalism, Pfister points out, is a more elemental force emanating from their depths. Desire is a force that, throughout the play, “competes” with an “economic ownership”: “self-ownership” against “economic ownership.” The play thus begins by focusing on patriarchal capitalism, manifest in the figure of Ephraim Cabot who dispossesses his sons of property and exploits them in the labours of the farm against which they ultimately revolt. Their new stepmother, too, changes the course as she shifts her attention from taking possession of her husband’s farm to taking hold of her stepson, “in order to own and to be owned” (92). “Unlike mere capitalist possessiveness, the sexual impulse to own and to be owned confers psychological significance on man and woman” (92).

The theme of “sexualized notion of self-ownership” is also to be understood in the larger context of the family, within the whole history of the American family. History, writes Pfister, is not only “theatre history, literary history, [or] intellectual history.” It also “encompasses family life, privacy, gender, sexuality, subjectivity, and psychological discourse” (15). A history of the American family life “offers perspectives on [. . .] the discourses of ‘the family’ that influenced O’Neill in his playwriting” (15-16). It is a history that culminated in what historian John Demos calls in Oedipus and America, the “hothouse family,” a nineteenth century phenomenon that emerged in the middle class (qtd. in Pfister 23). It is a family of “affectionate mothers, competitive fathers, and needy sons later christened by psychoanalysis the oedipal family” (25). These hothouse feelings became more obvious in the early twentieth century when “an even greater concentration of emotional needs and expectations” was laid “within the private rather than the ‘impersonal sphere’” (26).
This hothouse middle class family was the product of discourses of domesticity and motherhood which also entailed ambivalent bonds between mothers and sons. This context helps us understand the different relationships between the characters in the drama: the son-father rivalry, the Oedipal relationship between Eben, his mother, and his “surrogate mother,” to use Gloria Cahill’s words. These different relationships are expounded by Cahill in her article, “Mothers and Whores: The Process of Integration in the Plays of Eugene O’Neill.” But she relies solely on biographical accounts of the playwright as well as Jungian philosophy of the unconscious which, though they answer many questions related to O’Neill’s representation of women, lack historical insight. But the insights Cahill provides throw more light on the theme of self-ownership Pfister sorts out in the story of Abbie and Eben Cabot. Initially yearning to take possession of property via prostitution, Abbie is gradually becoming a mother substitute for Eben, a substitute for his deceased mother. “In the affair that develops between them,” Cahill also points out, “she is transformed from the materialistic whore to life-giving earth Mother” (14). This transformation is owed of course to complementary desires, with Eben seeking a mother and Abbie a child as they both have lost respectively a mother and a child. Indeed, the search for a mother figure with “the qualities of the Earth Mother and the whore” and the simultaneous search for a son and a sexual partner is a sociological phenomenon, the product of the prevailing discourses of hothouse family ambivalences that had their effect on the playwright himself who was already prone to these transformations in the conception of the family. O’Neill’s portrayal of prostitutes, throughout his major plays, shows an ongoing attempt to blend two opposite images of the mother figure, one, that of the withdrawn sensual, submissive biological Ella O’Neill; the other, that of the sturdy, domineering, overpowering Sarah Sandy, O’Neill’s nursemaid when he was a boy.

The idea of self-ownership becomes clear when Abbie, out of her lust for possessiveness, finally ends up smothering her own child to reclaim her possession of Eben. She “shows herself [. . .] as a woman who will go to any length to possess what she wants” and ultimately abandons her “life-giving role” (15). Eben’s desire for Abbie can also be placed in the context of son-father rivalry promoted by contemporary discourses of the Oedipal family. It rightly “serves as a weapon against his father.” An act of revenge against a father who has deprived him of his father. This theme is already established early in the drama when Eben dates Minnie, the town’s prostitute. But Minnie is initially a mother figure in the mind of Eben, an Earth Mother he refers to in images recalling land and fertility: “She smells like a wa’m plowed field”. Only upon his knowledge of his father’s relationship with her does he start to think of her as a sexual partner. “His exultation after his encounter with her is not the excitement of a young man who has just had his first sexual experience,” Cahill points out, “but rather the thrill of a conqueror upon having seized the spoils of war. ‘What do I care for her?’ he asks, ‘The p’ int is she was his ‘n – an’ now she belongs t’ me!’” (Plays 3:16).

While Pfister is right in arguing that the theme of psychological ownership prevails throughout the drama, it stands in itself as the medium whereby patriarchal and economic ownership is being subverted throughout as E. Andrew Lee argues in his essay, “Gothic Domesticity in Eugene O’Neill’s Desire Under the Elms.” Quite mindful of the cultural implications of O’Neill’s psychological portraits in the drama, Lee focuses on the playwright’s inscription and rethinking of the gothic in the drama to reflect on such issues as gender, labour relations and the issue of the family.
Lee’s thesis is the argument that in *Desire Under the Elms* O’Neill manages to transform the domestic setting of the Ephraim Cabot farmhouse into a gothic reality haunting the different characters in disparate ways. At the heart of this transmogrified gothic milieu lies the ghost of Cabot’s second wife, Eben’s mother, so relentlessly and inexorably invoking the dreadful past of the patriarchal, egomaniacal, rapacious past of Ephraim Cabot. In this scheme, all the domestic elements, ranging from the fence and gate to the interior walls and rooms are transformed into haunting sinister, rather sentient forces. The different gothic portraits in the drama, Lee argues, read as ideological aesthetics whereby the playwright posits a critique of “labor power relations and gender exploitation as Ephraim Cabot’s rapacity transforms domestic spaces into oppressive devices to serve his own ends.” But due to the ‘transgressive’ and ‘subversive’ nature of the gothic, this malevolence will be ultimately “thwarted and usurped by machinations both corporeal and supernatural.”

Reading Freud’s essay, “The Uncanny,” in which he observes that “heimlich (‘native,’ ‘familiar’ or ‘belonging to the home’) becomes unheimlich (‘uncanny’) when ‘that [which] ought to have remained secret and hidden […] has come to light,’” Lee states that these two planes are conflated in the drama in the sense that tokens of domesticity and security turn out to be menacing defamiliarizing forces. Thus, the Cabot farmhouse is transformed into “an uncanny haunted space” (72). Worthy of note is that the author, here, is mindful of the politics of underlying O’Neill’s inscription of the gothic when he rereads the family in terms of “a site” of interacting cultural forces, a view that opposes the common reading of the family as a self-sufficient entity, family as psychological fate, partly inscribed in the drama as we have pointed out above, and largely promoted by contemporary pop psychology. In this context, Lee uses an important statement by David Savran who posits in “Haunted Houses of Modernity” that “ghosts in modern drama are not merely a ‘product of highly subjective, personalized memories but also an embodiment of social, political, and economic forces” (qtd. in Lee 72).

The basic element Lee isolates in his analysis of the gothic scheme is the impinging of the past into the present. The past in this case is the long history of patriarchal transgression enacted by Ephraim Cabot, a history that seeks to sustain itself into the present, ever challenging “the status quo.” The end result is that all the domestic features are violated “when stone walls, kitchen, porch, and parlor reveal their gothic transformation into something uncanny and threatening.” Gothic is subversive as well, as “certain characters are themselves ‘displaced’ in the domestic space by other family members who subvert their roles, as seen in the conflict between Ephraim and Eben Cabot, as well as ‘Maw’s’ displacement by the seductive Abbie” (72). This gothic aura functions, in fact, to question “traditional notions of home and domesticity,” notions of “home as a ‘place for peace’ and the idea of father as provider and protector” as Kate Fergusson states in *The Contested Castle* (qtd. in Lee 73).

As far as gender tensions are concerned, there are many gothic devices that evoke patriarchal transgression and, in response to that, feminine revival and assortment. The elm trees referred to in the stage directions for the whole play, as having “sinister maternity,” Lee remarks, anticipate a basic concern in the drama; the fact that “wife and mother has been robbed of her estate by her grasping husband, and her place in the home has been usurped by a young siren” (74). This is a postmodern upsurge on the part of O’Neill. Lee also reads the elm trees described as “exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands on its roof, and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and not on the shingles” as representative of the two wives Ephraim has victimized. Besides, they can also be seen as early signs of the domineering
maternal ghost of Eben’s mother haunting the house, one “seeking revenge for Ephraim’s myriad betrayals – emotional, spiritual, and economic” (74).

In a similar remark made by such critics as Pfister and Judith Barlow, Lee observes that Eben’s mother was not only denied her life and her property, but also the very holder of her identity, her name, and was reduced to a maternal figure with certain domestic roles. “Furthermore,” he adds, “the mother’s ghost seems strangely tethered to the Cabot farm, unable to leave the site of her subjugation and enjoy eternal rest until her vengeance has been exacted” (74). This gothic convention of women in captivity established in such works as Anne Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797) or in Matthew Gregory Lewis’s *The Monk* (1795), witnesses a certain assortment in *Desire Under the Elms*, as we can only see this captive woman “in its aftermath, its eerie, ethereal residue” (74). In this way, O’Neill’s account of female subjectivity is even stronger. But this maternal ghost will be “looming over the Cabot farm, awaiting the opportune moment to orchestrate [its] […] revenge” (74). And we will see how the playwright moves from the exterior to the interior of the farmhouse finally settling on the parlor, which “becomes the site of the play’s most gothic moment” (75). In this respect, and back to Pfister’s remarks about the dominance of self ownership over economic ownership, it becomes clear that the idea of economic ownership and its patriarchal attendants is pressing stronger and stronger as the drama progresses. As Lee further demonstrates in his article, the pattern throughout is one of inscription and subversion: inscription and immediate subversion of this gothic landscape. The author gives a detailed account of this simultaneous pattern starting from the exterior walls and reaching the parlor, the heart of the domestic stronghold. I will just refer to these two elements for the purpose of exposition.

The stone walls are the first gothicized element. Instead of bringing security to the family, they are transformed by Ephraim as fences of oppression and imprisonment. “(with sardonic bitterness) Here –,” complains Peter in the first scene of the play, “it’s stone atop o’the ground – stones atop o’stones – makin’ stone walls – year atop o’year – him ’n yew ’n me ’n’ then Eben – makin’ stone walls fur him to fence us in!” (emphasis added) (*Plays* 3:204). These walls, as we have pointed out above and as the title of this essay reflects, are the subject of boasting of Ephraim when he tells his new wife: “Ye kin read the years o’ my life in them walls, everyday a hefted stone, climbin’ over the hills up and down, fencin’ in the fields that was mine, whar I’d made thin’s grow out o’ nothin’ – like the will o’ God” (237). Building those walls seems like tightening his grip on the family year after year. Besides, “the stones also acquire, in Ephraim’s mind, a supernatural authority which helps him justify his schemes: ‘God’s in the stones!’” (75). This is an instance of manipulation of religion for personal goals. “[…] [B]y declaring ‘God’s in the stones’ that built the wall surrounding the farm, Cabot grants himself a supernatural mandate for oppressing his family” (75).

The theme of manipulation of religion is handled by several critics who point out to a characteristic phenomenon in Cabot’s character, the perversion of religion. Important to note in this regard is that Ephraim’s hard religion or Puritanism is to be located in the context of the nineteen twenties, in the larger context of the conflict between the licentious liberal attitudes epitomized by “freedom and sensual experience” and the Apollonian life-denying New England Puritanism that Brenda Murphy, among many other scholars, trace in a number of plays written by O’Neill (“O’Neill’s America: The Strange Interlude Between the Wars” (136-37).

The idea of religious perversion is discussed for instance by Peter L. Hayes in “Biblical Perversion in *Desire Under the Elms*” who also points out to this antagonism. Arguing that while
Desire Under the Elms should be accredited for its emotional intensity – as Joseph Wood Krutch argues above – and if not controlled by an intellectual idea – as the same critic had observed – it is at least “shaped by an intellectual idea and a message,” the perversion of religion as embodied chiefly by the “harsh, loveless, and covetous Puritanical religion practiced by Ephraim Cabot,” which “cripples love and destroys men”. Ephraim, Hayes points out, “more than any other character in the play […] makes religious statements apply to irreligious acts” (78). Of the many instances of Biblical perversion, and for the purposes of the orientation of this study, we can refer to the same rare soliloquy made by Ephraim. Commenting on this speech, Hayes also writes that “He practices a harsh and loveless Puritanical religion that worships toil, scorns ease and sentiment or even the expression of honest sentiment” (80). The result of this is in fact repression, the fact that each of the characters in the play, though having their own desires, are often inclined to condemn each other’s desires. Take the example of Abbie who, failing to seduce her stepson, repudiates the latter to his father, and he in turn denounces it:

ABBIE. (vengefully) Just let me tell ye a thing or two ’bout Eben! Whar’s he gone, T’see that harlot, Min! I tried fur t’ stop him. Disgracin’ yew an’ me – on the Sabbath, too!

CABOT. (rather guiltily) He’s a sinner – natural-born. It’s lust eatin’ his heart. (Plays 3:233)

Ephraim feels guilty for two reasons, Hays points out. First, because he, too, had Min as a mistress. Second, because he, too, has his own lust for Abbie (79). Ephraim’s “harsh religion,” he concludes, “– the same religion as Hawthorne’s John Endicott and O’Neill’s own Mammons – has developed and confirmed [his] […] [natural] traits. And by purposeful use of Biblical language or quotations in debased contexts, O’Neill has underscored this perversion for us” (80).

The first sign of subversion of Ephraim’s sanctuary, so to speak, or rather, the first “visible fracture in the presumably solid domestic façade” as Lee puts it, comes when Ephraim’s son Simeon “takes the gate off its hinges and puts it under his arm” (221) after he and his brother, Peter, decide to set off for California, upon realizing they will not inherit anything material from their father. “This assault on the physical entrance to the farm,” Lee remarks, “may be read as a symbolic attack on the father himself” as the sons are aware of their father’s “maxim: ‘Sometimes ye air the farm an’ sometimes the farm be yew’” (76). This instance of transgression opens the door to further moments of subversion of patriarchal oppression, moving to the kitchen, to the porch, to the interior walls and finally settling on the parlor; the “inner sanctum of the haunted house” (80). The parlor is rendered gothic in many respects. It is the site where Maw’s ghost resides, the site where Eben and Abbie’s lovemaking takes place, leading to the latter’s pregnancy and thus “further becomes a type of conflated womb/tomb” (81). Also, the parlor, and less so the kitchen, stand as traditional sites of “socially constructed gender roles.” Subversion of these haunted domestic places normally associated with homeliness and festivity, therefore, becomes all the more significant (81).

The most eminent violation of this domestic sphere, is the appearance of the dead mother’s ghost, coming to take revenge upon the malevolent husband. The presence of this ghost, however, is felt earlier by Eben, in the kitchen, a place already turned into a “man’s camp kitchen” suggesting what Lee describes as “reverse gendering” (77). Naturally, this is the milieu that invokes Eben’s memory of his mother as it “resonates with traumatic memories of oppression and conjures the ghost of his dead mother. By taking on his mother’s domestic chores,
Eben performs a type of séance, which summons his mother’s ghost” (77). Important to note in this understanding, is that Eben’s sense of guilt not only emanates from within in the sense that he blames himself for not saving her from the malevolence of his father, but more fundamentally, it emanates from without. It is triggered by the gothic surrounding inhabited by his mother. It is a sort of “extrasensory” experience. Eben’s psychological perception of his Maw’s ghost, in other words, is enhanced by a “gothic milieu rather than merely a manifestation of a filial tortured psyche” (78). When confronted to similar episodes in other plays, this pattern becomes more obvious. In The Iceman Cometh, Parritt’s sense of guilt emanates from his betrayal of his mother to the authorities. In Long Day’s Journey into Night, Edmund, though having no responsibility in his mother’s morphine addiction, his feeling of guilt is exacerbated by his brother Jamie. “But the important distinction between these later plays and the gothic dynamic of Desire Under the Elms is the attested presence of the mother’s ghost, which Eben readily acknowledges” (78). These insights justify well David Savran’s remark when he states that ghosts in modern drama embody “social, political, and economic forces.” “Maw’s ghost is portrayed as more judicious than reckless, more purposeful than frenetic, and both Eben and Abbie realize that there is a prenatural plan in which they both will participate, unwittingly or not, in the […] parlor scene” (78).

“Once the parlor has served its purpose as the site of maternal vindication,” Lee adds, “it becomes at once a more traditional space of vitality and openness” (82). Abbie decides to bring life to the parlor, declaring: “I’m goin’ t’ leave the shutters open and let in the sun ‘n’ air. This room’s been dead long enuf. Now it’ goun’ t’ be my room!” “Abbie claims the parlor for herself, effectively re-establishing the matronly domestic space, while the brooding, maternal apparition apparently bestows her own tacit approval after having successfully avenged herself on Ephraim by cuckolding him” (83). One point Lee is not mindful of, however, is the fact that with all the empowerment the playwright gives to the female characters in this play, they cannot step outside the contours of the traditional domestic sphere. The only means Abbie can stand against the patriarchal Cabot, is through taking possession of the farmhouse. Nonetheless, Desire Under the Elms incorporates both male and female gothic elements. As David Punter and Glynnis Byron state in their book, The Gothic: “Male gothic tends to represent the male protagonist’s attempt to penetrate some encompassing interior; female gothic more typically represents a female protagonist’s attempts to escape from a confining interior” (qtd. in Lee 83).

Towards the end of the play, Lee points out, Ephraim, much like gothic patriarchal figures, reaps the harvest of his malevolent deeds. But where traditional gothic figures’ retribution is death, Ephraim’s doom is to be “surrounded not by the promise of his progeny but by the residue of his wrongdoing” (89). However, with all the insights into the cultural informants of the drama, Lee ends in a rather reductionsit reading reenacting the O’Neillian dictum of family as fate: all evils emanate from within the family. Speaking of Ephraim’s sensation of the threatening ghost in the house, he observes:

The eerie presence Ephraim senses is thus at once uncanny and gothic, in that it emanates from this house, this farm, and from the oppressive regime of its patriarchal dictator. Ephraim fails to acknowledge what Mary Tyrone observes in Long Day’s Journey into Night: ‘The past is the present, isn’t it, It’s the future too’ Ephraim’s past oppression of his wife and children created the haunted present he now experiences. Those same past patriarchal transgressions will result in a future in which Ephraim is bereft of both Abbie and his sons. Past, present, and future are inescapable. (87) (emphasis added)
This is the idea of determinism, familial determinism, promoted by psychoanalysis and reinforced by pop psychology. Lee does not discuss the historical underpinnings of this agitated family background, precisely the ideological dimensions of this representation of family as fate. True, he sheds light on the themes of religion and gender. But he does not unveil the social implications of the psychological contours within which these concerns are dramatized.

Mark A. Mossman’s article, “Eugene O’Neill and ‘the Myth of America’: Ephraim Cabot as the American Adam,” provides a more nuanced description of Ephraim’s case, although it still does not provide the ideological work of O’Neill’s representation of the antagonism between Puritanism and the emerging liberal discourses of the time within which the critic understands the figure of Ephraim. Reading R. W. B Lewis’s 1955 book *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*, Mossman uses the mythological concept of the American Adam in his interpretation of the character of Ephraim Cabot. Mossman’s main argument is that O’Neill’s Cabot incorporates, in a complex, rather unsettled way, the two versions of the American Adam Lewis has outlined: the party of hope and the party of memory. These parties Lewis qualifies as “pulling against each other, in constant debate and conversation with each other” (49). The first party is supported by such eminent writers as Whitman, Emerson and Thoreau, is specifically that of “the ‘ideal’ American figure, a free, unstained, unfallen character, an innocent Adam in the new earthly paradise of the West.” Mossman goes on to relate other traits of this Adam as accounted for by Lewis which essentially cluster around the premise of innocence: “Adam is ‘liberated’ from the dreaded, ‘depraved’ history of Europe; he is ‘new,’ ‘self-reliant,’ ‘self-propelling,’ free from all tradition, all history, and all of the guilt associated with those traditions associated with that history” (49).

Its opposite side, cast by such writers as Hawthorne and Henry James, treats the Adamic figure in terms of “a fallen nature, a nature intimately and unfortunately connected with the past, with the Puritanism of New England, and with the antiquated cultural of history of Europe” (50). Examples of modernist characters who display these two opposite sides of the Adamic figure are the liberated Jay Gatsby who “recreates himself, literally becomes ‘new,’ transforming himself from the poor North Dakotan, James Gatz, into the urban tycoon, Jay Gatsby” in contrast with Isaac McCaslin of Faulkner’s *The Bear* who “becomes instead a character who is ultimately aware of his ‘original sin’” (51).

More recent works on the mythology of the American Adam trace connections to the spirit of the frontier. “The connection, of course, is that the frontier, the open spaces and the great mountains of the West, represent the paradisal, pastoral garden, the new Edenic home of the American Adam.” Despite the actual disappearance of the historical frontier, its reverberations echoed by this mythological understanding of the Adamic figure still persist (51). In “The Frontier Archetype and Myth of America: Patterns that Shape the American Dream,” David Mogen argues:

When Frederick Jackson Turner proclaimed that as of 1890 the historical American frontier was settled, he threatened the very spirit of the Dream, and this provided an elegiac and ironic theme for much twentieth-century American writing. Yet for better or for worse our frontier mentality did not vanish with the historical frontier. It adapted to the times. (qtd. in Mossman 51-52)
Ephraim Cabot is such a figure who illustrates how complex and inconsistent this kind of adaptation to the twentieth-century cultural atmosphere can be. Both parties of hope and memory “are present, knotted together inside Cabot’s perplexing, complex character.” There are no indications that Ephraim finally opts for one or the other of these two sides. “He is [...] an elusive figure, constantly swinging in both directions, to both sides of the standard mythology, but never giving in fully to either world view.” This is due to the fact that he happens to be a typical modernist subject. “Cabot,” Mossman concludes, “is a new kind of Adam, and the profound ambiguity in his character is a result of this newness, a characteristic of it” (52).

The image of hope or that of the self-reliant, innocent Adam is articulated in a number of ways. But at the heart of this image lies the spirit of the West, the longing to seek gold, freedom, and more substantially recreation and affirmation. This desire is expressed with varying degrees by Simeon and Peter, Eben, and Cabot, of course. One possible implication of the variation on this theme of recreation is that it throws light on our understanding of the complex character of Ephraim Cabot. Simeon and Peter’s longings to go to California, Mossman observes, should be understood in the context of the overall mythological structure of the drama. Apart from money and freedom, “what they also intend to find out west is something more metaphysical, something more like a recreation of their selves, a new kind of identity” (55). Eben also thinks at one moment of going to the west, but his interest is of a different order. His ultimate purpose would be to reclaim what has been lost. Although the West offers the possibility of transformation and renewal, the ultimate goal is “to readdress the past, to confront a spiritual defeat” (55):

Eben. [...] an’ I’ll go t’ the gold fields o’ California-a whar Sim an’ Peter be!

Abbie. (terrified) Ye won’t – leave me? Ye can’t!

Eben. (with fierce determination) I’m a-goin’, I tell ye! I’ll get rich thar an’ come back an’ fight him fur the farm he stole – an’ I’ll kick ye both out in the road – t’ beg in the woods – an’ yer son along with ye – t’ starve an’ die! (He is hysterical at the end.). (Plays 3:257)

In Cabot’s crucial speech mentioned above, he also tells Abbie how he once went to the West and how he eventually abandoned the easy riches of the frontier claiming he did that in response to his God’s call to go back to the farm:

They was a party leavin’, givin’ up, goin’ West. I jined ‘em. We tracked on ’n’ on. We come t’ broad medders, plains, whar the soil was black an’ rich as gold. Nary a stone. Easy. [...] I could o’ been a rich man – but somethin’ in me fit me an’ fit me – the voice o’ God saying: ‘this hain’t wuth nothin’ t’ Me. Git ye back t’ hum!’ I got afeerd o’ that voice an’ I lit out back t’ hum here, leavin’ my claim an’ crops t’ whoever’d a mind t’ take ‘em [...] God’s hard, not easy! God’s in the stones! (237)

Cabot rejects then, the possibility of hope offered by the West and clings more to “the rocky soil of New England, and the guilt and memory of history attached to that soil, to the non-pastoral, non-giving land of the farm” (56). This new conviction as we have pointed out is held under the cloak of religion. Doris Falk has observed that Cabot is “a self-centered, loveless man who has projected his own personality into that of his God, a tyrannic, ascetic, restrictive embodiment of Puritanism, ‘hard and lonesome and old’ like Ephraim” (Eugene O’Neill and the Tragic Tension: 202
An Interpretive Study of the Plays, qtd. in Mossman 56). Mossman, however, goes on to argue that Cabot’s personality is not stable as such. This nature of his is constantly shifting, constantly changing. It is an essence that is, at its core, tense, paradoxical. Cabot, for example, is ultimately unable to leave New England, to forget the stony farm, to escape the voice of his historic, ‘tyrannic’ God. At the same time, it is clear that he desperately longs to eliminate his past and become ‘new’, escaping from the many stones of his New England farm and from the God of his Puritan past. (56)

The glimpses of hope are ever present in the heart and mind of Cabot and he can never completely rid himself of this thought. Towards the end of the play, he expresses again his desire to join his two sons in California. But this whim is continually repressed. No sooner had he spoken that desire than he returned back to his old contemplation of God and the farm:

I’ll be a-goin’ to Californi-a – t’ jine Simen an’ Peter – true sons o’ mine if they be dumb fools – an’ the Cabots’ll find Solomon’s Mines t’gether! […] God’s hard, not easy! Mebbe they’s easy gold in the West but it hain’t God’s gold. It hain’t fur me. I kin hear His voice warnin’ me agen t’ behard an’ stay on my farm. I kin see his hand usin’ Eben t’ steal t’ keep me from weakness. I kin feel I be in the palm o’ His hand, His fingers guidin’ me.

The psychological tension is finally expressed in Cabot’s last thoughts in the play when he senses his isolation and estrangement: “(A pause – then he mutters sadly) It’s a-goin’ t’ be lonesome now than ever it war afore – an’ I’m gittin’ old, Lord – ripe on the bough …. (Then stiffening) Waal – What d’ye want? God’s lonesome, hain’t He? God’s hard an’ lonesome! (Plays 3:268).

“The final image of being ‘lonesome,’ isolated, functions in exactly the same way as the image of the West: Cabot’s isolation allies him both to the party of hope and the party of memory” (57). Cabot’s final decision to stay in the farm and to worship his hard God could also be read in positive terms as Stephen L. Fluckiger points out in “The Idea of Puritanism in the Plays of Eugene O’Neill.” His theology is not wholly negative for O’Neill points out how he can find meaning in his endurance and earnest will as the passage above indicates. “The will to endure, the ability to see beyond life’s reversals, to maintain faith in spite of suffering represent traits that O’Neill found lacking in many of the religions of his day” (270).

This sense of ambivalence could also be read as reflecting on the spiritual state of America as O’Neill conceived of it several times in correspondence or interviews. This cultural preoccupation is what also governs O’Neill’s representation of Ephraim Cabot. “Desire Under the Elms,” Mossman aptly writes,

represents an interesting moment in American history and literary culture. The creation of Ephraim Cabot seems to be evidence of a particular cultural development or stage: the Adam mythology is still alive in Eugene O’Neill’s modernist America, but it is, by 1923, profoundly different, and profoundly more complex and intricate in its structure. (58)

Clearly, then, the mythology is used to transcend O’Neill’s cultural view of his country. A view centred on the conflict between the materialistic and the spiritual as he would later cast it in other plays. Speaking of the playwright’s unfinished cycle of plays, A Tale of Possessors Self-
Dispossessed, Brenda Murphy argues that he dramatizes this conflict to comment on the wider state of his country, a conflict that he “saw at the heart of American culture” (136). O’Neill, Murphy introduces her essay, spent most of his life in the United States, writing in a typically American theatrically medium, and quite engaged in “the political, social, and moral developments [of] his country,” a fact that makes of him a “distinctly American playwright,” a fact that is largely unaccounted for (135), a fact that counters claims by such biographers as the Gelbs who write that O’Neill was “remote from the upheaval taking place around him […] his work did not reflect the times […] he remained socially detached” (qtd. in Frederick C. Wilkins, “O’Neill’s Secular Saints” 71) or Travis Bogard who claims “he was never greatly concerned, as were many of his contemporaries in Europe and America, with social conditions” (xvi, xvii). He is rather “less concerned with the hostile external world than with that private world in which every man is isolated, as if in a cell” (viii).

The ambivalence in O’Neill’s treatment of all the above cultural concerns, as well as the combination of psychological and sociological discourses, attests to the complexity of O’Neill’s writings. I would rather conclude with Harriett Davidson’s statement about T. S. Eliot when she argues that: “The problem with reading Eliot is that we are uncertain how to frame the work at all. Press on Eliot’s conservatism and we find a bewildering critique of conservatism as well as liberalism. Press on his religion and we find a despair deep enough to chill the soul.” Press on O’Neill’s liberalism and you will find a bewildering critique of liberalism as well as conservatism. Press on his psychology and you will find a scathing critique of society. Much like T. S. Eliot, this is due to the “thoroughness of his critique of self and society” (12). But with all the social work he does in the drama, which surpasses his own directives to a certain extent, O’Neill’s social critique remains limited, for reasons that remain historical.

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