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The impact of some Naffati pupils’ basic personality traits on school performance.

By Nessim Bouzyani

Abstract

This research paper aims at establishing a causative link between some Naffati pupils’ basic personality traits and their school performance.

A lot of research was conducted to investigate on the origins of school failure in Tunisia. But, few studies targeted the pupil’s culture and personality and their impact on school achievement. That’s why; I opted to investigate more in this field using different theoretical lenses starting from an anthropological perspective ending with a social psychological one.

The nature of this research required a qualitative research as we can’t quantify pupil’s personality traits and their perception towards education. So, I used different qualitative research techniques: the semi-structured review, the participant observation and the content analysis. These techniques enabled me to collect a lot of data about the impact of Naffati pupils’ personality traits on school performance.

The findings I obtained, and described well how the pragmatic personality, the lazy personality and the irresponsible one resulted in poor school achievement. Also, these results proved how these personality traits and the influence of the secondary social institutions manifested in the role of the peers group and the facebook changed negatively the Naffati pupils’s perception towards education.
Thus, this research paper ends up examining the research question through the use of the Snow Ball Effect Theory.

**Introduction**

Human fascination with the concept of personality reached its peak during the 1st half of the 20th century precisely in the 40s and 50s. Experts in different domains have considered personality as the key success to improve industrial, commercial, cultural, agricultural and scientific performances. Many anthropologists also studied personality in its different dimensions. To mention a few:

**Edward Sapir** (1884-1939), a very famous anthropologist who made significant anthropological contributions in ethnology, culture theory, and cultural psychology. He was mainly interested in examining the tension between the anthropologist's concern with abstracting cultural patterns from observable behavior and the individual participant's personal biography and individual experience.

**Ruth Benedict**, (1887-1948), in her book *Patterns of culture (1934)* concluded that 'Human behavior is patterned. There exist within historically specific populations recurrences in both thought and behavior that are not contingent but structurally conditioned and that are, in turn, structuring ...Structuration occurs through social transmission and symbolic coding with some degree of human consciousness.' (*Adieu Culture: A New Duty Arises* 2003:99).

**Ralph Linton** (1893-1953), in *The Cultured Background of Personality (1945)* showed that each individual’s experiences and his own performance of particular set

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2. By Regina Darnell and Judith T. Irvine http://www.nap.edu/read/5737/chapter/15#291

of standardized cultural roles in a given society produce what Linton called the 'status personality'.

As far as education is concerned, school performance is usually seen as the result of multi factorial reasons such as socio- economic, psychological and external factors. However, few studies were conducted to link personality to school performance. Personality plays an essential role in students’ experience at school, and it has a great impact on shaping the relationships individuals share with peers and teachers, influencing classroom behavior, and contributing to academic achievement.

In Tunisia, formal education captured the post independence Tunisian leaders’ interest. Many reforms tried to propose an adequate Educational system in order to shape a reliable future graduate. However, researchers gave less importance to students ‘personalities. Few as they were, research on this field proved insufficient to launch a good and efficient educational system.

Professor Mahmoud Dhaouadi in “The Other Underdevelopment in African Societies», and in “Cultural Sociology within Innovative Treatise” and Dr. Moncef Ouanness in “The Tunisian Personality” tackled such issue to uncover some sides of the specific Tunisian personality. But, they didn’t investigate enough on the relation between personality and education. And as personality, in an educational setting, can directly affect the attitudes, perspectives and behaviors of students, in terms of success and effectiveness, in the classroom, should be the suitable key for a better school performance.

Education’s interest in students’ personalities is essential to ensure effective teaching practices and environments that are conducive to effective learning.

In fact, many attempts have been done to come up with an adequate and suitable educational system, but reformers practically neglected the role of the Tunisian pupil’s basic personality in education. As far as I am concerned, an English teacher in Bir Ali Prep School and a sociologist, I will work on the influence of the Naffati pupil's basic personality traits on school achievement.

The topic I am working on has captured the attention of numerous sociologists and anthropologists. To some extent, some researchers managed to cover the issue of education
and personality especially in western countries. However, in Tunisia such a topic requires much more research and investigation. In fact, the topic I am working on could be viewed and examined through different perspectives.

Could I use the lenses of a sociologist or those of an anthropologist? Does the psychology perspective help in this field or should I apply social psychology theories to conduct an effective research?

1. Literature and theories

1.1. The sociological perspective

Investigation in the field of personality and its influence on education requires somehow the use of the sociologist lenses. Numerous and various sociology theories have dealt with the topic I am working on, but my focus will target Emile Durkheim and Moncef Ouanness.

1.1.1. Emile Durkheim

Emile Durkheim was born on April 15, 1958 in Epinal, France and died on November 15, 1917 in Paris. Durkheim is a French social scientist who developed a dynamic methodology that combined empirical research with sociological theory. He is well known as the founder of the French school of sociology.5

As far as personality is concerned, education and learning covered almost a century of research and theorizing. For instance, Emile Durkheim in an article written in 1911 entitled ‘Education, its Nature and Role’, asserts, on the basis of ‘historical observation’ that ‘every society, considered at a given moment in its development, has a system of education which is imposed on individuals’. Every society sets itself a certain ‘human ideal’, an ideal of what a person should be from the intellectual, physical and moral points of view; this ideal is the core of education. Society can exist only if there is homogeneity among its members’. Education reinforces this homogeneity by engraving in the child’s mind the fundamental relationships required by life in the community. Through education, the ‘individual being’ is turned into a ‘social being’. This homogeneity is, however, only relative in societies

characterized by a division of labor, the greater the differentiation and solidarity between various types of occupation, the more a certain degree of heterogeneity is necessary.6

1.1.2 Dr. Moncef Ouanness in "الشخصية التونسية" (2009)

Dr. Moncef Ouanness is a Tunisian professor and a sociologist. He is also a researcher specialized in sociology of state, civil society and the cultural, economic and political elite.

He wrote "الشخصية التونسية" in 2009 dealing with the main Tunisian personality characteristics. He also shed light on the Tunisian basic personality which has been developed throughout three thousand years.

The Tunisian basic personality is the outcome of various historical, cultural, social and civilization accumulations. This basic personality is homogenous and unified because of the numerous and successive histories.7

In his book, Dr. Moncef Ouanness enumerated many Tunisian basic personality traits. In fact, the Tunisian personality is characterized by:

a) A flexible character

The availability of a psychological and cognitive reserve shared by all Tunisians may be an encouraging factor facilitating the emergence of a basic personality characterized by flexibility, tolerance and the ability of fusing.8

b) A personality rooted in epidemics and famines.

The shortage of food witnessed throughout history shaped a sacred and symbolic position to food. Also, the plague and hunger have accompanied the Tunisian history and have been main factors of collective memory. This factor built a very scared, fearful and a pragmatic Tunisian character.9

a) A very Truce personality

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7وَنَاس (،اﻟﺸﺨﺼﯿﺔ اﻟﺘﻮﻧﺴﯿﺔ ﻣﺤﺎوﻟﺔ ﻓﻲ ﻓﻬﻢ اﻟﺸﺨﺼﯿﺔ اﻟﻌﺮﺑﯿﺔ، اﻟﺪار اﻟﻤﺘﻮﺳﻄﯿﺔ ﻟﻠﻨﺸﺮ، 2010،ص 31 – 32).
8وَنَاس (،اﻟﺸﺨﺼﯿﺔ اﻟﺘﻮﻧﺴﯿﺔ ﻣﺤﺎوﻟﺔ ﻓﻲ ﻓﮭﻢ اﻟﺸﺨﺼﯿﺔ اﻟﻌﺮﺑﯿﺔ، اﻟﺪار اﻟﻤﺘﻮﺳﻄﯿﺔ ﻟﻠﻨﺸﺮ، 2010،ص 36).
9وَنَاس (،اﻟﺸﺨﺼﯿﺔ اﻟﺘﻮﻧﺴﯿﺔ ﻣﺤﺎوﻟﺔ ﻓﻲ ﻓﮭﻢ اﻟﺸﺨﺼﯿﺔ اﻟﻌﺮﺑﯿﺔ، اﻟﺪار اﻟﻤﺘﻮﺳﻄﯿﺔ ﻟﻠﻨﺸﺮ، 2010،ص 72 – 73).
Fearful of being held accountable and being punished, the Tunisian people developed a sense of truce in order to avoid socialization.

The Tunisian cognitive structure prefers truce rather than confrontation. It shows indifference and irresponsibility\(^{10}\).

c) **A Pragmatic paralyzing personality**

Some of human and social relationships are built on a pragmatic principle. We see individuals introduce themselves through their regional and tribal origins in order to gain economic, material, political and social advantages. That’s why; members bow and give concessions just to obtain benefits\(^{11}\).

d) **The Sbonah personality**

Sbonah is defined as a republic of booty exchange in return of loyalty.

It groups individuals of unequal and sometimes opposite social, economic and political statuses. Also, Sbonah is a social practice allowing people who seek fortunes to ask for loyalty and faith in return of providing material and corporeal advantages\(^{12}\).

e) **Alert personality**

The Tunisian personality is non productive and it never relishes work. It is always complaining about the government practices. It also, prefers individual work rather than group work because it is fearful of the other and the outsider. That's why, this personality is always on the alert and we can observe this through the following behavioral practices:

- Tendency to verbal violence.
- Solving problems via physical violence.
- Cursing and praying at others especially women\(^{13}\).

Thus, these common traits shaped the Tunisian personality and my dissertation will focus on some traits and their impact on Naffati pupils’ school performance.

Moreover, Dr. Ouanness, in the same book mentioned above, went on to speak about education and its role in the reconstruction of the Tunisian personality.
f) Education’s role in reconstruction

Whatever approaches are different, education modernization is the key success for any society development. This requires a clear strategy and a clear vision of a multi-dimensional future and also the ability to answer the following questions:

- What a Man we tend to build in this new millennium?
- What are His personality characteristics?
- Which education we tend to conceive to Him?

The today’s Tunisian society needs an educational system that serves the future. Also, the Tunisian society doesn’t need only an educational system that develops cognitive structures uplifts the collective Tunisian mind and positively reshapes the national basic personality but it also necessitates a value system. So, which value system does the Tunisian Man tend to adopt?

It is essential to renew our value system so that it can be more convincing and more motivating especially to young people.¹⁴

1.2 The anthropological perspective: Margaret Mead

To conduct a research dealing with basic personality traits, it is necessary that I use the anthropologist lenses to reveal the target society’s culture aspects and specificities.

Margaret Mead contributed massively in this area.

Mead was born in Philadelphia on December 16, 1901. As an anthropologist, Mead’s research sought to interconnect all aspects of human life. In fact, she concluded that rituals and beliefs intervene in the production of food. Also, she claimed that politics cannot be separated from childrearing or art. This holistic understanding of human adaptation enabled Mead to conduct research covering a wide range of issues.

In fact, Mead (1943) concluded that education is the instructive imposition of knowledge and values by the most powerful on the less powerful. Seven decades ago, Mead built a contrast between children’s learning in homogeneous, pre-literate societies, and the obligatory formal education in modern pluralistic societies. In pre-literate societies, Mead confirmed that there is a stability and conformity on the kind of knowledge needed, so kids are taught skills and principles that young and old alike view as worth learning. This implies
that learners in non-technological societies tend to learn the same things adults want to teach.

However, formal education, found in pluralist, swiftly changing, technology-driven modern societies, implicitly seeks to adapt students towards a specific way of knowing set by adults and powerful but not necessarily taken as significant by the young or the less powerful. In societies witnessing rapid change, relevant learning is not constant, and the young may not share adult views about what is worth learning. To sum up we can say, still according to Mead, that learners in a more static, continuous society are actively attracted to what is taught, but in formal, compulsory schooling within heterogeneous, changing societies there is an imposed process with more emphasis on teaching and those who teach but not on the learner. Mead’s essay reveals prophetic insight about issues of adults’ power that still dominates informal schooling. In complex and stratified societies, as Mead described, multiple opinions and beliefs coexist about what is worth being taught. What gets taught in schools, however, tends to be knowledge backed by the privileged and influential. Just as colonists taught natives to speak a lingua franca, to handle money, and to serve the interests of colonists. Thus, formal schooling conveys knowledge that supports the status quo of the dominant.¹⁵

Margaret Mead together with Emile Durkheim share a holistic view about education and schooling. They confirm that knowledge and values are imposed by a super power and learners can only submit to this.

### 1.3 The psychological perspective: Professor Mahmoud Dhaouadi

Professor Mahmoud Dhaouadi

Nobody can deny the importance of psychology theories in education. Students, for instance, experience different psychological states when interacting with each other or with their teachers. They develop senses of self – esteem and they undergo some complex of inferiority.

Professor Mahmoud Dhaouadi in “Cultural Sociology Within Innovative Treatise” (July 2013) dealt with what he called the culturo- symbolic domination. He also tended to explore the third world psychological underdevelopment.

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Psychological underdevelopment, as he defined, is used to mean ‘the deterioration of the basic foundation of psychological well being of the personality of the third world individual’. (Mahmoud dhaouadi, 2013).

According to him, this ‘deterioration’ results from the western imperial ‘culturo – symbolic’ dominance. Syndromes like the deterioration of the self – esteem, the strong desire to behave like others and adopting the western values. Moreover, the spread complex of inferiority and the feeling of alienation are seen to be symptoms of psychological underdevelopment in today's Tunisian society.

This weakening of self-esteem is not only the result of military, economic and political authority but also the consequence of the culture-symbolic domination.

As a result, this confused personality contributes to the level of native cultural values break down and makes the Tunisian personality structure more susceptible to further deterioration which results in the tendency to adopt western values.

Also, Dr. Dhaouadi adds that Tunisians, in their interaction with each other, show an attitude of discomfort, tension and fear toward their fellow Tunisians with whom they come in contact for the first time (they are seen as strangers or "barrani"). He used the Arabic term "Al Mustanfira" to describe this type of personality. The implications of this trait of the Tunisian Personality are numerous for both the Tunisian individual and her/his society. We mention here only four of them. First, Tunisians barely feel very secure in their first interaction with those Tunisians with whom they don’t have primary group blood relations. Second, at times, it is not easy for those to run the Tunisian administration that lack close relations with the other working staff. Third, the development of political democracy may be hampered by the distrustful attitude of Tunisians toward ”other” political parties. Fourth, Tunisians are more likely to suffer from stress in an increasingly urbanizing society where they have to deal with a vast majority of Tunisians with whom they are not familiar.

1.4 The social psychological perspective: Bernard Lahire

Bernard Lahire was born in November 1963. He is known as a sociologist of family and education and he is one of the most significant figures of contemporary French sociology.

16 Dhaouadi (Mahmoud ), Cultural Sociology within innovative treatise, Islamic Insights on Humans symbols, University Press of America, 2013.pp 147 - 148
17Takács (Erzsébet), From the One to the Many, From Pierre Bourdieu’s habitus theory to the concept of Bernard Lahire’s l’homme pluriel.
Research targeting the sociology of the individual, in the last decade, is based on the theories of the second modernity. In fact, the question of individualization represents the most main pinpoint of modernity. The study of modernity doesn’t aim at forming a theory but it investigates on methodology. Researchers confront the dilemma that there is no suitable theoretical background to describe recent changes of our contemporary society. That is why it is necessary to apply diverse intermediary theories and methods to understand social processes. So, the so called individual scale should be applied.

Lahire’s theory is highlighted in his 1998 book *Man In Plural: Drives and Spheres of Action*. Researchers perceived Lahire’s interpretations as theorization opposing Bourdieu’s mono dimensional concept of the ‘Habitus’ and other generalizing theories as such. At the same time, Lahire can be considered as a follower of Bourdieu, thinking along with and as opposed to him.

Bernard Lahire criticized Bourdieu’s concept of Habitus as well as the ones concerning socialization. Bourdieu perceives socialization as completely free of problems and as medium that brings the desired results. With reference to the excellent study of Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Wehler 2001) Bourdieu’s concept of the Habitus can be described based on the following hypotheses\(^\text{18}\):

a) *The individual ‘internalizes’, ‘interiorizes’ the structures of society.*
   Lahire’s objection to this: but which segment of society is primary and which one is secondary: family, school, job or social class?

b) *The development of the ‘Habitus’ is an extremely unaware imprinting.*
   Why does Bourdieu not examine the self reflection of the individual?

c) *Habitus has a clear, constant element which is primarily based on early childhood and family socialization.*
   But this depends on the family stability and its potentials of socialization.

d) *The Habitus postulates a homogenous empirical world.*
   Societies are getting more and more heterogeneous.

e) *Strategy-oriented practice is governed by the Habitus*

http://szociologia.btk.pte.hu/sites/default/files/Acta_Sociologia/10_-_takacs.pdf

\(^{18}\) Takács (Erzsébet), From the One to the Many, *From Pierre Bourdieu’s habitus theory to the concept of Bernard Lahire’s l’homme pluriel.*

http://szociologia.btk.pte.hu/sites/default/files/Acta_Sociologia/10_-_takacs.pdf
Individuals are partially socially determined according to Bourdieu; however, the concept of the ‘over-structured individual’ can be transfused reflecting upon the Habitus.

Lahire proves that family socialization is no longer homogenous. He mentions the example of a family where the father is uneducated, the older sister is extremely hard-working and is still pursuing her education at university, and the other child fails to accomplish at school. The question is what kind of attitude toward school can be developed in such a family. The author tries to show the contradictions and differences within the institution of the family. The many aspects of socialization are present. In fact, babysitter and nanny relationships, nurseries and kindergartens often impose expectations that contradict with the ones of the child’s own family.

Lahire’s objective is to construct and mobilize dispositions, as well as to examine the construction of the individual’s internal structures. Besides, in order to understand the individual as a cohabitation of multiple dispositions, we need to examine the progress of those dispositions that construct the individual. To achieve this, he suggests the composition of so-called ‘sociological profiles’ with help of longitudinal studies (Lahire 2002). Lahire attempts to elaborate a ‘psycho- logical sociology’, which relies on the plurality of action logics and patterns. The aim is to describe the effects of social structures on a micro level providing a more detailed description of plurality in the process of socialization.

This literature review is still insufficient to cover the different dimensions of my research. The study of the impact of students’ personality traits on school performance hasn’t captured the attention of researchers yet, especially in the Tunisian context. Dr. Moncef Ouanness and Professor Mahmoud Dhaouadi started research on the specificity of the Tunisian character but they didn’t link that to school performance.

More specifically, Naffati pupils and their school achievement is still a fertile sphere that requires investigation and research.

2. The Research Question/ Problem

Many researchers, scholars and stakeholders conducted a lot of research on education in Tunisia. A big number of sociologists and experts have conducted numerous investigations

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Takács (Erzsébet), From the One to the Many ,From Pierre Bourdieu’s  habitus theory to the concept of Bernard Lahire’s l’homme pluriel.
http://szociologia.btk.pte.hu/sites/default/files/Acta_Sociologia/10__takacs.pdf

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about the different factors that affect school achievements and performances. These researches have focused on the following areas:

- The socio economic conditions of students lead to school failure
- Pupils and educators motivations
- Parents’ educational levels.
- The excessive use of technology in cheating
- The different factors that led to school violence
- The push factors behind early school leaving
- Alcohol and drugs at school
- Communication in educational institutions.

However, our educational system still suffers from many lacunas. And from my own observation as an educator in Bir Ali Prep School, I marked the following observations:

- Many students who suffer from terrible socio economic conditions excel at school and get good results.
- Though punishment, we still catch pupils cheat at school.
- School failure characterizes poor pupils as well as well – to – do ones.
- We notice the same difficulties that pupils face in this region.
- Some good pupils leave school early to look for jobs.
- The pupils have almost the same perspectives towards education.

In short, I can't ignore the influence of these factors on the Naffati pupils’ school performance but other factors related to Naffati pupils’ basic personality traits contribute in and affect either ways school achievements.

As I mentioned above, dealing with the relationship between education and personality hasn’t been covered enough especially in the Tunisian context. Many attempts were done to work on the Tunisian personality (Professor. Mahmoud Dhaouadi ? Dr. Moncef Ouanness, Dhaoui Khweldia and Bechir Slama) but much work should be done to uncover the relationship between personality and education and more specifically on the relationship between personality and the school achievement in Tunisia.

In fact, students are deeply involved in education system. That’s why; we can't ignore their contribution to a successful or a failure educational system. So, researchers should never neglect the pupil’s personality structure and specificity. However, educational system reforms are always implemented by political choices or by foreign forces without taking into consideration the students’ basic personality.
Then, does the basic personality matter in education?

In my research, I will try to uncover the Naffati pupil’s basic personality traits and its contribution to a successful or a failure school achievement.

So, what is the impact of some Naffati pupil’s basic personality traits on school performance?

3 Research Sub-Questions

The Naffati basic personality is characterized by many traits that are shared by all Tunisian people. But, in this research, I will focus on some basic personalities of pupils and their relationship with school performance.

I will work on the following questions:

1. Do the Naffati student’s basic personality traits affect own school performance?
   a) Which impact has the pragmatic paralyzing personality on school performance?
   b) What influence have the irresponsible personality and the lazy personality on Naffati pupils’ school performances?

2. How could social institutions change pupils’ perception towards education?
   a) What kind of influence have the primary institutions on shaping the Naffati pupils’ perception towards education?
   b) What is the role of the secondary institutions in shaping the Naffati pupils’ perception towards education?

3. How could the new Naffati pupil’s perception towards education affect their own school results?

4 Key concepts

4.1 Naffat Tribe

"Naffat" alleged affiliation to the “Bani Salim" and settled in the region since the 13th century and we take into account al-ARoush that had settled in the region between the Ran valley and “Leban” valley and on the custody of Sidi Mhadheb . It belongs to Sfax and attached to “Asskhira” command at the beginning of the century. It includes Arouch “kraima”, “krait"
“Al-rubaia” and “Smaala”. The rest of Naffat tribe was more closely linked to the nucleus of the tribe, which was given privileged position by its leader Ali Bin Khalifa through storage privileges and the known control on “Aaradh” and Gabes oases. It was this second part of the tribe that work full winter in “Chnenni” and “Al-Hama” Oases and they return to Sfax only in summer.20

What we can take for granted is that “Naffat” is an Arabic tribe immigrated to Tunisia like the rest of tribes. This immigration had the religious dimension especially that the Arabic Peninsula was the land of the messenger Mohamed and the emergence of Islam. Thus, Naffat is not a Barbarian tribe and this is obvious even in today’s heritage. In fact, there are no Barbarian cultural or spoken expressions.

Naffat’s first grandfather called “Naffat” who was of an Arabic Qureshi origin.

Naffat had given birth to four sons “Hamed”, “Sdira”, “Kraiem” and “Ismael” who represented the first Naffati big “Arouch”.21
4.2 The Personality

Ortega (2009) describes personality as the constant characters or qualities in an individual and the dynamic moods that are connected to the cognitive processing of emotions, or even as ‘predispositions that have been learned through social experience’ (p. 193).” This portrayal of personality explains the relationship that links personality with cognition and perception. According to Hadas (et. al), in Proceedings of ASBBS Volume 19 Number 1 ASBBS Annual Conference Las Vegas 710 February 2012, ‘Personality influences ones’ perception of the world around them and how they interact within that world” (p. 3). Still in the description of personality, Ayan and Kocacik (2010) explain how personality is developed as “under the influence of the inherited characteristics of the individual and the environment, in which s/he lives22.

4.3 The Basic Personality

Personality is a combination of each person’s genetic, psychological and social interactions with the family, the society, the culture and civilization environment in general. (Dr. Fethi Rekik 2014)23

The basic personality is the shared behavioral traits of individuals raised in the same culture and experiencing similar child-rearing practices.

Kardiner and Linton coined the concept of ‘basic personality type’ in the book “Psychological Frontiers of Society” (1945). They were well aware that degree of individual variation in the person exists in every society. Kardiner and Linton developed the concept of basic personality type, to point out their common ground. This concept means that in every culture, there are common traits of personality among all members of a group, which is the basic personality type of the group. The basic personality is the result of cultural influences on the individual.

Kardiner divided the institutional aspect of culture in two categories: primary and secondary24.

22 Pennock (Anthony J), Moyers (Kelly L.), the role of personality in k-12 education, Proceedings of ASBBS, Volume 19 Number 1.
http://asbbs.org/files/ASBBS2012V1/PDF/P/PennockA.pdf

23 دروبية لسنة 2014

24
4.3.2 Primary institutions

They are those that are responsible for forming the basic personality structure. An analogy with Freudian doctrine, these institutions were ones most directly concerned with disciplining, gratifying, and inhibiting the infant and young child. However, Kardiner does not mention a fixed list of primary institutions. He thinks that the relevant disciplines were administered in different institutional forms a culture to another.

In general the intended aim of Kardiner is at family organization, in group formation, feeding, weaning, care or neglect of children, sexual training and subsistence patterns.

Thus, a primary institutional is one which is older, more stable, less likely to be integrated with by vicissitudes of climate or economy.\textsuperscript{25}

4.3.3 Secondary institutions:

They are those which satisfy the needs and tensions created by the primary or fixed institutions. Among the secondary institutions, Kardiner gives greatest prominence to taboo system, religion, rituals, folk tales and method of thinking. Between primary and secondary institutions, Kardiner poses the basic personality structure. Fashioned by the childhood disciplines, the basic personality in turn expresses itself in the groups’ ideologies, emotional and cognitive orientation to life and death.

Secondary institutions are those which satisfy the needs and tensions created by the primary fixed institutions. Kardiner gives greatest prominence to taboo system, religion, rituals, folk tales and method of thinking. Between primary and secondary institutions, Kardiner poses the basic personality structure.\textsuperscript{26}

4.4. Academic achievement/ school performance

Academic achievement is the learners’ performance that indicates the degree to which a person has accomplished specific goals in instructional environments, especially in school, college and university. Educational systems generally define cognitive goals that either fulfilled across multiple subject areas (e.g., critical thinking) or included in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (e.g., numeracy, literacy, science, history, etc...). Consequently, academic achievement should be considered as

\textsuperscript{24} Upadhyay (V.S) and Dr. Pandey (Gaya) “History of Anthropological thought” First published 1993/ published and printed by Ashok Kumar Mittal/ New Delhi, P 335 .
\textsuperscript{25} Upadhyay (V.S) and Dr. Pandey (Gaya) “History of Anthropological thought” First published 1993/ published and printed by Ashok Kumar Mittal/ New Delhi, P 335 .
\textsuperscript{26} Upadhyay (V.S) and Dr. Pandey (Gaya) “History of Anthropological thought” First published 1993/ published and printed by Ashok Kumar Mittal/ New Delhi, P 335 .
multifaceted construct that involves different spheres of learning. Because the field of academic achievement is very wide-ranging and covers diverse educational outcomes, the meaning of academic achievement depends on the indicators used to determine it. We can enumerate many criteria that measure the learners’ academic achievement. In fact, there are very general indicators such as procedural and declarative knowledge acquired in an educational system. Also, there are other criteria such as grades or performance on an educational achievement test and the cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as educational degrees or certificates. All these criteria reflect the intellectual capacity of a person.

4.5 The failure of the Tunisian educational system

Internal and external evaluations have found the following lacunas:

a) Weak educational institutions output

Despite the ongoing improvement of promotion rates of intra and inter cycles, many students leave school, especially in the second basic education cycle, without having acquired the minimum skills required to fit into the society.

b) Weak pupils’ acquisition:

- Students’ insufficient mastery of some fundamental transversal skills such as analysis, synthesis, research and the reinvestment of information.
- Low achievement in writing and speaking skills in languages.

b) Predominance of theoretical and cognitive learning

We notice a predominance of the quantitative aspect of the Tunisian curriculum. In fact, our students study many subjects with no room for field practice.

So, what are the different factors that led to this failure?

Many researchers have worked on these factors, but my dissertation will target the impact of the Naffati pupil’s basic personality on school achievement.

27 Steinmayr (Ricarda) and others, Academic Achievement. (http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756810/obo-9780199756810-0108.xml)


29 The same reference

30 The same reference
**Methodological framework**

In this research, I opted to conduct a qualitative methodology because we can’t quantify people's behavior and attitudes. Also, the study of a tribe and the basic personality of its inhabitants necessitates a participant observation and interviews as techniques to collect data.

However, I will also use some statistics to support my research with adequate and statistical findings. These statistics concern the pupils’ results in the 9th year exam as well as the statistics of detentions (punishment targeted to pupils who don’t do their homework) the educators gave to pupils.

1. **Research techniques**

1.1. **Participant observation**

Participant observation is a qualitative method with roots in traditional ethnographic research, whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations. As qualitative researchers, we presume that there will be multiple perspectives within any given community. We are interested both in knowing what those diverse perspectives are and in understanding the interplay among them.

As educator, I am deeply involved in the education system. I have been teaching in Bir Ali Prep school for 9 years. So, I have been able to observe students’ and educators’ behavior at school as well as outside it.

1.2. **Qualitative interviewing:**

It provides a method for collecting rich and detailed information about how individuals experience, understand and explain events in their lives.

1.2.1. **The semi structured interview**

This technique is used to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation (the interview) that allows a respondent the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. The focus of the interview is decided by the researcher and there may be areas the researcher is interested in exploring.
1.2.2. Group Interview

The group interview has been conducted by social researchers in general and by ethnographic investigators in particular. Group interviews can be formal with a specific, structured purpose such as a marketing focus group, or, it can be informal taking place in a field setting where a researcher stimulates a group discussion with a topical question. The data generated can be instrumental and factual, or, it can be subjective and qualitative. Researchers can use group interviews as a more efficient use of resources and as a means of adding valuable insight to the interpretation of a social or behavioral event.

As far as I am concerned, I conducted a Group Interview with two classes at school; each class is composed of 30 pupils.

My questions were about the use of facebook, the time allocated for it and the facebook groups that the pupils visit and join.

2. Population

The population I am working on is the Naffati Pupils. But, I will focus on Bir Ali Prep School as a case study.

3. Sampling:

The sample I have chosen consists of pupils from different "Arouch" and experienced educators teaching in Bir Ali prep school.

I have chosen different pupils of different school achievements to interview them. I prepared different semi structured questions and I left pupils speak about their experience at school and their perceptions towards education freely.

I selected 7 pupils from different "Arouch": 4 girls and 3 boys.

As far as educators are concerned, I selected 3 teachers teaching different subjects and asked them about their opinion towards Naffati pupils’ personality traits and their behavior at school.
The Empirical Framework: Results

The study of the Naffati pupil’s basic personality was not an easy investigation. In fact, I studied the Naffati tribe and its roots, economy and culture of origin. Moreover, my participant observation, as a teacher teaching in Bir Ali for 9 years, has enabled me to pinpoint some basic personality traits. Also, I conducted semi-structured interviews with pupils and educators to collect more data about the rapport between pupils’ personality traits and education.

My investigation pointed the following Naffati basic traits:
- A pragmatic personality
- An irresponsible personality
- A lazy personality
- A peaceful personality
- A changing and dynamic personality.

But, my research focuses only on the impact of this pragmatic, lazy and irresponsible personality on Naffati pupils’ school performance.

1. Do the Naffati student’s basic personality traits affect own school performance?

Before embarking on analyzing the impact of some Naffati basic personality traits on school achievement, let’s first examine some aspects of Naffati pupils’ school results in Bir Ali Prep School.

1.1. The Naffati pupils school performances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of pupils registered in the 9th level

The number of pupils sat for the final 9th exam

% of pupil's participation

Average during the school year.

Average in the exam

% of failure

Table 1: Bir Ali prep school pupils performance in the 9th level final exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
<th>% of pupil's participation</th>
<th>Average during the school year.</th>
<th>Average in the exam</th>
<th>% of failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td>11.22</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>43.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>8.86%</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>42.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>14.86</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>41.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: % of 9th level pupils' participation in the 9th form final exam

% of pupils' participation in the 9th form final exam
The table and the different figures above describe the Naffati pupils’ results in the 9<sup>th</sup> level exam during the years 2010, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

The 9<sup>th</sup> form final exam is an optional and national exam. All 9<sup>th</sup> form examinees sit for the same tests. This exam allows the top ranked pupils to join the pioneer secondary schools.

The table above shows poor school results in the 9<sup>th</sup> form exam which reveal very humble Naffati pupils’ school performances and achievements.

As we notice above, pupils’ averages in this exam ranged from 11 in 2010 to 8 in 2013, 2014 and 2015. However, pupil’s averages during the school years were above 14 during the same years.

Thus, what contributes to this deterioration of school results and performances? Who and what is responsible for this poor achievement?

My own participant observation and the interviews I have conducted resulted in the following findings.

### 1.2 Which impact has the pragmatic paralyzing personality on school performance?

Throughout its history, Naffati tribe members have shown tendency towards peacefulness and pragmatism to gain economical and political interests. The Naffati tribe was a "magazine" (مَخْرَب) tribe that served the central authority with soldiers and agricultural produce. These services were provided to obtain economical and political interests. The Naffati sheiks did their best to satisfy the rulers to protect their tribe and to gain political leadership legitimacy.
Nine years of direct contact with students have enabled me to mark some common Naffati pupils' personality traits. They all share a pragmatic character. In fact, high achievers as well as low achievers have shown tendency to get good marks with the minimum effort. They always ask the teacher to assign easy tests and to inflate grades. I have noticed such behavior during the 9 years of teaching in Bir Ali Prep School. Then, I have observed pupils rely on each other when they sit for tests. Pupils change their seats and their seatmates to copy from each other. I have caught many pupils cheating but they rarely confess.

This Naffati traits, I mean pragmatism and arrivisme are still rooted in the Naffati pupil’s character.

I have been teaching in Bir Ali Prep school for 9 years and I have observed the following pupils’ conducts.

First, what matter for them is only the grade they get in their tests regardless their assimilation of the subject contents and objectives. That’s why; most of them resort to cheating to improve their marks. Also, they always keep asking the teacher to give them good grades despite their low achievement.

Wrida, a 15 – year – old pupil from Awlad Hamed, who spent 13 years in Sfax studying there, said that “Education in Bir Ali is better than the one in Sfax” and to justify her opinion she added “Education in Sfax is more difficult than the education in Bir Ali” also “Teachers in Bir Ali are better and kinder than teachers in Sfax”. From this comparison, we can conclude that what matters for her is not the academic achievement or the knowledge acquisition but the grades she gets at the end of each trimester.

So, this conduct is not meant to help pupils succeed but to satisfy their parents. Naffati pupils’ parents still consider education as a facilitator to climb the social ladder and as a medium to earn money.

Moreover, pupils in Bir Ali prep school no longer consider education as a medium to help find a good and lucrative job.

Helmi, a 16 – year – old pupil from “Sdirat” is a low achiever pupil. He claimed that Education is no longer a facilitator to achieve one’s objectives. He said «I like school but soon I get fed up because I love football very much”. He also adds that “My father pushes me to study” and Helmi continues smiling “My father will beat me day and night if I fail at school.”

He supports his claims by comparing his two uncles’ economic statuses. He mentioned that he has an uncle who is a teacher but his salary is insufficient to lead a happy life. However, his second uncle (a trader) , who failed to pass the 9th year level, earns much more money.
We notice here that Helmi goes to school because he is afraid of his parents who still perceive education as the main way to ensure economic and social capitals. However, Helmi strongly discards this assumption. That’s why he started thinking about other ways to ensure a lucrative job and to guarantee a better life.

It is obvious that pupils, from a pragmatic viewpoint, lost faith in education to look for other shortcuts to guarantee a better life.

Moreover, my colleagues confirm the following hypothesis that the pragmatic trait of Naffati pupils has a negative impact on pupils’ school performances.

Mr. H.T, physics teacher and 12 years experience in Bir Ali Prep school, expresses his dissatisfaction with his pupils’ performances. He said that “Pupils don’t give much importance to the subject for its low coefficient. He adds “What interest pupils is the grade they get by all means. They don’t care if they assimilated the information the teacher aims to convey.” As a result, pupils sometimes resort to cheating to improve their grades.

Mrs. S.B, a computer science teacher and she has been teaching in Bir Ali Prep school for 5 years, said that she was not happy with her pupil’s performances. She also assures that most pupils resort to cheating to get good marks. She stated “Grades represent the ultimate objective of pupils”.

In short, we can conclude that the Naffati pupil’s pragmatic personality has a negative impact on school performance.

1.3 The lazy personality together with the irresponsible personality affect the Naffati pupils’ school performances.

I have been teaching in Bir Ali Prep School since 2007. Every year, I teach almost 140 pupils. They come from different regions. Most of them live in rural areas. Others live in the center of Bir Ali town.

I have noticed that Bir Ali Prep school pupils are characterized by their irresponsible character towards their studies. In fact, many of them show great reluctance to revise lessons every day. Moreover, they rarely do their homework.

The table below presents the number of pupils who received the detention punishment at school during the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 school years.
The school year | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016
--- | --- | ---
Number of pupils who were detained at school | 269 | 271

Table 2: The number of detained pupils at school.

These statistics show that the Naffati pupils don't do their homework at home and refuse to make effort to improve own school performances. Such reluctance to make effort is a common trait between almost all Naffati pupils.

This pupil's lazy personality resulted in an irresponsible personality which is demonstrated in the following conducts. For instance, Naffati pupils show no respect to each other as well as to their teachers (they call their teachers by their informal names: Nessim, Saber, Mohamed, Ilhem,...). Also, most of them smile when they get bad marks. Most of them don't value education because they always say "Why do we study? Many graduates are still jobless". Besides, many of them don't bring their books and copy books. They usually reply when we ask them about their stationeries, "We forget Mr." and most pupils lose their books and copybooks during the second trimester. In fact, 13 pupils in a 7th level class that I teach have lost their books. Moreover, I have good pupils in 9th form classes that have torn copybook and ragged books.

In this context, Mrs. S. M declared that her pupils never revise their lessons before sitting for tests. "They simply come to class and they answer the questions randomly", said Mrs. S.M. Also, she added that her pupils are unable to read and understand the test questions.

It is obvious that what characterizes most of Naffati pupils is their indifference towards education as well as their reluctance to make any effort to improve own school performances.

Kais is 15 years–old–pupil. A year before, Kais was a high achiever obtaining 14 as an average. This year Kais obtained 10 as average. He said that “I don't do my homework. I feel it boring and a heavy burden”.

Also, Rania, a pupil from Kraima, said that she attended school to satisfy her parents (70%) and just 30% to learn at school.

Raouf, a 14 year-old pupil from Sdirat confessed that he was not happy with his school results but he didn't concentrate in class and always made noise in class. He said that
his peers always say “Those who studied died and those who were dead become subjects at school”. All pupils I interviewed know this proverb and they totally approve of its content. Such a proverb has a negative impact on pupils’ performances at school.

To analyze the content of this proverb and its meaning, we must focus on the following units:

a) **Bir Ali Prep school pupils**: pupils aged between 12 and 16 who attend school to acquire knowledge and develop socially and academically.

b) **The proverb content**: “Those who studied died and those who were dead become subjects at school”.

It is a popular Tunisian proverb and it is well known among pupils’ society all over the country.

In this proverb, we can identify an irony that correlates education with death. This proverb contains a very touching and influential concept which is “death”. Unfortunately, pupils who are expected to be ambitious, full of life assume that education leads to death and after death people become subjects at school.

To conclude, we can assume that such irresponsible and reluctance to work traits affect most of students’ performances at school and change negatively their rapport with education.

Thus, the Naffati tribe culture that shaped a pragmatic personality lead to two other negative personality traits: a lazy and an irresponsible responsibility which in return affected negatively Naffati pupils school results.

These Naffati basic personality traits were also nurtured by the different social institutions which contributed in changing pupils’ perception towards education.

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2. **How could socialization change pupils’ perception towards education?**

Sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists, education experts used the term socialization to refer to the permanent process of inheriting and disseminating values, customs, and ideologies and providing the person with the required skills and lifestyles.32

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31 A popular Tunisian pupils’ proverb
32 Anonymous, “Child Socialization.” *Boundless Sociology*
In fact, social institutions in the Naffati society have a considerable impact on pupils’ perception towards education.

2.1. The role of primary institutions in shaping the Naffati pupils’ perception towards education

Sociologists identify primary socialization to be the acceptance and the learning of the conventional norms and values established through the process of socialization.33

In my dissertation, I will focus only on the two following primary social institutions:

2.1.1. The role of the Naffati family

The family is the first social unit and it is considered to be first primary social institution. It existed among our predecessors long before humanity evolved to its present social form, and it remains the basic social unit in every society. The family performs many fundamental social functions which are vital to maintain the total social order.34

The interviews that I conducted with Naffati pupils resulted in the following findings:

First, the Naffati families, driven by their pragmatic trait, still believe that education is necessary and it is a bridge that help individuals climb the social ladder and earn money. They always push their children to study and work hard to improve their school performances and achievements.

In fact, Raouf confirmed that his parents always advise him to study and work hard to get good results. He also added that his brothers left school and one of them immigrated illegally to Sweden. Raouf’s parents are unhappy with his brothers because they didn't pursue their studies.

Also, Helmi said “My father pushes me to study” and Helmi continued smiling “My father will beat me day and night if I fail at school.”

Wrida, another pupil, replied “My family encourages me to study and get good results to obtain a good job in the future”.


(http://mass.pakgalaxy.com/the-concept-of-social-institution.html)
Kais, as well, confirmed that, at home, his parents keep nagging at him and encourage him to go to school to achieve his goals. He added "My parents always say ‘go to school’".

All the interviewees mentioned this expression "ﺗﻮﺻﻞ" which reveals an arriviste and pragmatic trait.

So, we can say that the Naffati family, as a primary institution, encourages and pushes children to go to school and work hard to succeed and achieve ones’ goals.

2.1.2. The role of education as a primary institution

The Tunisian educational system aims to build a reliable future citizen who is rooted in his Arabic and Islamic identity as well as open to new cultures. At school, pupils learn different skills that help them think critically and develop strong personality proud of own identity and aware of the importance of knowledge and training.

In Bir Ali prep school, I noticed that most teachers do their best to teach pupils these skills through various subjects: humanities, sciences, languages, and physical education. These strategies encourage pupils to study and acquire knowledge. Also, education provides pupils with the necessary abilities and skills to solve future problems that pupils may encounter.

So, the educational institution in Bir Ali is in favor of education and learning.

Kais, to answer a question about the importance of education, said "I think that education guarantees my future" but "I sometimes feel frustrated when I see many jobless university graduates."

Wrida added that her teachers encourage her to study and work hard to succeed. Also, Intissar confessed that she loves her teachers because they are patient with her and do their best to explain the lessons and help pupils understand their contents.

Rania, though she is a low achiever pupil, said that she felt at ease at school and she felt comfortable with her teachers.

Thus, the institution of education helps pupils build a positive perspective towards education. However, most pupils started changing views towards the importance of education.

To sum, we can confirm that the Naffati primary social institutions are in favor of education and encourage pupils to study and work hard. But which factors contributed to the Naffati pupil’s poor school performance?
The role of the secondary institutions in shifting the Naffati pupils’ perception towards education

Secondary socialization refers to the procedure of acquiring the suitable manners as a member of a sub group within the whole society. Basically, it is the behavioral patterns reinforced by socializing agents of society.35

In this paper, I will examine the role of peers groups and the role of social media in shifting pupils’ perception towards education.

2.2.1. The peer groups’ contribution to changing the Naffati pupil’s perception towards education.

The peer groups are also agents of socialization that contribute in shaping new perceptions and attitudes towards life in general and towards education in particular. Many students perceive peer groups as reference groups.

Man is usually perceived as an imitative animal. It is instinctive to Him to behave like other individuals or groups. When a person finds another fellow making progress in life, he or she also likes to progress as well. He or she usually compares himself or herself with others and starts behaving like them in order to achieve their status and position.36

Hayman was the first who used the concept ‘Reference Group’. Later, Turner, Merton, Sheriff and Cooley elaborated more in this concept. According to Hayman, there are some particular individuals in a society whose standards or values become the ideals for other people and are imitated by them.37

In the Naffati context, most pupils leave homes early in the morning to go to school and they come back in the afternoon spending almost 10 hours away from houses. Therefore, they try to develop new social life and establish a new sub social group. Really, the influence of this new community becomes stronger on pupils’ behavior as well as on their attitudes towards education.

Kais, for instance, said that he had no idea about Naffat Tribe. He also added that he had been a good pupil but his peers ruined his behavior “ﬁs3دوﻧﻲ”. They convinced him that education is no longer a means to climb the social ladder. They also pushed him to sneak out and to not attend some sessions. Moreover, Kais declared that his friends S and R never encourage him to study but they convinced him that masculinity lies in conflicting with and disturbing the teacher in class.

Raouf, another interviewee, answered “I have no idea about Naffat tribe”. And to respond to his performance at school, Raouf expressed his dissatisfaction with the average he got (11.96). He said “I am unhappy with my average; I become depraved ( ﻓﺴﺪت). I don’t concentrate in class. I also make noise in class. I know that I am wrong. I tried to get rid of this behavior but I failed. My peers have a strong influence on me”.

Helmi like Kais and Raouf have no idea about the origin of Naffat Tribe. And to answer a question about education he said “I like studying but I soon get fed up” because I love football very much”.

Helmi is fond of football and he likes footballers very much. He mentioned that “footballers are famous and they earn much money.” Helmi has got many friends who don’t encourage him to study because they have no rapport ( ﻋﻼﻗﺔ). To conclude, we can say that the Naffati pupils’ primary group has no influence on them as they don’t know their origin and they have no idea about Naffat tribe. However, The peer groups changed negatively pupils’ perception towards education and by consequence affected their school performances.

2.2.2. The role of social media in changing pupil’s rapport with education

The social media, including facebook, twitter and youtube, became active means of communications, particularly among pupils at school and students at universities.

In Tunisia, there are 5,408,240 Internet users on Dec 31, 2014, 49.0% of the population, per IWS (Internet World Statistics).

This big number shows that the Tunisian people are interested in the social media. Also, a big number of pupils use facebook frequently to chat with friends and know about the updated news. But, unfortunately few number of pupils use facebook, youtube or the Web to improve school performances.

The following facebook wall shows how pupils perceive education in Tunisia. This facebook group managed to obtain 60,420 likes.
This Facebook group proves that a big number of Tunisian pupils adopt such a “slogan” (Those who studied died and those who studied became subjects at school) which reveals the negative pupils’ rapport with education. These pupils perceive education as a source of death. This implicit encouragement to neglect education resulted in poor school performances in Tunisia compared to other countries.

This year, and in Bir Ali Prep School, I teach almost 120 pupils, about 75% of them have Facebook profiles and about 60% use Facebook in a daily basis. They always ask me about my own Facebook profile to get connected.

In class, I caught many pupils “Facebooking”. They lost interest in academic performance and shifted their interest to the virtual world.

Mrs. S. M, the computer science teacher, said that her pupils showed indifference and felt fed up when they were studying the computer components. But, when it came to teaching
internet, she observed a great enthusiasm from the part of pupils to learn and use facebook, youtube, games and to look for information and download photos of footballers and famous stars.

In this context, I conducted a group interview with two classes, each group contain 30 pupils. All interviewees showed no reluctance to answer my questions and they spoke enthusiastically about their relationship with facebook.

The pupils I interviewed confessed that they spend from 1 hour to 5 hours on facebook every day. They also enabled me to know the names of facebook pages they visit or they are members in.

Here are the names of some facebook groups that the interviewees are members in:

- A7la dha7ka
- A7la s7ab
- Ahla tha7ka m3a a7la s7ab
- a7la 9a3da m3a a7la shab
- A7la bnat 2016 9b7

**We notice here that some Naffati pupils tend to construct a new social sub group with a different culture and they want to develop another sense of belonging.**

Chaima, who is a low achiever pupil (8.99) said that her facebook was always on and the group members didn’t encourage pupils to study. She added “I sometimes tell them that I am doing my homework but they say: ‘those who studied died’. Look at us we studied but we didn’t achieve our objectives”.

Helmi, Alaa and Hamdi (they are low achievers, too) also spend between 3 to 5 hours on facebook. They declared that they joined the different facebook groups to chat with people from different places. And to answer if they speak a little about education, they answered that they never spoke about education. Alaa intervened and added that the group members said “Don’t let your tests take you away from facebook.”

Kais said that he spent about an hour and half “facebooking”, chatting with his peers but he found it difficult to revise lessons and do the homework.

Many of these interviewees confessed that these facebook groups have negative impact on their behavior as well as on their school performances.
We notice here that the Naffati pupil invests much more time and energy in using social media.

However, Ghassen and Souha who are high achiever pupils and their averages are respectively 17.83 (Ghassen) and 15.62 (Souha) told me that they had Facebook profiles but they used it once or twice a week. Both pupils agreed that Facebook is a waste of time.

Dorra who is an excellent pupil (18.23) told me that she had no Facebook profile and she refused to have one and it was a personal decision. She added that “I think it is a waste of time”.

In short, we can say that social media, especially Facebook, has negatively changed the pupils’ perception towards education. Also, social media becomes a reference group and a new virtual social institution that starts reshaping the Naffati pupils’ personalities.

Moreover, Naffati pupils’ misuse of Facebook resulted in poor school performances.

3. The changing Naffati pupil’s perception towards education results in poor school performances

In this section, I will study the impact of the changing Naffati pupils’ perception towards education on school performances and achievements.

The results and the findings of my research show that the Naffati pupils’ basic personality traits together with the secondary social institutions have negatively changed the pupils’ rapport with education which resulted in poor school results.

In fact, the pragmatic trait inherited from ancestors has shifted pupils’ perception towards school and has shaped a new negative rapport with education. Naffati pupils no longer believe in education as a facilitator to help climb the social ladder or as a guarantee for a better economic future.

This attitude is reinforced by what pupils perceive in their surroundings as they see many jobless university graduates and even those who managed to find jobs work with low salaries.

This pragmatic view towards education resulted in a lazy and irresponsible pupil’s character. As a result, these pupils showed indifference towards education. They no longer
concentrate in classes or do homework. They soon lose their books and copybooks a short time after the beginning of the school year. As a result, pupils won’t be able to assimilate information and knowledge adequately and by consequence Naffati pupils obtain bad school results and poor school performance.

Also, the secondary social institutions especially the peers groups and the social media have a negative impact on pupils’ personalities. These institutions reshaped some of pupil’s basic personalities and changed negatively the Naffati pupils’ perception towards education. They also affected their willingness to acquire knowledge and improve school results.

All these factors we mentioned above resulted in Naffati pupils’ poor school performances and achievements.

However, in my research I encountered good pupils who still trust education and still consider it as the suitable medium to fulfill one’s dreams and achieve own goals.

4. Discussion

To discuss the results obtained above, the Snow Ball Effect Theory helps to explain my research findings.

4.1 The Snow Ball Effect Theory

The snowball effect explains how something grows in importance or influence in an increasingly more hastily rate. The name comes from imagining a snowball rolling down a hill. It gets larger and larger with more snow and becomes faster and more powerful as it moves onward. It is when a situation starts small and gets more and more powerful and influential. A snowball effect can be negative or positive.  

The following figure describes the results and the findings I concluded in my research paper.

38 Psychology Glossary

4.2 Findings

Socialization is a major factor that shapes individuals’ personalities. The Naffati primary social institutions, especially the family, developed in an atmosphere of pragmatic and interest’s exchanges. This tribe, which served as a “magazine” tribe for the sake of political and economical advantages, enrooted the trait of pragmatism in its inhabitants and therefore these people inherited such a character to their successors. As a result, the Naffati
pupil comes to school equipped with this trait and by consequence we can observe pragmatic conducts that guide pupils to act pragmatically towards education.

This pragmatism changed pupils’ perception toward education. They think that it is no longer a social ladder or a facilitator to achieve their objectives as they see many desperate graduates suffering from joblessness.

This pragmatist view to education resulted in other basic personality traits manifested in irresponsibility and laziness at school. My participant observation and the interviews I conducted have shown these conducts. First, the Naffati pupil lost faith in education as a social ladder that's why he/she started thinking about other alternatives to guarantee better life. That's why; they show reluctance to work hard or to revise lessons as well as loosing school stationeries.

These basic personality traits which characterized the Naffati pupil changed pupils’ rapport with education and resulted in poor school performances.

Moreover, this negative shift in pupils’ perception towards education is enhanced by the secondary social institutions especially the peers groups and the social media.

For the Naffati pupil, knowledge and academic achievement is no longer a reference for them. We, teachers, are no longer reference to pupils. Other reference groups and the social media, especially the facebook, substituted the primary social institutions and became more influential on pupils. As a result, pupils changed their rapport with education which resulted in low school achievement and poor school performances.

In short, the Naffati pupil’s pragmatism inherited via primary socialization (the family) resulted in shifting pupils rapport with education and in negatively changing their perception towards school.

This pragmatism, in return, shaped another lazy personality trait which by consequence constructed an irresponsible personality. These Naffati pupils’ basic personality traits affected negatively the learners’ school performance and resulted in poor school results.

But, what contributed most in fueling these traits and in changing the Naffati pupils’ rapport with education is the effect of the secondary social institution manifested in the negative influence of peer groups and the facebook. However, the family as a primary social institution failed to be a reference group for pupils.
4.3 Shortcomings

Objectively speaking, my research encountered different difficulties and obstacles.

In fact, no research was conducted on the Naffati pupil. Also, in the Tunisian context, the educational studies didn't investigate enough on the impact of the pupil's basic personality on school performance. So, I tried to figure out and touch upon such a complex topic.

Besides, my research resulted in some unexpected findings. Some pupils still have positive perception towards education and they consider it as the main medium to fulfill own objectives. They also still believe that education helps build strong, skilled and talented personality that will be able to face future obstacles and problems.

Moreover, other pupils developed individual strategies to excel at school. They resorted to private lectures to improve their school performances focusing especially on the main subjects such as Maths, Physics and sometimes English.

Finally and as far as secondary institutions are concerned, some Naffati pupils escaped this traps and developed their own strategies to establish a careful relationships with peers groups. They also fixed their own techniques to use facebook adequately and appropriately.

Conclusion

As a conclusion we can say that much theory has been written about the role of personality in shaping people's behavior and attitudes. Also much theory has dealt with education and the different factors that improve or affect pupils' performances and achievements at school.

In Tunisia, sociologists such as Dr. Moncef Ouanness and Dr. Mahmoud Dhaouadi examined some aspects of the Tunisian basic personality. However, the correlation between basic personality and education is still a virgin field that necessitates sociologists and anthropologists' investigation.

In my research, I tried to work on this area pursuing the qualitative research and using different qualitative techniques. My research resulted in the following findings:
The Naffati pupil’s pragmatic, irresponsible and lazy personality affected deeply their school's performances achievements. These personality traits together with the secondary social institutions like the peer groups and the social media contributed massively in changing The Naffati pupil's rapport with education which resulted in poor school performances and achievements.

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Awareness of the Influence of the Mythical Dimension in Exegetical works and its Impact on the Translation of the Qur'an: A Case Study of Laleh Bakhtiar's and Edip Yuksel's Translation

By Mhammed Krifa

Abstract

Although translators of the Qur'an work essentially on a canonical text, they often recur to peripheral texts such as exegetical works, some of which are marked by an abundant number of myths that may have no relation with the Qur'anic text. These are known in Islamic literature as \textit{Israiliyāt} and have their origin in Jewish and Christian traditions. The paper investigates the translator's degree of awareness of \textit{Israiliyāt} in religious thought from the angle of Modern Translation Studies. It precisely focuses on the translator's stance towards myths in works of exegesis and its impact on the process of translation. The corpus of investigation is Laleh Bakhtiar's and Edip Yuskel's translations of the Qur'an; precisely the narrative of Ayūb in Q. 38:44 and its relation to the understanding of Q. 4:34.

\textbf{Key words:} mythology – Qur'anic narratives – Israiliyāt – Modern Translation Studies – formal equivalence – dynamic equivalence – analytic method – thematic method

1. Introduction

Tafsir (exegesis) of the Qur'an is reckoned to be the most important science for Muslims since Allah has sent the Book as a guidance to all mankind. However, it is
recognized by many a modern researcher\(^\text{39}\) that many Islamic exegetical works, especially early ones, are influenced by the *Israiliyât* recognized to be mythical in nature\(^\text{40}\). As described by Vagda, the term "*Israiliyât*" refers to a body of narratives originating from Jewish and Christian traditions. These narratives can be identified mainly in works of Qur'anic commentaries. They include information about earlier prophets mentioned in the Bible and the Qur'an, stories about the ancient Israelites and fables taken from Jewish sources (211-212).

The adoption of such myths has, according to modern critical thinkers, a profound impact on orienting the understanding of the Qur'an towards a particular agenda such as patriarchal misogynist readings. Within this context, L.Bakhtiar declares in the preface to her translation that "A distinction between this translation and other present English translations arises from the fact that this is the first English translation of the Qur'an by an American woman who includes the view of women in the Signs (verses) " (xxi) and the authors of *The Qur'an: A Reformist Translation* describe their work as "A progressive translation of the final revelation of God to all of humanity – a translation resonates powerfully with contemporary notions of gender equality, progressivism and intellectual independence" (10).

The present paper strives to examine the degree of awareness in both translations in relation to myths recurred to by Muslim exegetes in their understanding of Q. 38:44 and the impact of this on the translation of the verb 'DaRaBa' in this verse and in verse 4:34 from the angle of Modern Translation Studies the aim of which is to look at translation from a descriptive angle that cuts with the normative/prescriptive norms of the linguistics-based translation. The study is carried out in the light of the following questions:

- What role does the translator's agency play in the translation of the Qur'an?
- At what textual levels does the translator's stance towards myths in exegetical works reveal itself the most? What role does this have in shaping the translator's final work?

\(^{39}\) See for example Wahid Sa'fi (2001), Al ‘Ajb Wal Garib Fi Koutoubi Tafsir Al Qur’an. Tunis: Tibr Az Zamen

\(^{40}\) See the working definition of mythology adopted in this article
What are the limits of the translator’s interpretation of the Qur’an?
What similarities and / or differences are there between the translator’s interpretation and the ‘Ulama’s interpretation of the Qur’an?
What approach should be followed in Qur’an translation to reduce the level of ideological manipulation?

2. Working Definition of Mythology

For working purposes of this paper, we adopt the following working definition of mythology provided by Gérard Durozoi and André Roussel in the Dictionary of Philosophy:

In general, and from the perspective of ethnology, mythology can be defined as the legendary fairy tale of an almost sacred character; it includes characters who personify natural phenomena or social rules. Consequently, we notice that mythology, in cultures where it plays an active role, is used either as a model or a defensive reference. In a more general sense, it can be referred to as a collective expression of a virtual behavior of some social groups (an example is the behavior of the cowboy as illustrated in stories of Western America. In social terms, when we talk about mythology, we mean the partially illogical collective perception; although being of great importance (such as the myths of progress and of golden age). We note here that the word, from this perspective, often undertakes a derogatory aspect. But it is inevitable to recognize its effectiveness. As for Marxist theorists, mythology is only a form of ideology.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{41} Translated by the author of the article
According to this definition, it is safe to postulate that some of the Israiliyat can fall within the scope of mythology if they meet the criteria of playing a defensive role and if they are based on a "partially illogical collective perception".

3. The Sublime Qur'an: English Translation by Laleh Bakhtiar

3.1. Translator’s Biography

Born to an American mother and Iranian father in New York, Laleh Bakhtiar grew up as a Catholic. She converted to Islam in 1964 after studying Islamic culture and civilization under the guidance of Seyyed Hossein Nasr at Tehran University. She holds a B.A in History, an M.A in Philosophy, an M.A in Counseling Psychology and a Ph.D in Educational Foundations. Bakhtiar has written and translated books about Islam, dealing mainly with Sufism. She is a leading authority on spiritual chivalry or Jihad al – akbar. She is presently a director of the Institute of Traditional Psychology and scholar – in residence – at Kazi Publications.

3.2. The Sublime Qur'an: English Translation

The book was first published by the Library of Islam in 2009 and was distributed by Kazi Publications. Apart from the translation of the Qur'anic text, it includes a preface, an introduction and a biography. In the preface, she declares that “The Qur’an itself declares its timelessness and universality. Therefore, its understanding or interpretation must also be eternal and for all time, inclusive of all humanity rather than exclusive to one group of people” (xvi). In describing the Sublime Qur’an: English Translation, Patrick J.D'Silva states that:

Laleh Baktiar spent seven years researching and preparing The Sublime Qur’an before its publication in 2007. This time was not simply spent reworking old translations, but instead to building a foundation for a new approach. Citing
the lack of internal consistency in translating the same word in the same context that she found in earlier translations, Bakhtiar consciously employed a systematic method whereby she decided on an exact rendering from Arabic into English for each word. This meant that any word, from the most basic particle to the most obscure, would be rendered in precisely the same manner each time. The hope of Bakhtiar’s method is that through standardizing the language, the reader will be able to find corresponding terms between Arabic and English with greater ease. Bakhtiar cites this method as **formal equivalence**\(^\text{42}\), used by the translators responsible for producing the King James Version of the Bible. (110)

According to Nida, formal equivalence translation is source-oriented and strives to reveal both the form and content of the original message\(^\text{165}\) . Translation theorists like David Chrystal, J.R Firth and Catford identify formal equivalence to take place at six levels: phonetic, phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical and semantic. Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is defined by Nida as "[the quality] of translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors"\(^\text{200}\).

\(^{42}\) Emphasis by the author
3.3. Bakhtiar’s Awareness of Myths in Exegetical Works and its

Impact on the Translation of Q.38:44 and Q.4:34

3.3.1. Bakhtiar’s Awareness of Myths in Exegetical Works

Although the translator does not use the term ‘myth’ per se, it is clear that she is conscious of the influence of Biblical narratives on Qur’an exegesists. This can be identified for example in note 6 in the introduction where she defends the possibility of translating the verb ‘Idrib’ in Q. 38:44 as “And take in thy hand a bundle of rushes and cast them upon the ground\(^{43}\) and retract thy oath” saying that:

some may see translating this verse as going against the tradition of commentators and interpreters over the centuries[...]. One cannot help but recall the Biblical influence of yet another story of another Prophet and that was the assertion that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. This found its way into Qur’anic exegesis much like the story of Job. (xLvi)

To the story of Ayūb, the translator devotes three pages in the introduction (xxx, xxxi, xxxii). In her article “The Sublime Qur’an: A misinterpretation of Chapter 4 Verse 34”, she explains that commentators resorted to the Old Testament for more details on the verse as the verse in the Qur’an is not specific in reference to Job. The translator suggests that the core story is further expanded by Muslim commentators saying that:

Qur’anic commentators then embellished the story, saying that, in desperation for money, Job’s wife,

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\(^{43}\) Emphasis by the author
Rahmah (her name means mercy), sold her hair in order to buy bread for Job. Before she was able to return to her home and Job, Satan went to Job and lied to him in order to increase Job’s grief and anguish, by saying that Job’s wife had committed adultery and as a punishment, the villagers had cut her hair. Rahmah returns home, but before she had a chance to explain that she had sold her hair in order to buy food, Job, seeing that her hair had been cut, became angry and swore an oath to beat her with one hundred strokes. Later, when God healed Job and returned his children and his fortune to him, Job became reluctant to carry out his oath. Muslim commentators say that the angel Gabriel appeared to Job and related Rahmah’s innocence to him. However, in spite of her innocence, Gabriel told Job that he must honor his oath by striking his wife lightly with a bundle of one hundred rushes.

The translator sees no logic in the stream of the story and blames the commentators and interpreters for not being able to see the underlying contradictions which she summarizes in two major points: First, the contradiction about Gabriel telling job that it is more important to carry out his oath, by beating an innocent wife albeit lightly, than expiating for the unfulfilled oath as suggested by another verse in the Qur’an. Second, the contradiction about Gabriel reminding Job of his oath so that he must beat Rahma who, ironically, remained faithful throughout his ordeal and worked hard to provide food for him. In relating the verb "DaRaBa" to the beginning of Q.4:34, where males are supposed to have advantage over women only in case they spend on them of their wealth, the translator explains that:

To treat any aspect of this story as rationalization for idrib in 4:34 being interpreted as ‘beat’ (lightly) goes against the first few words of 4:34.
She further explains that Rahma was the soul financial support at the time Job was in distress. Consequently, she purports that:

One cannot add the word ‘(lightly)’ as justification for continuing to allow husbands to beat their wives because they are only supposed to do it ‘lightly’ because this stems from an embellishment of a story that is not part of the Qur’an. (435- 436)

Applying the working definition of mythology cited above to the story of Ayūb, as recounted by L.Bakhtiar, it is clear that it is compliant with it in many aspects. First, this is not the unique version of the story as details of the plot are different in other accounts.44 Second, the story does not focus on logic and rational explanation; a trait characteristic of mythology. Third, the story, as used by exegetes in their explanation of verse 4:34, has the role of rationalizing for a particular aspect of society as claimed by Badran who comments on Qur’an exegesis saying that “It promotes a classical doctrine of male superiority that reflects the mindset of the prevailing patriarchal cultures” (202). In clearly stating that “the injustice of this story is clear to all but the commentators and interpreters”, L. Baktiar is not only highly aware of the exegetes’ use of mythology to serve their patriarchal purposes but stands as an opposing feminist voice who counterattacks the dominant male interpretation of the Qur’an.

3.3.2. Impact on the translation of Q. 38:44 and Q. 4:34

The reader, being exposed to Bakhtiar’s view of the story of Ayūb in the introduction, expects the translation of verse 44 of Surah 38 to be different from other translations. However, he discovers that she renders it as “And take in your hand a bundle of rushes and strike with it and fail not your oath”. The only explanation the readers can think of for this contradiction is that the translator declares following a formal equivalence approach in the translation provided so as to

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44 Stories differ for example as to the cause behind Ayub's oath
make of the language used inclusive. But one wonders why the translator has followed an interpretative approach in the translation of 4:34, rendering it as: “And those whose resistance you fear then admonish them (f) and abandon them (f) in their sleeping places and go away from them (f)”. It seems that the lack of “internal consistency” that the writer accuses the other translations of applies to her as well in the translation of these two verses. Moreover, translating the verb “DaRaBa” by “go away” does not have a solid linguistic basis, unlike what the translator claims in the introduction. Indeed, moving from the primary meaning of the verb “DaRaBa” to one of its secondary meanings requires the addition of a preposition. Consequently, the nearest equivalent to “go away” based on the root “DaRaBa” would be “daraba ‘an”.

4. The Qur’an: A Reformist Translation

4.1. Translators’ Biographies

The Qur’an: A Reformist Translation is a group translation carried out by Edip Yuksel, Layth Saleh al Shaiban and Martha Schulte-Nafeh. Edip Yuksel was born in Turkey and as a young man was an active Sunni radical and imprisoned for four years by the Turkish authorities in the 1980’s for his political writings and activities promoting an Islamic Revolution.

Layth Saleh al-Shaiban is the founder of Progressive Muslims and Free-Minds organizations and Co-founder of Islamic Reform organization. He works in a financial institution as a financial adviser, and lives in Saudi Arabia.

Martha Schulte-Nafeh is Assistant Professor at the University of Arizona and language co-ordinator of Middle-Eastern languages at the department of Near-Eastern Studies. She holds a Ph.D from the University of Arizona in Near-Eastern Studies- Arabic language and linguistics.

4.2. Skopos of the Translation
The presentation of the translation on the back of the book reads:

The Reformist Translation of the Qur’an offers a non-sexist and non-sectarian understanding of the divine text; it is the result of collaboration between three translators, two men and a woman. It explicitly rejects the authority of the clergy to determine the likely meaning of disputed passages. It uses logic and the language of the Qur’an itself as the ultimate authority in determining likely meanings, rather than ancient scholarly interpretations rooted in patriarchal hierarchies. It offers extensive cross-referencing to the Bible and provides arguments on numerous philosophical and scientific issues. It is God's message for those who prefer reason over blind faith, for those who seek peace and ultimate freedom by submitting themselves to the Truth alone.

4.3. Impact on the translation of Q.38:44 and Q.4:34

Commenting on the way verse 4:34 is rendered by other translations, the Reformist Translation explains that:

Many orthodox translators have tried to beat around the bush when it comes to explaining this passage, and perhaps just as many have beaten a
hasty retreat from those inquiring after the author’s intention — but all have found themselves, in the end, beaten by 4:34. (18)

As an alternative, it renders the verse in question as: “As for those women from whom you fear disloyalty, then you shall advise them, abandon them in the bedchamber, and separate from them”. In the discussion of the verb ‘DaRaBa’, it describes it as a “famous multiple-meaning word” and suggests the following clues for finding the appropriate meaning of this category of words: “Whenever we encounter a multiple-meaning word in the Qur’an we must select the proper meaning (or meanings) given the context, the Arabic forms, the usage of the same word elsewhere in the Qur’an, and a certain amount of common sense” (19). The translation also cites verse 38:44 as an example of mistranslation of “DaRaBa”. Although there is no use of the term ‘myth’ in the argument provided, awareness of this aspect is clear from saying that:

Almost all the translations inject a rather silly story to justify their rendering of the passage. Here is how Yusuf Ali translates the first portion of this verse, which is about Job:

“And take in the hand a little grass, and strike therewith: and break not (the oath).” (38:44)

Yusuf Ali, in the footnote, narrates the traditional story: “He (Job) must have said in his haste to the woman that he would beat her: he is asked now to correct her with only a wisp of grass, to show that he was gentle and humble as well as patient and constant”. (19)
In consistency with this interpretation, the translation renders the verse as “Take in your hand a bundle and travel with it\textsuperscript{45}, and do not break your oath” explaining that “In keeping with the translation we have used in 38:44, we translate the controversial ‘beating’ portion of 4:34 as ‘leave her’ (Literally, the phrase might also be rendered ‘strike them out,’ meaning, in essence, ‘Separate yourselves from such wives.’).”

Although the authors of The Quran: A Reformist Translation are close in their translation of the verb “DaRaBa” in Q. 4:34 to the translation suggested by L. Bakhtiar in The Sublime Qur’an because they interpret the verb as an order of separation from women rather than an order to beat them, they differ from her in two ways: First, they rely in their work on interpretation or “ta’wil” rather than on linguistics as Bakhtiar does. Second, they are more consistent in their translation than L.Bakhtiar is since they render the verb “DaRaBa” in Q. 38:44 as “travel with” and not “strike with”. But one might wonder here about the degree of compliance of this interpretation with rules of hermeneutics; especially that it is not widely accepted among readers and Muslim scholars on the one hand and has no sound linguistic basis on the other hand.

5. Modern Interpretations of the Verb DaRaBa in Arabic Exegesis

5.1. Amru Allah for Da’wah and Qur’anic Studies Website

In an article posted on his personal website entitled “Prophet Ayub did not Beat and there is no Trickery in the Religion of Allah”, the Islamic Critic and thinker Amrou Ash-Shaer declares that “Qura’anic exegesis includes a lot of Israiliyāt [...] and the verse about Ayūb in Q.42:38 is an example”\textsuperscript{46}. In his attempt to demythologize the dominant understanding of the verse, he argues that the word ‘digh’ means, according to Abu Hanifa ‘a handful of plants’ and since there is no object for the verb \textit{Idrib}, the meaning becomes “Take a handful of plants and engage in trading with it”.

\textsuperscript{45} Emphasis by the author
\textsuperscript{46} Translated by the author
As to the meaning of “Wa La Tahneth”, he suggests the explanation of “Don’t feel shy”. He concludes that:

with this new meaning of “Idrib’ as trading, the verse is understood without being obliged to add an object to it and recur to stories as classical exegetes did; an acceptable context is rather provided with the meaning of trading with something as little and valueless as a handful of plants in an attempt to start anew following a crisis and the verse becomes an advice for human beings to rely on themselves to get out of any hardships. 47

He also highlights that trading is a blessing and is consequently in harmony with the preceding verses while the order to beat has nothing to do with the context.

It is interesting that both the authors of The Qur’an: A Reformist Translation and Amrou Ash-Shaer attribute the same meaning of “trading” to the verb “DaRaBa” in 38:44 which makes us wonder whether this is the result of mere chance, especially that the translators make no reference to any modern interpreters they may have resorted to, or an intentional lack of referencing.

5.2. Ahl at Tafseer Forum

In an article entitled “Thoughts about the Life of Prophet Ayûb in the Qur’an” posted by Abu Al Azaem Abd AlHamid, the writer argues that “The story of Prophet Ayûb is an example of Qur’anic narratives deeply embedded in people’s minds and shaped by popular fables that are not in harmony with the image of Prophet Ayûb as portrayed by the Qur’an [....] They are all stories from the Torah and Israeli myths inherited from the people of the Book”48. Although the writer does not give any linguistic account for the verb “Idrib”, he questions the idea of Ayûb’s respect of his

47 Translated by the author
48 Translated by the author
oath through beating his wife on the basis that this is “trickery, deceit and ambiguity”49. Consequently, he purports that “We do not accept the stories spun around the prophet Ayūb whether in relation to his sickness, his portrayal as a model for patience or the story of respecting his oath through trickery”50. The writer’s view is that the story of Ayūb in the Qu’ran is allegorical and in support of prophet Muhammed and his companions at a time of hardship in their relation with the unbelievers and aims at teaching them that this phase was necessary to reach the highly-aspired goals.

6. Conclusion

Contemporary Islam is witnessing the advent of new critical discourses. Renewal of Islamic religious discourse has in fact marked the domain of religious studies since the end of the nineteenth century. Cleansing Qur’an exegetical works from mythical narratives has indeed been one of the priorities of this new discourse.51 Translations of the Qur’an, being themselves an interpretation of the founding text, have also been influenced by this revival in religious discourse. This paper has revealed the two translations examined to be modern, in the sense that they are not compliant with classical exegetical works in relation to the Israiliyāt or myths they included in their works. The degree of awareness of the mythical dimension in orthodox exegetical works is very high in both translations as the examination of their opinion about the story of Ayūb in Surah 38 reveals.

However, the two translations are not spare of problems. While L.Bakhtiar is highly aware of the mythical elements added by commentators to the core story for patriarchal purposes and translates the verb “Idribuhunna” in 4:34 as “go away”, she renders the verb “Idrib” in Q.38:44 as “strike with it” which makes her fall in the trap of inconsistency which she blames other translations to be suffering from. L.Bakhtiar’s claim of the usefulness of the formal equivalence approach in Qur’an

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49 Translated by the author
50 Translated by the author
51 A prominent example is Mohamed ‘Abduh who devotes in Tafsir Al Manar a section to demythologizing the narratives reported by his predecessors on the creation of Adam and explicitly entitles it “A Word about the Israiliyāt in Adam’s narrative and other narratives”
translation, in Follow of Nida’s translation of the Bible, is questionable. Indeed, not only did Nida opt for the approach of dynamic equivalence in the second phase of his biblical translation career but the concept of equivalence itself has recently been questioned by modern scholars such as Echo who claims that "equivalence in meaning cannot be taken as a satisfactory criterion for a correct translation"[9].

Although Reformist Translation is more consistent in its translation of the verb “DaRaBa” in both verses, the rendering of it as “Take a bunch and travel with it” leaves the reader at a loss as to the relation between the story and the notion of travelling; an explanation of which is provided for instance by Amru Ash-Shaer and yet remains without solid linguistic basis. To sum up, the article shows both translations examined and some modern Muslim thinkers to be aware of the impact of inherited myths from Israiliyāt on orienting the understanding of some Qur’ānic verses towards a particular agenda.

However, linguistic and semantic problems are identified in both translations. In order to translate the Qur’ān more accurately and avoid falling in the trap of myths and ideological manipulations, we suggest that Qur’ān translations should be carried out in the form of an inter-disciplinary group work with participating members emanating from different disciplinary backgrounds so as to ensure a better understanding and rendering of the meanings of the text.

Instead of the usual translations such as the ones examined in this paper, which are either too close to the source text such as the translation of L.Bakhtiar or too far from it such as the translation of Edip Yuksel, we propose a translation model where the interdisciplinary team combines both analytic and thematic approaches: while the first approach deals with the Qur’ān verse by verse and interprets it in a piecemeal manner, the second approach takes into consideration all the verses in relation to a single theme. In reviewing the merits and demerits of the two approaches, Mahmoud Namazi in Al-Islam.org explains that:

By looking at the differences between the analytic and thematic methods, one can conclude that the thematic method is the superior of the two. But it
should be noted that there’s no conflict between the two methods, because the thematic method is evidently in need of ascertainment by the analytic method of the meanings of the verses under study.

In follow of the proposed approach, the translation suggested should not place the target text opposite the source one, as most translations do. Instead, the Arabic text should appear in the middle with a transliteration of it on the one side and a close translation of it, accompanied by short footnotes about the final meaning the interdisciplinary team agreed upon, on the other side. The whole translation should be accompanied by a separate volume at the end which discusses in details the findings of the interdisciplinary team and should be presented according to a thematic classification.

**Works cited:**


http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/18/4/431
CVC syllables in Tunisian Arabic

By Mounir Jouini

Abstract

CVC syllables exhibit a special behavior. On a language-specific basis, they might be classified as heavy (bimoraic) or light (monomoraic) depending on whether their final consonant is moraic or not. They might even be considered as either heavy or light within the same system depending on their place within the word. In Standard Arabic for instance, they are heavy word-internally but light word-finally. The aim of the paper is to study the weight and representation of CVC syllables in Tunisian Arabic (TA) and to introduce a new syllable type to the TA syllable typology, namely the CvC syllable. It is a monomoraic syllable the nucleus of which is an epenthetic vowel (marked by the lower case v). It is shown that unlike the case with Standard Arabic, TA CVC syllables are always bimoraic. Furthermore, the crucial distinction between CVC and CvC syllables is quite central to the understanding of the TA stress system. In fact, it is shown that while CVC may or may not be stressed, CvC never is.

Key words: stress, mora-sharing, Optimality Theory, syllable, Tunisian Arabic

Introduction

Within moraic theory, only vowels and geminates are underlyingly moraic. Onset consonants are nonmoraic while coda consonants are underlyingly nonmoraic but they may acquire a mora if they abide by the weight-by-position principle (Hayes, 1989). A cross-linguistic observation (Zec, 1995) shows that CVC syllables exhibit a special behavior. In some languages, they are always heavy and bimoraic just like CVV syllables [1a]. In others, they are always light and equated with CV syllables [1b].

[1] CVC representation

a. Heavy CVC

\[
\begin{align*}
\sigma & \quad \mu & \quad \nu \\
C & \quad V & \quad V
\end{align*}
\]
In [1a] CVC is bimoraic and patterns with CVV. Languages that have such heavy CVC syllables allow coda consonants to be moraic regardless of how sonorous they are. That is, they apply weight-by-position to any consonant that occupies the coda position. For example, word-internal CVC syllables in languages such as Latin and Arabic are heavy bimoraic syllable, whatever the type of their final C. In [1b] CVC is monomoraic and patterns with CV, which means that weight-by-position is off in these languages and coda consonants do not contribute to weight. Zec (1995) gives the examples of Khalkha Mongolian and Lardil, where for instance evidence from stress in Khalkha Mongolian shows that CVC syllables do not attract stress. Only long vowels and diphthongs do.

There are also languages where CVC may be considered as either heavy or light depending on the type of the coda. For instance, Lithuanian (Zec, 1995) distinguishes between obstruent and sonorant codas. If the coda consonant is an obstruent (CVO) then the syllable is monomoraic, and if it is sonorant (CVS) then the syllable is bimoraic.

**Standard Arabic CVC**

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) exhibits an asymmetry that is different from the one in Lithuanian. CVC syllables in MSA may be heavy or light. They pattern with CVV when they are word internal, but with CV when they are word final. Hayes (1982, p.229), among others, argues that “word-final syllables are demoted one position down the hierarchy of syllable weight: superheavy syllables are treated as heavy, while heavy syllables are treated as light”. Similarly, Hung (1993, p2) observes that “in all dialects of Arabic CVC is heavy everywhere except at the end of the word”. Within OT, Kiparsky (2003, p. 157) translates the weightlessness of the final C as the effect of the undominated NONFIN-C.
It is mainly evidence from stress that pushes towards such an asymmetric analysis. Observe the data from MSA below.

[2] **Stressed vs. unstressed CVC syllables in MSA**

a. 'CVC.CVC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Taə.lab</td>
<td>fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ʔar.nab</td>
<td>rabbit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'maʔ.dan</td>
<td>metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ξiŋ.Zar</td>
<td>dagger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'mas.raḥ</td>
<td>theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'tar.Zam</td>
<td>translated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. 'CV.CVC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'ʔa.lam</td>
<td>flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'sa.bab</td>
<td>reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'qa.sam oath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ba.Σar</td>
<td>human</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. CVC.'CV.CVC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mun.'ba.hir</td>
<td>astonished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mus.'tah.ziʔ</td>
<td>mocking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mut.'ta.zin</td>
<td>balanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stress in [2a] is systematically penultimate. It is formed of an initial stressed CVC and a final unstressed CVC. A first observation could be that when two heavy syllables of the form CVC occur in a sequence, the one that coincides with the right edge of the word is not stressed. In
[2b], the final CVC is not stressed, even though it looks as if it were the only heavy syllable in the word. It seems that stress prefers to fall onto a penultimate light CV syllable than on a final CVC syllable. Similarly, in [2c] stress avoids final CVC syllables and falls onto the penultimate syllable whether it is light or heavy. This has led to the above-mentioned conclusion that CVC is heavy word-internally but light word-finally.

[3] *Word-internal vs. word-final CVC in MSA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Word-internal CVC</th>
<th>b. Word-final CVC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Diagram a" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Diagram b" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That the final C is extrametrical in Arabic is an observation that does not only rely on final consonants in stem-final CVC, but it is also supported by final consonants in superheavy syllables. In CVVC and CVCC superheavy syllables, the final consonant does not play a major role when it comes to stress assignment. In other words, the syllable inventory exhibits the equivalencies in [4].

[4] *Final syllable equivalencies in MSA*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{CVC} & = \text{CV} \\
\text{CVVC} & = \text{CVV} \\
\text{CVCC} & = \text{CVC}
\end{align*}
\]

Using Hayes’ (1982) terms, final syllables are ‘demoted’ one position. That is heavy CVC is considered light CV, and superheavy CVVC and CVCC are considered as ordinary heavy CVV and CVC.
The analysis of final consonants as extrametrical is quite adequate for MSA, especially when adopting the trochaic foot generalization for Arabic stress. [5a] for instance, corresponds to a trochaic foot of the shape \( LL \) where the first light syllable is stressed. In [5b], stress falls onto the bimoraic syllable, thus corresponding to an \( H \) trochee.

Within Optimality Theory (OT), it is mainly the interaction between \textsc{NonFin-C}, \textsc{Ft-Bin}, \textsc{Trochee}, \textsc{Wsp} and \textsc{Parse-Seg} that selects the optimal output.

[6] MSA CVC with OT

a. Constraints

\textbf{Weight-to-stress Principle (WSP)}

Heavy syllables are prominent in foot structure

\textbf{Trochee}

The stress occurs on the left side of the foot.

\textbf{NonFin-C}

The final segment of the prosodic word is not a consonant
FOOT BINARITY (FtBin)

Feet are binary at some level of analysis (µ, σ).

PARSE-seg

Underlying segments must be parsed into syllable structure.

b. Constraint hierarchy

Ft-Bin; Trochee; Nonfin-C >> Wsp >> Parse

c. Tableau for /katab/ → [ka.ta]b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/katab/</th>
<th>Ft-Bin</th>
<th>Trochee</th>
<th>Nonfin-C</th>
<th>Wsp</th>
<th>Parse-seg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [ˈka.tab]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [ka.ˈta]b</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [ka.ta]b</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tableau for /katab+t/ → ka[tab]t

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/katab+t/</th>
<th>Ft-Bin</th>
<th>Trochee</th>
<th>Nonfin-C</th>
<th>Wsp</th>
<th>Parse-seg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [ka.ˈtabt]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| b. [ka.ta]bt | | * | | *! | *
| c. ka.[ˈtab]t | | * | | * | |

The optimal output in any case is the one that does not parse the final consonant and treats the final CVC as a light CV syllable. Even though this analysis is frequently adopted in the literature on Standard Arabic phonology, TA requires a completely different approach.
Tunisian Arabic CVC

The asymmetry attested between MSA final and nonfinal CVC syllables is not found in TA. In fact, it is possible that in certain derivations TA final CVC in a disyllabic word acquires stress. For instance, unlike MSA and many of its related dialects, TA passive formation results in words of the form CVC.CVC where stress falls on the second syllable. Although the reason behind such an exceptional behavior is to be found in the nature of the first CVC rather than the final CVC, it is still quite obvious that the attested asymmetry holds no more for TA and a need for an alternative analysis of final CVCs arises. The data below, especially the forms under [7b] illustrate the claim.

[7] Final CVC in TA

a. unstressed final CVC

ˈmað.mil  factory
ˈfar.qað  he blew up
ˈmar.kiz  police station

b. Stressed final CVC

tliq.ˈtal  he was killed

tlb.ˈdaTitiò  it was sent

tliΣ.ˈrab  it was drunk

The disyllabic words in [7] are all of the form CVC.CVC. In [7a] stress falls as expected on the penultimate syllable and the final CVC behaves as a light syllable. Unexpectedly, the forms under [7b] stress the final CVC. The main reason is that the initial CVC syllables in these words are formed by the epenthetic vowel [I]. As such, it does not seem to intervene in stress assignment. This type of syllable is represented by the lower case v (CvC) to distinguish it from the syllable with a full vowel (CVC).
With the data above, the generalization that final CVC counts as light is no longer valid. The reason why the final CVC is stressed in [7b] owes to the fact that its final consonant contributes a second mora, rendering it bimoraic as it is supposed to be following the weight-by-position principle. Accordingly, since word-internal as well as word-final CVC syllables may acquire stress, then the asymmetry observed in MSA should be done without in the study of TA. In addition to the attested final stress in these forms, there is another argument against final C extrametricality in TA. Note how the words in [8b] below fatally violate a minimality requirement in TA once the final C is considered as extrametrical.

[8] Against extrametricality of final C

a. acceptable analysis

mäktib  mak.ti<b>  school

Tädlib  Taśli<b>  fox

barmaZ  bar.ma<Z>  he programmed

b. unacceptable analysis

ktib  *kti<b>  he wrote

hrab  *hra<b>  he escaped

Σrab  *Σra<b>  he drank

Considering the final C in [8a] as extrametrical accounts in a straightforward way for stress assignment. It results in interpreting words not as CVC.CVC but as CVC.CV. Expectedly, stress falls onto the heavy penult, rather than the light ultima. The same analysis is not extendable to the words in [8b]. Considering the final C as extrametrical yields monosyllables that do not meet TA minimality requirements. The minimal word in TA is a bimoraic foot.

Consequently, given that the final C may contribute to weight and render final CVC stressable, and given the fact that considering it as extrametrical may cause a violation of word minimality, TA CVC syllables should be treated as heavy, whether they are internal or final. With regard to stress, it is the crucial interaction of the two constraint families
NONFINALITY and WEIGHT-TO-STRESS PRINCIPLE (WSP) that decides on whether a final CVC should be stressed or not. The similar CvC syllable is never stressed though.

Turning now to the CvC syllable, it is a syllable formed by the epenthetic vowel [I] to break impermissible sequences formed by the concatenation of prefixes and suffixes (Jouiini, 2014). This is what makes most of CvC syllables peripheral. Multiple concatenation might as well trigger medial epenthesis to break -CCCC- clusters into CGiCC ([9d] below).

[9] Loci of epenthetic [I]

a. V:C+C (negative formative)

- saaq ma-saaq-Σ → ma.'saa.qlΣ  he didn’t drive
- maat ma-maat-Σ → ma.'maa.tlΣ  he didn’t die
- Σaaf ma-Σaaf-Σ → ma.'Σaa.flΣ  he didn’t see

b. C+CC (passive formative)

- ktib t-ktib → tIk.'tib  it was written
- qtal t-qtal → tIq.'tal  he was killed
- Σrab t-Σrab → tIΣ.'rab  it was drunk

c. CC+C (negative formative)

- ktib-t ma-ktib-t-Σ → ma.'ktib.tlΣ  I didn’t write
- qtal-t ma-qtal-t-Σ → ma.'qtal.tlΣ  I didn’t kill
- Σrab-t ma-šrabbit-t-Σ → ma.'Σrab.tlΣ  I didn’t drink

d. CGiCC (medial epentheses)

- ktib-t-l-ha → ktib.'til.ha  I wrote to her
- bðaT-t-l-hum → bðaT.'til.hum  I sent to them
- qul-t-l-kum → qul.'til.kum  I said to you (pl.)
TA does not allow triconsonantal clusters at word edges. This is why [I] is epenthesized when such a cluster is formed either word-initially, as is the case with the passive formative prefixation ([9b]) or word-finally when the particle of the negative discontinuous morpheme [Σ] is added to a final CC ([9c]). In the latter case, an alternative output form is possible where there is no resort to epenthesis. For instance, [maktibtΣ] can also be pronounced as [maktibtΣ]. This does not stand as an exception though, as the final CCC is exclusively formed of C+tΣ. Following Watson's (1999) treatment of Sanaani Arabic, the final [tΣ] in -CCC could be interpreted as an affricate where the constituent segments are adjoined to the same consonantal node. As regards epenthesis in V:C+C ([9a]), it emerges as the result of a constraint against clusters following a long vowel (Jouini, 2015a).

Bearing in mind the crucial distinction between the two epenthetic vowels [I] and [i] (in [9d]), we notice that what is shared among the syllables formed by the epenthetic [I] is that they are never stressed. Even in forms such as the ones under [9b]. In these examples, a treatment within CV theory misses important generalizations. Such words would correspond to the sequence CVC.CVC, which wrongly predicts non-final stress. This is why such forms are best represented within moraic theory, where final CVC is interpreted as bimoraic while the initial CvC is monomoraic. The monomorality of CvC syllables is quite expectable, first because they never draw stress and second because their nucleus [I] is the shortest vowel in TA (ranging between 20 and 35ms (Ghazali, 1979)).

That CvC is monomoraic is ambiguous though. Given that Arabic and its dialects have 'weight-by-position' set to 'on', one would expect coda consonants to be moraic. At the same time, nucleic vowels are underlyingly moraic. How could the CvC syllable be monomoraic then? The possibility envisaged here adopts the notion of 'mora-sharing' where two segments share one mora (Broselow, 1992; Broselow et al. 1995, Broselow et al. 1997, Watson, 2002, 2007). An Adjunction-to-mora rule was introduced by Broselow (1992) to allow more than one segment to be licensed by one mora. Mora-sharing in this sense solves the problem by allowing the coda consonant to be moraic while at the same time not exceeding the required syllable weight.

[10] Mora-sharing in CvC
Interpreting CvC syllables as in [10] immediately explains why they never attract stress. In TA stress is exclusively on heavy penults, or on heavy ultimas. That CvC is light explains the fact that it is never stressed and that stress in CvC.CVC is forced to prefer finality over falling on a light penult. A similar prefix to the passive [t] is the 2nd person imperfective [t]. When it is concatenated with the stem 'ktib', stress behaves as predicted and falls onto the heavy penultimate. Under [12], the representation of the words [tIk.'tib] and [tik.'tib] and [tIk.'la] is presented. The derivation under [11c] is quite interesting in that it shows that stress could fall on a final CV syllable instead of an otherwise preferred CVC penultimate. This is explained by the representation in [12c]


<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. /t+ktib/</td>
<td>[tIk.'tib]</td>
<td>it was written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. /t+ktib/</td>
<td>['tik.tib]</td>
<td>you (sg.) write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. /t+kla/</td>
<td>[tIk.'la]</td>
<td>it was eaten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[12] Representation
In [11a], stress falls onto the heavy ultima, as the penult is light (the monomoraic CvC). In [11b] the initial CVC projects its own foot by virtue of being bimoraic. The final CVC is interpreted as bimoraic in accordance with the argument developed earlier against final extrametricality, and in agreement with the representation of the similar form [tlk’tib] ([11a]). With two heavy syllables in a sequence, stress falls onto the penultimate syllable, distinguishing thus between [tlk.’tib] (it was written) and [tik.tib] (you write). Finally, [11c] and all similar passive derivations from CCV stems are quite strange when it comes to stress. In this example, not only is stress final but also it falls on a CV syllable, even though the penult is of the form CVC. The illustration solves the problem by interpreting the initial CVC as the monomoraic CvC since the vowel is epenthetic, and by analyzing the final CV as bimoraic, with an association line that fails to associate (in accordance with a long argument on open monosyllables in Jouini (2015b)).

The OT tableaux below include the observations on stress made so far, with the interesting distinction between initial and final stress in the similar derivations [‘tik.tib] (you write) and [tlk.’tib] (it was written). The relevant constraints are presented under [13]. The analyses with the different epenthetic loci follow.

[13] Constraints
*[\(\sigma\)CCC] No triconsonantal clusters

**REALIZE MORPHEME**
Morphemes in the underlying representation must receive some phonological exponence on the surface

**MAXIMALITY**
Every segment of \(S_1\) has a correspondent in \(S_2\)

**PARSE-\(\sigma\)**
Syllables must be footed.

**NONFIN**
The prosodic head of a the word does not fall on the word-final syllable

*[\(\sigma\)CCC] bans output candidates with initial triconsonantal cluster. **REALIZE MORPHEME** stresses the importance of morphemic segments. **MAX** prevents the resolution of the cluster through deletion. Finally, **PARSE-\(\sigma\)** requires that syllables be parsed into feet. Crucial enough is the ranking of **WSP** higher than **NONFIN** to allow final stress.

[14] *Initial CvC* (i.e. epenthesis in C+CC)

a. /t+ktib/ \(\rightarrow\) [t\(\text{tk}t\)ib] *it was written*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/t+ktib/</th>
<th>*[(\sigma)CCC]</th>
<th><strong>Pt-Bin:</strong></th>
<th><strong>RM</strong></th>
<th><strong>MAX</strong></th>
<th><strong>PARSE-SEG</strong></th>
<th><strong>PARSE-(\sigma)</strong></th>
<th><strong>NONFIN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [t(\text{tk}t)ib]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ['(\text{tk}t)ib]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. ['(\text{tk}t)ib]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. [t(\text{lkd})tkib]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. t(\text{lkd})t[tkib]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. /t+ktib/ → [tik.tib] you (sg.) write

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ti+ktib/</th>
<th>*[oCCC] TROCHEE; WSP</th>
<th>FT-BIN; RM</th>
<th>MAX</th>
<th>PARSE-SEG</th>
<th>PARSE-σ</th>
<th>NONFIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [tktib]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [ktib]</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [tkib]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. tik[tib]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee.[tik]tib</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

The tableau that follows illustrates the derivation of [‘qalbk] (your heart) from /qalb+k/.

The mirror constraint *[CCC]o rules out candidates with final triliteral clusters.

[15] Final CC+C → CCIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/qalb+k/</th>
<th>*[CCC]o TROCHEE; WSP</th>
<th>FT-BIN; RM</th>
<th>MAX</th>
<th>PARSE-SEG</th>
<th>PARSE-σ</th>
<th>NONFIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [qalbk]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [qalb]</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [qalk]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.[qalbk]k</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.qal[b]k</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Epenthesis in V:C+C is similar, except that it requires two additional constraints that govern the type of impermissible sequence. First, there is the markedness constraint *V:CC]σ which bans biconsonantal clusters after a long vowel. Second, there is IDENT, which is a correspondence constraint that bans the resolution of the sequence through vowel shortening, as VCC is a permissible sequence. For instance, in /ma+saaq+Σ/ → [ma.'saaqIQΣ] (he didn’t drive), CvC is not stressed because it is monomoraic and final. In /ma.'ktib-Σ/ → [ma.'ktibΣ] (he didn’t write) affixation forms a permissible VCC ending and [I] epenthesis is not called for. The same hierarchy accounts for both derivations.

[16] Final CvC in VVC+C

a. /ma+saaq+Σ/ → [ma.'saa.qIQΣ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ma+saaq+Σ/</th>
<th>*V:CC]σ</th>
<th>FT-BIN; TROCHEE; IDENT</th>
<th>MAX</th>
<th>PARSE-SEG</th>
<th>PARSE-σ</th>
<th>NONFIN</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. ma[‘saaqΣ]</td>
<td>*!</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| b. ma[‘saq]Σ |     | | *! | * | * |*
| c. mas[‘qIΣ] |    |    | *! | * | * |*
| d. [mas]qIΣ |       |   |   | * | * |*
| e. ma[‘saa]qIΣ |         | | | | |** |

b. /ma+ktib+Σ/ → [ma.ktib’Σ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/ma+ktib+Σ/</th>
<th>*V:CC]σ</th>
<th>FT-BIN; TROCHEE; IDENT</th>
<th>MAX</th>
<th>PARSE-SEG</th>
<th>PARSE-σ</th>
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Conclusion

In MSA, the CVC syllable may be heavy or light depending on its position within the word. When it is final, it is considered as light and it never draws stress, while when non-final it is considered as heavy and it could be stressed. In TA, this same syllable is always bimoraic, and it could be stressed whether word-internally or word-finally. In other words, the asymmetry observed in MSA is not attested in TA. Additionally, it was shown that a different type of CVC syllables should be added to the TA syllable inventory, namely the CvC monomoraic syllable. This syllable is never stressed, and it is there just to satisfy markedness constraints against certain structures in TA phonology. It is formed as a result of any morphological operation that may lead to the formation of marked structures such as initial and final triconsonantal clusters, and also biconsonantal clusters following long vowels. Considering CvC syllables as monomoraic by means of allowing mora-sharing has indeed proven quite crucial in the understanding of the TA stress system and it could also be useful to the future studies of TA phonology and morphology in general.

References


Celebrating the Female Cultural Other in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*

By Ahlem Louati

Abstract:

Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* 1(1966) is a postmodern parodic rewriting of Charlotte Brontë’s canonical novel *Jane Eyre* 2 (1847) in which the postcolonial woman novelist writes the absented side of the silenced Bertha Mason. This paper seeks to study Rhys’s text as a coming-out party for Bertha, who leaves the confines of voicelessness and savageness to celebrate, first, her splitting-subjectivity that endows her with much leeway not only to challenge her readerly representation as the ‘madwoman in the attic’ in the original work but also to embrace her capacity to rebirth herself as Antoinette Cosway who espouses the multiplicity of her identities and the plurality of her selves. Second, her fragmented narrative structure enables her to upset the conventional concepts of objective truth and conclusive meaning, opening the floor to the free play of signs and the free-floating articulation of different realities. Third, her hybridity is no longer perceived as a dysfunctional space; it turns out to be a liberating site which enables her to subvert the conventional concept of ‘purity,’ stressing the fact that cultural identity is a matter of being and becoming rather than of being. Fourth, Bertha’s excessive passion and uncontained sexuality are openly articulated instead of being repressed.

**Keywords:** celebration, Jean Rhys, Charlotte Brontë, fragmentation, hybridity, excessive sexuality
Opting for an intertextual revisionary project, Jean Rhys undertakes the task of “writing back” to Charlotte Brontë’s canonical English novel *Jane Eyre* and to the discursive and ideological practices within which such a narrative operates (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin 190). The Caribbean female novelist produces what Tiffin calls a “canonical counter-discourse” in which she revises and challenges the biased representation of the Creole heiress in the novel of her nineteenth-century counterpart (97). Sympathizing with Brontë’s Bertha Mason who is fictionalised as the racialised Other, Rhys re-appropriates her and projects her as Antoinette Cosway who challenges Edward Rochester’s stereotypical representation as she is given the chance to be the teller of her own story.

The mad wife in *Jane Eyre* always interested me. I was convinced that Charlotte Brontë must have has something against the West Indies, and I was angry about it. Otherwise why did she take a West Indian for that horrible lunatic, for that really dreadful creature? I hadn’t really formulated the idea of vindicating the mad women in a novel, but when I was rediscovered I was encouraged to do so. (qtd. in Tiffin 67)

Being a Creole woman, Rhys’s political project of answering back to this canonical work turns out to be the personal project of a novelist sharing with the character the same origin and background. She manages to give her readers an alternative account of Bertha’s lunacy and imprisonment, allowing her to weed out “the one side- the English side” of *JE*, as Rhys comments (qtd. in Shaffer 113). Put it differently, she undertakes the task of verbalizing the muffled voice of her Creole heroine in *JE* and writes the unwritten story of her imprisonment and madness while elaborating a critical stance credible enough to speak the unsaid and voice the repressed.

I. Disjointed Identity, Discontinuous Narrative: Fragmentation in *WSS*

A. Antoinette as a Splitting-Subject:

In her endeavour to redeem Antoinette/Bertha from her fixed identity as the Creole “horrible lunatic” woman from the West Indies, Rhys recuperates new forms of being for her heroine who embraces the multiplicity of her selves and the fluidity of
her evolving subjectivities. She takes her reader on a journey back to the Caribbean of the 1830s where she invites the marginalized Bertha Mason for a coming-out party to re-represent herself as Antoinette Cowsay, the counterpart of Bertha Mason in _JE_. Quickly after her mother’s marriage to Mr. Mason, Rhys’s female protagonist becomes Antoinette Cosway Mason. Antoinette’s nomadic identity that resists closure and finality is further addressed in the novel when she gets married to Edward Rochester. According to the English Law, she is given the last name of her husband to become Antoinette Cosway Mason Rochester.

Within this accretion of names, Antoinette is endowed with different identities that display her capacity to embrace different and evolving subjectivities. Indeed, her embrace of her English stepfather’s as well as Rochester’s surnames, without dropping one of them, can better translate her transgressive endeavour to masquerade the British identity. Actually, while identifying herself with the colonial subject, she upsets the imperialist ideology that fixes her within the confines of the cultural Other, opting for a cross-cultural identity. Her self-splitting female protagonist breaks down the conventional boundaries of fixity, dwelling in the realm of openness that celebrates the futurity of her identity and the flexibility of her perpetual state of becoming.

**B. Fragmented Narrative Structure:**

Rhys merrily overlooks the nineteenth-century chronological order, opting for a disjointed and disrupted narrative structure that fulminates against the seams of cohesion. She projects Antoinette’s fragmented identity on her inconclusive narrative, making her jump into the future and regales her readers with her coming acts. In so doing, she overturns the hierarchical supremacy of realism in the Brontean text that conjures an alternative reality about Bertha’s fatal demise.

Shuttling between her past life in Jamaica and her presence in her husband’s house arrest, her heroine subverts the traditional spatio-temporal conventions blurring the barriers of two chronotopic zones. Her narrative is ripping off chicks of reality, cutting the logical cords between events and celebrating the process of shuffling back and forth. The eruption of her homeland memory that intrudes into the
waking world of the heroine in the attic of Thornfield Hall showcases incompatible fragments of life which break away the logical sequence of events and disturbs its coherence. As she gazes to her red dress lying on the floor, she recalls her past life in Jamaica, where she used to enjoy the natural wilderness of the island, and notably Goulibri’s untamed garden which is compared to the Garden of Eden: “Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible—the tree of life grew there. But it had gone wild” (Rhys 4).

Actually, the lush landscapes of the island represent the maternal space where Antoinette feels immune, fortified and safe. Her nostalgic return to Coulibri which is accompanied by a remembrance of “the orchids and the stephanotis and the jasmine and the trees of life,” articulates Rhys’s tendency to articulate a gendered chronotope (123). In other words, her heroine’s non-sequential perception of time and space is well represented in her travelling from the symbolic masculine sphere England, which epitomizes the paternal law and colonial world that are related to linearity and rationality to the pre-Oedipal feminine Sargasso Sea that represents the semiotic or maternal space for her.

In addition to her use of flashback techniques, Antoinette’s different dreams also unsettle the chronological flow of events, foreshadow the coming actions in the plot and allow the reader to have access to the character’s subjective consciousness. For example, Antoinette’s third dream liberates her from the conventional spatio-temporal parameters through her violation of the bounds between reality and dream, creating a magical realist scene. While blurring the boundaries between her present life in Thornfield with her memories of Coulibri, Antoinette defies the realistic conception of objective truth, creating her own reality and world. She refuses to acknowledge the world of Thornfield Hall that imposes on her a fixed identity and defines her as the marginalised Other.

In the final section of the novel, Antoinette “doubts the identity of her residence” insisting that the mansion is not in England (Müller 74). She believes that England, which she previously depicts as “quite unreal, and like a dream” is an imaginary place, a “cardboard world” made of paper. She insists that she has never reached England
and that she is still sailing the wide Sargasso Sea. The indeterminacy and uncertainty that Antoinette creates overthrow the conventions of clarity and finality. Her refusal to accept England as an objective and external reality testifies her subversive capacity to create her own reality and to define herself in terms of a space of in-betweenness also stands for fluidity and flux which are in accordance with her hybrid and fluid identity. The novel’s title seems to signify Antoinette’s unstable world of plurality and difference, one that is set against Rochester’s world that denotes fixedness and stability reflected in the word ‘land’ in England. Thinking that she and Rochester have lost their way in the Sargasso Sea casts doubt on the authority and power of Rochester as well as the reliability of Bronte’s objective reality.

II. Celebrating Hybridity:

A. Antoinette’s Hybrid Cultural Identity:

Born to a British ex-slave owner father and White French Creole mother, Antoinette finds herself straddling the boundaries of two different cultural stools; she is Caribbean but not black, white but not English. As a White Creole, Antoinette enjoys the multiplicity of her identities stemming from her cultural hybridity; she subverts cultural hierarchisation and overturns the realm of imperialist and the colonialist system of binarism based on the dichotomous opposites of ‘either/or,’ ‘us/them,’ ‘self/Other.’ In other words, it calls into question Englishness as the purest cultural and national identity and troubles it as a monolithic and monologic signifier for whiteness. Her hybridity is a liberating force that opens up an “in-between space” which Homi Bhabha calls the “Third Space of enunciation” that works to release the tensions arising from the encounter between the colonised and the coloniser and to celebrate the politics of inclusion rather than exclusion (“Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences” 209).

Antoinette’s joyful celebration of her Creole identity and thus of her hybridity is better seen in the closing scene of the novel. To explain more, her condonation of Rochester’s calls “Bertha! Bertha” that define her as an English woman and her leap into fire where she sees the figure of Tia, her black Caribbean alter ego, should not be
read as a movement towards her personal cancellation in which she seeks a complete identification with the black girl.

Instead, it is an instance of rebirth in which Antoinette acknowledges her belonging to the Caribbean world and, thus, asserts her hybrid identity, embracing her in-betweeness and celebrating both parts, black and white, of her national identity. In a self-conscious act, Antoinette resurrections herself by thinking of identity as a production which is never complete or finished. Her embrace of her hybridity becomes a site of resistance, a liberating force that enables her to experience herself as a subject in process who is engaged in a continuous becoming and being.

**B. Hybrid Language:**

Rhys’s novel in English “serves to interrupt pure narratives of nation,” creating thus, a variety of dialects and an array of speech styles that ordinary people use in their use of language. Her novel turns out to be a heteroglot writing that encompasses the very presence of heteroglossia that Bakhtin defines as: “The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects” (“Discourse in the Novel” 484). This incorporates the presence of many marginalized voices and styles that erupt to subvert “the refined and serious language of high culture” and challenge the uniformity and universality of the English language while ceremonially enthrone Caribbean language (Yaneva 42).

In other words, the text incorporates both the Standard English used by Rochester and Mr. Mason and the English, French, and Patois used by the Caribbean islanders such as Creoles and Blacks. The novel incorporates many Creole’s songs like Christophine’s lullaby “Ma belle ka di maman li” meaning “my beautiful girl said to her mother,” that represents the mother’s voice. Other childish words are also used by Christophine when she talks to Antoinette such as “doudou,” meaning “little darling,” “doudou ché” meaning “dear little darling,” and others as “bébé” meaning a white person (Rhys 70-71-70, Sumillera 29).

Rhys’s embodiment of these terms in a text written in English is not only directed to decentralize the universality of her Rochester’s mother tongue, but also to
display the linguistic diversities and complexities of the West Indian society, rejecting Brontë’s imperialist ideology that presents her Creole heroine as a voiceless beast that “growled like some strange wild animal” (Brontë 321). She goes beyond that to display “that Creoles do have linguistic vitality and impact that Standard English lacks” (Rhys 151). Indeed, Rhys’s originality revolves around her introduction of varieties of languages to the novel form. Her use of a multiplicity of languages and dialects can stand as a marker of the generic identity and specificity of the narrative as a novel in English. In fact, in her essay “Feminism in Post-Colonial discourse: A Subversive Manoeuvre,” Rama Kundu contends that:

Rhys’s unique linguistic register [...] imparts a characteristic regional flavour to the text, and thus helps the reader to place Antoinette in her home island [...] and to perceive the assertive difference of ‘English’ of postcolonial writings from the ‘Queen’s English’ of the imperial text. (103)

It is a subversive strategy to create a heterogeneous space where she celebrates Bertha’s cultural specificities. The Caribbean novelist struggles to show the linguistic complexity of the post-emancipation Jamaican society. She rejects Brontë’s imperialist ideology that presents her Creole heroine as a voiceless beast that “growled like some strange wild animal” (Brontë 321). Instead, she strives to show her linguistic abilities.

III. Celebrating the Risky: Antoinette’s Embrace of her Excessive Sexuality:

Although both women writers address the issue of female sexuality as a way to subvert the patriarchal society, they approach it differently. In JE, Brontë violates the muteness that enveloped the nineteenth-century Victorian connubial intimacy by providing her readers a glimpse of Bertha Mason, the ethically perverted wife of her Byronic hero. She reproduces patriarchal and racist binary thought. She represents the proper female behaviour by encountering two antithetical figures of women: “The angel in the house” symbolized by Jane and “the madwoman in the attic” represented by Bertha.
In other words, while Brontë defines Bertha’s sexuality within the confines of the evil and monstrous and thus, lapses in the reproduction of the patriarchal sexual politics that force women to be passive, Rhys gives voice to the female passion negated in *JE*. She re-examines the appropriate English norms of female sexual politics. Antoinette represents herself as a woman who is sexually lustful and full of wolfish of excess, subverting the traditional conceptualization of the female body on which the conventional moral etiquettes enacting normality and abnormality are written.

While acutely embracing the physically and sexually immoderate pleasures and desires, Antoinette/Bertha violates the officially established cultural order which is used as a tool of gender domination and control in *JE*. Thus, unlike the Brontean narrative which is motivated by Jane’s journey of maturity as she learns the necessity of controlling her passion, the Rhysian text celebrates Antoinette’s celebration of her body’s excesses and signals the heroine’s subversive energy to resist the patriarchal desire to control, contain and master the female body.

Rampant with Antoinette’s obsessive and excessive expression of her anarchic sexual intercourse, *WSS* becomes a festive merriment of the female body’s corporeality that unseats the sexual/textual politics of the Brontean text. While challenging the cultural ideologies written on her heroine’s body, Rhys presents *WSS* as a text written through the body as it blends the sexual and the textual instead of arranging them in opposite poles. Conscious of her textualized sexuality in the original text, the Creole heroine strives to challenge the panoptical bodily statement of her husband who inscribes her excessive sexual proclivity within a discourse of savage grotesqueness and bestial madness.

In so doing, she offers new textual and sexual poetics which castrate male textual/sexual politics while liberating and redeeming herself from the regulatory system that incarcerates her within the ideological discourse of either passivity and purity or absence and lack. Rhys’s text becomes a body that heeds to voice the repressed sexual desires of the grotesque Antoinette/Bertha who challenges the stimulus/response approach which is used to indoctrinate women how to behave
properly, turning them to “docile bodies” disciplined to obey structures of cultural order, to use Michel Foucault’s own words. Antoinette Cosway turns out to be a projection of patriarchal fear of female sexuality.

On the one hand, she threatens the English conceptions of morality and normality. Her transgressive and excessive sexual appetites drive her to perversion and promiscuity as Rhys writes: “She thirsts for anyone- not for me … She’ll *loosen her black hair, and laugh* and coax and *flatter*” (Rhys, emphasis is mine 107). Antoinette has a sexual affairs and notably with her cousin Sandi. She jeopardizes her husband’s sense of superiority: she is no longer a sexual object of a male gaze as she redefines her subject position while disturbingly inverts and subverts the traditional sexual politics based on the binary opposite of active male/passive female. Antoinette’s active sexuality overpowers her husband who is captivated by her physical beauty that looks alien and strange, as Rhys writes: “[he is] bewitch[ed] with her. She is in [his] blood and [his] bones. By night and by day” (59). The patriarchal Rochester finds himself sexually dependent on his wife who performs the active role of the dominator. Antoinette’s provocative sexuality and unrestrained passion horrify the English patterns of proper femininity.

**Conclusion**

*WSS* releases the Creole Bertha from the shroud of vampirism while endowing her with an alternative identity. By offering her a plausible past life, the Caribbean female novelist opens the ground for her heroine who shares with her the same origin and background to celebrate her fragmented identity that defies the unified and fixed identity of Jane Eyre as well as her cohesive and chronological narrative. While breaking off the spatio-temporal barriers, the heroine inserts fragments of her past that trouble the objective reality/truth of Rochester’s account of her story of madness, opening the floor to a liberating and celebratory space that embraces the mushrooming of multiple ‘truths.’

This process of celebration is also manifested in her cuddle of her cultural in-betweeness as well as her hybrid creole language that enables her to upset the conventional concept of purity. This latter is also challenged while making
Antoinette/Bertha mock the pure and chaste Jane. The Rhysian female protagonist comes to liberate, articulate and celebrate her excessive sexual desires, subverting thus her female precursor’s complicity with the patriarchal sexual politics.

Endnotes

1. It will be referred as WSS

2. It will be referred as JE

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“Olfactory Silence” in William Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha: A Language of (Be)longing and Resistance

By Mourad Romdhani

Abstract:

Women in William Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha are often judged through masculine noses either as an attractive consumable aroma, containing coded messages of longing and desire, or as a rotten and undesirable odor, constituting a threat to masculinity. This classification is based upon a general patriarchal tendency to silence, fix and repress sexual desires and female body.

Moreover, smell in Faulkner’s world has to do with power and belonging, for only the patriarch is allowed this sense testifying to his belonging to masculinity and the fact that women are denied olfactory agency is telling about their exclusion and limited ability to be independent active subjects and their denigrating status as passive objects of consumption instead.

The present paper scrutinizes the code of olfaction recurrently employed in Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha and highlights the different communicative functions odors have in the writer’s imaginary homeland. The analysis of the issue of “olfactory silence” in Faulkner’s writings is based on sociocultural as well as psycho-feminist theories.

Key Words: smell, olfactory silence, feminism, longing, belonging, resistance
Dealing with issues considered as taboo, like female body and sexual deviancy, William Faulkner’s characters drift to the nonverbal as a way of voicing what culture dubs as unspeakable and what patriarchal language excludes from its repertoire. Though culturally and linguistically obscured, the instinctual and the natural find articulation in another non-linguistic medium, namely the olfactory code. Faulkner exposes his readers to a kind of a “smellable” language that is not be heard yet rather olfactorily perceived. Likewise, in Faulkner’s texts, language is not the only medium to represent gender stereotypes and power relations as the olfactory can speak, too. Faulkner’s male and female characters attempt to have very particular scents highlighting their gender and ensuring their belonging to masculinity and femininity as dictated by cultural norms. The absence of a particular smell is equally indicative of a sexual deviancy and a threat to a sociocultural patriarchal system.

Interestingly, however, smell is not just a patriarchal instrument classifying Faulkner’s women characters as objects of desire. It is also used as an instrument of sedition and resistance on the part of female characters who try to challenge patriarchal standards and escape the confines of degrading stereotypes of femininity as a consumable scent. The main concern of the present paper is to scrutinize the code of olfaction recurrently employed in Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha and highlight the different communicative functions odors have in the writer’s imaginary homeland. The analysis of the issue of “olfactory silence” in Faulkner’s writings will refer to sociocultural as well as psycho-feminist theories.

In Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell, Constance Classen, David Howe, and Anthony Synott state that despite its marginal and repressed position in contemporary Western culture, olfaction is an essential element in the construction of power relations on both popular and institutional levels and odors can indeed turn into a fluent medium of articulation and representation (161). Seen from a feminist sociocultural perspective, olfactory perception is of paramount relevance, for it constructs gender stereotypes and

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52 Yoknapatawpha is a fictional county that constitutes the major setting of William Faulkner’s works. The word Yoknapatawpha is derived from the “Yocona River” which crosses Lafayette County, Faulkner’s home place.
determines women’s sociocultural position. Classen, Howe, and Synott comment on the
sense of olfaction and its silent yet fluent communicative codes:

When we examine the myth of the perfumed sex more closely, we find that it
breaks down several stereotypical olfactory and feminine categories. Certain
women are not considered fragrant at all in Western tradition. These include [. . .]
any woman who defies the established male-dominated social order. Such
women are bad odors on the olfactory scale of the feminine value [. . .].
Maiden, innocent and docile, on the other hand, are naturally fragrant and
should smell of nothing stronger than the flowers with which they are
associated. Wives and mothers are surrounded by smells of cooking [. . .].
Seductresses are femmes fatales, sirens who lure men to their deaths. They
symbolize dangerous attractiveness and their scents are heavy and spicy. (162)
Interestingly, however, men are stereotyped as scentless, for they disdain smell and
consider it as a sign of masculine deviancy. Classen quotes the 1940s American author A.
H. Verill who sees that

the use of perfume in any form is abhorrent to the American male. In vain have
perfumes tried to introduce ‘manly’ scents such as leather, scotch, hay, [. . .]
etc. not one has succeeded and men of American blood remain firm in their
determination not to use perfumes. (163)

Gendered as non-smelling subjects, South American males avoid being smelled as it is
indicative of a masculine perversion. It is woman’s duty to smell attractive enough to
conform to a masculine-constructed olfactory scale classifying her as a consumable aroma.

Examining the relationship between female body and smell, leads to the conclusion
that women are attributed different stereotypes depending on their odors. This
nomenclature is in fact a silent communication that trespasses the confines of the linguistic
to reside in the olfactory, producing meanings and communicative codes related to gender
stereotypes and power relations.

Classifying females as a consumable aroma matches Simone De Beauvoir’s
postulation about “creation myths” that maintain a position of dominance over women. In
The Second Sex, De Beauvoir argues that “Man seeks in woman the other,” (302) revealing
the patriarchal tendency to negate and obscure femininity throughout human history. The
“other,” according to De Beauvoir is desired by man “not only to possess her but also to be
ratified by her” (312). The female “other,” De Beauvoir adds, ought to remain loyal to the values of the masculine. “She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not with reference to her. She is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the other” (16). Being stereotyped as a consumable aroma, a woman becomes the silent container of male desire and a passive object of the masculine subject.

De Beauvoir adds that, in patriarchal societies, a woman is locked in a process of natural functions and imprisoned in her bodily cycle of life, fulfilling male sexual desires and giving birth. Accordingly, being a pleasurable smell is a female's duty to fulfill her natural functions. Any attempt to change such a natural process will otherwise be thought of as a source of fear and anxiety as it represents a threat to patriarchal laws and orders. De Beauvoir conceives a series of oppositions which revolve around the duality Subject/Other. For instance, while the masculine is culture, the feminine is nature; while he is human, she is less than human and while he is scentless she is a consumable scent.

Significantly, smell is not only an idiom reflecting females as a desirable aroma. It can also be a mark of masculine rejection of femininity. In some patriarchal cultures, a category of women, mainly old or unwed, are associated with a sickening smell that constitutes a source of fear and anxiety for masculinity. Such a negative attitude falls within what Julia Kristeva’s calls patriarchal phobia in relation to the odor of the female body, resulting in feelings of disgust and abjection.

Nonetheless, although smell places females in a marginal position in patriarchal cultures, highlighting only the consumable element of female body, it can still contain an element of resistance. Women can still seek to highlight their olfactory idiosyncrasies in a way that celebrates their identities and challenges gendered smells imposed on them by those in power (Classen 161). Celebrating their “olfactory identity,” women can exist beyond the confines of masculine-biased stereotypes. In this respect, smell becomes an instrument of identity and presence, matching Luce Irigaray’s statement that a woman ought to live otherwise, by not only rejecting her marginal position in masculine discourses but also residing beyond its confines (166).

Classen traces the connection between silence and smell in Western culture throughout history and reaches the conclusion that both are repressed and marginal mediums of representation. Classen points out that both silence and smell are hardly even
considered as a political medium of expressing class allegiances and struggles (161). However, in modern times, with the rise of feminist theories, silence and olfaction have entered in the construction of power relations in society. Classen suggests the term “olfactory silence” to account for gendered roles and positions within modern societies. However, the term can arguably have a much broader meaning to include coded messages not only revealing gender relations but also maintaining masculine stereotypes and uncovering a certain deviancy from either masculine or feminine sexual norms. In this part, the term “olfactory silence” will be used in its broader sense insofar as the olfactory sense is employed in Faulkner’s novels as a silent narrative which substitutes a masculine-oriented language in accounting for (fe)male gendered stereotypes and power relations. This silent idiom equally unveils certain sexual deviances, on the part of both male and female characters, which are socioculturally considered as unspeakable taboos.

What is significant about smell is that it cannot be contained, for it escapes and crosses boundaries. In the literary text, odors infringe the boundaries of the linguistic and become a nonverbal idiom revealing different social codes. The Faulknerian text is a field of odors which are telling about power relations, gender stereotypes and norms of belonging to either masculinity or femininity. Faulkner’s male characters are equipped with the olfaction privilege that asserts their masculinity and mastery over females who, on the other hand, are not allowed to the masculine olfactory power system. Rather, they are portrayed as incapable of sensing the world and thereby constructed as subhuman.

In one of the interviews, William Faulkner pronounces a predilection toward smell as a medium of articulation capable of substituting the linguistic: “Smell is one of my sharper senses; maybe it’s sharper than sight. To me, it is as noticeable as the ear which hears turns of speech” (Blotner 253). The sense of smell is remarkably recurrent in Faulkner’s texts when dealing with female sexuality. Indeed, competing images of the female body within patriarchal ideology are referred to by distinctive smells which indicate the purity or impurity of the female character. Smell is in this sense a silent code that meets Adrienne Rich’s description of the female body as both “impure, corrupt, the site of discharges [smells included], bleedings, dangerous to masculinity, a source of moral and physical contamination” (34) and, at the same time, representing a masculine fantasy of the mother’s body as “beneficent, sacred, pure, asexual [and] nourishing” (34). Smell varies according to the nature of the female body, namely the sexual body considered as an
attractive scent, the mother’s body smelled as asexual and nourishing and the aged body considered as voracious and threatening to masculinity. Sexually transgressing social morals has also its scent and (fe)male sexual deviancy, instead of being linguistically presented, is rather smelled. Likewise, deep sexual desires are olfactorily sensed and communicated in Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha.

In Analyzing the Different Voice, Jerilyn Fisher and Ellen Silber comment on Faulkner’s employment of smell in his texts stating that this sense somehow offers his characters a true meaning as they can smell the otherness and hear voices coming through the smell of others (12-13). Likewise, in A Web of Words, Richard Gray comments on female presence through an emphasis on olfactory perception. Gray argues that Faulkner finds in olfaction an appropriate way of replicating the status of women in a white patriarchal world as an omnipresent, elusive and uncontainable. Being like smell “quite literally part of the air being breathed, but something that must remain tantalizingly diffuse, undefined and intangible” (212), Faulkner’s female characters constitute an entity that overcomes the contours of masculine-biased words and exists in “olfactory silence.”

In Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha, smell is a silent code that establishes gender stereotypes, relations and rules. Both male and female characters strive to conform to their masculinity and femininity through the production or adoption of a silent bodily language that cannot be uttered or heard but rather smelled. Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha, smelling of masculinity and femininity, associates very specific odors to both the patriarch and the matriarch and any deviancy in gender role performance can immediately be smelled, recognized and judged without words.

In Light in August, when Joe Christmas was taken out of the orphanage at an obscure night, the narrator states that Joe was sure that the person who was taking him was a man because he smelled him: “He knew where he was by the smell [. . .], knew also by smell that the person who carried him was a man” (127). The repetition of the verb “knew” and its association with “smell” is indicative of the efficacy of such a nonverbal medium as a way of achieving knowledge. Accordingly, it is arguably relevant to describe Faulkner’s employment of smell as a silent yet functional system of articulation as it tells without words and conveys messages and meanings without a voice.
Furthermore, the way Faulkner’s male characters olfactorily perceive each other is indicative of a sense of power, violence and belonging. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, Quentin’s father is recurrently described as smelling like cigars:

> It was a summer of wisteria. The twilight was full of it and the smell of his father’s cigar [. . .], the odor, the scent, which five months later Mr. Compson’s letter would carry up from Mississippi and over the long iron New England snow and into Quentin’s sitting room at Harvard. (23)

The smell of cigars is an idiosyncratic mark of masculinity which stands for male overwhelming dominance and virility in Faulkner’s texts. Besides, Thomas Sutpen’s father smells like alcohol, another odor relating to masculinity and highlighting Yoknapatawpha’s masculine freedom.

Male characters equally replicate the smell of their gendered environment. For instance, in “Dry September,” the man Miss Minnie Cooper started to date is “a widower of about forty [. . .], smelling always faintly of the barbershop or of whisky” (66). Similarly, in *Light in August* the men Joe met at a restaurant all have the same smell of “cigarettes” and “barbershops” (178). In the same way, in *The Hamlet*, the store where the men meet has a peculiar scent “radiating a strong good heat which had an actual smell, masculine, almost monastic – a winters’ concentration of unwomaned and deliberate tobacco-spittle annealing into the iron flanks” (137). The masculine-gendered space and masculine-gendered smell are recurrently employed in Faulkner’s texts to emphasize a sense of belonging and conformity to sociocultural norms in the writer’s Southern context.

Odors associated with violence and hostility are always linked to masculinity, meaning that such features pertain only to the patriarch. In *Light in August*, Mr. Hines is depicted as a man who carries “that quality of outworn violence like a scent, an odor” (343). War violence is similarly a smellable distinctive trait of masculinity. In *The Unvanquished*, Bayard smells war in his father’s sweat: “Then I began to smell it again [. . .], that odor in his clothes and beard and flesh too which I believed was the smell of powder and glory, the elected victorious but know better now” (10). In his description of his father’s return from war, Bayard employs smell as a silent voice having both a universal and a mythic resonance (Hage 97). Bayard’s description of his father’s smell is also gendered as it inscribes the father into the paradigm of masculinity constructed upon images of violence, virility and dominance. In the same way, in *Absalom, Absalom!*,

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Quentin and Shreve smell the “powder” and violence of the civil war associating it with masculinity, power and domination.

Interestingly, male characters breaking the codes of masculinity are immediately revealed by their odor, which is a silent interference of a patriarchal system to restore a natural order and secure masculinity. Sexual deviancy on the part of male characters in Faulkner’s writings is characterized by a silent olfaction or an inability to smell. For instance, in *The Unvanquished*, when Bayard Sartoris walks into Redmond’s office, a man who did not play a part in the civil war, he immediately notices the total lack of smell: “There was no smell of drink, not even of tobacco in the neat clean dingy room although I knew he smoked” (188). Bayard is bemused by the absence of the smell of tobacco or drink as these odors are indicative of someone’s masculinity and virility. He realizes that Redmond is a masculine deviancy as he lacks the smell of manhood and the smell of the war’s powder (172).

Gavin Stevens, in *The Town*, is another male who does not meet the requirements of masculinity and who is silently uncovered through smell. Being a victim of other men’s violence, failing to fulfill his sexual longings for Eula Snopes and her daughter Linda and escaping from Eula’s bodily offers, Gavin Stevens is excluded from the standards of masculinity as “he lacks the skills of smelling like a man” (95), to use Eula Snopes words. Besides, Eula notices that Gavin Stevens lacks the tobacco smell though he always carries a pipe: “‘There’s your cob pipe’, she said [. . .]. You’ve got three of them. I’ve never seen you smoke one. When do you smoke them?’” (320). Lacking the smell of tobacco and failing to perform sexually as a masculine, Gavin holds a pipe that he never uses, which is suggestive of a sexual impotency and a masculine deviancy.

Like Redmond who, in *The Unvanquished*, lacks tobacco smell, Gavin lacks such a gendered-masculine code. When Ratliff enters Gavin’s office, he opens the drawer where Gavin always kept liquor. However, the drawer “never even smelled like he used to keep whiskey in it” (353). Therefore, the smell of tobacco and alcohol, which are culturally established as masculine products in Faulkner’s south, are not olfactorily perceived in Gavin and his surrounding, testifying to his inability to meet patriarchal parameters of masculinity despite his many attempts. In a later scene, Ratliff watches Gavin trying to smoke his pipe. He lights the match and then blows it out carefully and, tellingly, sets the pipe unused (358). Considering the phallic dimension of Gavin’s pipe, this scene silently
yet clearly communicates the male character’s impotency and his inability to conform to the requirements of masculinity in Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha. Such a masculine failure is olfactorily established through the lack of a manly smell.

Like males, female characters have an idiosyncratic smell that can be straightforwardly recognized and that can silently convey signs of belonging. In *Light in August*, when Joe Christmas hid in the dietician’s closet, he smelled her garments as womanly with “rife pink woman smelling obscurity” (122). Correspondingly, the dietician’s room is repeatedly described as “warm, littered woman pink smelling” (132). Later, when Joe reached teenage, he discovered, with the help of his older friends, that the only valid fact about female body is that it ought “to be discerned by the sense of smell” (185). In another instance, Miss Bell Worsham, an old white woman in *Go Down Moses*, lives in a room having “the unmistakable faint odor of old maidens” (361). Likewise, in “A Rose for Emily,” another spinster, Miss Emily Grierson, lives in a house “smelling of dust and disuse,” having “a close dank smell” (48) and replicating her state of old age and decay. Therefore, just as male characters, Faulkner’s females are constructed as feminine through a gendered smell highlighting their sexuality. The smell of the ladies and their intimate belongings, ranging from the dietician’s pink toothpaste and her pink undergarments to Miss Emily’s room having a smell “acrid in the nostrils,” (59) are absorbed into one aroma associated with consumable femininity.

Not only do they have a charming smell turning them into sexual fetishes, as in the case of the “warm woman pink smelling” dietician in *Light in August* or Caddy Compson’s scent of “honeysuckles” and trees in *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner’s women also appear with an unpleasant stinky smell. In many Faulknerian texts, females are portrayed as having an unappealing smell which dehumanizes them and turns them into dangerous creatures constituting a threat to the whole community. Going in tandem with Simone de Beauvoir’s postulation, in *The Second Sex*, that female sexuality is considered as a threat and thus needs to be excluded and shunned, a category of Faulkner’s females, mainly old women, are described as a sickening smell and a disagreeable taste. In *As I Lay Dying*, Addie Bundren’s son Vardaman repeatedly mistakes his dead mother for a fish he had just caught, revealing her dead body’s putrid odor and inscribing her in the animal order due to her undesirable smell. Later in the novel, Albert reports to his boss Moseley the outrageous
smell of Addie’s corpse comparing it to a horrid taste: “It must have been like a piece of rotten cheese coming into an ant-hill” (192).

Similarly, in the same novel, Tull, the Bundrens’ neighbor, describes his wife Cora as a jar of milk that is bound to turn into smelly soured milk as she grows older:

To hold Cora like a jar of milk in the spring: you’ve got to have a tight jar or you’ll need a powerful spring, so if you have a big spring, why then you have the incentive to have tight, well-made jars, because you would rather have milk that will sour than to have milk that won’t, because you are a man. (126)

Tull’s description of his wife as a horrid taste erases the latter’s efforts to highlight her femininity through a pleasant smell and taste. Cora’s first words in the novel are reminiscent of the delightful smell and taste of baked cakes: “So I saved out the eggs and baked yesterday. The cakes turned out right well” (3). The woman’s attempts to highlight her appealing sexuality through the gendered role of cooking and the pleasant smell of food are further manifested in her overt reference to the snake which is an emblem of desire and temptation (3). However, Cora’s attempts to voice her sexuality prove vain since her husband describes her as a kind of unpleasant food he is compelled to consume as a way of maintaining his masculinity even if he knows that such food is bound to decay. Tull’s pronouncement is replicated in the image of one of the buzzards lured by Addie’s rotten corpse and described by Samson, the local farmer, as an “old bald-headed man” (106).

By the same token, Anse Bundren is attracted by Addie’s reeking corpse as he finds in it joy and regeneration. In her study entitled *Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying*, Ellen W. Waisala supports the argument that the female body ought to be consummated as a way of preserving one’s masculinity, stating that in Faulkner’s text the distinction between the people and animals is blurred. Anse’s posture is similar to that of a buzzard. The metaphor can be extended to Anse’s character; like a buzzard he seems to feed off Addie’s death. As her body rots, he appears neater, cleaner and more alert than when we first met him. (33)

The fact that Anse Bundren “feeds off” Addie’s dead body is a reverberation of Simone de Beauvoir’s and Luce Irigaray’s statement that the female body is a desired “other” which masculinity not only strives to possess but also be ratified by. In *Speculum of the Other*
Woman, Luce Irigaray exposes the dominant culture’s objectification of woman as an act needed in the establishment of the male subject:

Woman, for her part, remains an unrealized potentially unrealizable, at least by/for herself. Is she, by nature, a being that exists for/by another? […] Is she unnecessary in and of herself, but essential as the non-subjective subjectum? As that which can never achieve the status of subject, at least for/by herself? […] This ‘lack of qualities’ that makes the female truly female ensures that the male can achieve his qualifications. (165-66)

In such a culture, the relationship between sexes is exclusionary as it negates and subjugates the other, constituting a strongly gendered system that seeks to banish maternal origins and create the illusion of masculinity. Smell in Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha falls within Irigaray’s description as it turns females into objects upon which male characters exert their control and ratify their masculine subject.

In addition to dealing with taboo unspeakable issues, establishing gender stereotypes and sending silent codes of belonging, smell paradoxically produces silent signals of masculine desire and longing toward females. In many instances, Faulkner’s male characters exhibit the power of smelling women. In As I Lay Dying, the child Vardaman asks Dewey Dell, his sister, “I can smell her, I say. Can you smell her, too? ‘Hush’ Dewey Dell says. The wind’s changed. Go to sleep!” (202). By virtue of his masculinity, young Vardaman has the power to smell the dead body of his mother while Dewey Dell is denied such a power due to her feminine construct. When they arrive to Jefferson with the putrid corpse of their matriarch nine days after her death, the Bundrens are received with different gendered reactions. While women were “scattering up and down the street with handkerchiefs to their nose,” (191) men were standing unaffected around the stinky wagon thanks to their “hard noses.”

In other instances, smell constitutes a lure to masculine noses. In The Sound and the Fury, the Compson brothers are all attracted by the scent of their sister’s “burgeoning honeysuckle,” symbolizing her sexual maturity, and cannot help escaping her smell of rain and trees. In Light in August, Joe equates the smell of the female body to that of the “damp,” “dark” and “fecund” earth, smelling the female body in the physical setting around him. In The Wild Palms, when Harry Wilbourne visits Charlotte Rittenmeyer, he is lured by the scent of “sugar,” “bananas,” “jasmine” and “hemp” (31), which overwhelms the
woman’s exotic and alluring world. Even after her death, Harry still senses Charlotte’s scent whenever he feels an “ocean’s breeze” and whenever her memory crosses his thoughts the smells of “jasmine” and “hemp” tickle his nostrils.

Paradoxically, male characters refer to their noses to voice their rejection of the female body. Reflecting about his relationship with Joanna Bundren, Joe Christmas speculates: “Why in hell do I want to smell horses? [. . .] It’s because they are not women. Even a mare horse is a kind of man” (109). In this instance, Joe’s nose reveals his misogyny as he always treats females as a sickening odor. Moreover, in As I Lay Dying, Vardaman’s reiterated statement “my mother is a fish” (76-90-91-185) as well as Darl’s repeated words “Jewel’s mother is a horse” (86-90) fall within male rejection of the female body and the function of smell as a silent code of exclusion and abjection.

Likewise, in Sanctuary, when Benbow decides that he can no longer live with his wife, Belle, he sums up his marriage experience in images of unlikable odors and colors. Sitting with the men in the bootlegger’s house and speaking about the reasons of leaving his wife, Benbow reveals: “It wasn’t little Belle that sent me off [. . .], it was a rag with rouge on it. There it was, stuffed behind the mirror: a handkerchief where she had wiped of the surplus paint she dressed” (15). Later, he talks about his weekly journeys to collect shrimps for his wife. Benbow reveals that Belle adores shrimps. Thus, he provides her with some every day:

And I still don’t like to smell shrimps but I wouldn’t mind carrying it home so much, I could stand that. It’s the package drips. All the way home it drips and drips while after a while I follow myself to the station and stand aside and watch Horace Benbow thinking. Here lies Horace Benbow in a fading series of small stinking spots on a Mississippi sidewalk. (17)

Commenting on Benbow’s reflections, Richard Gray states that they do not require a particularly subtle or intensive reading to see that they contain a covert reference to female sexuality (213). The rag stained red by his wife’s “surplus paint” and the stinking series of dripping small spots “quite clearly figure for Horace the threat of an explicitly sexualized femininity” (Forter 104) as they constitute a substance whose smell and color trigger male revulsion and rejection.

The putrid smell of Faulkner’s females can equally fall within what Tania Modleski describes as the monstrous and voracious feminine. In The Women who Knew Too Much,
Modleski talks about the voracious female, referring to the continual threat of annihilation old females are thought to pose to masculinity in patriarchal sociocultural systems (109). Likewise, in *Powers and Horrors*, Julia Kristeva talks about patriarchal phobia in relation to the odor of the female body. According to Kristeva, “matrophobia” is a masculine fear of contact with the mother’s body, manifested in “rituals of defilement” which, based on the feeling of abjection and all converging on the maternal, attempt to symbolize the other threat to the subject; that of being swamped by the dual relationship, thereby risking the loss not of a part (castration) but of totality of his living being. (64)

According to Kristeva, defilement rituals reflect the masculine subject’s fear of his own identity sinking permanently into the mother figure. Kristeva adds that the feminine is always dubbed as a “pollutant” smell, for it is considered, in patriarchal cultures, as subversive and threatening. Defilement results in a feeling of abjection linked to the maternal body and the subject’s struggle to achieve a separate existence reveals an identity in danger of being sunk within the maternal sphere.

Kristeva’s arguments about repulsion, abjection and the threat to male subject’s identity being swamped by the matriarch can clearly be distinguished in Faulkner’s males’ anxiety and fear of being overwhelmed by the smell of the matriarch. The fact that the Compson brothers, in *The Sound and the Fury*, are incapable of moving beyond the confines of their sister’s suffocating scent of the “burgeoning honeysuckle,” the Bundrens’ struggle to bury the corpse of their matriarch, in *As I Lay Dying*, and the people of Jefferson’s discomfort with Miss Emily Grierson’s private life, in “A Rose for Emily,” and their attempts to isolate her from the community testify to a patriarchal dread of the outrageous feminine and her threat to the masculine identity.

Correspondingly, Barbara Creed, in *The Monstrous Feminine*, talks about the female body as being monstrous, arguing that the function of such a monstrous body is to produce an encounter between the patriarchal symbolic order and that which threatens its permanence (11). Creed notices that repugnant images of blood and reeking odors are central to a masculine culture’s construction of the monstrous feminine. By the same

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53 All societies and cultures develop rituals or ceremonial rites that help avoid contact with “filth” or – where contact is unavoidable – help to keep its impact within the limits or to decontaminate the people and places that may be sources of danger. Every culture develops purification ceremonies to ease the effects of possible contamination. Such rites are called “rituals of defilement” (Goodnow 47).
token, Kristeva states, in *Powers of Horrors*, that “it is lack of cleanliness that disturbs identity, system and order” (4). Stinking odors classify Faulkner’s aging females under the rubric of the monstrous feminine constituting a threat to masculinity and consequently doomed to rejection and exclusion due to their “voracious” sexuality.

In the same vein, Richard Gray, in *A Web of Words*, talks about the role of smell as a silent medium of female representation in patriarchal cultures. He states that odor provides a pertinent way of registering the position of women in Faulkner’s white male world as well as their omnipresence and elusiveness (212). Faulkner’s women are, like smell, an absent presence and a constituent part of Yoknapatawpha’s landscape. However, this part remains silent, invisible and undefined despite being diffused everywhere. Gray is of the opinion that smell is a silent voice of female sexuality as the emphasis on the olfactory sense is often connected to the female body considered as a taboo in patriarchal systems: “There is a remorseless emphasis on the olfactory sense, the way so many of Faulkner’s young white male characters smell out something they would prefer not to acknowledge, not to be aware of on a conscious level” (212-13). Gray provides the instances of Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury*, Horace Benbow in *Sanctuary*, and Joe Christmas in *Light in August* who fell suffocated by the smell of the “burgeoning honeysuckle” which they equate with female sexuality and the bodies of women they know.

To Gray, odor in Faulkner’s novels divides females into two categories, namely the female as a “chaste virgin” who is an elusive object of desire and the female as a “sexual being,” a wife or a mistress who is not only elusive but also an inescapable threat causing fear and anxiety. Accordingly, whether desired or feared, Faulknerian female characters are designed by a smell that endows them with a ghost-like or “spectral presence” determining their position in a white male world (213). Gray effectively distinguishes the role of olfactory silence in Faulkner’s masculine-biased Yoknapatawpha. However, he does not go a step further to highlight another important role of olfaction in its relation to the silences of Faulkner’s females. Indeed, true that odor determines women’s social position which is one of negation and subjugation and true that odor is a silent medium articulating masculine desire toward femininity. Nevertheless, odors can be employed by female characters as a resistive and subversive way defying a patriarchal order and echoing women’s endeavor toward voice, presence and identity.
In Faulkner’s novels, smell is a silent code that emphasizes patriarchal rules of behavior, abnegates the feminine and represses the instinctual. However, several female characters demonstrate adaptive skills of turning the obscuring gendered tool of smell into a disruptive medium of silent resistance. This female idiosyncrasy is voiced by Minrose Gwin in *The Feminine and Faulkner* where she argues that despite his misogynistic cultural background, Faulkner creates female characters who “in powerful and creative ways, disrupt and sometimes even destroy patriarchal structures” (4). Among other female characters, Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying* and Miss Emily Grierson in “A Rose for Emily” complement each other in producing a clear image of female resistance by means of a nonverbal olfactory agency.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Addie Bundren is surprisingly endowed with a masculine power of smell. From the very beginning of her single monologue, she overtly reveals an awareness of the gendered masculine nose in Yoknapatawpha County, criticizing it and describing it as filthy. Addie states that “in the afternoon, when school was out and the last one had left with his little dirty snuffing nose, instead of going home, I would go down the hill” (157). Addie not only criticizes the masculine gendered nose but also claims possession of such a masculine agency as she heads to the hill so as to enjoy “the quiet smelling of damp and rotting leaves and new earth” (157).

Moreover, a remarkable fact in *As I Lay Dying* is that Addie’s corpse is smelled by both males and females. In many instances in the novel, both male and female characters try to avoid the reeking dead body but they cannot, which brings up the question whether being smelled is always an act of consumption and female submissiveness or it is a subversive act of presence and silent resistance. Critics like Deborah Clarke see in Addie’s rotten corpse a degrading stereotype reflecting an image of “divided and defeated maternity” due to the female sin of sexual desire (153). Nevertheless, Addie’s rotten body can arguably be considered as a disruptive instrument since it gives off a smell male noses find uncontrollable and inescapable. In this respect, Addie’s odor is repeatedly described as “outrageous” (107-177) telling about the woman’s unvoiced discontent with a patriarchal system devastating her.

Likewise, Addie Bundren uses her silenced and violated body as an instrument of revenge. Throughout the text, Addie’s reeking corpse constitutes an obstacle male characters have to overcome. Samson, the local farmer who provides shelter to the
Bundrens in their way to Jefferson, expresses his irritation with Addie’s body claiming that “you’ve got to respect the dead themselves and a woman that’s been dead in a box four days, the best way to respect her is to get her into the ground as quick as you can” (103-4). Respectively, Addie’s smell becomes an uncontainable power that emasculates male characters and challenges their culturally-constructed smelling power. In *Faulkner’s Heroic Design*, Lynn G. Levins notices that “it is the corpse itself which becomes the instrument of Addie’s revenge and Anse and the Bundren children gain no rest from their trials until they bury the decayed body” (102). Throughout their journey, the Bundren males exhibit a sense of uneasiness and confusion due to the putrid smell of their mother’s decaying flesh.

Accordingly, Addie’s stinking odor turns into an uncontrollable enigmatic voice of a violated and silenced body which Darl and Vardaman hear as they put their ears on the coffin yet fail to understand: “And then she talks in little trickling bursts of secret and murmurous bubbling. I took Vardaman to listen [. . .] I put my ear close and I can hear her. Only I can’t tell what she is saying” (198-200). Despite their attempts to decipher Addie’s “murmurous bubbling” and despite their efforts to clean themselves from their mother’s odor, the Bundren males are able to neither make sense of their matriarch’s voice nor eradicate the smell that has infected them. Thus, through her silence and putrid smell, Addie posthumously triumphs over the patriarch, for “it is at such a cost that the body is capable of being defended, protected and also, eventually, sublimated” (Modleski 112).

Likewise, Vardaman’s deviant description of his mother’s dead body as a fish he caught to eat falls within Addie Bundren’s silent resistance to a patriarchal system. In *The Women who Knew Too Much*, Tania Modleski links Vardaman’s repeated description of his mother as a fish to the concept of “feeding the carcass of the dead woman and the culmination of the motifs of food and filth” (109). Modleski refers to Julia Kristeva to account for dietary prohibitions based upon religious proscriptions of incest and patriarchal projects of separation. Speaking about dietary prohibition, in *Powers and Horrors*, Kristeva states that “the dietary, when it departs from the conformity that can be demanded by the logic of separation, blends with the maternal as unclean and improper coalescence,

54 Kristeva describes bodily structures of separation or the “logic of rejection” as the bodily operations which prepare a child for entrance into language or the Symbolic stage governed by the Law of the Father. From the time of birth, the infant’s body is engaging in processes of separation and anality is the first example. Birth itself is also an experience of separation since one body is separated from another (Oliver16).
as undifferentiated power to be cut off” (106). In *As I Lay Dying*, the image of Cash’s wounded and blackened leg, his placement on his dead mother’s coffin and the smell emanating from both mother and son is an extreme form of such an “unclean and improper coalescence” that silently violates the logic of separation and the masculine order.

Like Addie Bundren whose smell turns into a threat to the patriarchal community, Miss Emily in “A Rose for Emily” ironically reveals a reversed masculine smelling power as she not only resists but also rejoices the smell of putrid male corpses in two separate incidents. The first occurs when she refuses to bury the dead body of her father and relishes his reeking smell, causing a big trouble to Jefferson’s people (52). The second is revealed after her death when the townspeople discover that she had spent forty years lying next to the corpse of her lover Homer Barron (59). Paradoxically, the threatening smell coming from Miss Emily’s house is not female. It is rather male as it comes out from a dead patriarch’s body resulting from Miss Emily’s refusal of separation and paternal love. In this sense, Miss Emily and Addie Bundren appear capable of showing that, as females, they are not merely an attractive scent ready to be consummated by a male nose or an unpleasant smell that men have to stand so as to assert their masculinity. Rather, Faulkner’s decaying females are capable of turning their gendered smell into a silent tool of resistance spreading such a smell onto male bodies and compelling male noses to sniff such unpleasant odors conventionally attributed to females. Addie Bundren’s and Miss Emily’s subversive acts of transfusing their gendered female odors onto masculine bodies are symbolically echoed in *The Wild Palms* when Charlotte Rittenmeyer crafts a puppet and labels it “Bad Smell.” Charlotte works out the idea of bad smells like “starvation” and “deprivation” into the body of an old man which is small enough to be contained in her hands.

Like Addie Bundren and Miss Emily Grierson, Charlotte Rittenmeyer transfers gendered female smells onto a male body as a silent yet effective means to resist the masculine smelling agency and uncover its phallocentricism. Charlotte hands the “Bad Smell” puppet to a male saying: “take it; you must need it much worse than we do” (92). Charlotte’s symbolic act of offering the “Bad Smell” puppet to a male is a covert refusal of gendered stereotypes of femininity as being a mere consumable aroma. Such a resistive

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55 Like Miss Emily Grierson who transmits her undesirable smell onto her father’s then Homer Barron’s corpses, Addie Bundren’s smell is moved to her son’s, Cash, cemented rotten leg.
attitude is equally pronounced by Caddy Compson in The Sound and the Fury: “We don’t like perfume ourselves” (51). Through such subversive acts, Faulkner’s women attempt to demonstrate that as females they are capable of employing their gendered smell as a way of turning masculinity into an object rather than a subject of consummation.

To sum up, some Faulkner’s females are trapped into a masculine-biased olfactory system of power and judgment and are consequently gendered as either an attractive or a disagreeable smell, conforming to stereotypes of femininity as a consumable scent. Other women characters, however, deliberately fall from the paradigm of attractiveness and consumption and become a source of masculine tension and fear as is the case with Addie Bundren and Miss Emily Grierson. These women find in their putrid smell a resistive tool to communicate a subversive identity and critically reconsider subjugating stereotypes seeing in female body a mere consumable aroma.

Smell is equally a silent code that brings in issues obscured and repressed by patriarchal words. Strict rules of masculine sexual behavior are established and communicated through the smell of liquor and cigars and the lack of such odors immediately evokes sexual deviancy and consequently leads to social as well as cultural exclusion. Therefore, to consider the abundance of smell in Faulkner’s texts as a mere element of the Southern natural landscape is in fact to fail to identify important hints to social codes, gender stereotypes and sexual standards governing Yoknapatawpha County.

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Subverting licenced liberty in Harold Pinter’s caretaker

By Zied Khammari

Abstract

The distinction between “Liberty” and “License” has been one of the major intellectual preoccupations of many Literary and Political theories. Though both terms seem to designate independence, License gives false impression of freedom. Actually, while Liberty is “a necessary condition of human fulfilment,” License is thought of as “a sufficient condition of human degeneracy.” (Scruton 398). Unlike Liberty, which is associated with the freedom from social constraints and relations, License points to a controlled freedom.

The differentiation between “Liberty” and “License” dates back to the age of the English philosopher John Locke. In his Second Treatise of Government, Locke claims that “liberty is, to be free from restraint and violence from others; which cannot be, where there is no law: but freedom is not … a liberty for every man to do what he lists … but a liberty to dispose, and order as he lists, his person, actions, possessions, and his whole property, within the allowance of those laws” (32). For Locke, liberty does not mean the right to do everything, but rather to do anything in accordance with the law of political society.

He insists that Man should have limited rights and society is supposed to place a critical limit on human behavior. Locke’s perception of licensed liberty is criticized by postmodernist philosophers who assert that individuals are to be freed from all forms of license. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, for instance, called for the liberation of subjects from the restraints of the System. In their theories of Rhizomatics and Nomadology, Deleuze and Guattari argue for the emancipation of individuals from the limits placed on them by society.
In literature, many writers have displayed a similar interest in the exploration of the borderline between Liberty and License, and Harold Pinter is one of them. In *The Caretaker*, Pinter dramatizes three alienated characters struggling to find a sense of identity in a restrictive society. In this paper, the study of the play through the lenses of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s perspective shall uncover Pinter’s problematization of freedom, and his condemnation of the Licensed Liberty.

**Key words:** Liberty, License, Political System, Subjects, Rhizomatics, Nomadology.

**Introduction:**

Harold Pinter (1930-2008) is a prominent British playwright and winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Literature (Prentice 23). He is well known for his innovative themes and unconventional dramatic techniques and has often been associated with the Absurdist drama. It was the eminent drama critic Martin Esslin who classified Pinter as an Absurdist playwright in his seminal book *The Theatre of the Absurd*. The term refers to a group of dramatists who appeared during the mid-twentieth century in Europe, especially between the 1940s and 1960s.

Esslin argues that Pinter and other Western playwrights, most notably Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco and Edward Albee, have broken with the traditional conception of drama and reacted against the notion of the well-made play. Esslin contends that absurdist writings “are essentially concerned with conveying their author’s sense of mystery, bewilderment, and his despair at being unable to find a meaning in existence” (*The Theatre of the Absurd* 44). Generally, Absurdist plays express human beings’ loss and isolation in a meaningless Godless universe.

Pinter’s *The Caretaker* was his most influential and widely acclaimed play as it has established his reputation as a prominent British dramatist. The play was first published by Eyre Methuen in 1960 and performed in the same year at the Arts Theatre Club in London. It also “ran for 444 performances in a row and was then staged throughout the world. It was both a literary and a commercial success and brought Pinter fame and Money” (Piquemal 9).

The play stages three characters, Aston, Davies, and Mick. It revolves around a complex relationship between the characters and their different perceptions of life in a
cruel world. The play problematizes also the notions of freedom and individualism through picturing the dramatis personae’s continuous attempts to assert their identities amid uncertainty and to protect their individuality from the repressive forces. In this respect, the present paper seeks to address the play from the Deleuzoguattarian perspective with the aim of unveiling Pinter’s complex conception of liberty and license.

I. Staging Liberty and License:

_The Caretaker_ is divided into three acts, and the whole action takes place in one room. The play opens with a minute depiction of the place and the different stage props. Mick, who is seen sitting on a bed, leaves the room quietly when he hears the noise of his brother Aston and another person, Davies. Aston starts a conversation with Davies about the latter’s life and identity. While Aston is generous and welcoming with Davies, Mick tends to be more suspicious and violent. Indeed, he frequently abuses Davies verbally and aggresses him physically.

The brothers suggest that Davies work as a caretaker for their apartment and Davies shows an uncertainty about the offer. Gaining the brothers’ confidence, Davies is told about their personal failures and private dreams. But when they realize that the outsider is attempting to play them against one another, they decide to expel him eventually from the place. The play ends with Aston turning his back on Davies, who stands confused and helpless.

The play is set in a small room owned by Mick and used as the residence of the brothers. It is remarkable that the three characters have a special relationship to the room. In reality, in the beginning of the play Mick is seen sitting “alone in the room,” and “slowly looks about the [it] looking at each object in turn” (39). Mick seems to be attached to his room and considers it as a place of relaxation and contemplation of life. Aston also has an unusual connection to the room and especially to his bed. Throughout the play, he is found inside the room and very often described setting on his bed. At times Aston finds himself compelled to leave the room, but he soon gets back to it as if looking for some rest. The beggar Davies, in his turn, perceives the room as a safe place that could protect him from the dangers of the street life.

Actually, it provides him with the comfortability and stability that his life of beggary and destitution lacks. Apparently, the three characters consider the room as a secure space that protects them from the dangers of the outer world. According to Victor L.
Cahn, the characters “take refuge in a room, a construction of familiar walls and furniture about which they know as much as they can… and in which they feel…safe” (2). Because it is the “only defined place of the play,” the room is seen as “a kind of refuge from the unmapped and unknown outer world” (Piquemal 12). The room is cut off from the external world and is consequently unaffected by the threats of the outside. It is within this relatively secure space that Mick, Aston, and Davies act and speak freely. The room is a refuge for the characters as it protects them from the potential menace of the world. While inside the room, the characters seem to enjoy the freedom of speech and action, outdoors their liberty is restricted.

The opening of the play gives also a detailed physical description of each character. Aston is seen wearing “an old tweed overcoat, and under it a thin shabby dark-blue pinstripe suit, single breasted, with a pullover, and faded shirt and tie” (39). It is obvious that Aston’s clothes are not new, but rather faded and overused. Wearing old and inappropriate dresses could allude to Aston’s indifference with his physical outlook. His disinterest with his public image could mean that he has little regard for others and their potential negative comments on his disagreeable bodily condition.

In the beginning, Aston is portrayed as a nonconformist character who prefers to live according to his own wishes. In fact, he disregards the norms of decency and civility imposed on individuals by their community. His physical decay could also acquire another dimension if related to his state of mind. In other terms, the worn out clothes could indicate that Aston is going through some psychological troubles. The shabby and old clothes betray his confused state of mind and could mean that he is experiencing a spiritual dilemma.

The assumption that Aston is facing internal problems could be confirmed especially when related to his treatment in the mental hospital. Aston confesses to Davies that he was forcibly taken to the asylum where he received an electric shock therapy. He insists that he was hospitalized because he was talking too much to people. He tells Davies:

They were all… a good bit older than me. But they always used to listen. I thought… they understood what I said. I mean I used to talk to them. I talked too much. That was my mistake. The same in the factory. Standing there, or in the breaks, I used to … talk about things. And these men, they used to listen, whenever I … had anything to say. It was all right.” (86)
In his monologue, Aston claims that years ago he used to talk to people frequently. He was accustomed to address people in public places like the café and the factory. Apparently, Aston was a dynamic individual and an eloquent speaker in the past. The fact that people used to pay attention whenever he spoke to them indicates that Aston was an activist. His dissatisfaction with the sociopolitical realities in his society urged him to make his disillusionment explicit.

In the café, Aston seemed to be addressing people from different backgrounds and with different social positions about the hegemony of the social authorities. Talking to the factory workers also seemed to be motivated by the injustices and grievances they faced as well as their deplorable working conditions. Aston was a dissident individual who longs for liberation from the chains of community and who wishes to break free from the rules and regulations of society. His objective was to free himself and his fellow men from the restrictions imposed on them by the structures of power.

While doctors perceived his speeches as “hallucinations,” Aston believed that “they weren’t hallucinations, they … I used to get the feeling I could see things … very clearly … everything … was so clear” (87). The doctors in the hospital considered him as a mentally disturbed person, but Aston asserted that what he experienced were moments of clear sight. When he was taken to the hospital, “they asked [him] all sorts of questions,” and told him that they “are going to do something to [his] brain” (87). After investigating him about his excessive talk, the doctors decided that he must receive the electric shock treatment. It could be argued that the investigators came to the conclusion that Aston is an unconventional individual who represents a threat to the integrity of society. To get rid of this rebellious voice, power structures decided that the therapy in the asylum would silence Aston and consequently preserve the unity of the community.

The treatment succeeded to a great extent in taming this wild individual who was looking for the total liberation from the rules of the System. As a matter of fact, Aston admits that after the treatment his lifestyle witnessed a radical change: “I got out of the place … but I couldn’t walk very well …. the trouble was … my thoughts … had become very slow … I couldn’t think at all” (89). Aston affirms that the treatment resulted in a slowness of thinking and an inability to get his ideas together. After ensuring that he does no longer represent a threat to society, he was released from the asylum.
In this context, Deleuze and Guattari affirm that the System compels individuals to obey the power authorities through their repressive measures and the discourse: “always obey. The more you obey, the more you will be master, for you will only be obeying pure reason” (376). Similarly, the electric shock treatment forced Aston to abide by the rules of the political authorities. It transformed him into an obeying subject who believes that he is actually obeying pure reason. It seems that the real objective of this therapy was not to cure a mentally disordered individual or to make him a rational person, but rather to oppress a nonconformist voice.

Further, Aston confesses that: “I don’t talk to people now. I steer clear of places like that café. I never go into them now. I don’t talk to anyone” (89). The once was eloquent activist becomes an alienated man who prefers to live in isolation from his society. In this context, Christopher Innes argues that “the shocking nature of the process that has reduced Aston to conformity implies that the social conditioning is the equivalent of political oppression” (340). That is, the electric shock therapy alludes to the System’s repressive practices and its tendency to use violent means in order to suppress the dissenters. Aston, therefore, has no longer the capacity to express himself freely and to incite people to rebel against society’s licensed liberty.

While Aston has failed to face the power structures’ incessant attempts to dominate the insurgent subjects, Davies seems to be still involved in a continuous struggle against these forces. In reality, he is portrayed from the outset as a deprived and untidy man. Davies is wearing “a worn brown overcoat, shapeless trousers, a waistcoat, vest, no shirt, and sandals” (39). Davies’s worn out and old clothes suggest that he is a poor beggar who is rejected from society. Aston is the only person to sympathize with him as he saved him from a quarrel and admitted him into the room.

Davies always complains about the mistreatment he receives from everybody and tells Aston that he is treated “like dirt” outside the room (41). Indoors also Davies suffers from Mick’s maltreatment and his recurrent attacks against him. Mick abused him in many occasions as he “seizes his arm and forces it up his back” when he finds him alone inspecting the room (60) and chases him with a vacuum cleaner: “suddenly the electrolux starts to hum. A figure moves with it, guiding it. The nozzle moves along the floor after DAVIES” (77). Mick’s verbal as well as physical violence towards Davies is intensified with Aston’s complaints about the annoying sounds that Davies makes while he is
sleeping. Aston accuses Davies saying: “you are making noises,” and adds “you were making groans. You are jabbering” (54).

It is obvious that Davies is always disregarded by other people and is suffering from the ignorance of society. He is actually a homeless tramp, “an outcast, a vagrant, someone cut off from society” (Stephen 38). Throughout the play, he is portrayed as a rootless tramp living at the margins of society. Apparently, Davies is deprived from his liberty and acts according to the regulations of his community. Put differently, the rootless Davies seems to be marginalized from society and his identity as an autonomous individual is put into question.

Yet, the fact that he is a rootless wanderer who does not want to settle in one place brings to the fore Deleuze’s and Guattari’s theory of Nomadology. In this theory, they examine the life of nomads in the desert and their constant mobility. Deleuze and Guattari affirm that “the nomad distributes himself in a smooth space” (381) and tends to reject locative stability. Instead, he adopts an active life characterized by the incessant movements to different places. They insist that nomads have a tendency to inhabit “an open space” and opt for living away from all the limitations of modern society (380).

As a rootless tramp, Davies could be perceived as a nomad who prefers a life of mobility beyond the reach of the power structures. His constant movements mean that he could not be seized by the power forces and consequently he still represents a threat to the integrity of the System. The nomad Davies, thus, is liberated from all forms of restrictions put on individuals by the structures of power.

A closer examination of Davies’s character would further reveal that this beggar enjoys a life of absolute freedom beyond the reach of the social forces. Actually, when Aston asks him about his identity, Davies informs him that he left his reference papers in Sidcup. He tells both brothers that he is planning to go there soon in order to get his identity papers. But, whenever Aston and Mick ask him about his journey to Sidcup, he finds an excuse for postponing it. In this respect, Innes affirms that “everything in the play is ambiguous, particularly the central character.

Davies may really be named Jenkins; and the existence of papers to prove his identity becomes increasingly dubious as he procrastinates about fetching the references from Sid Cup” (339-40). Davies insists recurrently that the weather is unsuitable for his trip and he cannot go with his worn out shoes: “the weather’s so blasted bloody awful, how
can I get down to Sidcup in these shoes?” (51). Apparently, Davies is not able to bring his personal reference due to some external factors. Yet, his recurrent delay of the journey could also be understood as a deliberate choice. Because the papers indicate his real identity, Davies attempts continuously to evade talking about them. Davies is unwilling to provide the brothers with his identity papers and this entails a reluctance to reveal his identity. It seems that the aim behind hiding his true identity is to avoid the control of the power structures.

In reality, uncovering his identity could leave him exposed to the constant surveillance of the social forces. Without the identity papers, those forces will not be able to identify or supervise Davies. The rootless wanderer, thus, chooses to get rid of the very papers that ground his existence in society and to liberate himself from the restrictions of his community.

Davies’s unconditioned freedom is also revealed through his adoption of more than one name. In fact, he admits that he has been going around under an assumed name that is different from his true name:

MICK. What’s you real name?
DAVIES. My real name’s Davies.
MICK. What’s the name you go under?
DAVIES. Jenkins!
MICK. You got two names. What about the rest? (105)

Davies asserts that his real name is “Mac Davies,” while “Bernard Jenkins” is the assumed name. Mick is sure that Davies is not telling the truth about his real name and believes that he has many other names that he goes under. Normally, power authorities assign one name to each individual living inside a community. Davies’s adoption of double names (or more) means that the social structures fail to identify this individual. Because the name is a social attribute to each person, Davies’s espousal of different names could be perceived as his own way to avoid the control of the System.

Davies could be associated with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s notion of Rhizomatics. In their *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they state that “in contrast to the centered… systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a
circulation of states” (21). The Rhizome is opposed to all the forms of hierarchy and functions rather through the principle of multiplicity. The rootless Davies resembles the Rhizome in its subversion of the System’s notions of unity and centrality and its adoption of multiplicity. Like the Rhizome, Davies the tramp resorts to assuming multiple identities with the intention of living a life of absolute liberty away from the System’s rigid categorization of subjects and its imposition of a licensed liberty on each member of the community.

II. Stylistic Subversion:

Davies’s undermining of society’s restrained freedom is further divulged through his use of an unconventional language. “The language of the characters,” in Florence Piquemal’s terms, “is not as smooth and obviously elaborated as in well-made plays, for instance. The characters often hesitate; repeat the same sentences, and dialogue is not always coherent” (32). In talking about his identity and social background, Davies frequently uses an incoherent and ungrammatical language. Davies’s interaction with Aston about his nationality is an obvious example of his fragmented speech:

ASTON. You Welsh?

Pause.

DAVIES. Well, I been around, you know … what I mean … I been about ….

ASTON. Where were you born then?

DAVIES. (darkly). What do you mean?

ASTON. Where were you born?

DAVIES. I was … uh … oh, it’s a bit hard, like, to set your mind back … see what I mean … going back …. a good way … loose a bit of track, like … you know…. (57)

In this verbal exchange, Davies’s disjointed speech, pauses and silences could indicate his uncertainty about his identity and origin. He seems to be ignorant of his true social belonging and unsure of his nationality. He could not even remember his past life and where he was born. However, Davies’s incoherent language could not only be interpreted as an uncertainty about his social origin. According to Margret Rose, Pinter’s language “can also reflect the elusiveness of human nature” (26). Indeed, Davies’s language could be understood as an attempt to conceal his real identity.
His unwillingness to tell Aston about his nationality through his evasive dialogue entails a determination to protect himself. In this context, Deleuze and Guattari insist that “the unity of language is fundamentally political” (101). Whereas unified and coherent language characterizes the discourse of political authorities, the fragmented language of Davies alludes to his challenge of the power of these authorities. Because revealing his real identity leaves him exposed to the assaults of the external forces, Davies decides to deconstruct language the very means by which power structures dominate humans. Language for Davies becomes a weapon of resistance through which he defeats the System’s endeavors to subjugate individuals by classifying and naming them.

Unlike Davies, Aston’s use of pauses and fragmented language could be considered as the consequence of the electric shock therapy. When describing the treatment he received in the asylum, Aston affirms: “the trouble was … my thoughts … had become very slow … I couldn’t think at all … I couldn’t … get … my thoughts … together … uuuhh … I could … never quite get it … together” (89). His incoherent speech is an obvious sign of the psychological dilemma he is going through. Aston himself confesses that after the treatment his thoughts become dispersed and he is no longer able to produce a coherent and meaningful speech. Aston “has been ‘taken care of’ in a sinister sense; active medical intervention has stripped him of his autonomy, his individuality and freedom” (Jeffrey and Jeffrey 123). Seemingly, the repressive electric shock he received in the mental hospital had a devastating impact on his mind.

In fact, Aston used to be a vociferous person who talked in public places to people of different social classes. Since his talk represented a threat to the unity of society and the authority of the power structures, the treatment ensured that this nonconformist individual will be ultimately silenced. The therapy has put an end to the dynamic lifestyle of this social and political activist. This dissident voice is suppressed and the result is an isolated subject who is even unable to utter significant words to express himself. Aston “retains a fragile emotional state, limited independence, and a healthy sense of injustice” (Luckhurst 363). The once dynamic and talkative individual who enjoyed the freedom of speech is transformed into an inert silent person. The electric treatment, thus, is an oppressive tool employed by the System to subjugate rebellious subjects and limit their liberty.

In addition to the disjointed language, Pinter makes use of a mixture of styles in his play to question the legitimacy of the System’s licensed liberty. As aforementioned, Pinter
is considered as an Absurdist dramatist and *The Caretaker* is perceived as an example of Absurdist plays. The bare stage (one room) and fragmented language in the play are often regarded as stylistic elements that characterize the Theater of the Absurd. Some critics, however, believe Pinter blends some elements of the Absurd with the major features of realism in his works. Actually, the play merges a wide set of features of Absurdist drama with the elements of realism.

It is worth noting that realism has been defined as “the portrayal of life with fidelity” (Cuddon 729), and that the realistic artist “should concern himself with the here and now, with everyday events, with his own environment and with the movements (political, social, etc.) of his time” (Cuddon 730). The realistic writer, then, employs lifelike situations, everyday speech to add a realistic dimension to his work.

In this play, Pinter makes use of a realistic setting, “a house in west London,” and plausible characters to convince the readers / spectators with the truthfulness of his work. For Martin Esslin, Pinter “remains within a firm framework of ‘real’ events,” nevertheless he “is not a naturalist dramatist. This is the paradox of his artistic personality. The dialogue and the characters are real, but the over-all effect is one of mystery, of uncertainty, of poetic ambiguity” (*Pinter: The Playwright* 41).

Pinter combines the Absurdist style with dramatic realism in order to comment on the sociopolitical reality in his community. The different styles he adopts could be a related to Deleuze’s and Guattari’s notion of multiplicity and its consideration as a strategy of resistance against the centrality of the System. Pinter’s dramatization of a realistic dramatic situation using Absurdist techniques, therefore, serves to question the existent reality. In other words, Pinter’s objective behind the use of the elements of the Absurd with realism is to criticize reality. The playwright seems to be dissatisfied with the social realities in his community and his deconstruction of the real in the play entails a condemnation of the suppressive nature of human society. Through adopting multiple writing styles, Pinter frees himself from the conventional and subverts society’s artistic as well as political licensed foredoom.

Pinter’s play is also characterized by its mixture of different dramatic genres, namely tragedy and comedy. In fact, *The Caretaker* is considered to be a tragicomedy, a genre that blends some elements of tragedy with the features of comedy. This dramatic genre, in John Anthony Cuddon’s terms, is characterized by “an increasing mingling of
tragic and comic elements, the use of comic relief in tragedy, and what might be called tragic aggravation or heightening in comedy” (934).

Tragicomedy, then, mingles elements of tragedy such as a character’s tragic end with the features of comedy, like funny characters and comic situations. In this play, “the careful juxtaposition of the comic and the distressing is part of Pinter’s process of dislocation, once the climax is reached; it is followed by dispossession and exclusion. There is a sudden collapse into tragedy. And this pattern is reproduced in the inner structure of the play, scene after scene” (Knowles 19).

In The Caretaker, the disastrous impact of the treatment on Aston as well as Davies’s eventual dismissal from the room are seen as the major elements that point to the tragic dimension of the play. Davies’s humorous discourse and conduct in addition to Mick’s funny manners with Davies link the play to the genre of comedy. Through blending tragedy with comedy, Pinter aims to put a special emphasis on the complexity of human society. For him, what is perceived as comic in life encompasses much more tragic facts. Pinter is commenting on the misleadingness of the outward side of human existence which tries to conceal the tragic life of individuals in their suppressive society.

Because of its inclusion of features of comedy and tragedy, the play has often been described as a comedy of menace. This dramatic genre designates a kind of play “in which one or more characters feel that they are (or actually are) threatened by some obscure and frightening force, power, personality, etc. The fear of menace becomes a source of comedy, albeit, laconic, grim or black” (Cuddon 159). In The Caretaker, the main source of menace is the outsider Davies. Actually, his admission into the brothers’ private space threatened the already delicate balance of the room. The interference of Davies into the cozy room means that the place is no longer safe. Davies tries to play the brothers against one another and to take over the place. The presence of this potential menace entails a restriction on Aston’s and Mick’s liberty of speech and behavior.

The brothers are no longer free to talk about their personal life as Davies always keeps an eye on them. However, the ultimate rejection of Davies from the room means that the threat has gone forever. Mick and Aston have expelled the outsider in order to regain their lost freedom. The elimination of this menace indicates the characters’ rebelliousness against all forms of licensed liberty and their desire to be emancipated from the repressive rules and regulations of society.
Conclusion:
In a nutshell, the present article sought to study Pinter’s staging of Liberty and License in The Caretaker through the Deleuzoguattarian perspective. It had as an objective the examination of the dramatist’s conception and representation of freedom in the play. Although Pinter’s work does not include direct statements on liberty and license and very few details point to the playwright’s concern with the concept of freedom, a close and cautious study of the play has proved that “liberty” is an integral part of this work.

Pinter’s dramatization of an isolated room, a suppressed individual (Aston), and a dissident rootless wanderer (Davies) points to his disillusionment with the repressive nature of human society. In addition to the thematic concerns, the dramatic elements and techniques in the play bring into relief the issue of freedom and its absence. Through mingling absurdism and realism, the comic and the tragic, as well as comedy and menace, and using an incoherent language, the playwright condemns the existent reality as determined and controlled by the structures of power and calls implicitly for the ultimate liberation of the individual from the chains of the community.

References

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