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Editor's Note

An arbitrary assortment of discourses, philosophies, theories, histories, spiritual or religious conventions, political representations and cultural practices, 'truth' generates infinite potential explanations to the fundamental queries of being. Introduced by the power structures, claiming authenticity and objectivity, truth occupies a unique stratum of everyday events and projects dominant subjectivities under the pseudo-objective corollary of the constructs. Assimilating the unambiguously stated equations of traditional and new media interpretations, truth sets momentum and parameters for the behaviour of the individual and communities as a redeemer of the desires and survival. The differential axioms of truth, often entail a subversive pattern of action and suggest strategies for the subaltern categories such as women, LGBTIQ, ethnic minorities such as Dalit, Black etc. Adapting itself to the pressures of propaganda, the egalitarian machines of truth, at times, subdue themselves to the impetus that is necessitated by the dystopias of democracy. Traversing across centuries and articulating the scientific and humanities rhetoric across fields and disciplines such as sociology, politics, anthropology, culture studies, ecocriticism, transnational studies etc. and articulating beyond the propositions of theoretical formulations of correspondence, pragmatic and coherence, truth not only conceptualizes the idea of reality but configures, updates and validates itself in sync with history and knowledge to resolve and resent and articulate the dissent against the varying climate. Drawing upon the theories from Plato and Aristotle to Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, Edmund Husserl, Slavoj Žižek and so on, truth intervenes with the conceivable ambiguities of the hyper sensitive realities, problematizes the postulates, undertaking the vindication of singularities in favour of multitudes of truths. The Singularities International Conference anchoring on the theme of Truth sets the momentum for discussions on truth's becoming an array of truths in the post truth era when the times negotiate with the validity of statements and policies that they manufacture. This is an extension of the academic culture that the journal set to make the scholars intellectually engaged, not simply through publishing papers, but by means of the dialogues and interactions the Singularities Conferences initiate. By presenting Singularities Truth Conference Issue, we offer a reading platform that voices the multiple perspectives on truth(s).

P. K. Babu., Ph. D
Chief Editor

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The Indispensability of Truth

Although I am not a philosopher and have only an amateur's expertise in the philosophical debates about truth that have occupied the tradition of Western philosophy since the Greeks, it seems to me that today the problem of truth is too important to be left to the philosophers alone. My principal claim is that truth concerns all of us-- more than ever today with the rise of would-be authoritarian rulers who attempt to create their own truth--; and that if there is a solution, the problem it is not to be solved by narrowly technical arguments that leave aside the many important ways in which truth functions in our daily lives.

I say this in full awareness that in the academic humanities today, at least in the West, people are often uncomfortable claiming that the things they are saying are true. This is, first, because we have learned that truth claims are dependent on historical contexts and particular perspectives, and that often structures of hegemonic power prevent people from recognizing the contingency of their own situations, perspectives and methods. Yet even if we hesitate to say that what we are asserting is "the truth," as teachers and scholars we are always saying or writing things that we think are true, and in our daily lives we not only constantly say things we think are true but act on what we deem to be true. And so long as we remain open to other perspectives, curious about other assumptions, and willing to engage in processes of investigation and verification, we must not allow our modesty about the scope of our understanding to lead us to abandon the idea of truth.

But let me first review what I take to be the implications of the Western philosophical debates about truth, before turning to the ordinary ways in which the notion of truth functions, and then, finally, to some examples from the field in which I have some expertise, that of recent critical theory. The treatment of truth in contemporary critical theory is diverse and complicated but not, I think, without lessons for us in the present political conjuncture in the United States, which, unfortunately, risks affecting the rest of the world in one way or another—mostly bad.

Philosophers are skilled at discovering and articulating the difficulties with various accounts of truth, but they have not succeeded in producing a satisfactory solution. The philosopher Paul Horwich, begins his book entitled simply *Truth*,

It will be widely agreed that hardly any progress has been made towards achieving the insight we seem to need. The common-sense notion that truth is a kind of 'correspondence with the facts' has never been worked out to anyone's satisfaction. Even its advocates would concede that it remains little more than a vague, guiding intuition. But the traditional alternatives—equation of truth with 'membership in a coherent system of beliefs', or 'what would be verified in ideal conditions,' or 'suitability as a basis of action' have always looked unlikely to work, precisely because they don't accommodate the 'correspondence' intuition...Hence the peculiarly enigmatic character of truth: a conception of its underlying nature appears to be at once necessary and impossible¹.

The most common-sensical theory of truth is the correspondence theory of truth, which claims that the belief or proposition expressed by an utterance is true if it corresponds to a

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¹Paul Horwich, *Truth*, 2nd ed. Oxford: OUP, 1998, pp. 1-2.

state of affairs. So, “*I am in Kerala now*” was not true when I wrote it but when I pronounced this sentence in Kerala, I have no hesitation in calling it true. This is common-sense realism. The world is relatively independent of our dealings with it, so to decide whether it is true that there is food in the refrigerator, I open the door and look in. But can this be expanded to a general theory of truth? That seems doubtful. As soon as we go beyond simple assertions about easily determinable states of affairs, problems arise. For example, suppose we wonder about the truth of some proposition about quarks, elementary particles that are said never to exist freely in nature. There are two principal difficulties here. The first is that there are no simple, independent, ascertainable facts about quarks because quarks seem to exist only as a function of the theories of particle physics and experimental techniques². There are not facts out there that could be compared to propositions. The second difficulty is that to determine whether something a physicist says about quarks is “really true” or just an apparent effect of some procedure, we would need to have an independent vantage point -- let us say a God's eye view of the world -- which would enable us to compare the state of affairs with our propositions about them³. We can't step outside our own skins to judge whether modern particle physics finally has everything right. Philosophers disagree about which of these conditions is the more serious difficulty. Donald Davidson claims, for instance, that problem is really that there is nothing for true sentences to correspond to. “The correct objection to correspondence theories is not, then, that they make truth something to which we humans can never legitimately aspire, the real objection is rather that such theories fail to provide the entities to which truth vehicles may be said to correspond.”⁴ Facts don't, in general, exist independently of conceptual frameworks: they are not simply given; this is true of a cat sitting on a mat (a favorite example of analytical philosophers), as well as of quarks. To say this is not to deny that there exists a world out there, with creatures sitting independently of us, for instance; only that the specification of a state of affairs to which a proposition is said to correspond is a matter of conceptual frameworks, descriptive categories, perceptual or experimental procedures.

If Correspondence theories of truth are philosophically inadequate, others have proposed Pragmatic theories of truth: truth is what works. The attraction of this is that it seems to deal with the objection to a conventionalist account of truth, that it is needs to account for the fact that in general modern science works. We understand how to treat some diseases; miraculously, information can be sent through the ether, over what is called the internet, which certainly suggests that some people have understood rather recondite facts about energy, electronics, information, etc.; airplanes fly -- which implies that modern science's understanding of fluid dynamics must be largely correct. If it were not correct, then planes would not be able to take off or stay up.

The trouble with the pragmatist theory, critics object, is that it gets the relation backwards. Something is not true because it works but rather, it works because it is true. This seems not to be in itself an insuperable objection, but one can imagine situations in which scientists and engineers just got lucky: they did not actually understand the underlying processes or mechanisms, but something they designed nonetheless happened to work for quite different reasons. It is certainly possible to imagine that a process might work yet for the propositions describing its mechanism not to be true. (There must be cases where modern medicine can

²Hugh Tomlinson, “After Truth” in *Dismantling Truth*, ed. Hilary Lawson and Lisa Appignanesi, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989, pp. 43-5.

³Simon Blackburn, *Truth*, Oxford: OUP, 2003, p. 56.

⁴Donald Davidson, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford: OUP, 2001, p. 184.

prescribe remedies which work for reasons we don't really understand.) Moreover, it is very easy to imagine cases where the understanding of physical laws and properties might be true but where the experiments or devices would not work, because of the clumsiness of experimenters, designers, or builders (this happens all the time in school and college science labs: the failure of students to get the right results in their lab experiments is not taken to put in question the truths of basic chemistry or show that the underlying science is wrong), so the equation of truth with what works is too hasty and crude to serve as an adequate theory of truth.

A coherence theory of truth, the third option explored in philosophical debates, starts from the wholly defensible notion that in general the truth of propositions depends on conceptual frameworks. The truth that water boils at 100 degrees centigrade depends upon agreement about a scale of temperature, how it is to be measured (at sea level, for example), and what counts as boiling. "Russia has an authoritarian regime" is a statement that depends on other propositions about what counts as authoritarian, what qualified observers can agree about governmental procedures in this country, etc. Often the way you test the truth of a belief or proposition is by seeing how it relates to other beliefs or propositions that have already withstood critical examination: it coheres with a system of beliefs.

One again, there seem two kinds of objections to this account of truth. The first is that there are propositions which do not cohere with any set of beliefs or propositions but which, according to objectors, must be true or false: for example, "Napoleon dropped his razor on the morning of the battle of Waterloo." I take it that there are no relevant verified propositions that support or infirm this. Coherence theorists would reply that this begs the question: that this objection presupposes the common-sense correspondence idea of truth, that a proposition either corresponds or does not correspond to the facts, but in their account, propositions that do not cohere with other propositions are not true. The second objection is that beliefs that once cohered with other beliefs have later been deemed not to be true –e.g. Newtonian physics has allegedly been superseded -- so that a coherence theory must extend beyond the beliefs that people actually have at a particular moment to some larger set of beliefs, such that at no point is coherence actually a test of truth.

These considerations, about various theories of truth, yield a strange result: analytic philosophers are good at identifying problems with extant theories of truth yet are inclined enthusiastically to defend the notion of truth against a straw man: some sort of relativism that they associate either with a general skepticism about knowledge or with a post-modern constructivism alleged to deny the existence of truth and alleged to claim that there are only opinions derived from ideology and historical situations. Few thinkers actually say anything like that –the American philosopher Richard Rorty is notorious for saying that truth is what your colleagues will let you get away with -- but Rorty is a defender of collaborative institutional frameworks and of modern science, as a model for cooperative discussion, so not really the skeptic he is alleged to be. He just thinks truth-talk is misleading.

A better approach to the problem might be to think about how the notion of truth actually functions. So, let me begin with ordinary uses of "truth." For example, if I should say, at Christmas time to my wife, "We had better send a gift to your aunt, otherwise we'll feel guilty if she sends us one," she might well reply, "That's true," or "Very true." But she could just as well say, "I guess so," since in such a context to say something is true is not really to make serious epistemological or ontological claims, but to signal general approbation of or

agreement with something someone has said. Or “true” can be used causally as concessionary—what you say is not wrong but I have a different view. My wife could reply, “True, but she didn't send us a gift last year, so maybe we don't need to think about it.” These casual uses of “true” seem unproblematic and suggest that truth is not always something so momentous that we ought to be wary of it.

The British philosopher, J. L. Austin, often called an exponent of ordinary language philosophy, because his approach was to examine closely our uses of language and to debunk philosophical arguments that went against our ordinary linguistic behavior, observes in his groundbreaking *How to Do Things with Words* that “it is important to realize that 'true' and 'false,' like 'free' and 'unfree,' do not stand for anything simple at all but only for the general dimension of being the right and proper thing to say, as opposed to the wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions.”⁵ Indeed, Austin notes that whereas philosophers sometimes speak as if any proposition must be either true or false, it is often pointless to insist on deciding in simple terms whether a statement is true or false -- that the galaxy is the shape of a fried egg, that France is hexagonal: “There are various degrees and dimensions of success in making statements: the statements fit the facts always more or less loosely, in different ways on different occasions for different intents and purposes.”⁶ We could say that for some purposes –indicating a vague shape – these might be appropriate things to say, but for others, they are too rough, too inexact, to count as true. Frustrated at the difficulty of producing an adequate philosophical account of truth, and cognizant of the often-casual way in which the term is used, a number of philosophers have developed what they call a minimalist or deflationary account of truth, insisting that the term “true” does not add anything to an assertion: If I assert that *The cat is on the mat*, -- strange example dear to analytic philosophers! -- I don't add anything by saying “It is true that the cat is on the mat.” The expression “is true” is just a convenient way of granting or approving things that have been said without having to repeat them. These philosophers may be right that we do not need a philosophical theory of truth, but I cannot accept this minimization of the notion of truth, which plays important roles in our lives.

There is a rather different use of “truth,” as aspirational or as indicating the goal of inquiries. W. H. Auden wrote an amusing poem “O Tell me the Truth about Love,” which begins:

Some say love's a little boy,
 And some say it's a bird,
 Some say it makes the world go round,
 Some say that's absurd,...

The poem concludes:

When it comes, will it come without warning
 Just as I'm picking my nose?
 Will it knock on my door in the morning,
 Or tread in the bus on my toes?
 Will it come like a change in the weather?

⁵J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962, p. 145.

10 ⁶Austin, "Truth," in *Truth*, ed. Simon Blackburn and Keith Simmons, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, pp. 158-9.

Will its greeting be courteous or rough?

Will it alter my life altogether?

O tell me the truth about love⁷.

There are often things – such as love -- about which we would like to know the truth, even though we generally know that there is no way we could actually come to know the truth, the whole truth. Truth in this sense is a goal that we assume will never be reached. For example, speaking of literary criticism, Paul de Man writes that “understanding is an epistemological event. . . . This does not mean that there can be a true reading, but that no reading is conceivable in which the question of its truth or falsehood is not primarily involved.”⁸ This is important. Interpretations are attempting to be true – humanists who may hesitate to call what they say the truth, nevertheless proceed by proposing what they take to be true rather than false and of course very frequently proceed by challenging previous interpretations as incomplete or wrong in various ways. Certainly, we do not believe that there is one true reading, but this does not eliminate the notion of truth. The truth of the text is something we aim at, something that gets elaborated in discussion with others, but not something we believe exists independently of our readings: something there to be recovered or actually to be reached once and for all. This seems to me a complex but significant aspect of our notion of truth.

But one of the more paradoxical aspects of the problem of truth is that there are innumerable truths that we depend on every day, just to get through life, but where the use of term truth doesn't arise, because it does not occur to us to doubt them. For instance, if I am going home from the university, there is no doubt whatsoever for me that I live on Wyckoff Road, in Ithaca, NY. This is a fundamental truth. But this is a truth to which the term would only be applied if someone else were misinformed and doubted me. “Do you really live on Wyckoff Road?” In which case I could say, “Yes, it's true.” We depend on the accuracy of maps to get us where we are going, on the truth of directions about how to make our many devices work. But in such cases, we do not often speak of truth, or wonder whether something is true or not, unless, for example, we discover to our annoyance that a map is inaccurate, wrong, or out of date. Although we don't often invoke truth, except in argument, truth is indispensable. We depend on engineers and manufacturers to grasped the truth about how the machines to which we entrust our loves will work. We expect our doctors to tell us the truth about our ailments. There are also innumerable truths it never even occurs to us to recognize or mention but that structure our world. For instance, I am firmly convinced that none of my readers are Martians who have somehow gained access to this text—I take that to be true -- and I know it is true that none of my readers are ten feet tall. Ridiculous examples, to be sure, but our lives in the world are structured by innumerable truths that never get articulated, never need to get articulated. It is only when the question of truth or falsity of one of them is posed that we are likely to speak of the truth of this or that belief or proposition. But that does not make truth any less important—indeed, it indicates just how much we generally rely on truths that are taken for granted.

We might say that the hesitation in the humanities about calling what we say “true” comes from considering the notion of truth in something of a vacuum – the truth, with a capital T – universal, eternal truth. Whereas we operate all the time with a lowercase notion of truth, what we take to be true as opposed to what is false. If I have no hesitation in saying that I live

⁷W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*, 2nd edition, New York: Random House, 2007, p. 69.

⁸Paul de Man, Preface to Carol Jacobs, *The Dissimulating Harmony*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. xi.

on Wyckoff Road, it is because I know that is not false, and hence true, not because it partakes of some universal Truth.

But if I have been invited to reflect on truth, it is not for my take on hoary philosophical debates but because I have written about contemporary critical theory, where there have occurred the critical developments that have made humanists uneasy about making claims to truth. Let me take up two examples from recent theory before focusing, in conclusion, on the notion of truth that seems to me actually operative in the humanities and that it is urgent to sustain, in the face of political developments that distort for their nefarious purposes what they take to be the consequences of recent debates about truth.

I shall say something about the case of Jacques Derrida, which has been of great interest to me, but I should note that there are disagreements among Derrida experts about his dealings with truth, which would require extensive and rather technical arguments to try to sort out, and I don't think his example will be of much help to us. I will stress just three things. First of all, there is in Derrida's writings, from the early works such as *Grammatology* and "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination* on, a critique of what he presents as the notion of truth dominant in the Western tradition: He writes, "All the metaphysical determinations of truth are more or less immediately inseparable from the instance of the logos, or of a reason thought within the lineage of the logos."⁹ The logos, from which comes the Greek root that represents knowledge in all those *-ology* words (biology, philology, psychology, geology), is in theological discourse the word of God, the divine truth, or in more secular terms, what we seek to know, the rational principle that governs the universe. In these works of Derrida's, it is through an analysis of the notion of writing, which is classically conceived as just a means of expression, which ought to be as transparent as possible to permit direct access to logic, reason, truth, that Derrida unsettles the hierarchy that makes writing a mere external accessory to speech, thought, truth. An expanded, radicalized notion of writing inaugurates, he declares, "the de-sedimentation, de-construction of all the significations that have their source in that of the logos. Particularly the signification of truth."¹⁰ But Derrida shows that in Plato, or Husserl, and elsewhere, it is writing as iterability that creates the possibility of meaning and truth. And the very possibility of traditionally opposing speech to writing on the basis of presence/absence or immediacy/representation is an illusion, since speech is already structurally dependent on difference, as much as writing, and thus can be seen as a species of a generalized writing as a system of differences. The notion of an expanded writing, an *archi-écriture*, is a dramatic way of putting the case that truth claims always depend upon a structure or system of representation.

The second point is related to this: philosophy, Derrida argues, has been a metaphysics of presence, in which representation is treated as secondary or inessential: "It could be shown that all names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated the constant of a presence."¹¹ Philosophical attempts describe what is fundamental, a ground, involve oppositions in which one term belongs to the logos and a higher presence and the other marks a fall, as complication, negation, or manifestation of the first: meaning/form soul/body, literal/metaphorical, nature/culture, intelligible/sensible, transcendental/empirical. Analysis thus becomes a matter of "returning 'strategically,' in idealization, to an origin or to a 'priority' seen as simple, intact, normal, pure, standard, in order *then* to conceive of derivation, complication, deterioration, accident. All metaphysicians have proceeded

⁹Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976, p. 10.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 279.

thus, from Plato to Rousseau, from Descartes to Husserl... This is not just one metaphysical gesture among others; it is the metaphysical exigency.”¹²

The critique of logocentrism or of the metaphysics of presence undoes truth as phenomenal presence -- truth is never given as such -- yet, and here we come to the third and crucial point, Derrida's analyses, his readings of philosophical texts, always make truth claims about what happens in these texts; they are carried out in the terms of a bivalent logic of truth and falsity, pursued to the point where that logic confronts a blockage of some kind, a contradiction or aporia. His arguments are always making truth claims, even if the words “truth” and “true” seldom appear. As Christopher Norris writes, “His point is not at all the obsolescence of truth-talk or the need to replace it with a Nietzsche-inspired genealogy of power-knowledge. Rather it is the failure of logocentric thinkers from Plato on down to make good on their express or implicit claim for a pure, unimpeded access to truth through a range of candidate items (concepts, ideas, primordial intuitions, sense data and so forth) that might ideally be relied upon to grant such access by reason of such transparent rapport-à-soi or intrinsic self-evidence.”¹³ Derrida's readings involve a commitment to the pursuit of truth in analysis that is in no way vitiated by the fact that rigorous analysis frequently highlights a logical impasse. In *Limited Inc*, responding to the claim that deconstructionists do not believe in meaning or truth, he replies, “The answer is simple enough: this definition of the deconstructionist is false (that's right: false, not true) and feeble; it supposes a bad (that's right: bad, not good) reading of numerous texts, first of all of mine, which therefore must finally be read or reread. Then perhaps it will be understood that the value of truth (and all those values associated with it) is never contested or destroyed in my writings, but only reinscribed in more powerful, larger, more stratified contexts.”¹⁴ In the case of truth, the expanded context would include, Derrida indicates, performative dimensions of language which make truth-telling a particular case of linguistic activity. Elsewhere he insists on his commitment to truth, as emerging in the context of possible untruth:

To have the possibility of the authentic, sincere and full meaning of what one says, the possibility of the failure, or the lie, or of something else, must remain open. That's the structure of language. There would be no truth otherwise. I insist on this because if I didn't say this I would be considered someone who is opposed to truth or simply doesn't believe in truth. No, I am attached to truth, but I simply recall that for truth to be true and for the meaning to be meaningful, the possibility of a misunderstanding or lie or something else must remain, structurally always open. That's the condition for truth to be truth¹⁵.

Truth is inescapable. And occasionally, particularly in polemical contexts, he does permit himself an explicit articulation: Giorgio Agamben's central claims about Foucault are “literally false,” he declares¹⁶.

Finally, whereas Norris's point is that Derrida's readings, as arguments, necessarily involve questions of truth and falsity, in a late conversation with Evelyne Grossman, Derrida expatiates on what she has called “a passion for truth.”

¹³Christopher Norris, “Truth in Derrida,” in *A Companion to Derrida*, ed. Zeynep Direk and Leonard Lawler, New York: Wiley, 2014, p. 28.

¹⁴Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, p. 146.

¹⁵“Following Theory: Jacques Derrida,” in *Life After Theory*, ed. Michael Payne and John Schad, New York: Continuum, 2003, p. 44

¹⁶Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, vol. 1, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 329.

“The paradox that you yourself noted is that this passion, I wouldn't say that it is not a passion for truth—I am in a certain sense passionate about truth—but it is at the same time accompanied by, and probably motivated by, the belief that truth infinitely withdraws itself from interpretation. Not that it doesn't exist. I never said, “There is no truth,” but I would say that the concept of truth does not answer what I am looking for, what we are looking for in decoding. That is to say, at the end of the decoding, there is no access to a true and established meaning¹⁷.”

Later, he continues,

There is consequently a need, I would say a drive for truth, that fuels all my work of interpretation and that is compatible with a certain mistrust, a certain suspicion of what is generally called truth as final meaning. There is a drive for truth, but I dare not present it that way, it would lead to too many misunderstandings. I would add as an aside, in a more familiar, empirical way, that when I try to think, to work or to write, and when I believe that something “true” must be put forward to the public sphere, to the public scene, then there is no force in the world that can stop me.... One can call it “passion,” as you say, a “passion for truth.”

I think Derrida's is an extremely interesting case, but it is rather complicated and difficult to sort out. The major lesson is that this deconstruction of metaphysics does not lead to a jettisoning of truth. We are left with a broader sense of truth, which includes notions of accuracy and demonstration yet is also aspirational, aware of the contingency of any stabilization.

A case that is, I think, more useful for our purposes in thinking about truth today is that of Bruno Latour a sociologist and historian and philosopher of science, who studies the ways in which scientific practices in a range of fields produce their results and generate truth. How is truth actively produced through processes of interaction, revision, and so on? His work led to the development of what is called actor-network theory, which attempts not to “overcome” the opposition between subject and object, mind and nature, that underlies most approaches to the problem of truth, but rather to set it aside, leaving it untouched: in brief, adopting a different picture of the world as networks of human and nonhuman agents interacting with each other.¹⁸ Traditional accounts of truth set the subject, or mind, over against the object, the world, and then the problem for the realist is how to claim that the mental representations of mind accurately capture reality, whereas the anti-realist argues that it is the categories, conceptual frameworks of the mind that make reality what it is. Within this framework, for science, there is always the question, did the scientist discover something that was there all along, just waiting to be discovered, or did his or her group's procedures bring into being the conditions that they then describe. Latour writes, “Most philosophy of science since Hume and Kant consists in taking on, evading, hedging, coming back to, recanting, solving, refuting, packing, unpacking this impossible antinomy: that on the one hand facts are experimentally made up and never escape from their manmade settings, and on the other hand it is essential that facts are *not* made up and that something emerges that is not manmade.”¹⁹ Both realist and anti-realist attempt to bridge the gap or overcome the distance,

¹⁷Jacques Derrida, “The Wounding Truth. Or the *corps-à-corps* of Tongues,” A Conversation with Evelyne Grossman. JEP #19 2004/2. <http://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number19/grossman.htm>

¹⁸Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999, pp. 294-5.

¹⁹Ibid., 125

but if we recognize that the humans are not minds in a vat but actors in a world that is also acting, responding to or resisting the investigative procedures, then the properties of the world develop in the interaction with actors in networks. Latour writes,

The idea of an Isolated and singular mind-in-a-vat looking at an outside world from which it is thoroughly cut off, and trying nonetheless to extract certainty from the fragile web of words spun across the perilous abyss separating things from discourse, is so implausible that it cannot hold up much longer, especially since psychologists themselves have already redistributed cognition beyond recognition. There is no world outside, not because there is no world at all, but because there is no mind inside, no prisoner of language with nothing to rely on but the narrow pathways of logic. Speaking truthfully about the world...is a very common practice for richly vascularized societies of bodies, instruments, scientists, and institutions. We speak truthfully because the world is articulated, not the other way around.²⁰

How is truth produced? In classical epistemology, we have two ways of talking about the scientist's work. Either he has discovered something that has always existed, out there in nature, or else he has invented, fabricated something; we have truth or illusion. But Latour is interested in the elaborate processes, endless experiments, the struggles, debates, explorations of interconnections with other results and established knowledge, that end up with a stable result that is accepted, that acquires the character of truth: eminently social, tested, verified, in part the result of actions of the non-human agents. Once you study in detail how scientists work, you come to appreciate the elaborate network formed by the interaction of scientists, instrumentation, the physical or biological materials with they are experimenting and the scrutiny of others who interact with the results of these experiments.

The most salient feature of actor-network theory is its insistence that anything that modifies a state of affairs by making a difference counts as an actor²¹. For instance, given a set of conventions and the purposes for which a map is to be made, a landscape dictates how it is to be mapped. Latour offers a simple but instructive example concerning agency from the realm of public debate about gun control in the United States. The National Rifle Association, resisting any gun control measures, insists that "Guns don't kill, people do." The only agents here are the people -- the gun is just an inert metal device -- so any control measures need to be directed at people, punishing bad people and rewarding the good. The partisans of gun control insist, on the other hand that guns kill people. The gun is a crucial actor in these scenarios: no gun, no mass shootings. This dichotomy mirrors the way we think about subjects and objects. But obviously, just as a gun without a shooter is merely an inert device, so a person without a gun is not a shooter: the person makes the object a lethal weapon and the gun activates the person as shooter. The reality is that it is the combination of gun plus person that results in the shootings, in complex networks where there are also many other factors, including the discourses that stigmatize certain populations and create situations in which shooting them becomes more likely. The gun is a crucial actor or actant in this network²². We acknowledge non-human actors in saying that kettles boil water, hammers hit nails, locks close rooms, soap takes the dirt away, the remote zaps the TV. In each case the non-human agent makes a difference, figures in a network, and once you accept this your task

²⁰Ibid., 296.

²¹Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford: OUP, 2005, p. 71.

²²*Pandora's Hope*, 176-8.

becomes describing the interactions that occur in the intricate ecologies in which humans and non-humans are engaged. “The only realistic way for a mind to speak truthfully about the world is to reconnect through as many relations and vessels as possible²³.”

The scientific case studies Latour has pursued – in such diverse areas as neuroendocrinology, soil science in the Amazon, French atomic science prior to World War II, and Louis Pasteur's discovery of microbes-- are more elaborate than the shooter with a gun or a carpenter with a hammer, but involve science in the making: the messy process of attempting experiments and interpreting the action that follows, in elaborate collaborative processes that may eventually yield results that secure wide acceptance and become scientific truth²⁴. They are of special interest because they have produced what is accepted as truth. In the case of Pasteur, Latour traces the process by which Pasteur moves from a purely chemical explanation of lactic fermentation to the explanation in terms of the action of a living organism, a yeast that causes the fermentation. The yeast is scarcely detectable under a microscope, nothing indicates that it is a separate material²⁵. Yet he comes to conclude that this yeast plays the principal role in lactic fermentation. This conclusion results from elaborate interactions between the scientist and this mysterious, practically undetectable substance, which others see as some minor and accidental contaminant. Pasteur subjects these spots of grey substance to numerous operations, or trials, adjusting proportions of chalk and sugar, adjusting temperatures, ultimately, Latour writes, designing an actor, something that can be said to produce effects in various circumstances. “Most of an experimenter's ingenuity goes into designing devious plots and careful staging that make an actant participate in new and unexpected situations that will actively define it.”²⁶ And the new truth will depend on the success of this agent in convincing others of its reality: in his reports of the experiments Pasteur has to display to other scientists that the action of the ferment occurs independently of his own imagination. The independence of the yeast as actor in turn makes Pasteur a successful scientist, as the person who has shown to the satisfaction of his peers that the fermentation is the result of a living organism and not a purely chemical decomposition. It is crucial to the operation that no matter how artificial the setting, something new and independent of the setting can be seen to emerge.

What is striking here is that there is not an opposition between the action of the scientist and that of the substance. As Latour notes, Pasteur does not try to pretend that his work played no role in creating this entity: “he is extraordinarily proud of being the first in history to have artificially created the conditions to make the lactic acid ferment free to appear, at last, as a specific entity.”²⁷ If Pasteur makes the agent appear, the ferment as actor makes Pasteur's experiments a success and leads others to confirm the truth of the process of lactic fermentation.

While in some quarters science studies are held to have debunked science, showing that alleged scientific truth is socially constructed, Latour notes that the correspondence account of truth is so unsatisfactory that no philosopher would seriously defend it; but no one can be convinced by a purely a social constructionist account for more than three minutes, he says,

²³Ibid., p. 113.

²⁴Good sources are *Pandora's Hope* and *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987.

²⁵*Pandora's Hope*, p. 116.

²⁶Ibid., 122-23.

²⁷Ibid., 137.

because the unpredictable actions of nonhuman agents is crucial.²⁸ When Latour was asked in an interview “what themes do you look upon as most important?” when you look back on the many topics you have written about, he replied:

I think I never had any other interest than the exploration of the many ways there are to find the truth of a situation. So, in that sense, my project is fully rationalist. What makes it different, is that I have been interested in the diversity of those forms of reason. This is why I have been led to the study of science, of technology, of law, of religion, of fiction, etc. to find, in each situation, how the differences between truth and falsity are being carried out.²⁹

I stress that for this thinker associated with contemporary theory and postmodernism, and often treated as a social constructionist, the point is to see how people work through their different frameworks and assumptions to modify them and produce truth.

In many cases the difference between truth and falsity is the result of complex negotiations in the elaborate networks that connect human and nonhuman actors with institutions, procedures, and past knowledge. Ultimately, the point is that truth is complex and multidimensional. In the case I have been discussing we are not dealing with a simple correspondence between some proposition and reality; rather, we seem involved with more of a coherence theory of truth: the various constructions of Pasteur's experiments and the behavior that reveals the ferment, become integrated with other scientific observations as other scientists become convinced by claims tested by others; but, as he stresses, there is not just coherence, for the assent of others depends on their conviction that the appearance of this agent is an independent event. The processes by which scientists determine truth are complex, recursive, and involve considerations of coherence, referentiality, and pragmatic success. No single traditional account of truth will capture this adequately.

In fact, I think there is an analogy here with notion of meaning. Truth is like meaning: sometimes we say the meaning of an utterance is what someone means by it, as though the intention of a speaker determines meaning, and what we need to do is to check our understanding against what the speaker says he or she had in mind. At other times, we say the meaning is determined by the language itself—you might have intended to mean X but you actually said y, which by the conventions of the English language means something else. Sometimes we say context is what determines meaning: to know what this particular sentence means you must look at the context. And sometimes people even say that the meaning of a text is the experience of the reader. Intention, text, context, reader: Meaning is inescapable because it is not something simple or simply determined. It is both what we understand and what we try to understand. And I believe that *truth* is much the same: a fundamental notion but not simply determined and that functions differently in different contexts. Sometimes -- in many everyday matters -- correspondence seems to work, if we are not too concerned with philosophical adequacy; sometimes it is coherence that seems essential, and at other times pragmatic criteria are at work, and often all three. In many cases, as I have stressed, we have no difficulty at all determining truths and in the conduct of our lives depend on many truths. The commonsensical view of truth as correspondence with reality is not, as I have indicated, a satisfactory account from a philosophical point of view, but in appropriately specified contexts, which are common domains of experience, it is

²⁸Ibid., p. 125.

²⁹<https://www.holbergprisen.no/bruno-latour/interview.html> Accessed 20 January 2019.

highly functional. Given our number system and accepted ways of counting, it is false and not true, for instance, that the crowd at Donald Trump's presidential inauguration was larger than Obama's, as Trump keeps claiming. Philosophical doubts about the nature of truth do not create an alternative fact.

To come back to humanists' feeling of embarrassment about claiming something is true, I believe that we need to overcome this inclination; we need to recognize that our practices, like those of Derrida and Latour, constantly involve implicit or explicit truth claims about the matters we are discussing, and it is our practice, and that of scientists, rather than the philosophical conundrums that ought to guide us. The fact that we can come to be convinced that something we believed was true is false is indication that we operate in a domain of distinctions, with criteria, and that we understand about the public nature of testing for truth.

It is especially imperative for politics today that we not hesitate to adjudicate truth claims and not allow our modesty and our embarrassment before Truth with a capital T to forestall our engagement; that we cultivate what Derrida called a passion for truth. It is important to recognize that to make a truth claim is not to deny human fallibility. Fallibility, the possibility that I have a belief that is not true, does not mean that for any belief of mine It might be false, that for no belief of mine can I claim truth. Taking oneself to be fallible is entirely consonant with recognizing that there is no possibility that some particular belief is false. The whole idea of fallibility, that something we took to be true turns out to be wrong, indicates our involvement with distinguishing true from false and a certain commitment to truth. If in this skeptical day and age we cannot be animated by a passion for truth, let us at least acknowledge that we rely on truths in our everyday lives and continually aim at truth, that it is both a foundation and an aspiration, a goal to be pursued.

A Critical Linguistic Analysis of Discourses on Terrorism on The Nigerian Print Media

Abstract

The bulk of studies on terrorism have mainly been carried out from nonlinguistic fields. Few studies on the Boko Haram insurgency from linguistic-related traditions are not sufficient. Therefore, this study identifies the critical linguistic strategies deployed to represent Boko Haram and other social actors in the Nigerian print media. For data, news reports were purposively sampled from four Nigerian newspapers (The Punch, Vanguard, Daily Trust and Leadership). The analysis is guided by a combination of critical linguistics and systemic functional linguistics. The study revealed that through passivisation, transitivity choices, direct and indirect reporting and labeling, power relations and inequalities abound in discourses on terrorism in the print media. The newspaper reports on Boko Haram insurgency orient the Nigerian public.

Keywords: Terrorism discourse, critical linguistics, Nigerian print media

1. Introduction

The Boko Haram insurgency is one of the most violent, ideological and intractable conflicts in contemporary history. Sited in a very sensitive and strategic region in Nigeria, the crisis has always been under the spotlight of the media. The crisis is almost a constant item in the coverage of news outlets, particularly from the time when the leader of the group was killed in 2010. The discourse of the crisis is as ideological and contentious as the crisis itself. News reporting, which is governed by values of truthfulness, accuracy, balance, impartiality and integrity, has always been the object of scrutiny. Discourses on the Boko Haram insurgency have been the object of a number of academic studies. In recent years, Nigeria has joined the group of nations whose identity is marked by incessant violence under the guise of promoting one religious or political ideology or the other. This trend has attracted scholars' attention. A lot of studies have therefore been carried out on terrorism discourse in Nigeria. These include studies from history: Ajayi (2012), and Aghedo and Osumah (2012), Sociolinguistics: Okoro and Odoemelam (2013), and pragmatics: Chilwa (2013). Therefore it is observable that linguistic studies on Boko haram in the Nigerian print media are still very few. Few of these studies have dwelt on a critical discourse study of Boko Haram discourse in the Nigerian print media. This study closes this vacuum by carrying out a critical linguistic investigation of discourses on terrorism in the Nigerian print media between 2011 and 2014. This study aims to contribute to this body of knowledge on the discourse of terrorism by critically analysing the discourse of news reports on selected events of the Boko Haram crisis from cross-cultural perspectives, by exploring the way newspapers across different geopolitical zones in Nigeria report on some recent events of the crisis. The approach utilised in the study is Critical Linguistics; henceforth (CL) serves as an analytical framework to examine the representation of selected events from the Boko Haram crisis in the selected newspapers. Even though this study considers contextual and ideological

factors, it is primarily a linguistic study, and those linguistic features are meant to inform the analysis.

2. Theoretical Background

Critical Linguistics (CL), an earlier version of CDA, was developed in the Seventies by researchers from the University of East Anglia; namely, Fowler, Kress, Hodge and Trew who aimed at utilising Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory "to isolate ideology in discourse" and to find how ideology manifests itself in discourse structures and processes (Fowler, 1991). Kress and Hodge (1979: 13) argue that —language should be seen more properly as the medium of consciousness for a society, its forms of consciousness externalised. Linguistics then, is an exceptionally subtle instrument for the analysis of consciousness and its ideological bases? Critical Linguistics considers that language is an integral part of the social process (Fowler, 1979). It holds that discourse cannot exist without social meanings and that a strong relationship exists between discourse structures and social structures; thus, all instances of language use are ideological. Critical Linguistics attempts to find the ways ideology manifests itself in discourse structures and processes. It regards the text as a whole and draws upon systemic grammar and speech act theory in its analysis.

Important grammatical categories that are examined by critical linguists include: transitivity, nominalisation, passivisation, among others, and it uses them to examine the way language is used to represent a particular world-view and to see how texts embody particular ideologies. Its aim is —recovering the social meanings expressed in discourse by analysing the linguistic structures in the light of their international and wider social contexts? (Fowler, 1979: 195-6). CL distinguishes itself from other linguistic approaches prevailing at the same time, namely, sociolinguistics and transformational grammar, as it aims at investigating the relationship between language and the social at a deeper level than sociolinguistics and refuses the opposition of form and content advocated by Chomskyan transformational grammar. Instead, CL calls for the analysis of authentic texts with an emphasis on their relationship to the context of their use. Its main objective is to read social meanings in texts, and to interpret them politically and ideologically.

2.1 Systemic Functional Grammar

Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is probably one of the most pertinent theories for the analysis of text/context relationship in language (Halliday, 1985, 1994; Young and Harrison 2004). To Fairclough (1999), Systemic Functional Grammar “has a view of texts which is a potentially powerful basis not only for analysis of what is in texts, but also for analysis of what is absent or omitted from texts”. His three dimensional view of discourse analysis (context, processes of text production and interpretation, and text) agrees with Halliday's text grammar, which is examined below.

2.1.1 Textual Grammar

The analysis of text is the concern of Systemic Functional Grammar. The term “text” has been described as authentic products of social dealings (Egins, 2004). According to Halliday and Hasan, text is “any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole (cited in Egins 2004:23). Halliday's context of situation refers only to the immediate environment for a textual event. He uses the term context of culture to apply to the broader institutional and cultural environment within which the context of situation is embedded.

Halliday's framework for describing the context of situation can be summarised as follows: Field of discourse refers to the general sense of what a text is about and it refers to what is happening in the nature of the social action that is reflected in the text. Tenor of discourse is concerned with the participants, their relationship, their roles and relative status. Mode of discourse focuses on what the language is being asked to do, its function, the way it is organized, the medium (print, spoken, etc.) and also “the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic and the like” (Halliday and Hassan, 1985:12).

The designation Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) derives from a view of function as a fundamental property of language. Eggins (2004:20) describes SFG as “a functional semiotic approach to language which explores both how people use language in different contexts and how language is structured for use as a semiotic system”.

Halliday further distinguishes three metafunctions of language. The first is the ideational, which he further divides into the experiential and the logical. While the experiential gives meaning to our experience, the logical defines the relationship between one process and another or one participant and another, that share the same position in the text. The interpersonal defines the process of social interaction which is occurring in the text. The textual denotes the interplay and relationship of linguistic elements which gives a text its coherence. In application, the field is generally expressed through the experiential function, the tenor through the interpersonal function and the mode through the textual function.

2.1.2 Transitivity, Mood and Theme

According to Halliday (1994:106), each English clause constituent expresses three kinds of meaning: a meaning about reality (experiential), a meaning about the interaction (interpersonal) and a meaning about the message (textual). Transitivity patterns represent the encoding of experiential meanings about the world and about how we perceive and experience what is going on. By examining the transitivity patterns in a text, we can explain how the field of situation is being constructed. According to Halliday (1994:106ff), the transitivity structure of an English clause entails selection for a process type (material, mental, behavioural, verbal, existential or relational). This process type specifies the action, events or relationships between implicated participants (actor, goal, recipient, beneficiary or affected), and they may be situated circumstantially (for time, place, reason, etc.) Undertaking a transitivity analysis involves determining the process type, participants and circumstances realised in any clause.

3 Research methodology

The data for the study were compiled from the archives of four Nigerian national daily newspapers, namely *The Punch*, and *The Vanguard* published in the south and, the *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* published in the north. The study covered a period of five years, from 2011 to 2014. This period has been remarkably known as a period marked by great insecurity and bloodshed due to the butchery activities of the terrorist group- Boko Haram. Where the newspapers were not easily accessible, Internet sites of the publications were visited. By assuming that news reports on the insurgency in Northern Nigeria would include a reference to terrorism or the name of the group – Boko Haram, the query terms “terrorism in Nigeria” and “Boko Haram” were used to access relevant reports. Search results were also manually checked to exclude any reports not directly related to the Boko Haram insurgency. The data

were closely examined. Over one hundred articles and reports on the Boko Haram crisis were gathered and read. From the search results, only 40 articles were purposively selected for analysis. Necessary headlines and relevant stories were written out and details such as the name of the paper and date of publication were marked out. The approach taken to the analysis of the newspaper articles was broadly one of Critical Linguistics.

4. Review of relevant literature

Alao (2012) analyzes the role the Nigerian media has played in the coverage of Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist group that has since been a threat to national security. The study claims that the period of coverage, November 2011 to March 2012, has been remarkably known as a period that recorded the highest casualties in terms of life and property. Six newspapers were used for the study: The New Nigeria, Leadership and Daily Trust representing the Northern based newspapers and The Guardian, Punch and Vanguard representing newspapers from the South. The study analyzes two major terrorist activities of Boko Haram using placement of stories, space allocated and number of illustration pictures as indices for measuring the amount of importance attached to coverage. The findings of the study show that although all the newspapers adequately covered Boko Haram, there is a clear distinction in the analysis of coverage that clearly mark out the feeling of screaming and over publicizing of Boko Haram by the use of overblown headlines and erroneous linkage of Boko Haram terrorist activities to Islam by the Southern based newspapers. On the basis of the findings, the study recommends that there is a need to close ranks between the Northern based media and those of their southern counterparts if the 'watchdog' constitutionally assigned role of the media will be of any relevance in Nigeria.

Agbede et al (2013a) examine Boko Haram's language of insurgency and its socio-pragmatic implications in the Nigerian and global contexts. The study delineates the communicative character of the language of insurgency and underscores its socio-pragmatic imports as revealed in the speech acts of the sect's spokespersons. Specifically, the study relies on the Austinian notion of 'speech acts' to account for the communicative activity of Boko Haram in relation to the illocutionary force of such utterances. The picture which emerges from the findings of the study indicates that the consistent use of carefully chosen words conjures a frightening of Armageddon which is certain to befall Nigeria if the sect's demands are not met.

Similarly, Agbedo et al (2013b) is a socio-psychological deconstruction of Boko Haram in Nigeria. The study examines the language of fear and anxiety as an adaptive response to the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. In particular, the study investigates the various contexts of fear, horror, and terror and assesses the issues that surround their linguistic significance. Using data drawn from the Nigerian print media, the study explores issues which lie at the interface of fear, horror and terror. The study attempts a theoretical underpinning of language of insurgency as a source of fear and horror in the Nigerian context.

As shown in the previous review of related literature, the discourse of the Boko Haram insurgency has been the focus of a number of studies in various disciplines. It has been investigated in areas like media studies (Alao, 2012), sociolinguistics (Agbedo, 2012), socio-pragmatics (Agbedo et al. 2013a). Most of these studies do not deal with the relationship between ideology and the representation of the conflict. Few of the studies, if any, have attempted to demonstrate that this representation is not free from bias, as different

sides of the conflict are not represented in the same way.

5 Linguistic representations of the Boko Haram crisis

5.1 Passivisation

The active or passive voice plays a major part in determining the role of the participant in an action. The role of a participant may be emphasised, minimised or omitted entirely (Nordlund, 2003:9). The passive voice is used when the writer wishes to make the agent becomes less prominent and the person or thing affected by the action is the focus. In newspapers, the actor may be deleted because “the paper is able to imply illegal conduct without actually making an accusation that could leave them vulnerable to legal action” (Reah, 1988:88). The use of passivisation is common in Nigerian English journalese because it allows journalists to shield themselves from unwarranted rebuttal or libel suits. Ayoola (2008) opines that it partially indemnifies the discourse producer from prosecution or persecution as s/he avoids making a direct declaration or accusation. The underlined in the following sentences are examples of such usages in the discourse:

Excerpt 1:

Earlier this week, it was reported by one of the national newspapers that Imo State government had deported 84 people of Northern origin back to their homes purportedly for fear that they might be members of Boko Haram (Northerners' deportation by Imo State *Daily Trust*, January, 31st 2014).

Excerpt 2:

The dead bodies were suspected to be security agencies killed in the attack (Scores killed as Boko Haram attacks Air force Base in Maiduguri *The Vanguard*, Dec. 03, 2013).

Excerpt 3:

Two Air Force personnel were also wounded, while 24 insurgents died during the exchange of fire. (Scores killed as Boko Haram attacks Air force Base in Maiduguri, *The Vanguard*, Dec. 03, 2013).

Excerpt 4:

The soldiers were alleged to have compromised their integrity while saddled with the responsibility of dealing with the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state (*The Punch*, July, 9, 2013).

In Excerpt 1, the use of the passivisation was reported partially insulates the writer of the *Daily Trust* newspaper news report from being required by the Imo State government to supply information on his claim that the state had sent packing some people from the northern part of the country. Passive constructions are used twice to represent the action of the Imo State government (“was reported and had deported”). Relationals are used to provide

additional information and descriptions and to make comments on the identity of the northerners. Similarly, in Excerpt 2, the use of the passivisation enables the elimination of the sayer. The dead bodies were 'only' suspected to be security agencies; they could be insurgents who dressed as security agencies. The journalist from the *The Vanguard* newspaper did not want to commit himself. The government is unlikely going to sue the newspaper as a competent defence attorney could argue convincingly in court that the writer did not categorically refer to security agencies. In Excerpt 3, the insurgents are predominantly represented as the affected participants of their action. They had launched an attack on the Maiduguri Air Force Base. Passivisation is used to reduce the effect of the insurgents' action as “two Air Force personnel were wounded. Through the passivisation, the impact of the attack is downplayed, with the effect of presenting the action of the insurgents as futile or unable to affect the government or its agencies. On the other hand, activation is used to report the plight of the insurgents. 24 of them died. The idea of dying and not being killed conveys the notion of a natural occurrence. This completely mitigates agency and conceals responsibility. In Excerpt 4, passivisation also conceals and protects, thereby reducing the impact of the potentially libelous observation about the soldiers in question.

5.2 Transitivity choices

5.2.1 Material process

The 'material' type processes are signified by 'doing' verbs that represent action in a concrete way with a sense of causality, transformation or creation. This process type generally involves two classes of participant, the 'actor' on the one hand; and the 'recipient' (the 'beneficiary' or the 'affected'), on the other. Examples from the discourse are shown below.

Excerpt 5:

Boko Haram forces 1,000 teachers to flee (headline) (*The Punch*, Oct. 5, 2013).

Excerpt 6:

...The JTF pursued and engaged them in a gunfight and they were overpowered (JTF smashes Boko Haram, recovers vehicles, arms - Spokesman *Daily Trust*, June 30, 2013).

Excerpt 7:

Nigeria's military has surrounded a village in the northeast to flush out Islamist rebels who fled there after reportedly snatching soldiers' wives and children during a daring attack on an army barracks nearby, witnesses told AFP Saturday (Military hunts Boko Haram after daring barracks attack, *Vanguard*, December 21st, 2013)

The Boko Haram insurgents are the actors in Excerpt 5, while teachers in the northern part of Nigeria are the affected participants. The material process options to pursue and engage (Excerpt 6) are the exclusive preserve of the FGN and her agencies who are the legal authority and dominant participants in the discourse. The superior position of the FGN is enhanced in Excerpt 7 where Nigeria's military is the actor of the material process

surrounded, while the wives and children of the soldiers are the beneficiaries and the Islamist rebels and unfortunate villagers are the affected participants. Pursued in Extract 6, presupposes that the conflict is initiated by the insurgents. They are the initiators of war; the JTF is presented as only going after them because of what 'they' the insurgents did. Through the constant representation of the insurgents as confrontational agents and initiators of the conflicts, the media succeed in shifting attention to the violence attributable to the Boko Haram insurgents. As a result, the JTF are justified to retaliate violently and kill the insurgents.

5.3 Direct and Indirect Reporting

News writers and journalists use direct quotations to make the content of a media-political news report appear more authentic and believable. Below are some examples from the discourse:

Excerpt 8:

In a joint press statement signed by Olu Sulaiman, Michael Popoola, Ovie Godfrey and Hycinth Chiluba, the groups said as the 2015 presidential election drew near, it would begin an intensive campaign against Islamic fundamentalists who might want to contest (Stop sponsoring Boko Haram, Northern Politicians warned, *The Punch*, August 11, 2013).

Excerpt 9:

Speaking at the funeral service held in honour of late Chief Okonkwo Ihejirika, father of the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Azubuike Ihejirika at Ovim, Abia State, weekend, Bishop Uche said: "If you do evil, you will certainly go to hell. Those who carry out political Boko Haram, political kidnappings, political assassination with the aim of causing a division in the country will fail" (Have a rethink, Methodist Prelate warns Boko Haram sponsors, others *The Vanguard*, Nov. 19, 2013).

Excerpt 10:

"Nigeria's unity is negotiable. The so-called indissolubility and indivisibility are mere rhetorics that cannot stand the test of time. Nigeria's unity is negotiable, because failure to negotiate it is to postpone the evil day. India and Pakistan were once one country, but where are they today? Already in Nigeria you have some separatist movements, the Boko Haram has already planted flags in some communities in the North" (Why we must negotiate Nigeria's unity at confab –Ozekhome *Daily Trust*, Feb. 10, 2014).

The participants in Excerpt 8 are members of groups representing indigenous communities in Nigeria. The statement credited to these members of the group is highly confrontational hence the journalist reported it indirectly. In Excerpt 9, the journalist quotes

the remarks verbatim as paraphrasing it may diminish the full import of the implication of the opinion of such a highly regarded religious personality about the Boko Haram crisis and other political issues in the country. Looking at the Boko Haram crisis from a media perspective, Bishop Uche's utterance in Excerpt 9 is better quoted verbatim so that readers can draw out for themselves the ideological interpretation of political Boko Haram. In Excerpt 10, Chief Mike Ozekhome's critical opinion on the continued existence of Nigeria as an indivisible entity is presented in direct reporting to preserve as much as possible its dramatic quality, emotive content and intonational features. It also partially indemnifies the journalist from sharing in the possible repercussion of such confrontational views.

5.4 Labeling

Chiluwa (2011) opines that labels are specific lexical items or 'tags' that sort out persons or a group into specific social categories that determine how members of the public should understand and judge their actions. Therefore, labels are capable of expressing value judgments and therefore not value-free representations of facts. Generally, positive or negative labels are linked with social attitudes associated with them and more often than not, the negative labels are the more powerful with greater inherent social consequences. A label naturally projects a mental model which eventually influences value judgement and a value judgement is personal, often subjective and inconsistent (van Dijk, 2005; Matheson, 2005). Examples from our data are shown below:

Excerpt 11

Buhari speaking during a *Liberty FM Hausa Service Programme, Guest of the Week*, on Sunday in Kaduna said that Boko Haram members were being killed and their houses demolished unlike the “special treatment” given to the Niger Delta militants by the Federal Government (**Buhari Faults Crackdown On Boko Haram** *The Punch*, June 3, 2013).

Excerpt 12

Sunday's attack by suspected Boko Haram members on Kawuri in Konduga LGA of Borno State affected 4,000 people, including 2000 people who were completely displaced, officials of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said yesterday (4,000 affected in Borno attack – *NEMA Daily Trust*, Jan. 31, 2014).

Excerpt 13

Nigeria's military has surrounded a village in the northeast to flush out Islamist rebels who fled there after reportedly snatching soldiers' wives and children during a daring attack on an army barracks nearby (Military hunts Boko Haram after daring barracks attack, *Vanguard*, December 21st, 2013)

Excerpt 14

Several Bama residents told AFP the insurgents also abducted several of the soldiers' wives and children during the attack (Military hunts Boko Haram after daring barracks attack, *Vanguard*, December 21st, 2013).

Excerpt 15

Dozens of suspected Boko Haram militants in Magumeri forest, Borno, have turned to human eaters after being stranded for days without food or water, *News Agency of Nigeria* reports (Stranded Boko Haram members turn human eaters in Borno – Suspect *Vanguard*, Aug. 24, 2013).

In excerpts 11 and 12, the use of the label Boko Haram members is noticed. The use of the label in excerpt 11 in *The Punch newspaper* is credited to the presidential candidate for the Congress for Progressive Change in the 2011 presidential election, Maj.- Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (ret'd). Buhari has been accused of lending the group his support through his words and body language. By using the label Boko Haram members Buhari and the *Daily Trust newspaper* based in the northern part of the country have a different perception of what and who the terrorists are. To them, they are just members of a militia organization like the MEND in the Niger Delta region of the country. In the *Vanguard* and *Punch* newspapers, as it is evident in excerpts 13-15, the Boko Haram members are referred to as Islamist rebels , insurgents , Boko Haram militants , etc. Labeling Boko Haram members as Islamist rebels is understandably due to the affiliation they have to Islam. The group claims to be inspired by Islam and is bent on doing away with anything that is western. Insurgency and militancy convey the idea of fighting against one's own government. To the average Nigerian, the 'militancy and insurgency' script especially if constructed by the press, tend to reconstruct the identity of the Boko Haram members. This also legitimizes whatever means of handling and curtailing the activities of the insurgents and militants by the Nigerian government and the agencies tasked with dealing with the insurgency. More often than not, the general public whose opinion about the Boko Haram members has been moulded by the press tend to approve of the illegal methods applied by the government and its agencies in handling the illegality of Boko Haram members. Hence, the labels tend to profile the Islamic militias and predict how members of the society should understand their actions.

Conclusion

The linguistic features that accounted for ideologies included passivisation, nominalization, direct and direct reporting, and labeling. Further, power relations and inequalities abounded in Boko Haram discourse in the Nigerian print media. These were obvious in the use of material process options (transitivity) through which the context of domination and its resistance could be seen in the grammatical choices of the discourse participants. This study represents a contribution to a small but growing body of research about the discourse of the Boko Haram insurgency. It presents an application of critical linguistics to an interesting corpus that deals with a timely and vital issue for peace in Northern Nigeria. It shows that representations of the conflict are ideological and that they reflect and naturalise the asymmetries of power between the different sides in the conflict. It

also shows that news reporting of the conflict is not as objective and free from bias and value judgments as it should ideally be. It is hoped that this may encourage newspapers to reconsider their representations of the insurgency, so as to provide better contextualisation of events, balance the views of the different sides and use linguistic structures in ways that do not mitigate responsibility for violence in order to represent events clearly and allow the readers to have a better understanding of events in context. The analysis shows that the members and actions of different sides are represented differently and that some of the differences are ideologically motivated. These representations can result in swaying the public opinion and giving the public a superficial and uncritical view of the Boko Haram insurgency.

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Staging the Implosion of Truth: Tom Stoppard's Subversive Theatre

Abstract

Until the advent of postmodernism in the 1980s, the principal function of literature as an institution had been to serve as a medium for the construction and propagation of 'truths' and 'meanings' subservient to the established centres of power in the world. The truths and counter-truths discursively constituted by mutually competing metanarratives such as Christianity, Imperialism, Capitalism, Socialism, and Post-colonialism, were to seek self-legitimation in literature through the depiction of characters and courses of events that conformed to certain pre-determined notions of reason, order and progress. Consequently the literature that was written under the rubrics of Realism and Modernism exhibited a uniform tendency to homogenise human perception and expression through the consolidation of certain principles of 'normative essence' that were meant to inform both the external behavior as well as the inner subconscious of individuals as well as communities. All strata of human organization – the family, the society and the nation – and all aspects of the human psyche – language, time, space, self – could thus be shaped and controlled by such definitive truths transmitted through literature to be entrenched in the human consciousness.

*Postmodernism delimited truth from the confines of the metanarratives, and propounded a new sensibility that truths had only a contingent value. This resulted in an implosion of the truths of yore under the weight of their own inner incongruities. Tom Stoppard, the Czechoslovakia-born British playwright has been using the stage consistently, ever since his debut with the renowned play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, to depict the self-contradictions inherent in the truths consolidated through discursively organized literature. The paper titled, “Staging the Implosion of Truth: Tom Stoppard's Subversive Theatre” attempts to trace the dramatic oeuvre of Stoppard to highlight the dramatist's deconstructive take on the category of “Truth” through diverse techniques of generic, epistemological and aesthetic subversion.*

Key words: Postmodernism, Discourse, Metanarrative, Drama, Realism, Modernism, Implosion, Subversion.

Any discussion on Truth must grapple with two fundamental concerns, vis-à-vis, the general philosophical query, “what truth is?”, and then the contextually material anxiety, “What is the truth?” For most, even for the sceptics and the most intellectually trained minds, truth in both these guises, is inextricably conjoined to “belief”, whether systematic or idiosyncratic. To put it straight, truth is what one believes in or what one can believe in. However, the high premium that is placed on belief in the approach to truth can sometimes cause a disjunction between the general definition of truth and the situational perception of truth, for, belief engendered through a congenial reconciliation between discursively codified knowledge and individually encountered experience, ironically has an element of arbitrariness associated with it. The consequence is that the human mind is furnished with a tendency to believe the most impossible, improbable and irrational explanations given to the

plain facts of life, and on the contrary, reject the most obvious perceptions as untrue. The more one is intellectually equipped, the greater this tendency to stretch one's imagination to incorporate the most incomprehensible into the ambit of faith. The boy who proverbially declaimed that the King was naked was more proximal to fact because he remained as yet outside the purview of the normative 'wisdom' bestowed on humanity by the centres of discursive authority. Tom Stoppard the Czech-born British playwright in his play, *Travesties*(1974) proclaims this inescapable truth about truth when Tristan Tzara, the avant-garde Rumanian poet and playwright who is brought in as a character is made to declare, "I am sick of cleverness. The clever people try to impose a design on the world and when it goes calamitously wrong they call it fate. In point of fact, everything is Chance, including design." (*Travesties* 37)

Stoppard's deconstructive approach to the canonical formulations and prescriptive institutionalisation of truths encountered in a large body of literary texts unified under the rubric of 'Realism', begins with his debut on the English stage with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967). Centered on the callously casual death meted out to the two marginal characters in *Hamlet*, the play dismantles many of the epistemologically consolidated perspectives on reality and the generically entrenched notions of literature, instituted by writers like Shakespeare. In its opening moments the play mounts a subversion of the mathematical Law of Probability through an unnaturally tilted game of coin tossing where the coins come down on Heads consecutively for eighty five times. Guildenstern, the consistent loser, is alarmed, not over the loss of money, but because he is apprehensive of the inexplicably arbitrary outcome. Stoppard suggests that the veracity of the mathematically instituted notion of probability and of the aesthetically conceived principle of "causal connection" – cause-effect relationship – between events, comes under strain when Shakespeare arbitrarily drags the innocent and innocuous duo who had absolutely nothing to do with the intrigues of the royal household of Denmark, into the plot of *Hamlet* and condemns them to unnecessary and unmerited death. The law of probability, conceived in the wake of Enlightenment Modernity in Europe, attempts to furnish a rational explanation to the outcome of chance events. "The **First Law of Probability** states that the results of one chance event have no effect on the results of subsequent chance events. Thus, the **probability** of obtaining heads the second time you flip it remains at $\frac{1}{2}$." The entry of the two men into the plot of *Hamlet* is a chance event that should have provided them with an equal chance to live. But the rule holds no truth for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the course of the play. The death accorded to them by Shakespeare is thus a truth that is not 'probably' true. Nor is the aesthetic principle of causal connection applicable in their case. Devoid of a valid or probable reason to be in the plot of *Hamlet*, the two civilians just remember the fact that a soldier on horseback had awakened them that morning with the royal summons. Since then life had been a murky affair for them, marked by doubts, misgivings, inscrutable fears and apprehensions – with no reliable truth to hold on to.

Enlightenment Modernity of the eighteenth century was an epistemological project that proclaimed to usher in what Jurgen Habermas describes as "objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic." (Habermas 9) The use of epithets like 'objective', 'universal' 'autonomous' and 'inner logic' deployed in this definition self-consciously claim a comprehensive access to "a" truth that is monolithic in nature and sweep. A critique of the notion of autonomous arts and literature as a true and unmodified reflection of life, is another thematic concern of Stoppard in *Rosencrantz and*

Guildestern are Dead. Apart from projecting the theatricality of the theatre through numerous metafictional references to the stage, the actors and the audience, Stoppard also highlights the unbridgeable gap between art and reality, especially with reference to 'Death' that is the one and only uncontested truth of the world. Guildenstern is least philosophical when he pronounces the fact that Death in real life is entirely different from the death enacted heroically and romantically on the stage by an actor:

No, no, no . . . you've got it all wrong . . . you can't act death. The fact of it is nothing to do with seeing it happen – it's not gasps and blood and falling about – that isn't what makes it death. It is just a man failing to reappear, that's all – now you see him, now you don't, that's the only thing that's real: here one minute and gone the next and never coming back – an exit, unobtrusive and unannounced, a disappearance gathering weight as it goes on, until, finally, it is heavy with death. (*R&G* 84)

As Guildenstern critically endorses how the theatrical tradition of Europe had deflated even Death – the only palpable, verifiable and final truth of human existence, the Player – the leader of the travelling acting group that performs the play-within-the play in *Hamlet* – summarises how the so-called “autonomous art” had driven the common consciousness of Europe so far away from truth or the willingness to perceive the truth, of death:

I had an actor once who was condemned to hang for stealing a sheep – or a lamb, I forget which – so I got permission to have him hanged in the middle of a play -- had to change the plot a bit but I thought it would be effective, you know – and you wouldn't believe it, he just *wasn't* convincing! It was impossible to suspend one's disbelief – and what with the audience jeering and throwing peanuts, the whole thing was a disaster! (*R&G* 84)

What the Player aesthetically identifies merely as a theatrical failure is to Stoppard the tragic culmination of the project of Enlightenment modernity and its arbitrarily discursive organization of human perception and experience, whereof the human mind has been rendered so pathetically unable to appreciate the most obvious truths, in its servile affinity for artificially codified forms of knowledge. The most significant aspect of postmodernism is its dislodging of 'reality' from all metaphysical foundations such as culture, morality, reason, knowledge and identity. The excessive emphasis that modernity laid on “Reason” as a reliable route to reality is deflated in the play by the postmodern sensibility of Stoppard. As Guildenstern becomes increasingly frustrated by his failure to glean what afflicts Hamlet, he subscribes to the idea of “Reason” in an autocratic fashion, in the same way the dictators of history did, nullifying the autonomy associated with it:

GUIL : (*Fascist*) Nobody leaves this room! (*Pause, lamely.*)
Without a very good reason.)

PLAYER : Why not?

GUIL : All this strolling about is getting too arbitrary by half – I'm rapidly losing my grip. From now on reason will prevail.

PLAYER : I have lines to learn.

GUIL : Pass (*R&G* 69)

Enlightenment modernity had the subtle effect of organizing human perception of reality

on the three concentric principles of Reason, Order and Progress, whereof a society of rationally organized minds would have a benignly codified, hierarchical order, and such a society would always move towards irreversible progress. Stoppard exposes the arbitrariness associated with the principle of order too:

GUIL: Wheels have been set in motion, and they have their own pace, to which we are . . . condemned. Each move is dictated by the previous one – that is the meaning of order. If we start being arbitrary it'll just be a shambles: at least let us hope so. Because if we happened to discover, or even suspect, that our spontaneity was part of their order, we'd know that we are lost. (*R&G* 60)

And, in order to explore the bogus nature of the notion of 'Progress' hoisted by Modernity as the ultimate test of any sustainable notion of reality, Stoppard unambiguously highlights the inescapable quagmire in which humanity has been trapped, through the plight of the two mundane characters in *Hamlet*. As Guildenstern acknowledges it, “. . . we may seize the moment, toss it around while the moments pass, a short dash here, an exploration there, but we are brought round full circle to face again the single immutable fact -- that we, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, bearing a letter from one king to another, are taking Hamlet to England.” (*R&G* 101) The paradoxical, rather self-critical truth that Stoppard presents here is that despite all their attempts at rationalization, their efforts to strike an order independent of the Shakespearean plot, and the freedom, howsoever limited, they could leverage from their situation, they could not progress an inch from the blind alley into which they were driven by Shakespeare. The capacity for rationalization and self-determination which could have changed the course of their life is negated by Guildenstern when they learn the content of Claudius' letter to the King of England. Rosencrantz, the simpleton is moved to a prick of conscience about conniving with the plan to assassinate Hamlet, but the more intellectually furnished Guildenstern thinks otherwise: “we are little men, we don't know the ins and outs of the matter, there are wheels within wheels, etcetera – it would be presumptuous of us to interfere with the designs of fate or even of kings.” (*R&G* 110) Thus, true to the spirit of postmodernism, Stoppard desists from altering the plot of the play, but only views it from a different angle, from the point of view of the victim.

Finally Stoppard extends his inquiry into the nature of truth and the means of human access to truth to a critical engagement with the scope and nature of language. The lofty status accorded to language as a reliable route to truth can be traced to the New Testament which states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1, King James Version of the Bible), whereof there is a synonymisation of truth with language. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard divests language, or, the Word rather, of the signifiatory power accorded to it. Language is identified with a competitive game of asking as many questions as possible and revealing as little as possible by way of answer, a ploy of keeping the truth at bay. Stoppard rejects the Enlightenment notion of language as a definite route to reach reliable truths of a transcendental nature. Rosencrantz, the simpleton relishes the memories of those times, but Guildenstern rejects it:

ROS : I remember when there were no questions.

GUIL : There were always questions. To exchange one set for another is no great matter.

ROS : Answers, yes. There were answers to everything.

GUIL : You've forgotten. (R&G 38)

One forgets answers because they are not valid or true to be retained. At the culmination of this exchange, Guildenstern makes his verdict that truth is what is lost in the effort to express it in language: "All your life you live so close to truth. It becomes a permanent blur in the corner of your eye, and when something nudges it into outline, it is like being ambushed by a grotesque." (R&G 39) Truth is what one lives, not says. In order to evade the truth of the pain of their current uncertainty, they decide to play with words, because, as Guildenstern says, "Words, words. They're all we have to go on." (R&G 41) They practice the game of asking questions among themselves' and later try it on Hamlet; but Hamlet proves more proficient in asking questions and giving away nothing:

GUIL : I think we can say we made some headway.

ROS : You think so?

GUIL : I think we can say that.

ROS : I think we can say he made us look ridiculous.

GUIL : We played it close to the chest of course.

ROS : (*derisively*) "Questions and answer. Old ways are the best ways"! He was scoring off us all down the line.

.....
.....

GUIL : What about our evasions?

ROS : Oh, our evasions were lovely. "Were you sent for?" he says. "My lord, we were sent for ..." I didn't know where to put myself (R&G 56–57)

The Player, probably as the mouthpiece of Stoppard, has already given them, as well as to the audience the cue to live in a world of such uncertainty, and there is nothing more to it:

PLAYER : Uncertainty is the normal state. You're nobody special.

He makes to leave again. GUIL loses his cool.

GUIL : But for God's sake what are we supposed to do?!

PLAYER : Relax. Respond. That's what people do. You can't go through life questioning your situation at every turn. [. . .] Everything has to be taken on trust; truth is only that which is taken to be true. It is the currency of living. There may be nothing behind it, but it doesn't make any difference so long as it is honoured. One acts on assumptions. (R&G 66-67)

Stoppard's *Travesties* is a play that contests the popular view of history and memory as monuments of truth. The notion that the narratives drawing on history and memory are reliable grounds for unameliorated and undistorted truths, is challenged in this play. As the old Henry Carr the central figure of the play schizophrenically collates the memories of his mundane personal life in Zurich during the First World War with certain significant strands of

the artistic and political history of Europe to which he was a passive witness, there emerges a new narrative which is equally credible, but without an original. Stoppard uses the structure of the play to suggest that 'the truth' that is often claimed to be represented and upheld either in artistic creativity, or in revolutionary politics, or in personal memory and consciousness, is often a piece of fiction. Henry Carr, a real figure who had a small job at the British Consulate in Zurich at that time was cast by James Joyce as Algernon Moncrieff in a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Switzerland's neutrality in the First World War had facilitated the coincidental presence there of certain key figures like Lenin, and rebel artists like the Dadaist poet, Tristan Tzara. The primary event that fomented the play of memories is the role that Carr had played in the production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and the legal skirmish that ensued with James Joyce over the charges of the costume that Carr had bought for his performance. Carr remembers Joyce as an "Irish lout . . . [who had] dragged him through the courts for a few francs, [and as he adds in a self-cosmeticising vein] though it wasn't the money or the trousers for that matter." (*Travesties* 5-6) Carr who elevates himself into an imagined loftiness of status as the British Consul in Zurich and as the "friend of the famous" (*Travesties* 6) prejudicially portrays one figure of fame after the other – "James Joyce As I Knew him", "a liar and a hypocrite, a tight-fisted, sponging, fornicating, drunk, not worth the paper" (*Travesties* 7) and "Lenin As I knew him" who "only had one chance in a million." (*Travesties* 7) His erratic memory meanders in and out through the annals of history and the plot of Oscar Wilde's play, to render every one of these figures to be looking up to him for help – Joyce begging for money for the production of the play, and Lenin, albeit indirectly, at Carr's mercy to facilitate his passage to Russia. In the final moments of the play an aged Carr and an aged Cecily, long married, are left on the stage to confess that they had deceived each other on many counts but Carr has no regrets' "What of it? I was here. They were here. They went on. I went on. We all went on. (*Travesties* 70) Carr signs off from his dalliance with different guises of memory – invented, concocted, and manipulated – with an otherwise deflated statement that is paradoxically valid for the metaphorical suggestiveness of its final part: "I learned three things in Zurich during the war. I wrote them down. Firstly, you're either a revolutionary or you're not, and if you're not you might as well be an artist as anything else. Secondly, if you can't be an artist, you might as well be a revolutionary . . . I forget the third thing." (*Travesties* 70) Of the three things that he wrote down, he has forgotten the third thing; effectively suggesting the essential incompleteness of one's grasp of the truth and meaning of life, or the inescapable disability to express it completely in language. Life like the proverbial dog's tail, has at every turn something that outgrows the sweep of man's perception and expression.

In *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (1977) and *Professional Foul* (1977) Stoppard leaves behind his intellectual explorations into the metaphysical dimensions of truth, and moves on to a more committed and bolder stance of exposing how the plain and the obvious truths of life are hijacked and distorted by dictatorial regimes hoisted on lies reinforced through blatant use of power. In both these plays, Stoppard replicates what the Schizophrenic memory of Henry Carr in *Travesties* denounces as the dishonesty of the clever people in subscribing to the carefully orchestrated lies propagated by the State. *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, written as a response to the violation of human rights in the post-Revolution Russia, is focused on the tenacious resistance of the protagonist, Alexander, modelled after the Russian dissident Victor Fainberg, who, like many other opponents of the Communist dictatorship, was pronounced insane and was incarcerated in a mental asylum. In

the play, the character Alexander is lodged in a psychiatric ward along with a real psychiatric patient, Ivanov, who believes that he is always accompanied by a musical orchestra. Both the political prisoner and the lunatic are under the charge of a Doctor who occasionally doubles up as a violinist, in obvious metaphorical reference to his status as a vassal playing the tunes composed by the State. The Doctor has converse cures for the two patients: Alexander must deny the real and fall in for the illusion of the State, and Ivanov must shed his illusion and come to perceive reality. The agenda of the State, put into practice through the Doctor who treats Alexander at the Hospital and the Teacher who instructs Alexander's son, Sacha in School, is based on the methodology of turning falsehoods into truths through repetition. But the indomitable courage of Alexander and the uncorrupted simplicity of Sacha remain intact over the desperately brutal attempt of the State to make them fall in line. Despite the teacher's best efforts, Sacha, who is seized of the fact that his father may die fasting unto death in protest of the tyranny of the State, cries out:

SACHA : A plane area bordered by high walls is a prison, not a hospital.

TEACHER : Keep quiet!

SACHA : I don't care – he was never sick at home. Never!

TEACHER : Stop crying. (*Every Good Boy ... 26*)

As Alexander persists in his convictions, the Doctor gets frustrated and thinks of dispatching him for more notoriously rigorous centres of psychological purgation:

DOCTOR : Your behavior is causing alarm. . . . I have to think seriously whether an Ordinary Hospital can deal with your symptoms.

ALEXANDER : I have no symptoms, I have opinions.

DOCTOR : Your opinions are your symptoms. Your disease is dissent. Your kind of Schizophrenia does not presuppose changes of personality noticeable to others. (*Every Good Boy ... 30*)

Caught between the lofty ethical ground occupied by his father and the crass political obstinacy of the regime, Sacha's innocent reason that is free of indoctrination tells him that if truth can meet truth, lies are best to deal with lies. He pleads with his unyielding father, "Papa, don't be rigid! Be brave and tell them lies!" (*Every Good Boy ... 35*). Ultimately the State genuflects before the tenacity of Alexander's conviction and determination, and is forced to devise a way out of the imbroglio where it can neither let Alexander die of hunger strike, nor let him free without claiming to cure the disease pronounced on him. It sets its own lie aright with another lie of exchanging the identities of Alexander and his cellmate Ivanov in the final interrogation by a military official. Alexander is declared perfectly sane because he is cured of Ivanov's illness; he has no hallucinations of an orchestra accompanying him, and Ivanov is purged of Alexander's aberration; he no longer believes that the soviet regime puts sane men into mental hospitals.

In *Professional Foul* (1977), Stoppard combines the theme of state-sponsored distortion and suppression of truth with a discussion on the moral obligation and the material resources of the academic intelligentsia, a privileged lot in the author's view, to stand by the victims of

State oppression and calumny. Professor Anderson, Professor of Ethics at the Cambridge University, presumably the protagonist of the play, is in Prague as a guest of the Czechoslovakian State to attend a conference. Beneath the stated purpose of making an academic presentation, he has an undisclosed intention of watching the World Cup qualifier between the English and Czech Football teams. There is prima facie an incongruity between his intent to play truant at the Conference and the absoluteness of the nature and scope of the principles of ethics inherent in human life at both social and individual levels. But he chooses to brush it under the carpet as an insignificant episode of occasional self-indulgence which does not involve any serious conflict between individual freedom and social responsibility. However, when his former student, Pavel Hollar approaches him with the request to smuggle out his doctoral thesis, which in effect is a document on how individual human rights have been trampled upon by the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia, Anderson's ethical consciousness is awakened:

- HOLLAR : They would not search you.
- ANDERSON : That's not the point. I'm sorry . . . I mean it would be bad manners, wouldn't it?
- HOLLAR : Bad manners?
- ANDERSON : I know it sounds rather lame. But ethics and manners are interestingly related. The history of human calumny is largely a series of breaches of good manners. . . . (*Pause.*) Perhaps if I said correct behavior, it wouldn't sound so ridiculous. . . . (*Professional Foul 54*)

Anderson's refusal to help Hollar is not to be attributed to the slightest indifference or callousness with respect to the plight of the oppressed people of Czechoslovakia; it rather proceeds from a genuine sense of allegiance to the idea of the State as a morally sanctioned authority formed through a social contract freely entered into by the individuals. Anyhow he agrees to carry the thesis to Hollar's apartment the next day on his way to the Football match, because Hollar is genuinely apprehensive that he would be intercepted with the manuscript, by the police on his way home. The next day, at the conference, perhaps mentally disturbed by the plight of his former student who is forced to work as a toilet cleaner in Czechoslovakia, Anderson is almost involuntarily moved to a spontaneous denunciation of the use, rather misuse, of language to obfuscate truth.

- ANDERSON : Ah . . . I would only like to offer Professor Stone the observation that language is not the only level of human communication, and perhaps not the most important level. Whereof we cannot speak thereof we are by no means silent. . . . The likelihood is that language develops in an *ad hoc* way, so there is no reason to expect its development to be logical. . . . (*A thought strikes him.*) The importance of language is overrated. It allows me and Professor Stone to show off a bit, and it is very useful for communicating detail – but the important truths are

simple and monolithic. The essentials of a given situation speak for themselves, and language is as capable of obscuring the truth as of revealing it. Thank you. (*Professional Foul* 63)

Anderson has a taste of the tyranny of the State when he takes Hollar's thesis to his apartment on his way to the Stadium. An unsettling experience of the highhandedness and apathy of the police who detain him while they are searching the premises of the Hollars, convinces him that what Hollar had told him the previous day was true. And, what remains of his confidence in the legitimacy of the State is violently shattered when he learns from the Police that Hollar has been arrested under false charges of "meeting foreigners to buy currency" (*Professional Foul* 71) and, by the time the search party produces a bundle of dollars which they claim to have unearthed from the apartment, Anderson becomes enlightened enough to perceive the deception involved in the falsely corroborated evidence. The abyss of ethical despair into which Anderson falls is deepened when he sees Hollar's, ten year old son Sacha, who runs into the room to console his mother: (ANDERSON, *out of his depth and afraid, decides abruptly to leave and does so. MAN 3 isn't sure whether to let him go but MAN 6 nods at him and ANDERSON leaves*) (*Professional Foul* 73) The fear does not last long, and Anderson who has earlier been invoking his superior status as an influential academic with high connections realizes that ultimately every human being is alone in his fight and individual courage and conviction is what matters. As he gets back to the Hotel, he has decided on two things: to utilize the podium of the Conference to expose the brutality of the State against its own people, and to fulfil his moral obligation to smuggle Hollar's thesis out of the country. He borrows the typewriter of a journalist to write his paper anew, and delivers a lecture the next day on the topic of "the conflict between the rights of the individuals and the rights of the community." (*Professional Foul* 71), ironically citing the benign provisions in the Czech Constitution to highlight the violation of these principles by the State, consciously exposing himself to the risk of inviting the scrutiny of the authorities. As for taking Hollar's thesis out, he plays the tactics of committing a professional foul where one deliberately engages in falsehood to save a situation. He hides the document in the luggage of his colleague Mcendrick, who is in Czechoslovakia for the same conference.

Stoppard's plays, every one of them, ruminate and sometimes even throw light on the truth about the truths that humanity has been driven to believe with respect to a wide array of phenomena – Nature, the human mind, art, criticism, journalism, Ethics, the State Stoppard's plays could rightfully be said to belong to the epoch of postmodernity in terms of philosophical stance, physical ambience and aesthetic form. In consonance with Jean Francois Lyotard's idea of postmodernism, they embody the politically poignant aspect of suspicion of the grand narratives of Enlightenment modernity, as well as the aesthetically pertinent task of 'presenting the unrepresentable' (81) in literature. Combining these two aspects, Stoppard's plays constitute a theatre that implodes the social, philosophical, political and scientific discourses of modernity, and at the same time embark on a new, anti-foundationalist aesthetic mode of 'presentation. 'The events and characters in Stoppard's plays warn us against "the fatal attractiveness of rational rigidities" and "urge us to keep jinking, on the move, sceptical and free" (Hunter 17). Jim Hunter even remarks that, "irrationality, in Stoppard, becomes heroic: even becomes the best hope for the survival of reason" (17). Stoppard's plays undoubtedly illustrate the postmodern view that in a world where the old certainties and points of legitimation have disintegrated under the weight of

self-contradictions, such absolute entities of the past as reason, judgement, value and even reality could be salvaged by rendering them as functional only in local, contingent and immanent conditions. And as part of postmodern literature, they subvert, through irony and parody, modernity's search for an abiding truth and a language that can encompass that truth.

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Truth – A Mirage: Elucidating the Role of Media in Society taking Reflections from David Fincher's *Gone Girl*

Abstract

*Media has become the fourth estate and it has brought out a transformation of Sociability creating a 'hyper social society.' It has become the backbone of the Network Society. Media gives 'new stories' and different products instead of information and neutral facts. The news we receive from the Media is far away from the real Truth. Earlier Media lived out of society but now society is living out of Media. Media is no longer innocent – it has become the part of the Capitalist Society where an individual is 'interpellated.' Every pinch of news, be it public or personal creates a sensation for a short time. It no longer focusses on uncovering the truth before the audience. This paper reflects on the role of Media in society – its pros and cons – how it deconstructs the Truth or the reality; taking reflections from David Fincher's movie *Gone Girl*. In *Gone Girl*, Media too takes the place of a major character like the hero and heroine – Amy and Nick and it is through the media as a tool that the Writer has brought out the happenings to the limelight. Yet we can find that what Media has portrayed as Truth is actually a well-knit story by the femme fatale character type heroine - Amy. It stresses on how Media has manipulated the Truth and presented it according to the pulse of the audience. This paper studies how married life - a personal domain turns out to be a news creating sensation - a public domain with the intervention of Media. It delineates how Media perceives Gender; how truth gets manipulated according to Gender and Identity they maintained.*

Keywords: Media, *Gone Girl*, Truth, Post Truth, Interpellation, Sensationalism, Simulacra and Simulacrum, Corporatization of Consciousness, Liquid Modernity

The character-type Femme Fatale is represented in the film *Gone Girl*, an American psychological thriller film directed by David Fincher, through the character Amy Elliot Dunne. The film is an adaptation of Gillian Flynn's novel of the same name. The film stars Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike. It also throws light on how the Popular Culture as seen in entertainments like movies, music, TV games, sports, news etc. influence an individual's attitude towards certain topics and situations through the media sensationalism in Amy's life. Popular culture refers to how culture is consumed while Mass Culture refers to how culture is produced. It tends to reproduce the liberal values of individualism and to foster the view of a citizen. This mass culture had brought out a new face to woman who drifted from the patriarchal norms and called her 'Femme Fatale'.

The protagonist, Amy Dunne, is a new kind of Femme Fatale, a reaction to a new kind of patriarchy. Modern patriarchy is evasive, shifty, manipulative, and it requires a different sort of resistance. The classic Femme Fatale engaged men on the terms that they had set for her, adopting the persona they demanded of her. But Amy Dunne opts out of this game altogether. As cold-blooded as any of her predecessors but far less compromising, Fincher's provocative anti-heroine refuses to adhere to male expectations. She is the most evolved manifestation of

the Femme Fatale character type.

One the day of his fifth wedding anniversary, Nick Dunne returns home to find that his wife Amy is missing. Her disappearance receives heavy press coverage, as Amy was the inspiration for her parents' popular *Amazing Amy* children's books. Detective Rhonda Boney does a walkthrough of their house and finds poorly concealed evidence of a struggle. The police conducts a forensic analysis and uncover the remnants of cleaned blood stains, leading to the conclusion that Amy was murdered. Suspicions arise that Nick is responsible, and his awkward behavior is interpreted by the media as characteristic of a sociopath.

Flashbacks reveal that Nick and Amy's marriage had disintegrated; both lost their jobs in the recession and moved from New York City to Nick's hometown of North Carthage, Missouri. Nick has become lazy, distant, uninterested and unfaithful. The lead detective on the case, Rhonda Boney, unearths evidence of financial troubles and domestic disputes, and a witness states that Amy wanted to purchase a gun. She also finds a medical report indicating that Amy is pregnant, of which Nick denies knowledge.

Amy is revealed to be alive and well, having changed her appearance and gone into hiding in a distant campground. She despises Nick for the erosion of their marital bliss, her isolation after they moved to be closer to Nick's family, and his infidelity. Amy plans the framing in great detail: she befriends a pregnant neighbor to steal her urine for the pregnancy test, drains her own blood to leave trace evidence of murder and fabricates a diary describing her fear of Nick. By using the clues in a treasure hunt game she and Nick play on their anniversary, she ensures he visits places where she has planted the corroborating evidence of Nick's guilt for the police to discover. She anticipates Nick will be convicted and executed for her murder, and contemplates committing suicide after his conviction. Nick hires Tanner Bolt, a lawyer who specializes in defending men accused of killing their wives. Nick meets Amy's ex-boyfriend Tommy O'Hara, who claims Amy framed him for rape. He also approaches another ex-boyfriend, the wealthy Desi Collings against whom Amy previously filed a restraining order but Desi refuses to share any details. When Amy's neighbors at the campground rob her of her remaining money, she calls Desi and convinces him that she ran away from Nick because she feared for her life. He agrees to hide her in his lake house, which is equipped with surveillance cameras.

Nick convinces his sister, Margo, of his innocence. After Nick's mistress, his student, reveals their affair at a press conference, Nick appears on a talk show to profess his innocence and apologize for his failures as a husband in the hope of luring Amy. His performance rekindles Amy's feelings for him, even as Boney arrests him for Amy's murder. Amy inflicts injuries on herself and uses Desi's surveillance cameras to her advantage, making it appear that Desi kidnapped and abused her. She seduces Desi and kills him during sex by slitting his throat, and then returns home covered in blood, naming Desi as her captor and rapist and clearing Nick of suspicion. When Boney questions Amy about the holes in her story, she sharply responds that Nick would have ended up on Missouri's death row and she would have remained Desi's victim because of Boney's incompetence. The FBI sides with Amy, forcing Boney to back down.

Amy tells Nick the truth, saying that the man she watched pleading for her return on TV is the man she wants him to become again. Nick shares this with Boney, Bolt, and Margo, but they have no way to prove Amy's guilt. Nick intends to leave Amy and expose her lies, but Amy reveals she is pregnant, having artificially inseminated herself with Nick's sperm stored

at a fertility clinic. Nick doubts the child is his and says he will undertake a paternity test. Nick reacts violently to Amy's insistence that they remain married, but feels responsible for the child. Despite Margo's objections, he reluctantly decides to stay with Amy. The 'happy' couple announces on television that they are expecting a baby. The film concludes with a similar shot as the opening, Nick stroking Amy's hair again, wondering what she's thinking.

A homage to its dark roots, *Gone Girl* is cynical and atmospheric, a jumble of infidelities, conflicting narratives, and abrupt police interrogations. With *Gone Girl* we see the appearance not just of the crime thriller genre, but also the re-emergence of a genre that sometimes gets forgotten, or at least not revived very often- the *Femme Fatale* genre. A *Femme Fatale* is an attractive and seductive woman, especially one who will ultimately bring disaster to a man who becomes involved with her. The *Femme Fatale* represents the most direct attack on traditional womanhood and the nuclear family. She refuses to play the role of devoted wife and loving mother that mainstream society prescribes for women. She finds marriage to be confining, loveless, sexless, and dull, and she uses all of her cunning and sexual attractiveness to gain her independence. *Femme Fatale* stock character and plot is used to portray the threat of female power. A society, a super culture, which is usually steered by male sentiments and feelings, must feel threatened by the position of women.

With a mastering of gender performances Amy Dunne perfects how to play on every expectation people put on her. It is very telling that Flynn includes descriptions in *Gone Girl* from Amy's perspective of different types of gender roles, such as the 'cool girl' who panders to her boyfriend's every wish in order not to challenge his masculinity. This is something at the forefront of Amy's mind, a conscious decision. It could be argued that it is at the forefront of most women's minds. *Gone Girl* is unique in its narrative in that it frames its main character Nick Dunne as the potential aggressor, which functions as a commentary of how society immediately suspects a husband of wrongdoing in a scenario that may involve domestic violence. *Gone Girl's* narrative having Amy missing, juxtaposed with excerpts of her diary being revealed to the audience represent Amy as the beacon of innocence that has been trapped by her domineering, aggressive husband.

It is the revelation that Amy is not only alive, but the diary was a faked account of events, that portrays the newest evolution of the *Femme Fatale*. The *Femme Fatale* is now sophisticated, highly intelligent, conniving, and no longer needs to rely on her sexuality to achieve her goals. Sex is only utilized by Amy if there is a conscious guarantee for her to use it to her advantage. Sex is no longer a currency; it is an actual tool that can be used against a male victim, so much so that his own appendage could potentially be his undoing. For Amy, she uses her gender to her advantage. Rather than exhibit characteristics of the masculine, she excels at manipulating those around her with her femininity. Ironically enough, Amy's motivations are gender-related: she is enacting revenge for her husband's affair and diminishing his chances of leaving her for another woman. Rather than play the role of the deceived spouse, Amy decides to destroy her husband's life instead by framing him for her murder. This is reasoning outside of financial dependency or seeking to attain a prospect of professionalism. Amy's motivations in *Gone Girl* are a complete rejection of the male-dominated environment. Her goal is to castrate her husband, to which, she succeeds.

Another interesting aspect of this film's twist on the *Femme Fatale* genre is that it offers an image of the ideal wife in the contrast between Amy's *Femme Fatale* role and the role of Margo, who is Nick's twin sister. Margo's defining characteristic is her loyalty to her brother,

whose side, she says, “she was on before they were even born”. In addition to her loyalty, Margo also acts as her brother's conscience, chiding him for his infidelity and giving him advice and guidance every step of the way. She suffers from the investigation and the media circus around Nick, and even is taken into custody at one point. But she never accuses her brother and loves him unconditionally. In all of these respects, Margo is the embodiment of a 'good wife', and demonstrates the virtues that society typically deems the ideal wife should display in a marriage. Whereas marriage vows mean nothing in the film, the bond between siblings imbues Margo with obligations and duties to her brother. The film thus offers the female audience a choice of which type of role they can fulfill in their relationships with men, specifically in the light of the failed marriage between Amy and Nick.

Margo is thus the 'real' wife in the film. This is hinted at when one news anchor accuses the twins of incest, which cleverly indicates that their relationship is more than a simple brother and sister relationship. The flaw of the media is in assuming that this special relationship is about sex and not about virtuous love. The media sexualizes things for its own gain, just as Amy sexualizes all of her relationships for her own gain. And here the media has sexualized Margo and Nick's faithful relationship. *Gone Girl* gives us a window into an American culture investigating third wave feminism through the Femme Fatale genre.

By the conclusion of *Gone Girl*, Amy has exonerated Nick from the crime she had planned to destroy him with, but now is holding him figuratively hostage in the home they share. She expects him to act complacent and behave like the husband she expects him to be, thereby completely stripping him of his masculinity and demanding him to be submissive to her. Flynn uses Nick and Amy's relationship to present an iconoclastic depiction of a modern marriage. The novel begins from Nick's perspective, and as the narrative point of view shifts between Nick's first-person narration and Amy's first-person diary, it is up to the reader to distinguish the lies that Nick and Amy tell about their relationship from the truth. Flynn's work functions on a structural level as a mystery novel; its plot features an unsolved crime and is suspense-driven.

Gone Girl also represents a satirical point of view on the media's baseness and the fickleness of the crowd, as Nick is hounded by sanctimonious female TV hosts and thrill-seeking women who insist on taking pictures with him. Both the upper and lower classes are nastily caricatured, when Amy hides out in a trailer park she gets robbed by a pair of tattooed lowlifes. Meanwhile her parents and her wealthy ex-boyfriend Desi are depicted as such pretentious fakes that they can have no real feelings, and deserve whatever they get. The only sympathetic characters are Nick's sister Margo, Detective Boney, and Nick's defense lawyer Tanner Bolt. The two women are down-to-earth truth-tellers, while the lawyer's spin-doctor fluency is grounded in his ability to see through the whole game.

In the end *Gone Girl* gives a cynical vision of society. Everyone is seen to be pretending and falling for their own and others' performances. Amy's character is less complex or ambiguous than sketchy and incoherent. She is both a smart, triumphant anti-heroine and a psychopath completely lacking either empathy or self-knowledge. Nick who is initially determined to get a divorce and see Amy punished, is blackmailed into staying and eventually sucked back into the hypocritical charade that has become second nature. The reunited couple gives a TV interview in which Nick matches Amy's lie of their happy marriage, “We're partners in crime.” They now aspire to the ultimate form of noir matrimony, the sick marriage, in which two people who know the worst are bound together by a toxic

bond of guilt, bitterness and dependence.

Nick and Amy is just a 21st century couple who have mastered the art of playing to the media, whose relationship is not a private battle but a public performance. It seems more like shallow cynicism than anguished knowledge when Nick tells Amy that all they did was hate one another, and she retorts, “That's marriage.” The early scenes in the film adaptation of *Gone Girl* purposefully recall tropes from clichéd “chick flick” romantic comedies to provide a sarcastic commentary on the ways in which 21st century mainstream American culture still insists on marriage as the primary indicator of success for a heterosexual female, and to explore the repercussions of post-feminist beliefs that obtusely equate marriage with personal validation and also note Hollywood's culpability in sustaining such ideals. Amy Elliot Dunne's character rebels against the paradigm wherein a wife, succumbing to the pressure to adhere to social norms and get married, subordinates her own interests in order to indulge a male fantasy of the easygoing, unfailingly compatible woman. Additionally, to critique this construct of contemporary marriage and the deeply problematic expectations it creates, the film invokes another popular film genre: film noir. However, through the incorporation of a visual aesthetic that is sympathetic to Amy's suffering, the ambiguity that derives from Amy's dual role as both the femme fatale and the protagonist, and the re-envisioning of traditional iconography associated with the femme fatale archetype, *Gone Girl* subverts the conventions of classic noir.

Gone Girl, with its false rape accusations and domestic abuse-inventing protagonist, Amy, represents what can be seen as terrible gender politics. It is an uncomfortable film that boldly examines the darker side of love and marriage and how the media shapes perception. Told from the perspectives of both Amy, which is often through her diary and Nick, *Gone Girl* cracks wide open and shines a spotlight on the often gendered expectations within a patriarchal marriage. Society pressures women to be flawless. They are expected to waver in an aura of perfection.

Female sexual objectification by a male involves a woman being viewed primarily as an object of male sexual desire, rather than as a whole person. Although opinions differ as to which situations are objectionable, some feminists see objectification of women taking place in the sexually oriented depictions of women in advertising and media, women being portrayed as weak or submissive through pornography, images in more mainstream media such as advertising and art, stripping and prostitution.

Often the mass media is accused of advertising and promoting the objectification of women to help promote goods and services. The objection to the objectification of women is not a recent phenomenon. Primarily, objectification theory describes how women and girls are influenced as a result of expected societal roles. Not all women are influenced equally, due to the anatomical, hormonal, and genetic differences of the female body; however, women's bodies are often objectified and evaluated more frequently. Self-objectification in girls tends to stem from two main causes: the internalization of traditional beauty standards as translated through media as well as any instances of sexual objectification that they might encounter in their daily lives. It is not uncommon for women to translate their anxieties over their constant sense of objectification into obsessive self-surveillance.

In *Gone Girl*, media plays an important role where Nick Dunne though innocent, falls victim to the prejudiced concepts of people around him, which in a way are created by media itself. He is mercilessly presented in a bad light, until they get to know the truth. He becomes

a prey to the vigorous television interviewers and neighbors. Nick Dunne crumbles within the oppressive means adopted by those around him, where he is defamed and attacked in every way possible. Amy is undoubtedly a sufferer since childhood, where she was forced to grab the ideal image imposed on her by her parents through the book, “*Amazing Amy*”. But as she grows up, she turns to be the villain, who cunningly brings destruction to those she hates.

The emphasis on matrimony is a particular cultural current that is relevant to *Gone Girl*, which criticizes the “primacy of romantic attachments” and reduces the traditional notion of an ideal, loving marriage to an act of mere performance. The viewer is given access to the early stages of Nick and Amy's relationship through flashbacks in Amy's diary, and while the idyllic account of their courtship is certainly made more intriguing by Amy's unreliability as a narrator, it nevertheless offers a purposeful meta-cinematic invocation of the trademark “chick-flick” tropes that inform the cultural values of modern female. The consumers of Media have merely become the Couches potatoes. We no longer tend to think twice regarding the authenticity of a piece of news. We equate news in the Media to Truth. This paper focused to prove that Media turned out to be a 'self-directed mass communication' which distorts Truth transforming it to the Post Truth.

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Resisting Truth by Unlearning the Told: A Biopolitical Perspective on Susan Abulhawa's Novel, *The Blue between Sky and Water*

Abstract

*Wars and terrorist attacks have brought more visibility to the Middle Eastern curiosity in the United States, and subsequently Middle Eastern literature has also gained popularity. This attention also coincides with an augment in the production of literary texts by Arab Americans. However, it is pertinent to look back and track down the history of Arab-American writers as it provides the vital information to help us value not only their trajectory, but also to study that their literary production is interwoven with the political events affecting the Arab community living in the United States. Political organizations and resistance movements struggle hard to get their messages heard. Human rights-, gender- and environmental- activists, among others, try to establish certain discourses in order to work towards public awareness of their causes. Often their resistance is enacted in the form of negotiating norms or establishing new truths. In the Middle Eastern exploration of truth with the Palestinian society's struggle for resistance by unveiling the told to consider unlearn and relearn. Palestinian problem has occurred many decades ago and still, there is paucity in the literary works that shed light on this issue in English language. The literary Palestinian voice was absent from the literary scene and could not reach the world, thus the story of Palestine was not heard. Instead, the story has been told by the others. Susan Abulhawa, a Palestinian-American writer, was born to Palestinian refugees of the 1967 war when Israel captured what remained of Palestine, including Jerusalem where her family had lived for centuries. She and her family went through the colonial experience and witnessed the tribulation and distress of Palestinians in their homeland or as refugees. There are many dimensions, social, economic, political and cultural for this occupation. The creation of Israel converted a settled, mostly agricultural society into a nation of refugees, exiles, second-class citizens and communities under military occupations. In her second novel, *The Blue between Sky and Water* connects with a family saga, though this time the setting of the plot in Nusseirat refugee camp in Gaza. The novel's action is principally carried by strong women, first and foremost the matriarch Nazmiyya, a representative of the first generation. There is also her daughter Alwan, who is also Khaled's mother, and her niece Nur, who has grown up in America. On 'war on terrorism,' Judith Butler and Lila Abu-Lughod's arguments underscore the responsibility gender theorists hold for engaging with the distribution of power that allows this to persist. This responsibility extends begins with the task of investigating and, where appropriate, challenging claims that women can be liberated by a foreign government's invasion of their country. Whether the conduct of this conflict consists a point at which a truly new politics, heeding Agamben's claim that "only a politics that will have learned to take the fundamental biopolitical fracture of the West into account will be able to stop this oscillation and to put an end to the civil war that divides the people and the cities of the earth," or Butler's lamentation of the lost opportunity to introduce a nonviolent ethics American politics based in the awareness of its own*

vulnerability remains to be seen. In Foucault's argumentation, this form of power is displayed with the concept of 'sovereign power'; that is, the (often repressive) legal sovereign power, which exists side-by-side with bio-power. (Foucault, 1994: 83–85;) The Blue between Sky and Water a story of Gaza struggling to move into the future, with its imagination haunted but its vitality undiminished. At any rate, resistance exists in relation to power (or violence) and the type of power often affects the type of resistance employed as well as the effectiveness of various resistance practices: violent or nonviolent, open or hidden, organised or individual, conscious or unconscious, et cetera. Still, as indicated above, power and resistance should not be seen as binary.

Keywords: Bio-power and bio-politics, Palestine, female consciousness, onus of truth.

The blue between Sky and Water is a cadence which traverses perennially through four generations of a Palestinian family from the village of Beit Daras. The narrative starts with the mother of three who befriends a Djinn Sulayman that always stays by her side or at least when his presence is necessitated. Mariam, her youngest daughter with mismatched eyes, sits by the river and talks to an imaginary friend Khaled who teaches her how to write and she is blessed with the quality to divine the unseen by seeing people's shine. Nazmiyeh, the eldest among her three children, is bodacious and bold who has the moxie to speak of things Allah forbids and her quips and lewd remarks can make anybody laugh and, at the same time, can leave them red-faced. The sustenance of the family depends on the only son of Hajje Um Mamdouh, who ekes a living working as an apprentice at a beekeeper's. Though they were unaware of the looming tumultuous storm which will shatter their lives forever, the day when villagers come to Hajje Um Mamdouh to ask Sulayman for help to discern the intention of Jewish settlers who, for a long time, have resided along with them the djinn admonishes them against the evil approaching but gives them a glimmering hope that one day their village Beit Daras shall rise from the ashes. The day which would dissipate their jovial lives finally arrives and drags those who survive the genocide committed by Israeli forces including Nazmiyeh and Mamdouh with their spouses to refugee camps in Gaza. Eventually, Mamdouh parts from his sister after he leaves the camp and set out for Kuwait against her wish and his fate finally takes him and his family to America. Although Mariam and her mother die but the djinn, Sulayman, and Mariam's partner of her imaginary realm, Khaled, never leaves the family and stays with them for generations to come. Nazmiyeh and her brother, Mamdouh, now have grandchildren including Nur, Khaled and RhetShel among them. Nur is Mamdouh's granddaughter and after he dies she gets entangled with her own quandaries at a very tender age. She is sexually abused by her stepdad, ignored by her Spanish mom and once she is extricated by Nzinga, an African lady, out of these unimaginable sufferings she is made to change her foster home time and again. Meanwhile, in Palestine, Nazmiyeh's grandchildren, Khaled and RhetShel, are living an impenetrable life in a world where there is not much left to lose. They seek happiness out of anything pleasurable they find from rummaging whatever little is left in Gaza. The cadence of sorrow and bliss continues and her fate finally brings Nur home where she spends rest of her life with Nazmiyeh, her daughter Alwan, and her cousin Khaled, RhetShel.

Set between Palestine and the United States, this is a novel that fiercely entwines political and family history. It is a poignant journeying of family and pedigree and how they delineate who we are, not only in Palestinian traditions and history, but also on a universal level. *The Blue Between Sky and Water* opens with a meditation from the yet-to-be-born Khaled, the

novel's narrator and a member of the fourth generation of a resilient Palestinian family. Khaled introduces readers to his great grandmother Um Mamdouh, a single mother to siblings Mamdouh, Nazmiyeh, and Mariam. Um Mamdouh was considered crazy by the BeitDaras farming village until the community realized that she could communicate with the djinn—specifically a spirit named Sulayman. It is Sulayman who warns the community of the impending Israeli invasion and saves Mamdouh and Nazmiyeh's husband as the men are fleeing to Gaza. Although Nazmiyeh had escaped earlier with the rest of the women, she has the guts to traverse the treacherous path back to the village to rescue her younger sister Mariam, who had concealed herself in the house's water well. Before they can run off, Israeli soldiers find the two sisters, shooting eight-year-old Mariam and gang-raping Nazmiyeh, leaving her for dead. Nazmiyeh, who is emotionally and physically broken, only musters the vigor to endure because Mariam's spirit promises her that they will be together forever and that Nazmiyeh will have a daughter, whom she must name Alwan. In the years that follow, the brash and headstrong Nazmiyeh becomes a passionate and wise matriarch. She continues to seek out Mariam's guidance in challenging times: when she gives birth to her first child—a son with gray eyes that remind her of one of her rapists; when her only surviving sibling moves to Egypt, Kuwait, and then America; when she gives birth to son after son but no daughter; when her first born, Mazen, is captured and imprisoned by Israeli forces because of his role in the resistance. And yet, there are also joyous times as the family creates its home within the refugee camp—when women seek Nazmiyeh's advice on matters of passion and sex; when Nazmiyeh finally gives birth to Alwan after eleven sons; when she holds jomaaghada each week, immersed in the laughter, tears, and fights of her many sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. Woven within the chapters about Nazmiyeh's growing family is the heartbreaking story of Nur, the granddaughter of Nazmiyeh's brother Mahmoud. After the death of both his wife and only son, Mahmoud spends years fighting his daughter-in-law until he wins sole custody of Nur. Mahmoud, whom Nur affectionately calls her “jiddo,” is her best friend. However, before the two are able to rejoin the family in Gaza, Mahmoud passes away, and five-year-old Nur is sent to live with her mom and her boyfriend, who inherit—and appropriate—Nur's trust. Nur endures several years of verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse before she is rescued by her Tio Santiago and caseworker Nzinga. Despite her emotional hardening and isolation as she moves from foster home to foster home, Nur continues to excel academically, becoming a psychotherapist who helps teenagers confront childhood trauma. It is this specialty that finally brings Nur to Gaza in order to help Alwan's ten-year-old son Khaled—the story's narrator—who is suffering from Locked-In Syndrome, unable to move or communicate. Though Nazmiyeh and Alwan don't initially recognize Nur, she quickly becomes a part of their tight-knit circle through her work with Khaled and his doting young sister Rhet-Shel before the epiphany finally occurs.

Gaza, a place where people had to participate in game of life and death on a daily basis would never in the conscious life of many people. Everyone would only criticize the author for unrealistically exaggerating the miseries of the characters in her novel. What the Palestinians go through on a daily basis would only feel like fictional. The historical events described in the texts are factually correct. The world never heeds the brutalization of Palestinians persisting unabatedly with the moral and financial support of the world's most powerful nation. It is in this status quo state, authors like Abulhawa grab the pen to tell the stories to the world drawing attention to their miseries. The story begins in Beit Daras, a village in the pre-1948 Palestine, when the people and the Baraka family are forced to flee

from their village by the Zionist militia.

And these people sought refuge in Gaza and eventually scatter to Middle East and America with the luggage of their stories of misfortune to different continents. The women characters in the novel have gone through trail and tribulations of post-Naqba Palestine life in Gaza. The character that has been raised in the foster care in U.S shares her tale of misfortune which scarred her psyche. Nurs's redemption happens only when she returns to her roots to be with her own people and to be a part of their daily struggle for justice and liberty. The characters take everyone on a virtual tour through the present and past of Palestinians who lost their homeland to a bizarre political arrangement made by none other than the UN. Khaled, the comatose boy and grandson of Nazmiyeh another character in the novel is the invisible narrator whose voice of insightful sarcasm keeps popping up iterate.

The en route, Susan has taken are wide in many levels and there are no continuous shifts of first person to third person narrative to elaborate the complex stories of an uprooted family from the land of their ancestors.

It evokes into a heart-wrenching narrative which instantly is blithesome and it makes you squint at the little pleasures on the other side through the thick fog of ordeals, sorrows, and misery which Zionists have brought to the Palestinians ever since the day of Nakba. It narrates the story of four generations of a Palestinian family who have been struck with the plight that the occupation carried with it. It left them bereaved as the members of their family parted, sometimes shot dead by the Israeli forces and sometimes taken away as prisoners to be freed only if God punishes the occupiers for their egregious atrocities or brings an end to the occupation. It would be an injustice not to mention the character at the heart of this novel, Khaled, who is named after Mariam's imaginary friend and is incapacitated. His blinking at the request of his little sister Rhet Shel as an approval or disapproval for her chores and fancies will melt your heart. The grandmother Nazmiyeh is the most prominent character as she is the one who binds the family together at Morasses and she permeates the whole narrative with the shades of matriarchy which at times rescues her daughter and grandchildren from the surreal monotony of the occupation and their limited life with recurring chores. This novel depicts the life under a siege where whatever little amenities are available are brought from Egypt through tunnels and as the story proceeds it becomes palpable that if you are diagnosed with some diseases it's better to die with it rather than staying optimistic with forlorn hope of getting an opportunity for treatment outside Gaza. No matter if their life is nothing but a ramshackle despair, they live it with sheer determination to rejoice for every minuscule surprise Allah unfolds before them. Nur's confluence with her Palestinian family reaffirms the never-ending affection of Palestinians for their homeland regardless of the place where they live and whatever culture they have ingrained in themselves. Being an American graduate she had better prospects in outside world but her affection for her roots deeply entrenched in Palestine convinced her to stay with her family in Gaza and help the Palestinians in need. Hers is a character which at times is vulnerable but her win over all the odds is a surefire especially when Nzinga and Nazmiyeh are by her side. The novel is flushed with so many prominent characters that describing each of them would be painstakingly onerous but it is extremely necessary to iterate that they all have a unique story to tell as they all bear the scars of occupation and have lived with a myriad of predicaments throughout their life.

With these magical realist techniques, in the tradition of Toni Morrison and many

postcolonial novelists, Abulhawa seeks to convey the extremity of what her characters experience at the moment of dispossession: gang rape, burning homes, the killing of siblings. When the Israeli soldiers shoot Um Mamdouh, who is carrying her wounded son en route to Gaza, she incinerates them with a glance: “Their bones turned to froth, their hearts to ice, and their faces ashened before they burst into flames, writhed, and burned.” While the use of fantasy elements is initially promising, a means of illuminating the villagers' imaginative world, Abulhawa's writing lacks the eloquence and nuance needed to carry it off. In her hands, the djinn and the auras serve only to create an exoticised picture of Palestinian life during that fatal moment of history, while the overwrought prose distances the reader from her characters' suffering. It is never just night in these pages; instead there is “a canopy of stars”. In one scene that should be taut with suspense and contained rage, Abulhawa resorts to bellowing capitals. After Israeli forces lay siege to their village, what is left of the Baraka family struggles to rebuild a life in Gaza. The surviving daughter, Nazmiyeh, is haunted by memories of her younger sister; she bears child after child in hopes of a daughter to resurrect the dead girl's spirit, while her husband and sons go fishing to earn a living. Like so many Palestinian families, the Barakas are eventually scattered across the world, and the novel weaves in the story of Nur, the granddaughter of Nazmiyeh's brother, who is being raised in the US by foster carers. Bar one soldier who gives a little girl a stick of gum at a checkpoint, the Israelis who briefly pass through the story are caricatures of implacable evil. While it is easy to dehumanise the aggressor in a historical episode as stark as the nakba, it is striking that Abulhawa never allows her characters to wonder what is driving the Israelis to brutalise them. More than anything else in the book, this feels like a missed opportunity. Compare Elias Khoury's (far superior) *Gate of the Sun* (2005), in which one Palestinian character unforgettably asks another, “in the faces of those people [Israeli settlers] being driven to slaughter, didn't you see something resembling your own?” The novel picks up pace in its later, more realist sections, where Nur, now a psychotherapist in North Carolina, falls in love with a Palestinian doctor and follows him back to Gaza, rather implausibly landing in the lap of the family she has long been estranged from. Abulhawa's strengths come to the fore here as Nur faces the task of reviving her semi-comatose cousin Khaled from his “place of blue”.

At any rate, resistance exists in relation to power (or violence) and the type of power often affects the type of resistance employed as well as the effectiveness of various resistance practices: violent or nonviolent, open or hidden, organized or individual, conscious or unconscious, et cetera. Still, as indicated above, power and resistance should not be seen as binary but political rationality which takes the administration of life and populations as its subject: 'to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order'. Bio power thus names the way in which bio politics is put to work in society, and involves what Foucault describes as 'a very profound transformation of [the] mechanisms of power' of the Western classic age.

The internal conflicts in the people of Palestine that threaten their and intertwines in the cultural and social hegemony demands a paradigm shift by constituting a new *bio* power. A profound transformation of [the] mechanisms of power' insofar as it differs from what Foucault associates with 'juridico-discursive' conceptualisations of power as repressive and negative: a power whose 'effects take the form of limit and lack'. Indeed, Foucault conducts a lengthy critique of this repressive functioning of power (In the current state of war) or of the *biopolitics of fear* modern class wars of liberation are now taking place. Consequently new occurrences of the production of subjectivities are arising with them, wherein it is possible to

wonder about resistance schemes and about the role that people play therein as they legitimate the use of violence. In this case, the legitimation process lies not in the sovereignty of the people but rather “in the biopolitical productivity of the multitude—where humanity becomes “the new biopolitical body” ie the Palestinian people. The Israeli occupation of Palestine is untenable. If the two-state solution really is dead, Israel faces a stark choice. It can absorb the West Bank and rule the Palestinians but deprive them of civil rights, thus becoming a proper apartheid regime. Or, it can remain a democracy and enfranchise the Palestinians, who will eventually vote the Jewish state out of existence in favour of a one-state solution. It has been known for a long time that the key to a safer, more peaceful Middle East lies in resolving the conflict. The international community, especially the United States, has been pouring its ample resources and energy into bringing Israel and Palestine together. This book is result of the resistance with the power excruciating in the life of Palestinians as the Arabic proverb says, the dogs bark and the caravan moves on. Once again, history has conspired against the Palestinians. The collapse of Syria and Iraq, and the rise of Isis, has all but removed the prospect of any meaningful pressure on Israel. President Obama has given up on reconciling the two sides. In a region collapsing into terror and chaos, the Jewish state now presents itself as a bastion of western values and stability. As Lenin once said, “The worse, the better” – but not for the Palestinians.

It also brings to light a struggle against *subjection* of the people in their homeland as refugees but does not necessarily exclude other sources of *resistance* such as domination and exploitation. This is because, as Foucault states, the mechanisms of subjection cannot be studied outside of their relationship to the others mechanisms, due to the complex relationships that keep them perpetually interconnected. Power is different from domination, then there is freedom—and, as such, resistance or counter-power. In any case, new forms of transnational solidarity and resistance have emerged recently due to the domination and exploitation that has derived from the globalization of capitalism. This kind of an escaping reading can be suggested from Susan picturing once again the western countries influence in the mainstream novels to decree against a nation's turbulence over years by their representation to create a new world of the whether this home or no home especially the population born and die in the refugee camps.

On 'war on terrorism,' Judith Butler and Lila Abu-Lughod's arguments underscore the responsibility gender theorists hold for engaging with the distribution of power that allows this to persist. This responsibility extends begins with the task of investigating and, where appropriate, challenging claims that women can be liberated by a foreign government's invasion of their country. Whether the conduct of this conflict consists a point at which a truly new politics, heeding Agamben's claim that “only a politics that will have learned to take the fundamental bio political fracture of the West into account will be able to stop this oscillation and to put an end to the civil war that divides the people and the cities of the earth,” or Butler's lamentation of the lost opportunity to introduce a nonviolent ethics American politics based in the awareness of its own vulnerability remains to be seen. In Foucault's argumentation, this form of power is displayed with the concept of 'sovereign power'; that is, the (often repressive) legal sovereign power, which exists side-by-side with bio-power.the bio political regulation of life regulate the resistance (Foucault, 1994: 83–85 ;) *The Blue between Sky and Water* a story of Gaza struggling to move into the future, with its imagination haunted but its vitality undiminished. In short where there is Power there is resistance.

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Exploring Reality: The Concept of Truth in *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*

Introduction

Truth is most often used to mean being in accord with fact or reality. The concept of truth is discussed and debated in several contexts, including philosophy, art, religion, and science. Commonly, truth is viewed as the correspondence of language or thought to an independent reality. Truth is provisional, shifting, temporary and subjective, and the quest for elucidation is forever incomplete and wholly narrative. Science Fiction gives scientists a chance to explore reality in a way unimaginable by them.

Science fiction is considered to be a genre that explores or questions and investigates moral philosophical and technological possibilities by creating new and exciting realities. Today, we face a situation where the advance of technology is so swift, and the dangers of war and climate change so terrible, that we have no idea what will happen in the next 20 to 50 years. Science fiction is relevant, important and has much to offer the world, giving meaning to life, enlightening readers and as all those characteristics in a way that no other literature can hope to capture. As well as

Considering the effects of current and developing technologies, science fiction can help address long term problems such as global warming. It can help with the development of space exploration and prepare us for problems we may not anticipate.

Both novels can be viewed as satires presenting extremes, with *Brave New World* presenting the ultimate utopia on one hand, and *1984* the ultimate totalitarian state on the other and how this constitutes and determines what we sense as reality and thus our experience and perception of truth. It creates uncertainty over fact and fiction, and not just what one is supposed to believe but also what one ought to believe as truth. This paper throws light on the different concepts of truth in the science fiction novels in order to illuminate new perspectives in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* and Huxley's *Brave New World*.

Manipulation of Truth in *1984*

In *1984*, truth is manipulated in a far more literal, physical way. The Party alters and destroys newspapers, photographs, and all other evidence of the past in order to suit its agenda. The people have learned not to doubt anything the Party claims—if the Party says it, it must be true. In order to accommodate this constant changing of “the truth,” citizens use “doublethink.” This is the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously and express whichever the Party requires you to believe at that given moment. Citizens forget any information that has become inconvenient or contradictory and acknowledge that there is no objective reality.

Therefore, when the Party claims that Oceania is at war with Eurasia, when in fact, just the day before it had claimed Oceania to be at war with Eastasia, the citizens are able to simply believe what is being told to them. Thus, in the context of *1984*, the government manipulates truth and the people are able to receive this manipulation without question as they have

trained themselves mentally to do so. Therefore, the Party is expert at representation and the people are also completely unable to evaluate knowledge, truth, and reality. The Party's form of deception is far riskier than that of the World State. The Party alters reality in an extremely conspicuous, blatant manner, and relies on citizens' effort to doublethink. The World State, however, employs a form of brainwashing that is far less noticeable—one that occurs as its citizens sleep or acts as an escape from their problems. Once again, the Party imposes itself upon its people while the World State invites its citizens to believe that their ideas and beliefs are their own.

Distortion of Reality in Brave New World

While readers know that *Brave New World* is a dystopian novel for the people living in that world it would seem like a utopia. They live in a world where they want for nothing, they live for pleasure, do not grow to look old and if anything in their life is lacking they have access to Soma that will take any ill feelings away with hallucinations. The only way this works though is by the people in the society having no idea about how they are being controlled through the things that make them happy, such as soma, and how the world controllers define every aspect of their lives. Brave New World shows how a society can be happy and work together perfectly but it is only able to happen through the people in the society having no idea of the truth about how their society has been made and how it is controlled. Sex has become a meaningless pleasure in order to deter from people creating close bonds with people, art and literature that promotes any feelings has been censored.

In Brave New World, the government and leaders like Mustapha Mond construct a society that functions smoothly and effortlessly through the careful brainwashing of its citizens who whole-heartedly believe in the system. The World State uses hypnopædia (sleep teaching) to condition its citizens to believe certain things. For example, children that are in the Beta caste listen to this as they sleep at night: “Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write...

“I'm so glad I'm a Beta”(27). This is just one method that the government uses in order to prevent its citizens from evaluating the things around them. Because these ideas are instilled within them from such an early age, no one thinks to question them. Therefore, there is no reflection or analysis.

Furthermore, whenever citizens feel any kind of discomfort (any emotion other than happiness) they are encouraged to take “soma,” a hallucinogenic drug. Soma further hinders their ability to evaluate knowledge, ignorance and representation. It simply transports them to another reality where they do not have to think about their problems or any kind of negative emotion they may feel. These people do not dwell on anything that is not positive, and therefore have learned to avoid thinking deeply about anything.

The Incompatibility of Happiness and Truth

Incompatibility of happiness and truth is one of the main themes that are discussed in *Brave New World*. In the world controlled by government, its citizens lost their freedom, but instead they are given pleasures. They can't know the truth because they are trained not to know the truth. And it seems like they don't want to know the truth, either. *Brave New World* is full of characters that do everything they can to avoid facing the truth about their own situations. The almost universal use of the drug soma is probably the most pervasive example of such wilful self-delusion. Soma clouds the realities of the present and replaces them with

happy hallucinations, and is thus a tool for promoting social stability. But even Shakespeare can be used to avoid facing the truth, as John demonstrates by his insistence on viewing Lenina through the lens of Shakespeare's world, first as a Juliet and later as an "impudent strumpet." According to Mustapha Mond, the World State prioritizes happiness at the expense of truth by design: he believes that people are better off with happiness than with truth.

It seems clear enough from Mond's argument that happiness refers to the immediate gratification of every citizen's desire for food, sex, drugs, nice clothes, and other consumer items. It is less clear what Mond means by truth, or specifically *what* truths he sees the World State society as covering up. From Mond's discussion with John, it is possible to identify two main types of truth that the World State seeks to eliminate. First, as Mond's own past indicates the World State controls and muffles all efforts by citizens to gain any sort of scientific or empirical truth. Second, the government attempts to destroy all kinds of "human" truths, such as love, friendship, and personal connection.

In *The Republic*, Plato agrees with the importance of truth: "Good... is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right... and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual... This is the power upon which he... must have his eye fixed" (Plato). Although the truth is harder to deal with than ignorance, the emotion and spiritual satisfaction of being truly happy should be what everyone strives for and cannot be achieved without accepting truth. Ignorantly blissful is easy, but in *Brave New World*, happiness achieved through animalistic methods is meaningless compared to the fulfillment of true happiness. In *Brave New World*, happiness and truth are separated. Citizens of the World State are happy in an artificial society, while in contrast, John lives an unpleasant but truthful life. People may instinctively want to sacrifice truth take the easy path to happiness, but being able to fully appreciate happiness through the hardships of truth is what makes life worth living. Truth or happiness? That is the final thought Huxley leaves with the reader at the end of the book when John is dangling, slowly turning in directionless circles.

Two Types of Truths

According to Mustapha Mond, the controller of 'brave new world', stability is the key factor that ensures happiness of the society. To keep the stability, there are two types of truth that the government is trying to eliminate. One is truth related to human relationships and emotions. Love, friendship, sadness, and sympathy are among those truths. It is natural for humans to feel these truths and also it's in their nature. While these give human great happiness and attachment, these also can cause great deal of grief and pain. People have sexual relationships for their pleasures but never develop serious relationships and emotions. It is considered as abnormal to feel attachment to someone. There are no couples or families. The idea of chastity is strongly banned. Making group whose members are tied with love is great threat to stability. People of a group would value themselves more than others and treat themselves with more love, causing the instability.

The other is scientific truth. This type of truth includes discoveries, beauty of language and conclusion made from experiences. In the 'brave new world', even citizens of alpha plus class can't judge the correctness and objectiveness of 'science' they are taught. The government roots out the ability to think logically from people. During the discussion between John and Mustapha Mond, Mond reveals that he had once been captured by the

pleasure of scientific discoveries. However, he had chosen stability over science. He claims scientific truth causes are not to be allowed because it involves too much works and passion of individuals. Also, it will make individuals unique, not equally same leading to instability.

These two types of truth are quite different from each other: objective truth involves coming to a definitive conclusion of fact, while a “human” truth can only be explored, not defined. Yet both kinds of truth are united in the passion that an individual might feel for them. As a young man, Mustapha Mond became enraptured with the delight of making discoveries, just as John loves the language and intensity of Shakespeare. The search for truth then, also seems to involve a great deal of individual effort, of striving and fighting against odds. The very will to search for truth is an individual desire that the communal society of *Brave New World*, based as it is on anonymity and lack of thought, cannot allow to exist. Truth and individuality thus become entwined in the novel's thematic structure.

Reality Control

In George Orwell's *1984* society is manipulated and guided by an organization called the Party and an anonymous figure named Big Brother, who is used as God. One of the main aspects the Party controls is truth or tries to control is truths in the society and the truth in the minds of the individual themselves. The Party creates what they want to be true to make the individuals ignorant so they can manipulate them easier. This twist of the truth by the Party makes it seem like truth doesn't actually exist, but for Winston it does exist or it once did. Truth does exist if the individual is rebellious to the extent to where it will not get them vaporized and Winston is one of those rebels.

This is another initiative used to keep the individual from their own truths to deprive them even more of an identity. "Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality-control. (46)" Winston's coworker Syme believes that Newspeak will end the issue of thoughtcrime, which it seems it is true. Newspeak is used by the Party to take away multiple meanings, expressions, individual thoughts to make the individuals more ignorant of individualism and other ideas that could ruin the ideas of the Party. With this language the people want be able to create thought crime because they want have the knowledge to do so. Winston doesn't care for this aspect he only thinks of those who want be affected by the Party, the proles and at this point in time he thinks that no matter what kind of language they have now he will continue with his own ways.

Brave New World shows how a society can be happy and work together perfectly but it is only able to happen through the people in the society having no idea of the truth about how their society has been made and how it is controlled. Sex has become a meaningless pleasure in order to deter from people creating close bonds with people, art and literature that promotes any feelings has been censored. *Brave New World* may show the apparent incompatibility of truth and freedom in a utopian society. We see what happens to an outsider, John the Savage, who is unable to adapt and accept what this society views as true happiness, as he has had other experiences outside what is allowed in by the world controllers, and he commits suicide.

History and Truth

In *1984* they still cast history aside but instead of getting rid of it completely like *Brave*

New World, the government continues to revise it until there is little to no truth left in it at all. The Party revises everything to comply with the requirements of the future. Making the concept of historical truth irrelevant. His most recognized examples of language designed to eliminate ' "thought crimes" included Ministry of Truth slogans such as: "War is Peace", "Freedom is Slavery", and "Ignorance is Strength". In Orwell's Ministry of Truth, it is a crime to read history against the grain. In fact, history is falsified so as to render it useless as a crucial pedagogical practice both for understanding the conditions that shape the present and for learning what should never be forgotten. As Orwell makes clear, this is precisely why memory is often considered dangerous by tyrants because it offers the opportunity to learn how to remember differently.

O'Brien and the Party will talk about the history of the past and about history's relation to power; but it is the control over history in its synchronous mode, history as a dynamic activity here and now and in their control of interpretations of the future, that their domination and determination of the meanings of words gives them – their control of language itself – that is the essential basis of their ability to realize and impose their "Truth" to the exclusion of all others.

Contradicting Truths

In 1984, we see the Party's mottos not far into the text, which shows their significance. Winston Smith, the novel's protagonist, is attending a Two Minutes Hate as the words,

"WAR IS PEACE,
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY,
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Orwell 16)

appear on a telescreen. At first read, these phrases are obviously contradictory. But really, these slogans represent truth for the Party. These words are the official slogans of the Party, and are inscribed in massive letters on the white pyramid of the Ministry of Truth, as Winston observes in Book One, Chapter I. Because it is introduced so early in the novel, this creed serves as the reader's first introduction to the idea of doublethink. By weakening the independence and strength of individuals' minds and forcing them to live in a constant state of propaganda-induced fear, the Party is able to force its subjects to accept anything it decrees, even if it is entirely illogical—for instance, the Ministry of Peace is in charge of waging war, the Ministry of Love is in charge of political torture, and the Ministry of Truth is in charge of doctoring history books to reflect the Party's ideology.

That the national slogan of Oceania is equally contradictory is an important testament to the power of the Party's mass campaign of psychological control. In theory, the Party is able to maintain that "War Is Peace" because having a common enemy keeps the people of Oceania united. "Freedom Is Slavery" because, according to the Party, the man who is independent is doomed to fail. By the same token, "Slavery Is Freedom," because the man subjected to the collective will is free from danger and want. "Ignorance Is Strength" because the inability of the people to recognize these contradictions cements the power of the authoritarian regime.

Perception of Reality

Party's power-source is found to be at its most effective and virulent in its ability to determine the nature of the perception of reality, effective reality, inducing a *scotosis* toward

reality *per se*: the fullness of being. And it is in this control of reality through language that Orwell presents his most convincing and terrifying manifestation of the (mis)use of power. But how, precisely, can the Party be so effective in this determination of reality? How is it that people can apparently be prepared and willing to accept a version of reality that seems so antithetical to so many of our basic human needs? Well, it would seem that reality is by no means as stable or certain – so concretely “out there” in a Cartesian sense – as our senses may suggest it is. Orwell, writing before post-modernist ideas become current, nevertheless, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, seems to focus on many key elements of a post-modernist understanding about the nature of reality even if, perhaps unsurprisingly, he cannot see beyond them.

Reality, some post-modern thinkers propose, is fundamentally ambiguous: it is not simply “out there.” And this is not in itself a point that I wish to challenge, although I will in turn propose a different version of this ambiguity. For Derrida, reality is a kind of “text” outside of which there is “nothing”; for Badiou it is “the event”; and, for Lacan, although the “Real” happens to us, it is, nevertheless, “impossible.” These are all positions which resonate in important ways in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Paraphrasing Lacan, Zupancic tells us that “the impossibility of the Real does not prevent it having an effect in the realm of the possible” (Zupancic, 2000, 235). Now this is a curious state of affairs; however it does immediately suggest how the nature of reality could be manipulated; and *is* by the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Prophecies Foretold in Nineteen Eighty Four

In the half-century since Orwell first wrote *1984*, we have seen the world transformed by the rise of the internet and, with it, a growth in our access to information and the truth. It is easy to look at our reality and see fundamental differences between it and the one posed by *1984*: most present-day readers of *1984* aren't threatened by their governments, and the world we live in is less divided and oppressive than the one Winston has found himself in.

Winston is, like us, just a human being that believes that 'truth' cannot be overcome. In the same way that we want to believe what we read online, he wants to believe that the pictures and reality he destroys can't really be destroyed. In a period of time in which we as a society are beginning to question our media—and, according to some critics, enter a 'post-truth era'—*1984* presents us with a lead character that represents much of what we are currently struggling against. When it comes to digital media and our relationship with information, we have become obsessed with fighting to uphold the truth. Fake news has become so widespread on Facebook that Mark Zuckerberg is actively devising strategies to combat it; AI Twitter bots are spreading false news, and other AI Twitter bots are being deployed to combat them. Never before have we had so much information at our fingertips, and never before have we so questioned its validity. We can spend hours online and still come away with facts and figures taken out of context or, in extreme cases, completely fabricated.

What is truly unique about *1984* is this same obsession with the truth. Winston is a man actively engaged in spreading false media—editing news reports to reflect a new truth and creating entire people to validate baseless claims. In today's world, he could easily be posting fake-news articles to Facebook. Despite this, he believes, like many of us, that the truth can simply exist by itself. Sometime, somewhere, and somehow, truth must prevail. In our own pop culture, the truth always comes out.

Huxley's view of the future was very different from that of George Orwell, who in 1948 wrote the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While Orwell's dystopia was based on oppression through fear, the earlier *Brave New World* offered a blueprint for a society controlled by enforced happiness. It eschews the futuristic landscapes, flying machines and technical wizardry that much of sci-fi is obsessed with, and focuses instead upon a human story set in a ruthless totalitarian regime. This is a world where people think they are always happy, always get what they want, and never want what they can't have. It is a place in which artifice rules, whether in scents, flavourings or fabrics. A world where life is created in test tubes and children are conditioned to prioritise consumerism, sexual pleasure and unswerving dedication to a World State. Here real emotion and ideals are purged, concepts such as family, religion, empathy and honour are banned and "history is bunk".

In *Brave New World*, privacy is seen as both a crime and a punishment. Keeping one's "private" life private within this New England is non-conformist and so those who transgress in this way are, ironically, sent away from society to live their lives away from the public eye. In a broadly similar way, if a person of a certain age and privilege (I'm looking at you, young, middle-and-upper-class Westerners!) does not participate in at least one social network then they are seen as being "off the grid", and are punished for it. A large proportion of event promotions and event invitations are created via Facebook, and a startling amount of jobs (particularly in the creative industries) will penalise you if you do not have a successful LinkedIn and/or Twitter. Privacy is now arguably subject to consumerism. Personal privacy has become something of an enigma, in that we feel we are asked to choose between being socially active (as online social activity increases) and keeping our private lives private. It comes in the most unassuming of ways

Conclusion

Brave New World may show the apparent incompatibility of truth and freedom in a utopian society. We see what happens to an outsider, John the Savage, who is unable to adapt and accept what this society views as true happiness, as he has had other experiences outside what is allowed in by the world controllers, and he commits suicide. Huxley's view of the future was very different from that of George Orwell, who in 1948 wrote the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While Orwell's dystopia was based on oppression through fear, the earlier *Brave New World* offered a blueprint for a society controlled by enforced happiness.

As we read *Nineteen eighty four*, we become embroiled in this same ideological struggle over truth. We read lines detailing how the masses consciously choose lies over facts, and struggle to understand how the obvious can be so easily ignored. It's infuriating! The truth simply must exist and matter on its own merit. Winston ultimately learns that truth means nothing by itself, and this is a reality that we are beginning to struggle with in our fight against fake news in a post-truth era. How do we know what is real, and what do we do with that knowledge? What does the truth matter if nobody cares to believe it? These are the same questions Winston struggles with, and his answer destroys him while sickening us: truth means nothing by itself.

In other words, truth was unimportant to the citizens of *Brave New World* and it was summarily rescinded from the realm of 1984. Both novels can be viewed as satires presenting extremes, with *Brave New World* presenting the ultimate utopia on one hand, and 1984 the ultimate totalitarian state on the other. It creates uncertainty over fact and fiction, and not just what one is supposed to believe but also what one ought to believe as truth.

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Beyond the Veil: Aesthetic Objectivity in the Portrayal of Death in Literature

Abstract

*Confounded with devastated imageries of silence and mystery, deaths and funerals are usually cradled with myriad associations of dread and fear. Ruminations related to demises, though inevitable to human thought and experience are constant inducements of negative emotions within people. Contrary to this, portrayals of death and related ceremonies have been described in bewitching manners in literature across time and space boundaries. Aesthetic descriptions by which literature is written gives a conflicting delightful overtone to the traumatic content which authors narrate in alluring passages. Monroe C. Beardsley in his theory relating the objectivity of aesthetic qualities defines aesthetic experience as one which is detached from ordinary experience i.e. an aesthetic experience's internal coherence detaches it from the flow of experience, stressing upon internal non-referential characteristics of a work. In this paper, Beardsley's claims of objectivity is analysed taking into account three works spanning over ages and cultures. The works analysed are Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, e.e.cummings' *Buffalo Bill* and Francis Bacon's *Of Death*- a novel, a poem and a piece of non-fiction respectively. The paper entitled *Beyond the Veil: Aesthetic Objectivity in the Portrayal of Death in Literature* aims to portray the beautification assumed in literature regardless of the genre and the content the work attempts to convey.*

Keywords: Objective, Death, Aesthetics, Experience

"Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forget life, to be at peace."

(Oscar Wilde, *The Canterville Ghost*)

Literature creates sensibility changes in the prevailing notion of traditional ideology in contemporary societies. To affect people both aesthetically and socially, literature, like any other art, must break through its shell of habitual frames of reference and attempt perspective shifts in its attempt to convey meanings within its audience. Death narratives are significant due to death being the only accepted belief by people of every religion, philosophy and spiritual train. Literature is filled with a vast assortment of intriguing perspectives of man's final exit. While death can be interpreted in a two-fold way- spiritually, of the soul leaving its human host and scientifically, the shutting down of man's body processes one by one; the eternal return is an emotionally turbulent state of a human being. Literature which serves as a panacea for every human suffering is thus, an overflowing container of representations of death in many forms, rarely in a direct way.

In the two-fold significance of death narratives, the one mentioned above i.e. literature as a space to vent out thoughts and tribulations on death and related experiences, and another importance which is the supplementary nature of literature that satisfies the seekers on

queries related to death. While the first type of writings is commonplace in contemporary literature, the second type is deeper in impact and proves to be highly philosophical. Zygmunt Bauman, the Polish philosopher and sociologist asserts that death being the most truthful and factual occurrence in human life, is yet the most mysterious and inexplicable. The American literary critic Cleanth Brooks is another scholar who claimed upon the notion that German cultural critic, philosopher and essayist Walter Benjamin argued for, that our constant search within fiction is to seek for the knowledge of death which is inaccessible for us in real life. Beardsley's theory on the objectivity of aesthetic experience heralds an approach to meet the end of a pleasurable experience in literature, an approach which requires the reader to contemplate any work with an objective mindset, resulting in a complete aesthetic escapade. In fact, Beardsley proposes that for an aesthetic experience any work of art must be detached from ordinary experience. For this, a work must contain internal coherence which pushes away the reader's experience. This requires a work to be self-referential and must dispose off any referential claim from outside the work- aesthetic production owing to the work's unity, intensity and complexity.

“I think distance or detachment- withdrawal from practical engagement-
in some form...is a factor in aesthetic character”

(Beardsley, *Aesthetics*)

Arundhati Roy has based her entire novel *The God of Small Things* on the death of a young English relative of the protagonists whom they call Sophie mol. Roy refers to the event throughout the novel and it is also understood that the past, present and future of the course of lives of the characters are governed by the tragic event. Like most of the narrative, Sophie mol's funeral and death is a childhood narrative, particularly in the perspective of young Rahel. The novel's mostly adult readership is taken on a paradigm shift to look at death from someone who doesn't understand its serious nature or even what it means to die. Perhaps, the most disturbing point in the narrative is during Sophie mol's funeral at church. Rahel's narration gets into details of the surroundings, of people around and their secret activities, of looking through pretences, of Sophie mol lying in her coffin, of how “Sophie Mol died because she couldn't breathe” and how “her funeral killed her”. Rahel understood that Sophie mol had been in water for a long time due to wrinkles on her face. She also noticed that Sophie mol was wide awake for her funeral and she was pointing out the church ceiling which “would have been easier to notice” when “lying in a coffin”. Rahel also believed that Sophie mol attempted to show her a baby bat crawling into Margaret Kochamma's saree, and she was sure she was the only one who saw Sophie mol cartwheel amidst the chaos caused by Margaret Kochamma's terrified yelp. A mournful mood is brought in the description with indicators such as that of the “yellow church” which “swelled like a throat with the sound of sad singing”, priests who “never smiled at babies the way they did on usual Sundays” and “the sad singing started again and they sang the same sad verse again”. Apparently, Rahel's excitement is bought to a close when she sees that Sophie mol was being lowered into the ground in her “special child-sized coffin” which was luxurious indicating the wealth the family has accumulated. Rahel could hear her suffocating cousin thudding against the coffin walls attempting to break free from the layers of soil she was buried under. She grew disheartened on the thought that her cousin would die “because she couldn't breathe” and no one else could hear her muffled screams. Rather than the usual description from death and the obvious misery it causes, Roy gets the reader thinking about

the effects that death causes in places which are unnoticed, usually unthought-of. By voicing simple, direct views of Rahel about transformations death can cause, the readers are taken away from passive experience and made to think about it. This leads to a comprehensive aesthetic experience, the audience is made conscious about each detail of the funeral ceremony which in turn leads to an objective and detached understanding.

e.e.cummings' *Buffalo Bill's*, similar to other concrete poetry, visually appeals to readers through typographical means. The poem also uses subtle ironic imagery that leaves the reader confused as to what the poet attempts to convey. The reader contemplates more intensely on the poem's 'howness' than on its 'whatness' which leaves the question of the poem's significance and the stance of the author in the reader's mind even after the reader has read the poem. The most prominent and noticeable use of referential characteristics is the way the poet has arranged the 'words on the page' in the form of a gun. The titular hero, though the notion of him being a hero is questionable according to the poet, was a stereotypical cowboy whose use of guns as a tool to kill creatures ranging from buffaloes to innocent pigeons is a popular passed-down tale in the West. On this account, there is significance of the typographical image of the gun. Another technique the poet uses is the word 'Jesus', which acts in a twofold way, both as a trigger for the gun image and as a trigger for the poet's emotions which spurts out in the second half of the poem. The word, which makes its appearance precisely in the middle of the poem, also represents the sudden shift from the poet's representation of the hero's bravery to the inevitable appearance of his death. The poet plays with word spacing to represent the expertise Buffalo Bill seemed to have which reflects in his precision to shoot "onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat". The choice of words the poet uses is also a major technique of creating objectivity for the reader. He talks of the hero being "defunct" just like a machine to portray the fury and terror he incited with his objective passion for hunting which was as precise and tireless as any machine. Towards the end of the poem though, he is said to be a "blue-eyed boy" who makes the reader think as to whether the author thinks of his deeds as those marked with schoolboy innocence and not reckless bravery as he was understood to be in the beginning. cummings also asks "Mister Death" casually, as if he is someone who has been invited over for tea, in the manner of chitchat whether he likes his "blue-eyed boy".

While cummings uses the technique of objectification by the alteration of visual perspectives to portray the objective nature of death, the revolutionary scientific essayist Francis Bacon credits the same by conceiving a series of syllogical and empirical depictions. Bacon achieves the aim of objectivity by scientifically portraying death, and by relating the familiar nature it has to its unfamiliar side. He begins his essay *Of Death* with a comparison of death and darkness. The opening sentence reads,

"Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark,
and as that natural fear in children, is increased with tales, so in the other."

He thinks that the fear of death is merely the fear of the unknown, the same as children's fear of darkness, both of which are mysteries without the existence of proof that something is certain ahead. He also suggests that it is the fear of the approach of death that is stronger than the occurrence of it, a fear which is emphasized with happenings around a dying man- howls and sallow faces of his kith and kin. He even goes on to call death a happy experience for the dying man, because he's cocooned with loving souls which leaves him at ease. Apart from giving logical substantiations to an emotional and turbulent event, Bacon also recounts

instances from history on admirers of death, and on love being torn apart due to its occurrence. He mentions Stoics like Seneca who thought that death is merely an escape from insufferable agonies of life. He expresses death to be an exit portal from this world which is as natural as birth, and at times even heroic. By choosing to give a detailed analysis of the death process and the emotional variations it has, Bacon gives the reader an interesting objective point-of-view on a natural phenomenon, even making it seem less significant than it actually is. This technique allows the reader to fully take in the aesthetic nature of the work, thus achieving the author's aim.

As is seen in the works related above, descriptions are a profound aspect in literature; they determine the relative significance a work is to be given. The description in literature is its presentation according to Beardsley and tends to the aesthetic object as a perception. As Beardsley puts it, a work of art, is governed by its “internal evidence”, which “is evidence from direct inspection of the object”. This evidence is unrelated to our habitual perceptions and a work of art must make someone think against what they unconsciously know of any object and throw light upon instances to its unfamiliarity. Proving unfamiliarity is what leads to objectivity and completeness in a reader's aesthetic experience.

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Mirrors as the Devices of Truth in Selected Agatha Christie Novels

This paper studies Agatha Christie's three detective stories: *Dead Man's Mirror*, *Mirror Crack'd From Side to Side*, and *They Do It With Mirrors* where mirrors emerge as vital clues in solving the murder mystery. One of the popular symbolisms attached to mirrors is the symbol of truth. However, the selected texts feature the other varied symbolic and mythical attributes to mirrors. The paper examines the ways in which the different symbolisms on mirrors emerge as the devices of truth in the selected texts. The paper argues that the texts depict mirror symbolisms as not mere representation of a certain idea but as “semantic equivalents” for abstract ideas. As a result, the study argues that Christie's use of mirrors as devices of truth attempts to neither forward nor dismiss the myths on mirrors instead treats it as popular elements that are part of a familiar rhetoric in cultures and society.

Truth in detective fiction as Ronald R. Thomas states in his article, “The Devices of Truth”, is 'elusive' and the primary role of the detective is to find this elusive truth. The quest for truth and the fact that the detective discovers the truth in the end of the narrative implies that the concept of truth is perceived as fixed; that is, the existence of truth is undisputed in detective fiction. And as Thomas observes, the detective's preoccupation with solving crimes is to escape the morbid reality of the world and the genre as such functions as a lie detector that helps restore the social order within the narrative and thereby reaffirm the notion of an ordered society in the minds of its readers. Since the focus is on the process and purpose of accessing the truth rather than defining the concept of truth, this paper asserts that truth in detective fiction has a functional role or is functional in nature. In order to find that truth, the detective uses his/her “self-invented techniques” which are termed as “the devices of truth” by Thomas.

Dame Agatha Christie, the foremost writer of the Golden Age of detective fiction, created a narrative structure called the “clue-puzzle” where the readers are provided with clues to resolve the mystery alongside the detective. This technique or Christie's narrative device does not “display too much individualism” and is “less authoritarian than Arthur Conan Doyle's or that of most crime fiction” (Knight, 109). Also, her two most popular detectives, Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple, employed deductive techniques that were what could be termed as non-technical or non-intellectual in its form and thus making the sleuths rather humanistic and ordinary “unlike Doyle's process of humanising Holmes' special powers” (Knight, 111). While Poirot's deductive technique is based on “psychological means” and his “rigid attention to an objectified sense of time and place”, Miss Marple's power arrives from her “domesticated epistemology” combined with sharp observatory and reflective skills. Because the structure of the narrative and the deductive formulae of the detectives is both motivated and rooted in the prosaic life of the bourgeoisie and since the mirror forms an integral aspect of the quotidian, Christie uses the object as a crucial device as part of the detective's quest for truth.

In *Dead Man's Mirror* Hercule Poirot starts suspecting that Sir Gervase's death was not a case of suicide but of murder when he finds out the strange position at which the bullet had struck the mirror. Alongside the description of the crime scene, Christie provides a sketch of

Sir Gervase's study. Poirot enters the study, finds Mr. Gervase lying dead on his chair, turned sideways to the mirror and with his back facing the door; also the mirror smashed and a bullet lying below it. Poirot finally deduces that Miss Lingard (Sir Gervase's Secretary) had shot Sir Gervase in his head when she learns that Sir Gervase was planning to disinherit Ruth Chevenix-Gore (his adopted daughter and Miss Lingard's biological daughter). When she shoots him, the bullet passes right through his head and hits the gong at the end of the corridor. Later, she twists the chair sideways, smashes the mirror with a bronze piece, and locks the door from inside, and exits through the window.

In this narrative, the mirror's function as an everyday object has become tenuous—for the reason that it is smashed and secondly, the “tiny sliver of the looking-glass” stuck on the bronze piece, emerges as the vital clue to identify the murderer. Significantly, the mirror, in the story, no more functions as a mere reflecting surface. Bill Brown, in his article “Thing Theory”, claims that an object becomes a thing when it is either accidentally or deliberately dismissed from its conventional meaning or function; thereupon it derives a new identity and a different function. Brown's theory on Things is influenced by Martin Heidegger's work on Things in “What is a Thing?” Brown and Heidegger regard that objects are mere representations while things are dynamic; the functionality of a thing differs with the human-object interplay. For instance, in the above narrative, the presence of a broken-mirror in the murder-spot gives rise to different readings on the broken-mirror by the possible suspect: Mrs. Gervase thinks that her husband was doomed to die as the mirror in the room had cracked, which according to her is a sign of ill-omen. Mrs. Gervase borrows this notion on broken mirrors from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem- “The Lady of Shallot”; in which the cracked-mirror of the Lady of Shallot indicates that she is doomed to die. Here, Mrs. Gervase's interpretation of the 'Dead Man's Mirror' severs it from its everydayness and it manifests itself into another 'thing' with premonitory qualities—its new functionality. Further, the “tiny sliver of the looking-glass” which Poirot spots on the bronze piece in the study, clearly possesses the quality of a mirror. However this tiny sliver does not function like a reflecting surface. Instead it emerges as the vital clue since it aids in finding the Dead Man's murderer—therefore it is that 'thing'—the tiny sliver which in fact becomes the *Dead Man's Mirror*—and not the object-mirror hanging on the wall in his study.

In *The Mirror Crack'd From Side to Side*, featuring Miss Marple, we see another varied function of the mirror. Contrary to the previous narrative, there is no use of a physical mirror in the crime scene nor is it used by the criminal to commit the murder; instead, the use is rather symbolic. Set in the fictional village of St. Mary Mead, it begins with Mrs. Bantry selling Gossington Hall to popular American actress Mariana Greg and her husband, Jason Rudd. Heather Bradcock, a resident of St. Mary Mead and an admirer of Mariana, attends the party hosted by Mariana. In the party, Heather is murdered when she consumes the poisoned cocktail apparently meant for Mariana Greg. Just before consuming the cocktail, Heather was in conversation with Mariana—where she recounts how she had managed to seek an autograph from Mariana in Bermuda, despite suffering from German measles, and how she had it all covered with lots of makeup. Mariana has a “frozen” look as she listens to Heather's accounts and Mrs. Bantry likens that look to “The Lady of Shallot's” “frozen look” when her mirror cracks from side to side and realizes that the curse has come upon her. This analogy by Mrs. Bantry emerges as the vital clue for Miss Marple to resolve the case. Years ago, Mariana was infected with German measles when she was pregnant causing her child to be born deformed. When Heather insolently recounts her efforts to meet Mariana in Bermuda, it

occurs to her that it was Heather who had infected her. At that moment, she has “a frozen look” which Mrs. Bantry compares to the Lady of Shallot's look. Mariana, out of rage, poisons her own drink, deliberately spills Heather's drink and lends the poisoned drink to her causing her to die immediately.

At first, let us analyse the function of the mirror in the poem, “The Lady of Shallot”, and accordingly understand its correspondence in the narrative. In the poem, the mirror acts as a reflecting surface and thereby performs its everyday function. The Lady of Shallot is cursed to view the world only through the mirror and never directly, but while doing so she must weave continually. When she quits her quotidian lifestyle—weaving and viewing in the mirror—the mirror is shattered. The shattering of the mirror 'reflects' her deviance and thereby the mirror too deviates itself from its everyday utility. Ceased from its everyday utility, the mirror is attributed with a new meaning— it's a different kind of mirror with different kind of 'reflection'. When the Lady of Shallot views herself in the broken-mirror, she has a 'frozen look', i.e. the broken mirror 'reflects' a frozen look since it indicates bad luck. Mrs. Bantry, in the narrative, compares the look of Mariana to the Lady of Shallot's look when she cannot find an alternative word to define Mariana's mysterious look. According to Yuri M. Lotman, the expressions used to represent one system in another not through “precise translations but approximate equivalences determined by the cultural-psychological and semiotic context common to both systems” are called tropes. However, they are not mere embellishments on an external surface but “a means of forming a special ordering of consciousness.” Consequently the use of tropes in a culture becomes part of the 'familiar' rhetoric of one's consciousness. In the above context, the object mirror removed from its everydayness functions as a thing—a broken-mirror; which renders a reaction—the frozen look. This frozen look in relation to the broken-mirror becomes the “approximate equivalence” for an abstract idea—Mariana's mysterious look. Thus the broken mirror imagery becomes a trope. It is a mirror of another kind with a different functionality, becomes a trope.

In the third narrative, similar to the above narrative, there is no use of an object-mirror in the crime scene, but the allusion to certain kind of mirrors, by a witness, becomes crucial for the detective to resolve the murder mystery. Carrie Louis and her husband Lewis Serrocold live in an old Victorian mansion called Stonygates. The mansion is owned by Carrie and is converted into a home for juvenile delinquent boys. Lewis supervises the home and regularly trains the boys in theatrical performances as a remedy to reform their behaviours. Christian Gulbrandsen, a member of the Stonygates Trustees, unexpectedly arrives at Stonygates to inform Carrie about Lewis's misappropriation of Stonygates fund. Before Carrie receives the news about her husband's theft from Christian, he is tactfully murdered by Lewis. The night Christian is murdered, Lewis with his accomplice Edgar Lawson stage an incident in order to deceive the other guests about the real murderer: When a fuse blows out in the home, Lewis and Edgar start a verbal fight inside the study. While the other guests gathered in the Great Hall, carefully listen to their brawl, Lewis exits the study through a secret door in the roof and enters the guest room, shoots Christian and returns to the study through the same route. Meanwhile, Edgar, with his acting talents, modulates his voice to keep both sides of the argument going and thus, everyone in the Hall is deceived in identifying the real murderer. The whole episode is baffling for Miss Marple until Alex Restarick (Carrie's stepson, who claims to have seen a person crawling on the rooftop on the night of murder) stirs up an important thought in her mind about the whole murder act. He likens the incident to a stage

set up: “I was thinking of this place in terms of the theatre. Not reality but artificiality!” (Alex to Miss Marple) While Alex attempts to describe the episode as an illusion, Stephan Restarick quickly sums up Alex's point by saying: “They do it with mirrors, I believe, is the slang phrase”.

The expression, “they do it with mirrors”, in the story, emerges as the substitute 'slang' term for the word illusion. Similar to the case in the previous narrative, the witness renders a symbolic expression as part of his inference on the murder act. This symbolic remark, about the conjurer's use of mirrors in reference to the act of illusion, yields the necessary response. Thereupon, Miss Marple ruminates on Alex's remark, she begins to view the murder act in terms of a stage set up, where she mentally recreates the episode, and finally spots the hidden door through which Lewis had travelled to the guest room to kill Christian. In this narrative, we see an allusion to a different kind of mirrors. They belong to a particular realm, where they are used to create illusions. For conjurers, a mirror is an object which essentially aids in creating illusions. In this context, the function of the mirror evidently alters from its everyday function as a reflecting surface. But, within the realm of conjurers, the mirror still prescribes to its ('other') everydayness —as an object used to create illusion. Further, this function does not get challenged in the story, instead is forwarded through Stephan's 'slang' phrase—the “approximate equivalence” for Alex's abstract idea—“not reality but artificiality”. That is, it is the conjurer's mirrors, representing artificiality, becomes the trope. As Lotman states, the method of translating expressions from discrete to non-discrete (visual analogues) or vice-versa, is called, “Semantic translation”. Such translations, according to Lotman, are distinguished from primary signs and symbols because they operate at a secondary level of “modelling and meta-modelling”. Therefore, the mirrors, in the present context, are not just qualified with a different semantic function, but, are rendered a distinct semiotic function—they are the vital clues for the detective to resolve the murder mystery.

William. W Stowe states in his article, “Convention and Ideology in Detective Fiction”, “Popular art is a vehicle by which a society teaches and perpetuates its values, it is a bearer of culture, understood not as personal cultivation but as the body of knowledge and tradition that human beings require to interact with their environment.” In the above three texts, belonging to the realm of popular fiction, the mirror trope recurs. The shattered mirror, the act of (mirror) shattering, and the mirrors of illusion— portray the established and popularly accepted rhetoric on mirrors; which tends to resemble the aesthetic components of one's culture. Christie's ingenuity is transforming the varied mirror symbolisms as the device of truth suggests the multiple inferences and meanings symbolisms generate. The correlation between truth and mirrors as depicted in the texts are, as Lawrence E Johnson states in his book, *Focusing on Truth*, “a matter of a particular use of language in a particular way for our then purposes.”

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Perspectivism in Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*

The existence of an objective truth has been looked at with scepticism by the postmodern theories which see any claims to truth as just that- claims. The world that we take to be real is perceived by each person in a different way. This presupposes an infinite number of perspectives that are in turn spawned by an infinite number of pre-knowledge (or prejudices). The postmodern scepticism for claims of an objective or absolute truth has culminated in a case for the rejection of all discourse as just perspectives—mere perspectives to be accepted as valid as any other alternative perspective.

Perspectives and claims are reduced to empty signifiers. Mere shells with no substance. Every perspective is equally valid with no reference point or metanarratives to tie down meaning. Meaning was suspended in the infinite chain of relativism.

Nietzsche's perspectivism is often cited to be starting points that elicited/spawned this ultimate relativism that looked at all phenomenon as relative with no absolute value. Nietzsche posits his idea of perspectivism in his *On the Genealogy of Morality* not as a death knell of the existence of truth, but as a reminder to the existence of such perspectives. The multiple perspectives rather than demolish the edifice of truth only illuminates multiple facets of a phenomenon thereby affording to move closer to the objective reality that is sought.

Objectivity is not, according to Nietzsche, “contemplation [Anschauung] without interest’ (which is, as such, a non-concept and an absurdity) but as having in our power the ability to engage and disengage our ‘pros’ and ‘cons’” (Nietzsche 87). It is impossible to engage with ‘pure reason’ as it is self-contradictory. Any act of engagement with a concept is active and interpretive. There cannot be a way of seeing and knowing when all powers of interpretation is suppressed. It is absurd to conceptualize a way of eliminating all pre-concepts of seeing and still see. Therefore, all seeing and knowing is perspectival.

There is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival ‘knowing’; the more affects we are able to put into words about a thing, the more eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of the thing, our ‘objectivity’. But to eliminate the will completely and turn off all the emotions without exception, assuming we could: well? would that not mean to *castrate* the intellect?... (Nietzsche 87)

Thus, by saying that all seeing is perspectival, Nietzsche is not denying the existence of an objective truth, but the near impossibility of arriving at the objective. The more number of perspectives that are available, the closer to objectivity one gets. The plurality of perspectives offers a multitude of ways to perceive a concept with extra-subjective imagination thereby approaching closer to the holy grail of ‘objectivity’. Perspectivism is thus “not a relativism, but rather the condition for a more appropriate understanding of objectivity. The more perspectives we are able to draw together the more comprehensive our objectivity will be. Perspectivity does not *relativize*, it *realizes*” (Alloa).

In contemporary literature, the inescapable condition of perspectivism is not just alluded to in multiple ways but used in narrative as a means to subsume extra-subjective imagination. In Christopher Schaberg's *The Work of Literature in an Age of Post-Truth*, the author examines the technique of narrative perspectivism employed by Yiyun Li in his novel *The Vagrants*. Schaberg notes how the novel transcends the logic of 'main characters' to 'see' the fictional world through the 'eyes' of all the major and minor characters that inhabit the novel. Even a TV turned off is a valid perspective to employ in this novel.

The Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafak is an elaborate exercise in narrative perspectivism. The novel is structured as a novel within a novel with two stories narrated in parallel. The outer story is that of Ella, an unhappy housewife with three children and an unfaithful husband. She takes up the job of reading for a literary agency which changes her life for ever. The novel she is assigned to read first is by a new novelist Aziz Zahara by name. The intriguing novel is a whirlwind of spiritual aphorisms that go by the name of 'The Forty Rules of Love'. The nested novel traces the spiritual journey of the renowned Shams of Tabriz to find his soul mate Rumi and transform him into the legendary mystical love poet.

The two stories alternate throughout the novel with the outer story narrated from the perspective of Ella. Her world is unveiled as she moves towards realization in her life. Her flirtatious e-mail transactions with Aziz is reproduced in the form of e-mail threads thereby shifting narrative perspectives. Ella's cloistered existence is punctured occasionally by the emails that pierce through from Aziz travelling all over the world. The ironical stifling atmosphere of Ella's cosy 'secure' home is contrasted to Aziz's descriptions of the remote locations he encounters while he globetrots.

Ella had settled to her imperfect life as the norm of any successful marriage. She had resigned to the fate of sacrificing herself and her desires to the larger good of the family and putting anything and everything before herself as is wont of a the social setup. She sees no anomaly in keeping up the guise of the good wife even in the face of clear instances of unfaithfulness from her husband. She takes it to be the inevitable sacrifice to save the marriage and keep the social fabric intact.

It is Aziz and his instinctual existence that permeates through his email that initiate Ella to think otherwise. The perspective is rotated 180 degrees and Ella begins to see her life in an all-new perspective. She says to her daughter in the beginning of the novel that, "Women don't marry the men they fall in love with. When push comes to shove, they choose the guy who'll be a good father and a reliable husband. Love is only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away" (Shafak 10). The life she leads is relatable in terms of the average urban middle-aged housewife. It takes a total shift in perspective to see what's missing and she gives up the secure predictable existence she had for a day to day life existence in total abandonment of the future.

The story of Shams of Tabriz and Rumi is an extreme of narrative perspectivism. All through the novel the chapters are named after the characters whose perspective the story inhabits. If the outer story is entirely composed of chapters named 'Ella', the novel within has chapters variously named after all the major and minor characters in it—from Shams and Rumi to the novice and the drunkard. Most incidents are presented from alternate points of view. This narrative perspectivism that shifts the reader's points of view slow down the reading and consider the event through the lens of a fresh eye.

'Sweet Blasphemy' by Aziz Zahara that forms the inner novel begins soon after the foreword with the Killer ruminating over the aftermath of his violence to Shams. The seminal event of the novel, the assassination of Shams of Tabriz is presented from the remorseful self-reproach of the Killer. He carries the baggage of his guilt such that he feels that something from the victim passes on to the killer; that something which is internalised and becomes part of his self. It hangs around his neck like Coleridge's albatross. He recounts the way the job came to him. It was a mysterious affair where he did not get to see who commissioned the crime. He is invited to a tavern in the dark of the night and the two young men sit on his either side such that their identities remain hidden. When they reveal the target to be a dervish, the Killer is reluctant as he does not want to invite the wrath of God by killing a holy man. But he is soon convinced by the triple price they were willing to pay.

The same episode is recounted by Suleiman, the drunk towards the end of the novel. The Killer states the presence of a scar-faced drunkard deep asleep at the table by the window in the tavern, the reason why he occupies the facing table. Here, Suleiman remembers having woken up by the heated arguments from the next table. He is hooked by the word 'murder'. In the former narration by the Killer, the victim is not mentioned by name; only as a heretic, "A maverick of a dervish" (Shafak 24). But in the chapter from Suleiman's perspective, he is shocked by the realisation that it is Shams of Tabriz that they plan to kill. The multiple narratives offer multiple perspectives that equip the reader to conjure up an image of the event that moves closer to objectivity.

The Killer describes the murder from his vivid memory and how he waited for the splash that never came after dumping his body in the well. It was as if the body had risen up towards the sky rather than fall down into the water. He describes the two eyes of his victim following him like a piercing memory.

Beneath dark waters in a well, he is dead now. Yet his eyes follow me wherever I go, bright and imposing, like two dark stars ominously hanging in the sky above.... The wail echoing inside my mind, that very last cry he gave out before his face drained of blood, his eyes bulged out, and his throat closed in an unfinished gasp, the farewell of stabbed man. The howl of a trapped wolf. (Shafak 21)

The immediate chapter in the novel is from the perspective of Shams who has the vision of the exact scene of his murder. He describes the night he is killed in lucidly as is done later by the Killer himself. He sees in his inner eye the vision of a middle-aged man who is later revealed to be Rumi walking to the well in the courtyard and leaning over its wall.

At first he couldn't see anything other than the darkness of the water. But then, deep down at the bottom of the well, he caught sight of my hand floating aimlessly on the rippling water like a rickety raft after a heavy storm. Next he recognized a pair of eyes—two shiny stones, staring up at the full moon now coming out from behind thick, dark clouds. (Shafak 27)

The act of retelling becomes an effective tool in the novel where each account adds layers of perspective to create a fuller objectivity to the event described.

The Harlot, Desert Rose is seen through various eyes in the novel. Through the eyes of Shams, she is described to be a young woman who is heart breakingly beautiful. Her "delicate chin, pearl-lustre skin, and dark almond eyes clouded with worry" are described

(Shafak 111). She is later seen through the eyes of Kerra when she seeks refuge at her house. Kerra finds her to be pretty and lithe in spite of her bruises and cuts. “Her brown eyes reminded me of Mother Mary's eyes” (Shafak 265).

Desert Rose's encounter at the mosque where she goes to listen to Rumi speak is narrated piecemeal by herself and the others who witness the event. Desert Rose begins by talking of her outing from the brothel to listen to Rumi speak at a mosque. She disguises herself as a man and finds a quiet corner to listen unobtrusively. But when the scarf covering her face comes loose, she realizes that one of her customers Baybars, sitting in the front row, has recognized her. The ensuing story is narrated by Hasan, the beggar. “...(A) commotion broke out in the background....A woman, a known prostitute, had been found in the mosque dressed up as a man. A group of people were shoving her out, chanting, “Lash the deceiver! Lash the whore!” (Shafak 123). Shams intervenes to rescue the poor girl and she flees the scene. The story again shifts to the perspective of Desert Rose who finds herself in a bazaar. She is reassured by Shams of her worth and encouraged to take the first step forward to usher in change.

This alternating of perspectives is a recurrent technique throughout the novel. The shift effects a movement of characters from subject to object. As is obvious from the way the event is narrated from multiple perspectives, the dynamics and mechanics of the social system is exposed by this movement. Perspectivism is an inescapable condition of life. The shift from subject to object inevitably results in an insightful comprehension of the event the phenomenon in question. The novice watching Shams conversing with the Master and the reverse perspective of Shams moving towards the door sensing his presence all attempt to offer near complete account of the story. Literature in appropriating it into literary technique acknowledges the impossibility of ever approaching any semblance of objectivity without grappling with the innumerable perspectives. And offers an antidote to the scepticism towards the notion of absolute truth and the objective reality in the Post-truth age.

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Culture and Truth

Abstract

As E B Tylor puts forward in his work Primitive Culture, culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This means that a person's thoughts, beliefs, perspective and behavior are heavily dependent on the underlying pattern of the society defined by these social institutions. The manifestation of these underlying laws establishes the idea of truth of that period and human beings rely on society to define his 'Truth'.

Truth for a society may be the truth of the dominant class. It gets reinforced over time without the burden of proof and is passed on to the next generation and that finally becomes the morality or culture of that society. This paper tries to examine moral truths as the product of culture through following three affairs:

- 1) Decriminalization of Section 377.
- 2) Striking down of Section 497.
- 3) India's distant dream of criminalizing marital rape

The two recent Supreme Court judgements and wide outcry for the need of criminalizing marital rape are revolutionary and shatter the long existing Victorian morality in our country. This paper examines their legitimacy in the changing world.

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1864 during the British rule of India which criminalized same sex relations between consenting adults. Pre - colonial India was relatively less conservative about sex and sexuality. But with the advent of British, their moral beliefs and truths were forced upon which led to the trailing of Victorian morality.

Section 497 was also drafted in colonial India by lord Macaulay which criminalizes adultery. Adultery is defined as having sex with a woman without her husband's consent. The section is a kind of "Romantic Paternalism" which brings out the assumption that women, like chattels, are the property of men.

Lastly, on the issue of marital rape. India doesn't have a well-defined law to deal with marital rape. The sanctity of marriage is placed above the dignity of woman and thus no law outlawing marital rape finds a place in our legal system. Married women are considered to be the property of men with no autonomy over their bodies and even if a man rapes a woman after marrying her, it's legally acceptable which again reinforces the Victorian era of patriarchy.

The proposed paper tries to analyze these issues on the basis of changing truth, constitutional rights, freedom to express and human dignity.

As E B Tylor puts forward in his work *Primitive Culture*, culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This means that a person's thoughts, beliefs, perspective and behavior are heavily

dependent on the underlying pattern of the society defined by these social institutions. The manifestation of these underlying laws establishes the idea of truth of that period and human beings rely on society to define his 'Truth'.

Truth for a society may be the truth of the dominant class. It gets reinforced over time without the burden of proof and is passed on to the next generation and that finally becomes the morality or culture of that society. People tend to be so inculcated in their morality that they fail to recognize the distinction between moral truth and “truth”. That is, people find no difference between moral truths and empirical statements; 'Theft is wrong' and 'The sun rose today' are considered to be the same kind of statement. David Hume, a Scottish enlightenment philosopher, historian and economist was probably the first to point out that these two are completely different types of assertions and that there is no way to root a moral assertion in an empirical one. Arguing that reason cannot be behind morality, he wrote:

Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason (Hume 1739, p. 458).

The above statement is very relevant in the present context where there is an outweighing of moral truth over truth. This paper tries to examine morality as a mere product of culture through following three affairs:

- 1)Decriminalization of Section 377.
- 2)Striking down of Section 497.
- 3)India's distant dream of criminalizing marital rape

The two recent Supreme Court judgements and wide outcry for the need of criminalizing marital rape are revolutionary and shatter the long existing Victorian morality in our country.

The period from 1837 – 1901 is known as the Victorian era in England. During this period, sex was considered as a taboo and sex for any other reason than procreation was viewed as 'dirty' and scandalous. Thus, homosexuality was considered as a sin in England. India was one of the colonies of Britain during the time and eventually the Victorian morality in England was introduced to India.

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1864 by Lord Macaulay which criminalized same sex relations between consenting adults. It was modelled on the Buggery act of 1533, an act that was passed during the reign of Henry VIII. According to section 377, *whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description of a term which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to fine.* This section is based on Christian moral and ethical standards.

Pre - colonial India was relatively less conservative about sex and sexuality. In many ancient historical evidences such as mythological characters and architectural structures, it can be seen that homosexuality or LGBTQ community was always part of the Indian society. The ancient law code *Manusmriti* shows that homosexuality was being practiced by both men and women in those days. In *Ramayana*, there is evidence of homosexuality in the story of a King called Bhagirath, who was born to the two widows of king Dileep. In *Mahabharat* too, there are a number of instances which underlines homosexuality and the LGBTQ as a whole. Shikhandi, who was born as a girl and who later attained perfect manhood, Mohini,

who is the female incarnation of Lord Vishnu, Lord Krishna turning into a woman to marry Arjuna's son Aravan are to mention a few.

The evidences of homosexuality do not stop in the mythological and religious texts alone. The erotic paintings and sculptures in temples also provide evidences of homosexuality in Indian culture. Images of women embracing each other, naked men showing their genitals to other men find a place in the walls of the temple of Khajuraho. Historians and scholars consider them as undeniable evidence of homosexuality. These evidences reflect the fact that homosexuality was common and it was never against Indian morality. However, with the advent of British, their moral beliefs and truths were forced upon which led to the trailing of Victorian morality.

The first attempt of questioning the authenticity of section 377 was from the Naz Foundation in 2001. They filed a lawsuit to allow homosexual relations between consenting adults. However, in 2003, the Delhi high court dismissed the Naz Foundation petition, saying the body had no standing in the matter. In 2006, the Naz Foundation appealed the dismissal to the Supreme Court, which instructed the Delhi court to reconsider the petition. Finally, in 2009 the Delhi High Court decriminalized section 377 and described the section as a violation of fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution.

But the Delhi high court's order was appealed by the religious fundamentalists and in 2013, the Supreme Court cancelled the Delhi high court order and the court re-criminalized homosexuality. The decision that gay sex is a criminal offense was seen as a major setback for human rights and it was widely criticized by the activists. These activists pointed out that section 377 is been used as a weapon for abuse, detention and questioning, extortion, harassment and forced sex by the police and law enforcing authorities.

In 2016, some well-known LGBTQ activists filed a petition claiming their “right to sexuality, sexual autonomy, choice of sexual partner, life, dignity, privacy and equality, along with other fundamental rights guaranteed under part III of the constitution, are violated by section 377.”

In 2018, a five-judge constitutional bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra and comprising of Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra, heard petitions challenging section 377. And on September 6, SC decriminalized section 377 and finally after 150 years of struggle, India got rid of the draconian law.

Just as every other citizen, people from LGBTQ community deserve equal right to live life peacefully. But that is not the case for people from this community, as they are often harassed and looked down upon by the religious fundamentalists calling them corrupt and for distorting the 'Indian culture'. The LGBTQ community suffers at the hands of law and are also deprived of the citizenry rights which are protected under the constitution. A large number of people in India think that homosexuality is a mental illness or influenced by the western culture and thus they consider homosexuals as abnormal and curse to the society. However, an individual's sexual orientation is individual's potential for finding emotion, affection and sexual attraction which can be towards same sex or opposite sex. This is not a mental sickness but this is their way of expressing themselves. It is their right to choose.

To put it another way, public morality cannot uphold the constitutional morality and the section 377 was created based on Victorian principles of morality. Those against legalizing homosexuality argue that it is against the moral values of the society. But morality cannot be

taken as a ground to restrict the fundamental rights of a citizen. A legal wrong is a moral wrong but vice versa is not correct. A moral wrong becomes a legal wrong only when its consequences are for society. A moral wrong cannot be taken as a legal wrong according to the interests of a particular section of the society. Morality is strictly evolved or developed from the thoughts, beliefs and perspective of the majority and there is no 'reason' behind these moral beliefs. What people believe to be the moral truths are simply a manifestation of the perspectives of the society. Likewise, it was just a perspective of the majority in the Victorian era that sex is only for procreation and sex for any other reason is sin or scandalous. Thus, that perspective of the majority gradually became the truth of the Victorian society and that 'truth' was forced upon the Indian society when British colonized India. In other words, India became a victim of Victorian morality and it took 150 years to break the shackles of this draconian law.

While giving the judgement for section 377, the judges unanimously opined that freedom of “choice” cannot be subjected to majoritarian perceptions. Addressing the bench, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said that laws made 50 years ago can become invalid with time. Arvind Datar, senior advocate echoed this when he said that the IPC was not a law made by Parliament, but a pre-constitutional law “based on religious sentiments of the time” and had no scientific basis. To highlight the sad state of affairs that science enjoyed in the past, he cited how Copernicus was denounced for contending that the sun, and not the earth, was at the centre of the universe.

Datar said that choice of a same sex partner was a “normal and benign variation of sexuality”. At this, Justice Malhotra said homosexuality was present not just in humans, but also in animals.

Justice Chandrachud also said that the section criminalizes behavior that does not fit into the heterosexual expectations of society. “History owes an apology to the heterosexual community and their family. Homosexuality is part of human sexuality. They have the right to dignity and be free of discrimination” – was the opinion of Justice Indu Malhotra.

Decriminalization of section 377 can be considered as a turning point in India's journey to gender equality and social justice. The judgement not only frees LGBTQ community from the shackles of gender inequality; it not only gives them the freedom of individuality, Right to privacy, life and liberty, freedom of choice; but also, the Right to freedom of self-expression. The decision of decriminalizing section 377 is a classic example of how moral truths become invalid with time. What society considers to be true today will not be true tomorrow.

Striking down of section 497 is another example of how moral truths change with time. It was also drafted in colonial India which criminalizes adultery. It states: “Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent or connivance of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery, and shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine, or with both. In such case the wife shall not be punishable as an abettor.” The section is a kind of “Romantic Paternalism” which brings out the assumption that women are the property of men. The law evidently gives out a conclusion that the wife who is involved in an illicit relationship with another man is a victim and not the perpetrator of the crime. Legislature considers adultery as an offence against the sanctity of the matrimonial home.

Therefore, those men who defile that sanctity are brought within the net of the law.

The First Law Commission of 1837, under Lord Macaulay, had not included adultery as a crime in the original IPC it had drafted. In fact, it was only counted as a civil wrong. But, the Second Law Commission of 1860 headed by Sir John Romilly made adultery a crime and exempted women from punishment of adultery due to the conditions in which they lived like child marriages, polygamy and age gap between spouses. The drafters of the IPC looked at this as being sympathetic to women, and also viewed men as the real perpetrators.

Not just the IPC, most legal systems also treat adultery as a serious crime. *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert*, Vol. 1 (1751) too equated adultery with theft: "Adultery is, after homicide, the most punishable of all crimes, because it is the cruelest of all thefts". A man having sex with another man's wife is considered as "the highest invasion of property". The political philosopher Larry Siedentop, in his book *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism*, observes that Greek and Roman religious and moral beliefs were influential in the rise of the city state, the foundation of much of the modern society. But these beliefs were not challenged until the first century A.D., he adds. He explains how the family was the driving force behind these early societies. These societies paid huge respect to the man-woman relationship, ensuring the continuity of the family line. Some of these beliefs and traditions seeped into later Christian values and found a place in laws. This is the context in which modern laws of adultery emerged.

Section 497 which criminalizes adultery was sanctioned when Victorian morality marked by sexual restraint was at its peak. Victorian period witnessed an extreme gender discrimination, where men were considered to be reasonable, aggressive and independent whereas women on the other hand were considered to be passive, submissive and dependent. Men dominated in a society and they became the governing sex. They were viewed as brave, rational and independent. Women, on the other hand, were dominated by their sexuality and were regarded as sensitive, irrational and dutiful. They were expected to fall silently into the molds crafted by men. As Susan Kent, Canadian actress and writer observes: "Women were so exclusively identified by their sexual functions that nineteenth-century society came to regard them as 'the Sex'" (32).

In this period, marriage was considered as the most important point in a woman's life that it prevented women from making a living on their own. Women were forced to depend on their husband's income: "Barred by law and custom from entering trades and professions by which they could support themselves, and restricted in the possession of property, woman had only one means of livelihood, that of marriage" (Kent 86). Due to women's economic reliance on men, they were predestined to become wives, no matter what they desire. To be even considered as a potential wife, not only she has to be virgin but also has to be innocent and free from any thought of love and sexuality. This requirement of chastity and absolute purity was not expected from men. The husband had the freedom to engage in premarital and extramarital sexual relationships. In other words, women were stuck alone in a world ruled by men: "Justice was administered according to a male view of her rights, and of how she ought to behave. It seemed appropriate that justice was portrayed as a blindfolded woman, since her scales were so tilted in favor of men" (Perkin 113).

Section 497 was introduced in India when polygamy was a social curse. A man could have more than one wife and each one of them could not have the same amount of love. Arranged marriages were so common and neither the bride nor the groom know each other before

marriage. So, there was every chance that a third man could allure the unsatisfied wife. It was considered as a crime on the part of adulterous man if it was done without the consent of the husband of the woman. That is, the husband has the right to file a case against the adulterous man for having physical relationship with his wife. But if the husband is engaged in adultery, wife cannot file a case against the adulterous woman. This non-uniformity of section 497 makes sense only if we understand the underlying logic behind it. The section is based upon sexual stereotypes that gives sexual power to men and passivity to women. To put in other words, men is considered as the seducer and women as the seduced. Also, the husband's consent plays a major role in this adultery law. That is, the adulterous man is free from crime if the woman has her husband's consent. Here lies the chattel theory. That is, wife is considered to be the property of the husband and she could not enjoy freedom and privacy.

Adultery laws are morally wrong as it fails to satisfy two important constitutional requirements. One, all legal provisions, whether enacted before or after the adoption of constitution, must satisfy the values of the Constitution. In other words, tradition and popular morality cannot surpass constitutional morality. Two, criminalizing adultery denies the freedom to choose a sexual partner, which is considered as the most intimate of decisions a person can make. Thus, it violates fundamental rights.

Section 497 is morally wrong and it fails to satisfy constitutional requirements but still Indian society held on to it for more than 150 years which clearly reflects the fact that not only the lands in India were colonized but also the minds of Indian society too. Even after the British left the country many years ago, the minds of the Indian society are still under the control of the British. Thus, by striking down section 497, it is the colonized mind that has been liberated after 150 years.

During the judgement of section 497, Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra said that the “beauty” of the Constitution is that it includes “I, you and me”. The CJI declared that the husband is neither master of his wife, nor does he have legal sovereignty over her. He also declared that “any system treating a woman with indignity... invites the wrath of the Constitution”.

Justice D Y Chandrachud called the provision a relic of Victorian morality and said that it “proceeds on the notion that the woman is but a chattel; the property of her husband”. Justice Chandrachud said that the provision was “destructive” and deprives women of their “autonomy, dignity and privacy” and observed: “Autonomy in matters of sexuality is intrinsic to a dignified human existence... Section 497 denudes the woman of the ability to make these fundamental choices.” In his 77-page verdict, he said “a society which perceives women as pure and an embodiment of virtue has no qualms of subjecting them to virulent attack: to rape, honor killings, sex-determination and infanticide. As an embodiment of virtue, society expects the women to be a mute spectator to and even accepting of egregious discrimination within the home.”

“The law on adultery enforces a construct of marriage where one partner is to cede her sexual autonomy to the other. Being antithetical to the constitutional guarantees of liberty, dignity and equality, section 497 does not pass constitutional muster,” Justice Chandrachud added. “A woman's 'purity' and a man's marital 'entitlement' to her exclusive sexual possession may be reflective of the antiquated social and sexual mores of the nineteenth century, but they cannot be recognized as being so today,” he said.

In other words, what is considered to be true many years back may not be true today. Everything changes, people changes, so does the society, their beliefs, their perceptions, their ideas, their thoughts, their environment, their culture, their tradition and even their truths. We live in a dynamic society where nothing is constant. So, to follow a culture that is made by the British 150 years ago creates asymmetry or instability in the present society. That is exactly why these draconian laws are being questioned and struck down from the constitution. These colonial era biases have very much poisoned the credibility of the Indian Penal Code and even the lawmakers of Independent India had become victim to it. So, by decriminalizing section 497, Indian society has taken a further step towards a progressive and civilized society rather than getting stuck to a state imposed moral society.

Lastly, on the issue of marital rape. India doesn't have a well-defined law to deal with marital rape. The sanctity of marriage is placed above the dignity of woman and thus no law outlawing marital rape finds a place in our legal system. Married women are considered to be the property of men with no autonomy over their bodies and even if a man rapes a woman after marrying her, it's legally acceptable which again reinforces the Victorian era of patriarchy.

In the Victorian period, after a woman is married, her rights, her property and even her identity cease to exist and she lives under the control and supervision of her husband. It is not acceptable from the side of a woman to have an opinion of her own. Her opinion is the opinion of her husband. And the husband had complete control over her body. Thus, domestic violence and marital rape were legal during the period. Marriage was almost similar to slavery during the Victorian era. Marriage was considered as women's natural and best position in life by the Victorian society. Men saw marriage as an expected duty of women. One Victorian male contemporary writing in a letter to a friend described the perfect wife as nothing more than an extension of his household surroundings: "of course at a certain age, when you have a house and so on, you get a wife as part of its furniture" (Kent 91).

When it comes to motherhood, formally it was given more respect but as with marriage, there were many unjust requirements and expectations. Firstly, motherhood was always separated from 'sex' thus giving motherhood a sexless image. One early twentieth century Protestant reformer wrote "If a woman becomes weary of bearing children, that matters not: let her only die from bearing, she is there to do it" (Kent 95).

The situation of women in the Victorian period was terrible and laws were made which subjugate women. The perception that women is nothing more than 'sex' led to the exclusion of marital rape as a crime from the IPC. In ancient time, a raped woman was considered less valuable as property, punishment for such crime includes paying fines or other compensations to her husband or father but not to her. It is the legacy of this approach which exempts marital rape from the IPC.

In criminal law, the act of the accused is judged through a lens of 'reasonableness' that is, it is judged by a reasonable person. The reasonable person's perspective is of an average, ordinary person who represents the community. However, this approach seems problematic in the case of marital rape because there is a mainstream perception that women are the property of men. In other words, in a patriarchal society, the 'reasonable person' is always a male, who judges the position of a female in the society. According to Morton Hunt, an American psychologist, "the typical marital rapist is a man who still believes that husbands are supposed to "rule" their wives. This extends, he feels, to sexual matters: when he wants

her, she should be glad, or at least willing, if she is not, he has the right to force her. But in forcing her, he gains far more than a few minutes of sexual pleasure. He humbles her and reasserts, in the most emotionally powerful way possible, that he is the ruler and she is the subject.”

Justice Indu Malhotra noted in her judgment of marital rape that “any legislation which treats similarly situated persons unequally, or discriminates between persons on the basis of sex alone, is liable to be struck down as being violative of Articles 14 (equality) and 15 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Constitution, which form the pillars against arbitrariness and discrimination.” Further, she said: “The time when wives were invisible to the law, and lived in the shadows of their husbands, has long since gone by. A legislation that perpetuates such stereotypes in relationships, and institutionalizes discrimination is a clear violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution.”

Marital rape despite being one of the most heinous crimes one can commit against a woman, it is still a distant dream for India to consider it as a crime which reflects the fact that the seed of Victorian morality is still in the minds of the Indian society. However, the wide outcry for the need of criminalizing marital rape throws light on the fact that, the perceptions of the people are changing so are their truth.

What is to be understood is that culture is a flux, it changes with time. Sometimes it evolves and at other times it becomes invalid. The equilibrium of the static society has to be shaken which may give rise to disturbances but the society itself will regain its equilibrium by solving the previous problems existing in the society through innovation and development. This self-correcting mechanism of the society continues through constant interaction between past and various subjects in a society. This process continues and is vital to the existence of every society. The culture that is considered to be true many years ago may not hold valid in today's world. Continuous debates and negotiations are inevitable for bringing back society into equilibrium by altering, diluting or eliminating altogether the particular notion on any practice or culture. Therefore Ideas, beliefs, and perceptions change which leads to the change in the interpretation of the 'truth'.

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Authenticity of Social Media Posts: Dissemination of Truth Versus Fake News in Social Networks

Abstract

Objective

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate that the current efforts to combat the epidemic of fake news – compiling lists of fake news sites, flagging stories as having been disputed as “fake,” downloading plug-ins to detect fake news – show a fundamental misunderstanding of the issue.

Research Methodology

This paper explores the plummeting believability ratings in conventional news outlets, as well as current efforts to combat fake news. These concepts are situated in the post-truth era, in which news is upsold on the notion of belief and opinion.

Findings

This paper finds that, in combination with a general mistrust of all news, a fundamental flaw in the system of clicks-as-reward allows fake news and other clickbait (on the Internet - content whose main purpose is to attract attention and encourage visitors to click on a link to a particular web page) to gain unobstructed virality.

Originality/Value

Fake news is a widely discussed topic right now. As this is primarily an issue of truth violence and information literacy, library and information professionals need to understand, discuss, and address this issue as one that is directly related to the profession.

Keywords- Disseminating truth, volunteer's dilemma, fake news, social network policy, post-truth, clickbait

I. Introduction

The concept of “truth,” as a public good is the production of a collective understanding, which emerges from a complex network of social interactions. The recent impact of social networks on shaping the perception of truth in political arena shows how such perception is corroborated and established by the online users, collectively. However, investigative journalism for discovering truth is a costly option, given the vast spectrum of online information. In some cases, both journalist and online users choose not to investigate the authenticity of the news they receive, because they assume other actors of the network had carried the cost of validation. Therefore, the new phenomenon of “fake news” has emerged within the context of social networks. The online social networks, similarly to System of Systems, cause emergent properties, which makes authentication processes difficult, given availability of multiple sources. In this study, we show how this conflict can be modeled as a volunteer's dilemma. We also show how the public contribution through news subscription (shared rewards) can impact the dominance of truth over fake news in the network.

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In today's social network era, the perception of truth depends on emerging social interactions along with the traditional news broadcasters. These online social interactions leave us with a diverse pool of news resources most of which are all but impossible to be individually fact checked and verified in terms of credibility and truthfulness. The lightening spread of news in the social media is known to be one aspect of network diffusion in social networks [1]. The network effect in disseminating news suggests that a piece of news gains credibility when goes viral. In other words, higher number of redistribution for a piece of news by other nodes is often perceived as its authenticity across a networked system [2] [3] [4] [5]. Activity of these nodes (agents) also depends on other agents in complex network of social interactions. At the same time, accessing the stream of true and credible news is costly. However, creating such credible streams in social networks to eliminate dominancy of fake news will be ultimately beneficial for the whole society, in long run. This suggests that the truthful news (i.e. truth) can be considered as a public good.

The world is consuming and interacting with social media at increasingly high rates. According to 2018 data from the Pew Institute [6], the majority of U.S. adults now use YouTube (73%) or Facebook (68%); of those who use Facebook, more than half check this platform several times a day.

As we engage on social media with greater frequency, we find ourselves sifting through photos of children, commentary about food, and explosive reactions to current political events. This increased media usage and exposure poses the question: How accurate is the information we are getting? More specifically, how honest are people on social media sites?

II. Honesty and Lying on Social Media

The truth is that people tend to lie on these platforms. How? First, people directly lie about their lives, which is often an effort to make themselves look more desirable or positive. In a study examining 80 online daters, Hancock, Toma, & Ellison (2007[7]) found that 2/3 of participants lied about their weight by 5 pounds or more. In a large sample of over 2000 people in England conducted by Custard.com[8] (2016), 43% of men admitted to making up facts about themselves and their lives that were not true online.

Even more commonly, people "lie" by presenting an image of themselves and their lives that is imprecise or less than comprehensive, leading the viewer to believe falsehoods. For example, in the Custard.com [9] study, only 18% of men and 19% of women reported that their Facebook page displayed "a completely accurate reflection" of who they are. Most commonly, participants said that they only shared "non-boring" aspects of their lives (32%) and were not as "active" as their social media accounts appeared (14%).

III. How and Why Does Dishonesty on Social Media Affect Us?

Although selective self-presentation and lying about ourselves on social media may not seem like a surprise (or even a big deal), it can affect us greatly. Why? Humans are naturally social creatures—we crave relationships and social interaction. According to some of the most prominent theories of human nature (e.g., Adlerian psychotherapy) and a large body of research, social interaction and feeling a sense of belonging to a community are two of the most important predictors of psychological and physical health (see here for a review[10]). Given our social nature, we want to feel connected to people and "in the know" about our friends, family, and even celebrities.

In addition to being social, we appear to have a natural propensity to trust that others are being honest with us. A large body of research suggests that we are programmed to trust others [11]. Although the reasons for our tendency to trust are complex, without interpersonal connectedness and a fundamental belief that those around will support you, protect you, and treat you respectfully, *we feel unsafe*. In essence, trust is developmentally essential to our feelings of safety and security.

When we engage on social media and our propensity to trust is met with overt lying and less than honest presentations it can be problematic because we internally presume that what is presented is true. That people are naturally as good-looking as their photos appear on a daily basis. That people's daily home life is as perfect as the pictures depict. That others have very few gut-wrenching struggles. That people around us are in a habitual state of going on vacation, eating out, and parenting blissfully. *This is clearly not true*. And although we are less aware of the realities of other peoples' lives, we are well aware of the ways in which our own lives are NOT ideal.

IV. Social Comparison in Social Media

To make matters more complicated, when we internally believe that what we see in social media is true and relevant to us, we are more likely to compare ourselves to it in an internal effort to evaluate ourselves against those around us (e.g., regarding our looks, wealth, significant other, family, etc.). As we do this against the idealized images and unreasonably positive life accounts that tend to permeate social media, we are likely to feel more poorly about ourselves and our lives.

Indeed, a growing body of research suggests that social media use can negatively affect your psychological health, particularly if you compare yourself to the positive images you see online. In a study of 339 college women (Puglia, 2017), the tendency to compare oneself to others was associated with poorer body esteem. Furthermore, in a subsample of 58 women in the Puglia study, those with higher levels of Facebook usage displayed lower body satisfaction than those with lower Facebook usage [12]. Similarly, in an experimental study by Vogel and colleagues (2015[13]), participants who tended to compare themselves to others more regularly had lower self-esteem, more negative emotions, and a poorer view of themselves after using Facebook than participants who did not tend to compare themselves to others.

The Naked Truth is this: Most of us now use some form of social media. Research suggests that what people post on social media is not an accurate representation of their lives or who they are. In fact, it may be blatant lies. Consequently, when engaging with social media, it is critical to remind yourself that what you see is not an accurate picture of reality. Don't compare yourself to the images of friends, colleagues, or celebrities. Remind yourself that it is just a snapshot of their life—and one that they want you to see.

V. Why Fake News on Social Media Travels Faster Than the Truth

False news is more novel than true news, and that may be why we share the false much faster and more widely. Prominent responses to false news include surprise, fear and disgust. True news tends to be met with sadness, joy, anticipation and trust. Humans are more likely than automated processes to be responsible for the spread of fake news.

These insights emerge from a large and impressive study published on 9 March in the journal *Science*. Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, interested in how and

why true and false news stories spread differently, used 126,000 stories that had been tweeted by 3 million people a total of 4.5m times. The data spanned 2006, when Twitter began, to 2017.

The study is unsettling reading, especially in light of what has so far emerged from US intelligence agencies, congressional inquiries and the special prosecutor Robert Mueller about use of social media to distort the 2016 presidential election. I hope the research helps to persuade more people that fake news powered by social media is a serious threat to all democracies' health [14]. A growing bundle of studies shows that this is a qualitatively and quantitatively new problem, not just a digital manifestation of the yellow press of old. Apart from effects on elections and referendums, fake news in social media can assist hate speech to turn into communal violence more quickly. And some government responses are troubling on free-speech grounds, such as Sri Lanka's week-long ban on social media, or “digital curfew”.

The MIT researchers studied what they called “rumour cascades”. A cascade starts with a Twitter user making an assertion about a topic – with words, images or links – and continues in an unbroken chain of retweets. The researchers analysed cascades about news stories that six fact-checking organizations agreed were true or agreed were false. The study found that “falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper and more broadly than truth in all categories of information”. False political news reached more people faster and went deeper into their networks than any other category of false information.

The study compared the emotional content of replies to true and false rumours by using about 32,000 Twitter hashtags and a lexicon of about 140,000 English words that associate with eight basic emotions: anger, fear, anticipation, trust, surprise, sadness, joy and disgust. Were automated processes, or “bots”, the main culprits in spreading falsity? No – the researchers found, it's humans.

Calling for more effort to identify the factors in human judgment that spread true and false news, including interviews with users, surveys, lab experiments and neuroimaging, the paper points to some obvious reasons to look deeper. “False news can drive misallocation of resources during terror attacks and natural disasters, the misalignment of business investments, and misinformed elections.” [15]

Two features of this study, besides its published results, are heartening. Artificial intelligence was successfully deployed to good effect, for example, a bot-detection algorithm. And Twitter provided access to its data, some funding, and shared its expertise. The researchers have conditionally offered to share their dataset.

More openness by the social media giants and greater collaboration by them with suitably qualified partners in tackling the problem of fake news is essential. Traditional journalism organizations are potential partners too. They find, check and disseminate news, are well placed to assess veracity, attract masses of comment online and discussion on social media platforms, and have a clear incentive to maintain trust in their own contributions to democratic life.

VI. Conclusion

As we enter the post-trust era, in which facts and evidence have been replaced by personal belief and emotion, the nature of news, and what people accept as news, is also shifting toward a belief and emotion-based market. The truth of the story no longer matters. What

matters is that the story falls in line with what a person wants to hear. “Fake news” no longer means factless or slanderous news, but rather news that is seen to attack a person's pre-existing beliefs. This is the truth of the post-truth era.

The term “fake news” has become almost a joke; a tongue-in-cheek reference used by a society in which belief in any news is spiraling downwards. The term is also extremely polarizing, both socially and politically. And seeing a market in which polarized headlines sell, both “real” and “fake” news producers are contributing to this post-truth mess. News is being upsold on the notion of opinion. A neutral and objective story is being lost.

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The Entwined Truth and History in Herta Müller's *Traveling on One Leg*

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

- George Santayana

History, the study of the past events, stands a testimony for the completed work of a particular place. It is an umbrella term which corelates the past events with the memory, discovery, collection, organization, presentation and interpretation of information about these past events. Truth, on the other hand, deals with the real-life situations with the emotions and feelings, trustworthiness and loyalty. It depends on the situations of any individual's mentality. The truth of the past events leaves their irreparable imprints on their way of due change in the course of time.

Herta Müller, a Romanian born German Nobel Laureate of 2009 had raised the curtains of the Communist Regime by portraying the pains, sufferings, and emotions of the public. *Traveling on One Leg* is the portrayal of a fragile woman, Irene, born to a German family in Romania who has recently emigrated from Romania to Germany. In 1985, in the Communist Romania, the thirty plus year old Irene falls in love with a German Franz.

Apart from narrating the story of a young woman loving a young man who does not love her, and who is loved by a man who she hates, this novel portrays the ironies, absurdities and paradoxes of the last days of the Cold War in Europe before the fall of the great Communist Regime in 1989. Irene, being politically and socially isolated, takes a dissonant journey within strange yet familiar territory for a poignant exploration of exile, homeland and identity leaving the traces of history and truth hidden among them. As Katrin Kohl states in her essay *Beyond Realism*: "Literature can invent a truth through language that shows what happens inside us and around us when moral values become derailed. The power of literary invention thereby gains a utopian dimension that is capable of generating political energy."

In the 1980s Irene, the 35-year old protagonist has emigrated from an unnamed Eastern bloc country to West Germany in order to escape the political persecution. She struggles to maintain her sanity when tangled in an ambiguously romantic quadrangle with three men. First, Franz, a student and a decade junior; second comes his friend Stefan, a sociologist; and finally, Stefan's friend and a gay man, Thomas. Her past imprints not only her memories but also her experiences to come and an attempt in contemporary culture engaged with history.

Though Müller's characters are fictional, the stories narrated by them tend to spring from the author's own life. Her writings often portray the fictionalized accounts of sufferings and persecution of minority residents, the ethnic German community in Romania, under an oppressive Communist regime of the twentieth century. In the words of Brandt and Glajar, "Müller's poignant discourse of discontent, as well as her personal history as a political writer, allows for a sophisticated perspective on Communist life in Romania, and it reaches a wider audience than most historical texts ever could."

The award of the Nobel Prize Committee affirms that Müller's writing is not trapped either in Romanian or German local histories but speaks to a broader cosmopolitan, politically engaged audience. She revisits the traumatic past under Nicolae Ceausescu's Communist yet nationalist dictatorship constantly and obsessively in her writings. Her writings provide an invaluable source for those who want to understand how non-democratic regimes control the individual lives.

The novel is a slow progressing one with tightly packed emotional, acute loneliness. Irene's anxiety when she faces her adoptive homeland's hectoring refugee bureaucracy, her unsentimental observation of Berlin street life and her rigorously controlled homesickness is depicted in spare prose that is never less than striking. Müller's novel never identifies Irene's native country by its name, instead chooses the term 'the other country', just as it never gives a last name to the characters in the novel.

Similarly, the novel depicts the dictator as “the dictator”, without revealing the full identification of that person. At first, when Irene prepares to leave their country, the dictator enters her apartment stepping on her clothes and uttering a few general sentences. He never assaults her or try to prevent her from departing the homeland. After her settling in West Berlin, she travels to her homeland through revisiting the incidents that had happened there. These reminiscences of her traumatic past paints the sufferings of the life of the common public under dictatorship. The images of the place of her short stay at the dictator's mansion in a vague way reinforces the novel's idea of the colorless hoarse life under the Communist regime and the lack of personality in the character of the dictator.

Traveling on One Leg offers the readers a multiple narrative analysis of her various reflections on writing. In an interview with Haines in 1998, she defines her political stance with the statement 'Ich habe keine Theorien' ('I don't have theories'). The same applies to her approach towards writing. The vivid, picturesque description of either the landscape or the person or the office or any other working place or any particular situation, enables the readers to experience the same pain, pleasure and admiration as of the writer.

Kohl, while differentiating the role of Müller from a historian remarks:

Instead of relating actual events like a historian, she seeks to create a reality that may be 'higher' or 'deeper' than the ordinary reality. The usage of various metaphors reveals that Müller is not particular in defining a systematic position but is rather evoking a process of creativity that is deliberately intuitive and mutable. (Haines and Marven 24)

Traveling on One Leg pictures the angst that pervades the protagonist, Irene, when interrogated frequently by the *Securitate*, the secret police force employed by the totalitarian regime. They create a psychological fear in her by their secret and frequent visits to her apartment. Using the technique of photomontage, Müller makes overpowering statements to highlight the double alienation suffered by the refugees.

The history twined with the life of the public when expressed in the literary works, provokes the readers to visualize the pains and the sufferings of them. Irene, the protagonist, undergoes all these sufferings and mental agonies. But, never loses the hope of overcoming all these difficulties and learning to lead a life of utter bliss. This work of Müller is comprised of image-laden depictions of the depressed desolation and understated anguish and pains of the refugees. The author is unique in linking her own experiences of life in the totalitarian

regime with the character of Irene. Müller by rendering so, gives flesh and blood to the historical happenings and relive the heartbreaking emotional life repeatedly.

Müller's texts reveal the darker excesses of human history and remind the mankind that they should never let them happen again. What Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta says in her essay, 'Making a terrible world beautiful', about the impact of the history in the lives of the people in a dystopian fiction in general, is that they are not only

cautionary tales about unchecked authoritarian regimes. They are also about human hope, optimism and the role of the individual. They are about valuing freedom, and not taking it for granted but cherishing and supporting it. They are about integrity, civic engagement and the work of strengthening democracy. (THE HINDU. 11)

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Truth and Mind in The Autobiographies of Doris Lessing

Abstract

*Psychology focusses its aim in the study of mind within the sphere of cognitive domain since from the bygone days. The domain of psychology had its inception with Sigmund Freud, who emphasized that the human mind is compared to a vast sea engulfed with huge blocks of dense icebergs. The outer part of the iceberg is the conscious mind which is very active and tries to redress the problems and gladness. Some of the emotions which is unexpressed lies within the dense core mantle of the mind, known as the Unconscious which is the hub of repressed desires and emotions. The central part of the mind which is partially visible is the subconscious, erupts in the form of dreams, slips of tongue etc. These theories of mind, later modified by Jean Jacques Lacan, who propounded his theory of Unconscious which states that the Unconscious is structured in the form of language. The unique quality that is found in the human mind is the gift of language which has created wonders in the world. The concept of truth is a platonic idea which lies embedded within the unconscious mind, which is subjective and depends on an individual perception. It is related to the individual mind and depends on the culture and the environment that an individual experience and undergoes during his lifetime. Absolute truth is a myth and relative truth finds a better place in today's society. This paper tries to analyse psychoanalytically, the concept of truth and mind in the two autobiographies of Lessing namely, *Under My Skin* and *Walking in the Shade*. Doris Lessing, a British writer, born and brought up in the midst of the wild savannahs of Rhodesia and later migrated to England to become a full-fledged writer. She recollects her childhood memories and her nostalgic past and portrays her own individual identity and the subjective changes that she undergoes during her lifetime is narrated. Her memoirs are recollected and compiled in the form of an autobiography, one of the genres of literature. Lessing states that novels don't have to be the truth, autobiographies have to be. At least the attempt must be made and this brings us to Memory. Hence, this paper tries to focus itself on the concept of truth and mind in the autobiographies of Lessing as psychobiography and try to fit within the framework of psychoanalysis.*

Key Words: Autobiography, psychobiography, Conscious, unconscious, Truth, Mind, Memories.

Beauty is Truth, and truth Beauty.

(John Keats, Ode to a Grecian Urn)

One of the renowned Hindu philosopher, Adhi Shankaracharya says, *Ahom Brahmas me* (I am the God). Here the self 'I' is equated to God, the ultimate truth and the mind being an entity, facilitates like a catalyst. The knowledge of self is closely related to our mind. With introspection, personal examination and self-reflection, the mind is defined as a hidden entity which reflects itself through our appearance and behaviour. Autobiography cannot be written on imaginative events like that of a novel. Readers expect truth in autobiography for, the factual truth is the soul of autobiography. Truth is the first requirement of a good

autobiography. Susie Tharu is convinced that there is an unseen agreement about truth in autobiography between a writer and readers. She writes,

The defining future of the genre: a pact between the reader and the writer, one committed to tell the truth, the other committed to take the text as truth, not fiction.

Truth, in all its connotations, can be distorted, mediated or rearranged, thus making it difficult to truly recognize and outline other concerns around authority and authenticity, which, for me, are at the core of truthfulness in writing. Psychology focusses its aim in the study of mind within the sphere of cognitive domain since from the bygone days. The domain of psychology had its inception with Sigmund Freud, who emphasized that the human mind is compared to a vast sea engulfed with huge blocks of dense icebergs. The outer part of the iceberg is the *conscious* mind which is very active and tries to redress the problems and gladness. Some of the emotions which is unexpressed lies within the dense core mantle of the mind, known as the Unconscious which is the hub of repressed desires and emotions. The central part of the mind which is partially visible is the subconscious, erupts in the form of dreams, slips of tongue etc. These theories of mind, later modified by Jean Jacques Lacan, who propounded his theory of *Unconscious* which states that the *Unconscious is structured in the form of language*. This unique quality found in the human mind is the gift of language which has created wonders in the world. The concept of truth is a platonic idea which lies embedded within the unconscious mind, which is subjective and depends on an individual perception. It is related to the individual mind and depends on the culture and the environment that an individual experiences and undergoes during his/her lifetime. Absolute truth is a myth and relative truth finds a better place in today's society.

This paper tries to analyse a psychoanalytical study of the concept of truth and mind in the two autobiographies of Lessing namely, *Under My Skin* and *Walking in the Shade*. Doris Lessing, a British writer, born and brought up in the midst of the wild savannahs of Rhodesia and later migrated to England to become a full-fledged writer. She recollects and narrates her childhood memories and her nostalgic past and portrays her individual identity and the subjective changes that she undergoes during her lifetime. Her memoirs are recollected and compiled in the form of an autobiography, one of the genres of English Literature. Lessing states that novels don't have to be the truth, autobiographies have to be. At least the attempt must be made and this brings us to Memory. The memory isn't fixed: it slips and slides about. It is hard to match one's memories of one's life with the solid fixed account it that is written down. Lessing adds to that *... inside a moving, flickering luminous envelope, like a candle flame in a draught. Novels do not have to be the truth. Autobiographies do have to be. At least the attempt must be made*. Hence, this paper tries to focus itself on the concept of truth and mind in the autobiographies of Lessing and try to fit within the framework of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis appropriates the organizational context of unconscious to analyse and interpret the text and the subject. In the complex process of defining the contours of potential subject, psychoanalysis effectively negotiates the discovery of subject. Therefore, it works as a powerful way of thinking about one's self in relation to literary theory and practical criticism. When psychoanalysis was influenced by the structural and post-structural discourses, it reconceptualised the notion of inner 'self'(truth)- a philosophical concept – as a structure and a content of language to term it as 'Subject' or 'Subjectivity.' The radical form of psychoanalysis always ends up creating the same subject which it pretends to have already discovered. The conception 'I' has an essential philosophic problem as it is formidable to

describe the meaning of our 'selves' in a rational satisfactory way. Therefore, the nature of self to define the reality is rather, a herculean task. Philosophy has preoccupied with the notion of the self since Plato, where the concept of self tries to identify itself with the physical bodily form and other with the mind or spiritual aspects. Panpsychism maintains that the body is explicable in terms of mind and the mind is an essential seat of the self. As a result, this theory rejects the materialistic explanation because of its empirical presuppositions viewed as pure prejudices being inconsistent with the experience of remembering, desiring and acting phenomena. As an alternative, the panpsychists declare that the self consists of mind and the reality of physical events occurring within an individual being is a matter of doubt. Yet, it is plausible to consider our minds as real and central to ourselves.

This paper tries to analyse the study of Lessing's autobiographies with a view to trace the structure and construction of her subjectivity through Lacanian psychoanalysis. Doris Lessing's autobiographies are both a mirror and anti-mirror. It reflects her own image and is much more than the image she thinks when she sees at the moment as she gazes into it. Her autobiography reflects and refracts the nature of her 'self'. The purpose of this study is to analyse the role and position of Doris Lessing in the portrayal of truth and her state of mind in the compiling of her autobiographies. The method adopted is a psychobiographical study which aims in studying the lives of very important personalities. Psychobiographies produces inspirations, strong hunches, or insights, leading in time to formal propositions that can be tested against larger group of people. It tries to study the working process of a psyche and its relation with its surroundings which led to the creation of great autobiographies.

Self-knowledge is supposed to be transforming. The term autobiography was coined by Robert Southey in 1809 when he described the Portuguese poet, Francisco Vieira and the theory of autobiography has become a very well-trodden terrain. Linda Anderson explored the ideological assumption about the nature of self that underlies in the writing of autobiography, particularly in the light of recent feminist, psychoanalytic and poststructuralist criticism. It is an important testing ground for critical controversies about a range of ideas including authorship, selfhood, representation and division between fact and fiction. It has been recognized as a distinct literary genre since the late eighteenth century. It is an important testing ground for critical controversies about a range of ideas including authorship, selfhood, representation and division between fact and fiction. Phillippe Lejeune (1982) produced the widely quoted definition:

A retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality. (Lejeune 1982:193)

Autobiography is the mirror in which the individual reflects his/her own image, says Gusdorf. Cellini Casanova was the first to pen autobiography and the term was coined by Southey. And this brings us to Memory are our childish selves where parents create memories for their children? Most of the time we are in a sort of trance, not noticing much. It tries to create an identity. Doris Lessing states that,

An autobiography is written in one voice, by one person, and this person smooths out the roughness of the different personalities. This is an elderly, judicious, calm person, and this calmness of judgement imposes a unity and an identity.

Our own views of our lives change all the time, different at different ages. The linguistic codes and representations developed by Freud and Lacan can be questioned by the traces of the woman/artist left in her work. Freud's thinking on the relation between narrative and the subject has important consequences for the understanding of autobiography and how we remember our lives. His theory of Oedipus Complex which deals with the childhood drama of love, hate and jealousy in relation to one's parents that sets the scene for the adult's later affective life. According to Freud, the Oedipus Complex becomes the place where sexual difference is established. For Lacan, the Oedipal Complex is an allegory of the subject's initiation into the symbolic order, which is the realm of language, the law, lack and sexual difference. For him Language determines images, but images provide the resource(imaginary) which makes language possible. Lacan argued that the mirror constructs of self, which is the cohesiveness of a reflection where the subject fantasizes as real. Many people see truth as an important issue in autobiographies. Dreams, fears and fantasies might not be an historical reflection, but can be a truthful reflection of one's life. The argument that texts can have political or historical effect revives the question of referentiality or truth, without it necessarily returning us to the same place. At its simplest perhaps the question of truth-telling asks us to ponder the relationship of the autobiographer's text to her experience. In salvaging the truth of her experience, the autobiographer might seek to unearth or unmask her true self, that unique self-uncontaminated by the falsehoods, half-truths, that her culture would foist off as the universalized truth of female experience and female identity through this process of shedding layers of false selves and identities, she would struggle towards an authentic, or truthful reflection of her emotional life, towards a legitimate articulation of what she really feels and thinks. However, truth to the self and the experience is a problematic phenomenon, as Sidonie Smith argues in her essay *Constructing truths in lying mouths: truth telling in women's autobiography*.

The unproblematic celebration of the experience and the self of the woman outside the text too easily homogenizes that truth into an essentialist theory of sexual difference, too easily erases the traces of social, cultural, linguistic, psychological technologies of selfhood and gender. And finally as it promotes a literary theory of reflectionism and transparency, the celebration of a reified experience paradoxically certain obscures the influence of determining structures, including those of literature and genre. Experience is not therefore to be recovered outside the interpretive grids of culture and the structural grids of language. Moreover, experience is culturally legitimized since only certain experiences are elevated to the truthful at particular historical moments.

Doris Lessing tackles such issues as those of truth, memory and identity, which she believes are important to life writing.

You cannot sit down to write about yourself without rhetorical questions of the most tedious kind demanding attention. Our old friend, the Truth, the truth is firsthow much is to tell, how little?(UMS11).She points out that memory is a careless organ, not only a self-flattering one, and not always self-flattering. More than once I have said, No, I wasn't as bad as I've been thinking as well as discovering that I was worse. (13)

Thus from the beginning, she acknowledges memory as unreliable, and doesn't guarantee truthfulness because sometimes one remembers details about certain episodes and nothing about others. In an autobiography, memory speaks in a multifarious voice, including ones that distort, change, silence, embellish, obscure. Thus, acknowledging the fallibility, frailty

and unreliability of memory, Lessing seems to tell us that the self is not entirely revealed in autobiography. The ultimate truth in autobiography is a sheer illusion, it is as evasive as memory.

Autobiographical truth is not a fixed but on evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation. The idea of autobiography's claim to referentiality is debunked.
(Eakin)

The adult Lessing thus attempts to overcome the grief of being rejected by her mother, who had preferred a baby boy, by imagining a better a better version in which she is wanted and welcomed into the world. Her strict mother who refused to cater the needs of her infant deliberately avoided her feeding, despite the toddler was hungry as she was misled. Lessing's sense of anger towards her mother, leave her children and migrated to London. This would be the result of victimization in the institution of motherhood. Lessing was fighting against her mother at the age of fourteen in nervous flight. Lessing would be the first woman writer to follow the concept of a free woman by boldly cutting the chords of traditional norms and mores of her society. She breaks the traditional conventions of marriage, sanctity and patriarchal dominated society by freeing herself through liberalization. She acts according to her 'self' and the mental process that arose in her mind by leaving her children in the care of her husband and gets to London to become a free writer. She joined politics and became an active member of the Communist party, but was disillusioned by the manifesto of the communist politics, propaganda and their functioning in the real life. She left the party as it was life full of inconsistencies and migrated to London to try her career as a writer, where she succeeds in her future years. Here, inspite of many upheavals in her life, she brings up her son, Peter as a single parent and continues to be a promising writer. The presence of photographs in her autobiography also adds as an evidence of her life and certain incidents which were very crucial in her lifetime and serves as true testimonials to substantiate her past life. Goethe concludes in his autobiography

This conviction, sprung from faith and sight, which in all cases that we recognize as the most important, is applicable and strengthening, lies at the fountain of the moral as well as the literary edifice of my life, and the book hasn't changed but you have.

The cognitive concepts of truth and mind with reference to Subjectivity is concerned with the study of psychoanalytical theory in general and analysing the two voluminous autobiographies namely *Under My Skin* & *Walking in the Shade* to define her subjectivity not only from the psychoanalytical point of view but also from the cultural point of view. The reason is quite obvious from the fact that psychoanalysis is not a self-contained, privileged system of knowledge capable of unlocking the cultural secret. It has to align with culture to perform efficiently as a system of knowledge. Therefore, psychoanalysis is not considered as a baffling metanarrative, is treated as a product of historical determinants and a result of critical inquiry. Psychoanalysis is not utilized for the detection and identification of the pathological symptoms, but treated a system of systems structuring the subjectivity within the cultural context.

With the above perceptions in mind, an examination of subjectivity in Lessing's autobiographies aims in bringing out a structure of the subjective shape of Lessing as an individual writer who aligned herself to the western culture. The perception that psychoanalytic forms of narrative came to organize subjectivity informs the version circulated in western, critical and theoretical history. The theories of Jean Jacques Lacan

which has caught the imagination of psychoanalysts and cultural theorists, emphasise more on the role of language in the formulation of conscious subjectivity. However, there should not be a preconceived misconception that there is a notion of absolute truth that lies in these autobiographies and that is the limitation that psychoanalysis acts like a semi-permeable membrane that helps in decoding the mental functioning aspects and restrains to decode the cultural or societal subjectivity. Therefore, a careful analysis of deconstructing the structure of subjectivity is done along with the reconstruction of cultural subjectivity on parallel lines found in her autobiographies.

The complexity involved in formulating the subjectivity of Lessing lies in translating the unconscious experience of being in a specific cultural setting into a descriptive conception woven into a psychoanalytic vocabulary. Hence, I wish to conclude by stating that absolute truth is a platonic myth.

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The Alteration of Human Psyche through Attire in the Movie, *The Dress Maker*

"Real fashion change comes from real changes in real life. Everything else is just decoration."

- Tom Ford.

The 2015 movie titled 'The dressmaker' is not just a remarkable revenge story, it is also a quest for truth. This quest is made exquisitely stunning and a feast for eyes by the central character Myrtle "Tilly" Dunnage. The movie is an adaptation of Rosalie Ham's novel of the same name. Revenge and creativity being the central theme, the movie also explores into the psyche of the society towards the social fragments. The changes that a simple piece of cloth can perform is revolutionary and this idea is well exhibited and exploited by the lead role played by Kate Winslet. Fashion changes people, reshape the society, transforms perspective, maybe win wars too. If you haven't realised the power of fashion then you haven't looked close enough.

The story is set in the Australian outback town of Dungatar, where Stuart Pettyman, a school boy, meets with violent death and Tilly Dunnage being accused and exiled. She returns back, after 25 years with a 'singer' sewing machine, as her weapon in her quest for truth. She transforms the society through her well stitched clothes and alter their perception about her. As costumes changes, people reshape their idea of her. She trades clothes for information and until she finds out the truth about the murder she was accused of. She wins over her challenge and destroys all the attires she made so that the town would go back into its previous worn out state.

The objective of the paper is to bring out the role of fashion in assisting Tilly Dunnage in her quest for truth. A detailed analysis is made with comparing each costume and the changes it reflect in the society. This revolution of clothes helps everyone in that small town to find identity and helps Tully to free herself from the accusation of murder. At the end, the paper concludes with what the society would be if fashion hasn't crept its way into every wardrobe of every house. To make a change of such magnitude, to be a change that reflects in the way each person constructs identity over others and over oneself is the power of fashion in reconstructing truth.

Key words: Truth, fashion, society.

"Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening."

- Coco Chanel

The notion of truth is an integral part of every existing ideology. As an idea, a statement, a theory, a belief etc. we can find numerous perceptions of truth in all these paradigms. Over the years philosophers have developed many theories to arrive at the exact meaning of truth.

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Truth should have enough support in terms of rigid facts, that it cannot be questioned or altered, that with the correspondence of facts, we arrive at a conclusion called truth. The correspondence theory of truth gave importance to the underlying facts. As a counter belief, the coherent theory of truth emerged but in today's world much more focus lies on the pragmatic theory. The pragmatics' motto being "truth is satisfactory to believe" stress on the practicality of understanding, opening the impact of experiences, physical and metaphysical, into the consideration of the ideal truth. Truth should reflect on the subsequent experiences of human understanding rather than conflicting it. These theories can be extended and incorporated into any of the disciplines to nurture a better understanding of the facts. Truth becomes a moral idea, an idea that suggests the correctness of reflections, an ideal state, the ultimatum to strive for. It suggests an accurate representation of the times, the impression of every period with respect to its previous one. When there is a change in the conditions or propositions that hold up the truth, the truth in itself experiences that change. It echoes the moral consciousness of the society. When facts and prepositions became important factors in determining the truthness of truth, eventually these factors remolded to be something manipulative, preying on the consciousness of the society, developing the elements that would naturally ripen into aspects that arbitrate to a more favorable outcome, a polished shining truth, more digestible and more acceptable to the society.

Fashion has its own way of reflecting the truth of the times. Focusing on the attires, costumes from Elizabethan age to modern times suggests the innate ideology of the society with respect to its social and economic status. Clothing in association to art, critical thinking, as a rebellion against the existing notions is also popular. The beat generation moved away from the already accepted forms of clothing and brought a revolution by choosing tight jeans and turtleneck sweaters. It was their way of breaking away from a culture they don't believe in, to wear freedom on the sleeves. The truth was different for each coming age and it was always reflected in clothes, many new attires emerged, one for each occasion, each social class, community, it suggested economical wealth, social status, educational superiority, level of success, etc. Fashion confronts with the changes and sometimes propel the change from within, it becomes a reflection and influence as well. The hippies rebelled against formal articles of clothing and invited loose flowy skirts even for men, long hairs, ripped or torn clothes, added fringes to everything, wore embroidered clothes to formal meetings, walked around in flip-flops, painted their faces, wore headbands and seashells against the then sophisticated tight skirts and power suits. These unprecedented acts left generations of people inspired and marked a consequential change in women clothing. Trends are social dialogues on which we can expand a more sensible commentary on life. Fashion industry opens up its rebellion to bring more transparency into the society, it projects the ideals of the social fabrics where it is most visible. A basic necessity in everyday life, a piece of cloth and the amount of significance it holds over us, over the future world and how they are going to identify our society is not something that trivial.

As fashion helps in providing a platform for self-expression, the notion of its truthness becomes important. Transversing the idea of fashion as a luxury to complacent behind the actual changes in the society, it can be seen as a language that speaks even when the words fail. The range of implications such actions make should have a far more impact than just being an outfit for the day. Truth and fashion should have an interrelation that keeps either in check - without crossing the boundaries.

The 2015 movie titled, *The dressmaker* is not just a remarkable revenge story, it is also a

quest for truth. This quest is made exquisitely stunning and a feast for eyes by the central character Myrtle “Tilly” Dunnage. The movie is an adaptation of Rosalie Ham's novel of the same name. Revenge and creativity being the central theme, the movie also explores the psyche of the society towards the social notion of clothing. The changes that a simple piece of cloth can perform is revolutionary and this idea is well exhibited and exploited by the lead role played by Kate Winslet. The story is set in the Australian outback town of Dungatar, where Stuart Pettyman, a schoolboy, meets with violent death and Tilly Dunnage being accused and exiled. She returns back, after 25 years with a 'singer' sewing machine, as her weapon in her quest for truth. She transforms the society through her well-stitched clothes and alters their perception about her. As to costumes changes, people reshape their idea of her. She trades clothes for information and until she finds out the truth about the murder she was accused of. She wins over her challenge and destroys all the attires she made so that the town would go back into its previous worn out state. The movie projects strong messages against bullying, misconceptions and social pretensions.

"Tilly brings color back into this town. We purposefully kept everything desaturated until Tilly comes and brings these strong rich colors in her dresses," says Moorhouse, the director of the film. In the beginning, we are presented with a rusty shire, where people still prey on each other with their evil and obnoxious dislike for everything common. The shire holds itself with the tragic memory of Stuart Pettyman, who was murdered by Tilly Dunnage. They exiled her and abandoned her lonely mother to fate. There is not much life or activity in this place and not much has changed since the tragic case of Stuart and Tilly. The shire does not forget and certainly does not forgive. Into this crude and uncouthly shire, Tilly Dunnage and her 'singer' sewing machine befell. Tully didn't have much of propaganda or revolution in mind, but she wanted to know the truth. She was taken away from her mother in charge of murder of which she can't remember. This inner conflict, of the questions that were unanswered, she came back to the shire once again and continue her quest for truth in and only the way she knows the best. In her quest, Tilly was also able to bring life and color to the lives of the people, she changed the perceptions of men about women, she helped a friend to reveal himself truly, and also finds the misfortune that shadows the shire all along. Tilly and her clothes made modifications in the societal concepts, paved way for gender identity and revelation of truth. Tilly's first formal appearance is at the football match where the players get distracted by her costume and style. This instance emphasis on the beginning of many changes that the shire is subjected to. With a simple dress, she adds color, life, activity, desire, and passion in the minds of the people. It is from this instance that she gets her first client. Tilly is different from the normal tailors, she demands information in exchange for clothes. She collects information in such a way that finally she will be able to discover the truth behind her exile.

When Gertrude came to Tilly for a dress that would win her the favor of William Beaumont, Tilly promised to make her the most striking girl in the room. In exchange, Gertrude told Tilly that she was the one who informed Stuart where Tilly was hiding that day, the day Stuart died. Indeed, Gertrude became the most desirable girl in town and William was taken away by her beauty. Tilly's style has brought the best in her clients and thus from there, she starts a revolution of her own. More clients came with her first success and more information she gathered.

When a package arrived for Tilly, everyone was intrigued, Sergeant Farrat brought home her huge box of materials. The Sergeant is a close friend to Tilly and the one who lead the case

of Stuart's murder confess to her that Evan Pettyman holds sway over him, that he was the one who sent her away. Evan Pettyman threatened to take away his career and report his out-of-ordinary character, his perversions to the deputy chief. In exchange for a box of clothes, Sergeant gave her official police records that helped in understanding the case. Tilly's box of fine refined materials, her styles inspired by Dior, and colorful satin silk like that of which the shire has never seen, charmed Sergeant Farrat to find a way to express himself more clearly. Regretted by his earlier actions to send Tilly away, he accepted the charges against Molly Dunnage and let Tilly have her chance at a normal life again. The elements of fashion that Tilly brought with her made him have the courage to finally embrace his true identity.

When Tully started making beautiful clothes, and when her clothes made people feel different about themselves, they slowly started forgiving her. They started to accept Tilly as part of the past and welcomed her new styles open-hearted. Through the many attires, she made Tilly was able to effect a change in the shire. It can also be noted in the case of Gertrude, that her mother-in-law who doesn't approve of her made her dress less attractively so that her son would reject Gertrude's proposal and marry some other girl from town. This actually entrust the idea that costumes construct identity. To Gertrude's favor, Tilly made her save her image again by presenting her in a more appropriate and suitable wear.

Through all the information that she had gathered from her clients, Tilly learns about her innocence and the real truth for the death of Stuart Pettyman. In her quest, Tilly used her only power, her tool, her eloquent styles, and fashion to uncover the truth. Fashion saved her from bearing the intolerable undeserved burden of murder crime. Tilly burns the whole shire, along with her house and all the attires with it, she leaves the shire the way she finds it, in its tatter waiting for destruction. Tilly's rage signifies the state of every place without the sense of fashion. She was able to model clothes in a way that it would bring change and advancement in people and to places. Fashion brought the truth about the death of Stuart Pettyman and the innocence of tilly Dunnage thus saving her from a terrible fate. It also helped Sergeant Farrat to accept his identity and live true to himself for the rest of his life. Fashion brought the truth about the death of Stuart Pettyman and the innocence of tilly Dunnage thus saving her from a terrible fate. It also helped Sergeant Farrat to accept his identity and live true to himself for the rest of his life. Fashion was Tilly Dunnage's tool in her efforts to unearth the actual events that lead to her terrible destiny. Thus the movie, 'The Dressmaker', offers an instance where truth and fashion come together and the elementary role each have in the construction of society and self-expression. Fashion has become the basic instrument in helping people to express and identify with each other, it is the tool that is available to everyone and also it has made itself affordable to everyone that anyone could rely on it to effect a significant change. To make a change of such magnitude, to be a change that reflects in the way each person constructs identity over others and over oneself is the power of fashion in reconstructing truth.

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Dystopian Hegemony of Henry VIII in Utopia: A Dystopian Truth Behind Utopian Concept

Abstract

Utopia is a satirical and allegorical book written by St. Thomas More. Utopia is a complex, innovative and penetrating contribution to political thought, culminating in the famous 'description' of the Utopians, who live according to the principles of natural law, but are receptive to Christian teaching, who hold all possessions in common, and view gold as worthless

Even though it is a fiction, Utopia has several hidden meaning (allegory) and truth, which diatribes Henry VIII the monarch. How an Utopia, so called ideal state represent most vulnerable and cruel dystopian rule of Henry VIII. For an example In Utopia, Thomas More not only derides against the rule of Henry VIII but also chaffed against the law. More criticized against the law forced by Henry VIII government made against common people especially thieves. "So be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it, and it is dreadful punishments enacted against thieves". It deals with the cruel nature of Henry VIII law, where even a small thief punished with death. But In Utopia, thieves are not put to death put to service of society.

This paper is looking to the allegorical meaning of the book Utopia through the close reading. The paper is an analysis of how an utopian work changes to dystopian and how St. Thomas More Lord Chancellor, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and speaker of the House of Commons in the office of Henry VIII hides his message in his work Utopia.

I die the Kings good servant, but God's first

- Thomas More (1535)

Utopia is a satirical and allegorical book written by St. Thomas More. Utopia is a complex, innovative and penetrating contribution to political thought, culminating in the famous 'description' of the Utopians, who live according to the principles of natural law, but are receptive to Christian teaching, who hold all possessions in common, and view gold as worthless. Thomas More took the ideas from Plato's 'Ideal Republic' and made an ideal land called Utopia. And More is the legendary man who bestowed two genres in English Literature that Utopian novel and Dystopian novel (counterpart). More published Utopia as a work of fiction and socio-political satire in 1516 in Latin. Though it is a fiction Utopia has several hidden meaning (allegory), which diatribes Henry VIII the monarch. Thomas More shows the courage to bespatter him even though he was a Lord Chancellor, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and speaker of the House of Commons in the office of Henry VIII.

Thomas More lived in the era of Renaissance (late fifteenth and early sixteenth century) and it was also the era of economic feudalism where all power resided amongst rich nobles and aristocrats. In the period of Renaissance, an intellectual movement happened in England which was known as Humanism. Humanists argued for the dignity of man and power of reason instead of skepticism, they were deeply committed to Christianity. But their panoramic vision goes beyond the strict religious orthodox which was followed, preached by the monks and priests of middle ages. Humanists, including More argue against the feudal

system which started in the middle ages where the rich and noble people enjoyed most part of the luxury where working class was in misery. Through Utopia More trampled this act of degeneracy.

Thomas More wrote Utopia in 1516, it is little before the outbreak of religious reformation but it is the period where the corruption and religious uprising that led to reformation. It is an apt question to ask whether St. Thomas More Lord Chancellor, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and speaker of the House of Commons in the office of Henry VIII and a huge believer of Catholic church really outlining a communist template? Is really Thomas More preaching and advocating the abolition of money and private property in his fictional and ideal land 'Utopia' along with the surrender of basic freedom such as freedom to travel, freedom to decide, where to live, freedom to choose one's profession and full freedom to death?

On the other hand, there is Christianity and it matters to More because he is a Christian, sacrifices he made for his faith, god and his divine beliefs is focused on eternal matters. In Christian message there is an anti-property aspect. Everybody knows about Jesus teaching that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man to get into a heaven. Like that if someone's focuses on money instead of god, it is very hard for one to find salvation. Property is of itself sinful to Christians like More, but it is an occasion for sin to the avaricious. Duality of the material was acknowledged by the Jesus and spiritual in the mortal society and he said that the people should render unto Caesar that which Caesar's unto God that which is God's. Through Utopia Thomas More portrays that it is a land of pagan and communist state in which the institution and policies were entirely governed by reason.

Both Karl Marx and Jesus shows antipathy to public property such as economic and social positions. But there is a difference between two perspectives or world views. On one side there is liberation theology, which attempts to address the poverty and social injustices as well as spiritual matters. The world views of Christianity and Communism are different, at the same time mutually exclusive. Marxism is godless and worldly in the sense that it seeks to achieve an idealized and utopian society in here and now.

Through the fictional land Utopia, he indicates England itself because in prologue to his Utopia 'Thomas More to Peter Giles greetings,' he says that Utopia is an island that lies in the ocean. While looking at the geographical structure of England or Britain, it also an island which lies in the North Sea and it is also like an island which covered with water. So, in the prologue itself More gives a hidden idea about Utopia alias England. In the prologue he has doubts about publishing his book Utopia because he really scared of Henry VIII and his impetuous decisions. He says that he was conflicted whether he should publish the book or not. Utopia is a mere reflection of a mirror or it is a mirror of 16th century England. More tells that he wrote this book based on 'Truth', "Truth in fact is the only quality at which I should have aimed, or did aim in writing this book." He speaks about his helplessness that he cannot do anything against the monarch the only thing he can only do is simply write down what he had heard, because most of his day is given to the law listening to some cases, pleading other, compromising others and deciding still others.

Book 1 of Utopia starts with a praise of King Henry VIII that he is "the most victorious and triumphant king of England, Henry the eighth of that name, in all royal virtues a Prince most peerless had of late in controversy with Charles" (More , 8). This line has a great resemble with the speech of Antony in Julius Caesar that Antony calls Brutus as Noble and honorable

man even though he killed Caesar. Like that the beginning of Utopia book 1 is filled with irony. Henry VIII was a man who doesn't know how to rule a country or to lead a government but he had an excessive affinity to marriage, divorces and beheading. Also, Thomas More referred to him as a victorious and triumphant King like how Antony called Brutus as most Noble and Honorable man.

In Utopia, Thomas More not only derides against the rule of Henry VIII but also chaffed against the law. More criticized against the law forced by Henry VIII government made against common people especially thieves. “So be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it, and it is dreadful punishments enacted against thieves” (More , 18). It deals with the cruel nature of Henry VIII law, where even a small thief punished with death. But in Utopia, thieves are not put to death put to service of society.

“They are like rude, ungrateful guests who, after they have stuffed themselves with a splendid dinner, go off, carrying their full bellies homeward without a word of thanks to the host who invited them”. Through this sentence More explicitly denigrate Henry VIII that he turned against the church after he got everything that he wants from the hand of church. Henry wrote 'The Defense of the Seven Sacraments' allegedly with the assistance of Thomas More against Martin Luther's attack on indulgence. And he dedicated that book to Pope Leo X, who rewarded Henry with the title 'Fidei Defensor' or Defender of faith. But the title revoked following the King's break with the Catholic Church. And through these lines More tells about the impertinence of Henry VIII.

“It I should show that they chose a king for their own sake, and not for his; that, by his care and endeavors, they may be both easy and safe: and that therefore, a prime ought to take more care of his people's happiness than his own, as a shepherd is to take more care of his flock than of himself” (More 40). Through this line in Utopia, Thomas More give an admonishment to Henry VIII for his royal selfishness. Henry VIII was such a prodigal King who lived and ruled the country for his will and luxury instead of people's prosperity. He was such an erotic and a carnal man who had six legitimate wife (Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine of Howard and Catherine Parr) and other concubines. Through Utopia More advised Henry to shy away from all his luxurious and materialistic life and rule for common peasants and people in country and he also tells that a prince should be more concerned with the welfare of his people than with his own for it does not befit the dignity of a king to rule over beggars but rather wealthy and happy subjects and he transcends that how can a person wallow in pleasure and luxury while he is surrounded on all sides by grieving and groaning.

“There be diverse kinds of religion not only in sundry part of the island, but also in divers place in every city. Some worship for God the sun; some the moon; some, some other of the planets”(Utopia, Thomas More Page84) Through this More indicates about Paganism and Christianity that sustained in 16th century England. Paganism came in England on 6th century after the advent of Anglo-Saxon, in 16th century also there were a minuscule amount of Paganism survived in England with Christianity and More inducted this fact into his Utopia. He tells that in his Ideal state, there were a convene of religions including Paganism and Christianity.

“First of all, he made a decree, that it should be lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he would, and that he might do the best he could to bring others to his opinion”.

In *'Of the Religions in Utopia'* (Utopia Thomas More Page 129). Thomas More expostulate against the religion that vouchsafe by King Henry that is Protestantism. In 16th century, church of England broke away from the authority of the Pope and Roman Catholic Church. These events were, in part associated with the wider process of the European Protestant Reformation, a religious movement as well as political that affected Christianity across all over the central Europe. King Henry VIII encouraged and pave the way for Protestantism in England. Henry VIII has a desire to marry Anne Boleyn and he requested to Pope Clement VII but he refused and thwarted it, this cause advent of a new religion in England. And through Utopia, More portraits that the king forced everyone to follow his religion, instead of their religion.

More begins Utopia with a letter to his friend Peter Giles and he ended this book with a letter. He wrote Utopia in very hidden and clandestine allegorical manner because he knows the wrath of Henry VIII, whose hobby was beheading others. In book 1, he mentions a sentence about India (Kerala, Calicut) *"At last, by strange good fortune, he got, via Ceylon to Calicut, where by good luck he found some Portuguese ships"* (Utopia Thomas More Page 11). it depicted about the arrival of Vasco Da Gama in India in 1498.

There are some ideal aspects also in Utopia which is entirely against King Henry VIII, Henry was a man who ravenous and a desperado for ladies, but Utopia is entirely different from it. There is equality of sexes in Utopia, Women work the same as men, and are encouraged to go to war with their husbands. In Utopia there is a hurdle for all kind of unwanted and bedraggled merry making. Even recreation is mandated and regulated, gambling a 'Form of madness', and other socially destructive pastimes are not permitted. Falconry and hunting are also prohibited. The Utopians discourage promiscuity. Adulating is harshly punished.

Thomas More never criticized the Tudor era or the English throne or the European society in a direct or straight manner because More knows that he needs to be so careful in his lambastes, if he wants to stay out of the tower. There are a lot of other things that More can say, and he wishes to say but he cannot say all that things too directly. More lived in an era where the wrath of the monarch will cost a head. But later in the case of More, the same thing happens. Through the Utopia he not only criticized the English throne but also the harsh nature of English law, the manipulation of military power, bad agricultural policy, poor economical policy, social injustice and immorality especially anti-Christian movement in a Christian nation (though this he means about the Protestantism movement), Selfishness of ruling family or royalty, and corruptible clergy saints.

And Utopians make no treatise when it comes to international affairs. Utopians became unkind and ruthless when they were inducted in a war, the mercenaries and center strategy of every war is killing the enemy chief in battle ground itself. And the gambling and useless and socially waste pastimes are prohibited and banned in Utopia. Killing animals for mere pleasure and hunting is banned in Utopia. There were gender equalities in Utopia and there was not a system of patriarchy, women work at the same time of the war and encouraged to participate in war with their husbands.

Thomas More uses Marxist ideology by depicting the case of having and have nots. He clearly talks about the excessive pleasure enjoying by have and have nots. "What shall we say when this miserable poverty and want is coupled with wanton luxury? All classes of

society indulge in extravagant sartorial display and excessive, luxurious cuisine” Through the line More tries to establish a kind of parity between working class and the master.

Utopia or an ideal island was not a novel idea that inducted by Thomas More before that there were several ideas like Plato's 'Republic' or Ovid's 'Golden Age'. Like that through Utopia More sounds all important context of Tudor dynasty and he criticized England and Europe through his work.

Through Utopia More says that this is how a good society or an ideal society might be organized. Before 502 years ago Thomas More's unique and radical stuff was published in Latin. It was published in English in 1551, after the death of More in 1535. He didn't get the fate to witness his astonishing work published in his own language because he was beheaded by Henry VIII, More opposed the Protestant Reformation and Oath of Supremacy, for that he convicted treason. But before his death he bestowed such an opulent and inexorable ransom for the literary world, that is 'Utopia'.

Conclusion

These are the statements to prove that the Utopia is an allegorical work, which is written by Thomas More also his dream of changing the dystopian hegemony of Tudors and to make an ideal society, hence he named so called Utopia. In Utopian More explicitly talks about the dystopian hegemony of king Henry VIII, one can easily understand it through the hidden words and sentences in Utopia. It does not talk about Henry VIII and his rule but also it is a socio-political satire.

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Truth About Liars : A Close Introspection of the Two Unreliable Narrators in *Gone Girl* By Gillian Flynn

Unreliable narrators are usually first person narrators whose credibility might be seriously questioned within the course of the novel. The technique of narrating a story through unreliable narrators is an age old practice. One can find traces of unreliable narrators in *The Frogs* by Aristophanes or *Miles Gloriosus* by Plautus. In English Literature, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* presents one of the earliest uses of unreliable narrators. In the preface to *Wife of Bath's Tale*, she distorts the stories with inaccurate quotations and the merchant in *The Merchant's Tale* bends his story towards his bias against his wife because he is in the midst of an unhappy marriage. With the rise of gothic and detective fiction in the 18th and 19th century, unreliable narrator became a convenient tool in the hands of the author whose sole intention was to shock the ordinary existence of their readers. Agatha Christie, the Queen of crime fiction employed it in many of her novels. Christie's novel, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) is a fine example for narrative unreliability, where the narrator causes unreliability through omission of facts, than deliberately lying about the events.

The term “unreliable narrator” was coined by Wayne C. Booth in his text *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). In the chapter titled *The Price of Impersonal Narration II: Henry James and the Unreliable Narrator*, Booth points out a narrative trend in the stories of Henry James where he transforms a 'subject' into something different through the development of a “reflector” (Booth 340). According to Booth, Henry James first formulated the original conception of subject and later imported unreliable observers. Then he gradually developed the reflector until the original subject is rivalled or overshadowed. In these tales, the first-person narrator is both “self deceived and deceiving” (Booth 342). Through his thorough analysis of Henry James' stories, Booth draws the conclusion that unreliable narratives tend to replace the general rule which states “No narrator can be expected to do contradictory tasks” (Booth 362).

The novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn was published in June 2012. The novel is slightly inspired by the case of Laci Peterson, where her husband Scott Peterson was convicted for her murder, when she was eight months pregnant. The novel revolves around the disappearance of Amy Elliott Dunne and her husband's involvement in the case. While reading the first half of the novel, the reader will find both Nick and Amy to be innocent characters, who love each other beyond limits. In the second half, the author reveals that both Nick Dunne and Amy Elliott are unreliable narrators. Nick had been cheating his wife with an extramarital affair and Amy had been taking 'revenge' upon her husband by fabricating her own disappearance. The novel is told from alternating subjective opinions and experiences of both Nick and Amy.

William F. Riggan in his study *Picaros, Madmen, Naifs, and Clowns: The Unreliable First-Person Narrator* (1982) classifies unreliable narrators into five different types. 'Picaro' is the first type of unreliable narrator, who exaggerates and explains the event to the

readers. Second type is the 'madman', who is the narrator who has minor or major mental illness and hence, their narrative cannot be trusted. Third type is the 'clown', who does not take narration seriously and he/she plays with the reader's expectations literally. The "naïf" is the narrator whose perceptions are immature and hence fails to provide the holistic observations of an event. The final type is the 'liar', a narrator with healthy mental state, who bends, disrupts or replaces truth with brilliantly fabricated lies. Both Nick and Amy belong to the final type of unreliable narrators, the liars. Both Amy and Nick have sound mental cognition. In fact, they are far from an ordinary person with average mental IQ. Both of them are well read individuals with high IQ levels who work as writers for magazines.

The novel simultaneously narrates the same events from two different perspectives superficially. Nick narrates from the present events and then goes into the past. He starts off his narration from July 5, the day on which Amy went missing. Whereas Amy's narration kicks off from the day they first met each other. In the second chapter, Amy explains that they first met at a writers' party set up by her friend Carmen. Her first impression of Nick goes, "It is him (Nick), but I don't know it's him. I know it's a guy who will talk to me, he wears his cockiness like an ironic T-shirt, but it fits him better" (26). By the end of first five chapters, the reader might start noticing conflicting opinions about the same events, situations or ideas from both the narrators. These conflicting ideas about same events eventually create what is widely known as 'Rashomon effect'.

Rashomon effect refers to the phenomenon in which the same events are interpreted in distinctly different ways by different people. The term 'Rashomon effect' is taken from the title of Akira Kurosawa's 1950 movie *Rashomon*. In this film the murder of a Samurai is retold by four different narrators in four different ways. The film adopted its title from a 1922 short story by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, titled "Rashomon", which explores a conversation about the devastation of Kyoto, under a ruined gate in the rain. The term was first used in the field of humanities by the anthropologist Karl Heider in 1980s during a Pacific Island Discussion which was called the Rashomon Sessions. These sessions were coordinated from 1980 to 1984. The term was later elaborately explained by Robert Anderson in his 2015 research paper, *The Rashomon Effect and Communication*. Anderson explains, "...the Rashomon effect has shown up in many historical intellectual undertakings that deal with contested interpretations of events or with disagreements and evidence for them, or with subjectivity/objectivity, memory, and perception" (Anderson 252). He further explains:

The Rashomon effect is not only about differences of perspective. It occurs particularly where such differences arise in combination with the absence of evidence to elevate or disqualify any version of the truth, plus the social pressure for closure on the question. (Anderson 265)

According to Anderson, the first ingredient in creating Rashomon effect is the development of a fact. He opines, it should not be simply a fact, but a "compelling fact" (Anderson 253). When such a compelling fact is created, the author has the attention of both implied and actual reader. When the reader has known the fact, they demand answers to the various questions surrounding that fact, or ultimately they strive for truth. This social pressure for an answer makes the fact "compelling". In the context of *Gone Girl*, this "compelling fact" is the missing case of Amy Dunne. She was a fairly known writer from her *Amazing Amy* series and had many fans that were curious enough to know what happened to

her. Within a day of her missing, the police and the media becomes interested in the case, which thickens the impact of the fact.

The author then took the next step, where she carefully placed two unreliable narrators to unwind the story. Both these narrators project different interpretations of the fact. The second ingredient in the mixture to create Rashomon effect is, “these interpretative differences”, which “are wrapped in long narratives, each carefully cultivated by the teller give us their version of the truth” (Anderson 253). To understand these differing perceptions, close analyses of both the characters are required. Looking into the character of Nick Dunne, he was born into a middle class family as one of the twin children. His twin sister is called Go throughout the novel. Towards the end of part I of the novel, Go explains Nick's relation to truth since his childhood:

You've always had trouble with the truth - you always do the little fib if you think it will avoid a real argument. You have always gone the easy way. Tell mom you went to baseball practice when you really quit the team; tell Mom you went to church when you were at a movie. It's some weird compulsion. (283-84)

This “weird compulsion” or forceful deception of truth had always been part of Nick's life. Nick had been into all known types of deception including telling lies, equivocations (making ambiguous statements), concealments, exaggerations and understatements. He cheats on his wife and conceals it from everyone. He lied to the police and media that he never had any serious fights with Amy or kept them as understatements saying that the fights were on stilly stuffs such as to cook lobsters or to clean cat box. When he first met Amy, he exaggerated and presented himself to be a “cool guy”. After marriage, this deception started fading and he starts dating a very younger woman named Andie. Amy finds out this relation and begins to take revenge upon Nick by fabricating her missing. Therefore at the end of five years Amy's ultimate conclusion is that Nick has changed.

Amy's character is much more complicated than Nick's character. The readers get to see the real Amy in part two of the novel, entitled *Boy Meets Girl*. She begins telling about her actual self in this part. She explains:

To start: I should never have been born. My mother had five miscarriages and two still births before me...they tried and tried, and finally came me...when I remained alive they named me Amy, because it was a regular girl's name, a popular girl's name...I grew up feeling special and proud. I was the girl who battled oblivion and won...As a child, I got a vibrant pleasure out of this: just me, just me, only me. (310)

Amy grew up in a background where she was assured that she is the best. Amy began writing from a very young age and that is how she later developed the *Amazing Amy* series. *Amazing Amy* was everything that the real Amy failed to be. Amy herself points out:

My parents have always worried that I'd take Amy too personally – they always tell me not to read too much into her. And yet I can't fail to notice that whenever I screw something up, Amy does it right: When I finally quit violin at age twelve, Amy was revealed as a prodigy in the next book...When I blew off the junior tennis championship at age sixteen to do a beach weekend with friends, Amy recommitted to the game. (47)

Through *Amazing Amy*, Amy Elliott was creating a literary doppelganger to her real self. *Amazing Amy* was the epitome of morality and propriety that the real Amy detested. She used *Amazing Amy* as the mask with which she attained the “Cool Girl” status. She believed

that everyone loved the cool girl and she would always be the centre of attention.

Amy went farther than Nick in deception because, Nick never deceived his own self whereas Amy was involved in self-deception. William Von Hippel and Robert Trivers in their paper *The Evolution and Psychology of Self-Deception* (2011) opine, “The classic form of self-deception is convincing oneself that a lie is true. This sort of self-deception can be difficult to verify, as it is difficult to know if the person believes the lie that they are telling others” (Hippel & Trivers 10). Amy does the same as this basic form of deception. She recreated a doppelganger and believed that she herself was the perfect, all praiseworthy Amazing Amy. According to Hippel and Trivers self-deception can also lead into deception of others with the ultimate aim of presenting ourselves as much better than we really are (Hippel & Trivers 4). It is to this deceived self that Nick fell in love. Both of them fell in love with their pretended self and failed to hide their real self after marriage. Amy who grew up believing that she was the most desirable human being in the world could not accept the fact that she was cheated on by her husband. He hurt her ego for which she paid off in the form of framing him for her constructed murder. By the end of five years, Nick also gradually realizes, Amy is not the “cool girl” that he dated before marriage.

The third and final ingredient that Anderson discusses in Rashomon effect is “the absence of evidence to elevate or disqualify any versions of the truth” (Anderson 265). Through a close reading of the novel *Gone Girl*, one can notice that out of two people, we have three different perspectives to the story. One is Nick's perception of the story, second is the fake diary entry of Amy and finally the real Amy's perception of the story. These perceptions are different from each other, plausible in its own rights yet confuses the reader as to which is ultimately the truth.

These conflicting perceptions and confusions can be pointed out in various instances.

One major conflicting, question raised in such manner was, whether Amy was pregnant while she went missing or not. In her diary entry dated October 21, 2011 Amy notes that she said Nick about getting pregnant:

...now might be the right time. To start a family. Try to get pregnant. I know it's crazy...I have become the crazy woman who wants to get pregnant because it will save her marriage...he jerks away from me. 'Now? Now is about the worst time to start a family...(267) Here she presents Nick as a ruthless man who denies a woman's right to be a mother. Later in the novel Nick says his perspective to the lawyer in the chapter titled *Eight Days Gone*, “I whispered the words, Let's do this Amy, let's have a baby – and she said no...nothing dramatic, no big deal, just not something she was interested in anymore...I begged her, Amy remained unmoved” (409-10). These lines show Nick to be an ordinary man and Amy to be an evil woman. Later it is revealed by Amy that her pregnancy was just another plot created by her to trap Nick. But, there is no evidence to prove any of these arguments to be true.

Anderson concludes his essay by making the statement, “Rashomon effect provides us with an epistemology that we can apply to a special set of situations, that tracks how we come to terms with the complex properties of these situations, and that suggests how we understand them or misunderstand, depending on our insight. From this epistemology we can see precisely how we communicate what we think we know, and what we say, about this

set of situations” (Anderson 266). These lines show us how Rashomon effect tends to be a means of communication from the writer to the readers, leaving the readers in an eternal state of confusion without a sense of closure to any of their questions. By the end of the novel *Gone Girl*, many questions lie unanswered. Who is the real reason behind the cracks in relation between Amy and Nick? Is it Nick the cheater or Amy the murderer who has committed serious crimes? By the end of the novel Nick reunites with Amy after realising that they do not have any other evidence to prove either of their accusations to be true. Is this end justified? Is it morally acceptable to have an ending where the murderer Amy is left without any punishments? Finally the Rashomon effect leaves the readers into accepting the fact that the author is the magician and he has the right whether to choose truth or to leave the truth undisturbed to complete the aesthetic effect in fiction. As Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* comments: Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.

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