Locations of Comparison vis-à-vis Postcoloniality: A Dhvani Reading of Madness in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Tanzia Mobarak[1]

Abstract

This paper proposes a triadic comparative ground comprising the critic (a Bengali-speaker), the text (an English play) and the critical concern involved (a Sanskrit theory) as it employs Anandavardhana's theory of dhvani (suggestion) to its study of madness in Shakespeare's Macbeth. A central doctrine in Classical Sanskrit poetics, dhvani draws on the suggestive power of words to systematically and comprehensively uncover layers of possible meanings within a text. Through this critical endeavour, the paper broaches the problematics of delimiting the aspect of comparison within the field of comparative literature simply to its comparanda and argues for an extension of its paradigm of comparison from mere method to the spatio-linguistic locations of the critic, the text/s, and the critical lens/concern involved in the process. The arguments presented in this paper are informed by the critical standpoint of a decolonial scholar in that it explores the ways in which the pervasive Eurocentrism of the field may be countered and further exposed, and articulates the role of decolonial comparatist as an activist, aware of the ways in which literatures serve as subtle means of ideological transmission.

Keywords: Comparative literature, Postcolonialism, Shakespeare, Macbeth, Sanskrit Poetics, Dhvani

Introduction

Since its inception to its present state as an institutional practice, comparative literature has involved crossing borders that are not easily crossed or readily visible with their hegemonic and discriminatory functions. This egalitarian vision of the field specially coincides with the spirit of postcolonial studies since one of its key concerns now involves confronting pervasive Eurocentrism and dismantling oppressive power structures that underlie/mediate literary studies worldwide. Embracing this aspect of comparative literature, the present paper employs dhvani theory, a sophisticated 9th century semantic theory from Sanskrit tradition propounded by Anandavardhana, to its study of madness in Shakespeare's Macbeth. Though this theoretical reading of the text does not entail comparison as its explicit method, the fact that a Bengali speaking researcher from Bangladesh is evaluating a 16th century English author's play using a critical lens borrowed from classical Sanskrit tradition is itself suggestive of a comparative ground, which problematizes the paradigm of "comparison" within comparative literature that has

[1]Lecturer, Department of English, Green University of Bangladesh

largely limited the aspect of comparison to mere method. Such a quixotic endeavour has both political and aesthetic objectives to meet. It is political in the sense that it (i) effectively seeks to extend the comparative aspect of the field to spatio-linguistic locations of the critic, the text/s and the critical lens/concern involved in the process, (ii) demonstrates the strength and relevance of non-western literary and semantic theories that have largely remained neglected, and (iii) carries a counter-discursive agenda in its non-Western theoretical intervention into Shakespearean oeuvre. Again, it is also aesthetic in the sense that it (i) aims to familiarize a critical perspective outside of national or Western paradigms, and (ii) explicates how dhvani, or the suggestive power of words, provides a comprehensive framework to generate both particular (e.g. Lady Macbeth) and general (e.g. cultural episteme of Shakespearean era) understandings of in/sanity in the play.

Comparison and Postcolonialism

When comparative literature began its journey as an institutional practice, it no doubt began in a straitjacket for the focus was largely limited to an investigation of "sources and influence, bringing together works where there seemed a direct link of transmission" (Culler, 2007, p. 254).Now that comparative literature has entered "a broader regime of intertextual studies where in principle anything could be compared with anything," a greater predicament follows with regard to the "nature" of this "new comparability" (Culler, 2007, p. 260). General consensus is that at least one of the elements considered for comparison should be a literary product (Dominguez, Saussy, &Villanueva, 2015, p. xiii). Standard definitions of comparative literature now hold it as a way of describing "programs of study that cross national or linguistic boundaries… [or] research that considers the transmission of texts across cultures" (Bassnett, 2010, p. 142). Such studies, as they claim, aim to provide an enhanced "awareness of the qualities of one work by using the products of another linguistic culture as an illuminating context" (Hyde, 2006, p. 29). In various parts of the world, it is also understood as an exploration of "the relationship between national literature and other literary systems and is therefore an intensely politicized form of literary study" (Bassnett, 2010, p. 142). Since its inception, the field itself has been plagued by a range of debates such as: (i) its apparent lack of "a distinct subject matter and a specific methodology" (Wellek, 2009, p. 161); (ii) its pervasive Eurocentrism (Behdad& Thomas, 2011, pp. 6–7); (iii) a blurred view of "national or linguistic boundaries" (Culler, 2007, p. 259); (iv) contesting definitions of literature (Saussy, 2006, p. 10); (v) debates on disciplinarity and "a lack of distinctiveness" (Culler, 2007, p. 255); (vi) the unavailability of former humanist discourses as well as the "grand narrative of the university centered on the production of a liberal, reasoning subject" (Culler, 2007, p. 261); (vii) the viability of

comparative approach to literature (Dominguez, Saussy, &Villanueva, 2015, p.1); and indeed, (vii) the very purpose, need and justification of comparison (Culler, 2007, p. 261). It is this latter concern where postcolonial studies enter the scene.

According to Jonathan Culler, most of the recent innovations in the field of comparative literature has been possible due to "the identification, largely by postcolonial theory, of a general postcolonial context within which comparabilities can be generated" (2007, p. 263). When merged with the ethos of postcolonialism then, comparative literature precisely becomes a site of academic activism for the decolonial scholar, for whom, generating "comparabilities" is by no means entirely innocent or neutral, especially due to the hierarchal power relations as well as the unequal share of spaces and representation that accompany such comparisons. As a strategic engagement therefore, comparisons by decolonial scholars often coincide with counter-discursive aspirations. "Post-colonial counter-discursive strategies," as pointed out by Helen Tiffin, "involve a mapping of the dominant discourse, a reading and exposing of its underlying assumptions, and the dis/mantling of these assumptions from the cross-cultural standpoint of the imperially subjectified 'local'" (2006, p. 101). However, these are not simply "strategies of replacement" nor do they aim for the "oppositional reworking" of a canonical text; rather, the idea is to subvert the authority and power practiced within/through such texts, and diminish their "stranglehold on representation" (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996, p. 16). As counter discourses are by default intertexual, they also present the paradox of an "inevitable reinscription" through this process of subversion (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007,p.50). This means that, every time a comparative study is attempted between a Shakespearean and a non-Western text as a counter discourse, for example, it still ends up endorsing the very canon it claims to refract as it requires prior knowledge of and further engagement with the canon. After all, seeking boundaries is also a way of acknowledging/preserving boundaries. So far, we can identify two crucial predicaments then: (i) for the decolonial scholar, at least, the role of a disinterested critic comparing between two or more works will not suffice because s/he is aware of the politics and the paradox of "re-inscription" involved in the process; (ii) for the general comparatist, on the other hand, since the autonomous humanist subject is no longer available to the academia, relying on comparison exclusively as a method regardless of the geopolitical position of the comparatist and the critical concern involved will be a partial engagement with the project at hand. From these considerations, one may suggest two strategies to mitigate these shortcomings. Firstly, counter-discursive projects may be taken "to an interactive level bringing multiple traditions into the floor" so that the focus is not narrowed down to a dichotomy of centre and periphery (Mobarak, 2017, p. 142). This means, when comparison serves as a method, it need not be restricted to a presumptive notion of "West" versus "non-West" nor constantly resort to an abusive nationalism that

often results in a reversal of the hierarchies instead of questioning the very criteria of judgment, but rather, more critical engagement should be extended to what is considered peripheral (for example, between literary aspects in China and in India). Secondly, the paradigm of comparison within comparative literature may be extended from method to spatio-linguistic locations of the critic, the text/s and the critical lens/concern involved as they transcend "policed frontiers" as well as locality and centricity in their endeavors. This means, the critical studies that do not exclusively take comparison between two or more literary elements as their method may be accommodated within the field in that the discursive location of the subject (a Bengali speaking scholar located in Bangladesh), the text/s under consideration (a 16th century English author's play) and the critical perspective involved (Dhvani-School of Sanskrit poetics) entail crossing national or linguistic boundaries or "policed frontiers." Within this extended paradigm, the comparative ground begins with the reader or critic who undertakes the study and is realized through her/his transcendence of linguistic, national or cultural frontiers of different literary systems. Of course, such an extension suggests that a Bengali-speaking scholar evaluating a Shakespearean play itself is a comparative act, turning different disciplinary concerns as more specialized forms of study (European studies, African studies, indigenous studies, for example) and contesting originary histories of comparative literature redundant. Since there is an implied global audience to its critical ventures, this panoramic view of the comparative project may (i) resist standardizing the basis of sought similarities and differences, (ii) accommodate broader transcultural dialogues, (iii) expose, in many ways, the ideological and political ends that instigate such comparative acts, and finally, (iv) accentuate the role of a comparatist as an activist constantly keeping the ideological matrix within literary studies in check.

Why Shakespeare?

The study of 'English literature' was primarily introduced in the colonial education system for its alleged "humanistic functions," to "civilize" the native students and thus create a class of compradors by investing in them the empire's ideologies and values, often ignoring and negating local traditions and worldviews (Gilbert and Tompkins, 1996, p. 15). After political decolonization, the hegemonic domination of the imperial canon is still prominent in various postcolonial education systems, not only in terms of "the choice of curricula material and the relative worth assigned to European texts but also through the ways in which such texts are taught" (Gilbert and Tompkins, 1996, pp. 15–16). For 400 years, William Shakespeare has been equally praised by critics for his versatile creative genius and criticized largely on the ground that he served as a hegemonic force to add to the "humanizing" project of imperial powers and to rule out non-Western traditions

and worldviews. The result is that there is, on the one hand, Shakespeare, academically one of the most widely studied authors whose creative genius is agreed to have stood the test of time, place and taste, and there are, on the other hand, the ever increasing efforts to re-write and re-interpret canonical texts like those of Shakespeare's, which are subjected largely to appropriation and cultural adaptations in order to dismantle established hierarchies and the hegemonic domination of any single tradition i.e. Western tradition. Given the prestige and importance Shakespearean canon holds for both parties, the choice of a Shakespearean play for this study underscores a strategic engagement with colonial discourses in that, the paper acknowledges the versatile genius of Shakespeare as an author, and utilizes this aspect of Shakespeare to demonstrate that the rather neglected non-Western critical lenses are no less capable of bringing new/enriching insights to a canon so exhaustively reflected upon by scholars. Indeed, the arguments presented in this paper by no means aim to devalue Shakespeare as an author but only to discourage a parochial engagement with his oeuvre.

Sanskrit Poetics and the Quest for Alter/Native Worldviews

In Death of a Discipline,while condemning the field's Eurocentrism, Spivak maintains that "[c]omparative literature must always cross borders" and draws attention to the predicaments of crossing borders as such: "borders are easily crossed from metropolitan countries, whereas attempts to enter from the so-called peripheral countries encounter bureaucratic and policed frontiers, altogether more difficult to penetrate" (2005, p. 16). Spivak's warnings on crossing borders here become specifically relevant apropos of the critical frames used to evaluate, interpret, and appreciate a work of literature. While non-Western critical perspectives have remained largely unexplored, debates continue on whether they can be adapted to fulfil the demands of contemporary age and used to evaluate works of art (Ashcroft, Griffiths, &Tiffin,2002, p. 116). It is to the credit of comparative literature that critical lenses beyond those borrowed from the West are now being studied both from local and global perspectives.

The Sanskrit tradition has had a long and rich history of intellectual activities which lost much of its spontaneous development under colonial surveillance. Scholars such as P.V. Kane, K. Krishnamoorthy, V. K. Chari, Krishna Rayan, Edwin Gerow, and Daniel H. H. Ingalls, who have made extensive studies on Sanskrit literature, theories, and aesthetics, have demonstrated the relevance, applicability, and potentials of the same in contemporary age. Due to the "highly sophisticated" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin,2002, p. 116) and complex nature of Sanskrit literary theories, the diverse range of theories are discussed under seven broad headings(Kapoor, 1998, p. 13):

- Alamkara, or theories of "Language"
- Guna/Dosa, i.e. "Style and compositional value"
- Dhvani, or "Verbal Symbolism"
- Rasa, or "Aesthetic experience"
- Mahavakya, or "Narrative"
- Yuktis, or "Discourse analysis," and
- "Comprehensive analysis"

Though what counts as theory or non-theory remains open for debate, these broad headings are themselves suggestive of potential grounds of study. The incorporation of these traditional aesthetics and theories to decode texts/authors may in fact prove to be a strategic tool to provide alter/native views of the world and facilitate decolonization process of the imaginative sphere.

The Dhvani School of Anandavardhana

The origin of the term dhvani (suggestion) can be traced as far back as to the Atharva Veda where it denoted "sound," "tune," and "noise" (Arun and Saraswat, 2009, p. 59). The concept of dhvani was also discussed variedly by the Mimamsakas and Naiyaikas. Bhatrhari'ssphotadoctrine had strong influence on the foundations of dhvani theory. However, it was Dhvanyaloka, a 9th century work ascribed to Anandavardhana along with Abhinavagupta's later commentary on the text that established dhvanias a comprehensive and all-embracing doctrine (Raja, 1963, pp. 277–278). Dhvanyaloka is basically a poetic treatise comprised of two specific parts, namely, karikaor, short stanzas, and vritti or, explanations of the karikas in prose format. In the text Dhvanyaloka, dhvanimay denote: (a) sabdah:word giving rise to suggestion; (b) arthah: meaning giving rise to suggestion; (c) vyäpärah:the operation, suggestion of implicit meaning; (d)vyangyam: suggested meaning itself; and/or (e) samudäyah:the group (Ānandavardhana, 1999, p. 47).

One of the merits of dhvani (suggestion) is that its comprehensive and well-defined classifying system reveals hidden layers of meanings as well as provides the ease of systematically dissecting a text step by step to assess various possible meanings using the same framework. Dhvani is divided into two broad categories, namely, avivaksitavächya or "where the literal meaning is not intended," and vivaksitänya- paravächyaor where the "literal meaning is subordinated to a second meaning" (Ānandavardhana, 1999, p. 200). First, avivaksitavächyais based on secondary meaning (laksanamula) and is of two types: arthäntara-sankramitavâcya, and atyantatiraskrtavâcya. The basic difference between the two is that, in arthäntara-sankramitavâcya, words are used in an "enhanced or diminished sense" (Raja, 1963, p. 303). For example, when Lady Macbeth says, "When you durst do it, then

you were a man" (Shakespeare, 2001, 1.7.49), she is not setting up criteria of being a human being for Macbeth; the inherent suggestion (dhvani), activated by the word "durst," is that violence, determination, and courage are the masculine features that define a male as a "man." On the other hand, atyantatiraskrtavâcya completely dismisses the literal. Thus, when Macbeth says: "Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more; / Macbeth does murder sleep' – the innocent sleep" (Shakespeare, 2001, 2.2.38–39), the primary meaning is completely dismissed because sleep cannot literally be murdered; the suggestion (dhvani) indicates Macbeth's realization of the underlying horror of regicide. Second, vivaksitänya-paravächya is based on the primary meaning (abhidha-mula) of a word, where the expressed sense is intended but the literal meaning leads to further implications (Chari, 1993, p. 96). This is of two kinds: asamlaksayakrama-vyangya, referring to the "suggestion" of rasa (sentiment) and bhava (state), sometimes called rasa-dhvani; and samlaksayakrama-vyangya, referring to the meaning which is "apprehended at a moment recognizably later than our apprehension of the denoted meaning" (Ānandavardhana, 1999, p. 304). The second one can again be subdivided into two categories: vastudhvani, i.e. an idea or "fact" suggested, and alamkaradhvani, i.e. "figure of speech" suggested (Ānandavardhana, 1999, p. 358). Alamkaradhvani can be further divided into three categories: sabdasaktimula (words making the suggestion), arthasaktimula(context, socio-cultural aspects, etc. leading to the suggestion), and ubhayasaktimula (the previous two simultaneously operating to make the suggestion). This, in short, is the major classification of dhvani provided by the Dhvani School.

Construing the "Mad" in Macbeth

Different psychoanalytic interpretations of Macbeth have, in many ways, limited themselves to "philosophical," "moral," or "medical" grounds, labeling certain scenes and not others to be the "mad" scenes of the play (Wenzel, 2010, p. 141). Michel Foucault observes a close link between madness and "death and murder" in Shakespeare's works, arguing that madness on the onset of Renaissance period marks the realization of death as an inevitable human phenomenon, and a mechanism to disarm this understanding "in advance, making it an object of derision by giving it an everyday, tamed form, by constantly renewing it in the spectacle of life, by scattering it throughout the vices, the difficulties, and the absurdities of all men" (1965, pp. 15–31). Critical explorations of madness in Macbeth are predominantly limited to the case of Lady Macbeth, often associating her presumable state of psychosis with guilty conscience on moral grounds. Arguments also consider "bodily frustrations" as the reason behind her state (Barmazel, 2008, pp. 118–122), while others find an Oedipal undertone contending that murder of the father-figure leads to the psychological imbalances seen within the couple – an approach condemned as too reductive a use of the Freudian term (Reid, 2010, pp.

117–120). Among recent critics, Carol Neely extends her focus including references to the three witches, yet the interpretation, as per the focus of her book, is principally concerned with the gendered discourses concerning madness (2004, pp. 56–59). One common feature of these varied psychoanalytic interpretations is that they are often too particularistic, and focus their arguments on a single ground, namely, "bodily frustrations," Oedipus complex, or discourses on gender etc. In contrast, a dhvanireading can accommodate both a general (e.g. examine the cultural understanding of madness in Shakespearean age as reflected in Macbeth) and a particular (e.g. a closer examination of Lady Macbeth's madness) approach to the text within a single investigation.

As an example of a broader approach, a dhvani reading of Macbeth may provide clues to the conception of madness in Shakespearean time, for which, it is crucial to decode to what the society assigns the label "mad." On meeting three witches, Banquo asks rhetorically: "Or have we eaten on the insane root / That take the reason prisoner?" (Shakespeare, 2001, 1.3.82–83). If we consider the phrase "insane root" exemplifies an alamkaradhvani based on arthasaktimula, then the suggestionhints at the contemporary superstitions belief about certain herbs thought necessary in sorcery and witchcraft, therefore, sees madness as a condition inflicted by supernatural forces. Again, when "insane root" is considered as vastudhvani, the suggestion reads that madness results, among many things, from the consumption of intoxicating herbs, and is, therefore, a medical condition. This understanding of madness as a medical condition can be further supported by the fact that it is not a priest appointed to exorcise Lady Macbeth but a "doctor of physic" to treat her, who also calls it a "disease" (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.49). This shows a shift, though not departure, from the medieval line of thought that saw madness primarily as "a point of intersection between the human, the divine, and the demonic" i.e. a result of one's "sin" or some demonic possession (Neely, 2004, p. 47). This is precisely because the prevailing idea of madness as a divine penalty for sins can be substantiated from the doctor's advice: "More needs she the divine than the physician" (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.64). The later degeneration of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, their growing delusions and paranoia may be directly connected to this understanding of madness as the result of one's sin.Again, the phrase "That take the reason prisoner" falls under the category atyantatiraskrtavâcya and suggests madness as the inability to reason or having hallucinatory visions. Lady Macbeth's later exclamation, "Thou'rt mad to say it" (Shakespeare, 2001, 1.5.29), suggests similar meanings, only it falls under the category alamkaradhvani where suggestion appears based on sabdasaktimula. The social conception of madness is also hinted at through Lady Macduff's dialogue with Ross(Shakespeare, 2001, 4.2.1–4):

Lady Macduff : What had he done, to make him fly the land?
Ross : You must have patience, madam.
Lady Macduff : He had none;
His flight was madness.

Applying alamkaradhvanibased on arthasaktimula, Lady Macduff's association of Macduff's hurried and rather unexplained departure with madness here reveals an understanding of madness linked with violent gestures, restlessness, impetuosity, and irrational behaviours. Later, when Caithness speaks of Macbeth: "Some say he's mad" (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.2.14), considering as alamkaradhvani, carries the suggestion that actions or behaviours which seem capricious to others characterize madness.

Cultural construction of madness in Shakespeare's Macbeth will be more evident when one also makes a particular approach, that is, to whom the society assigns the label "mad." At this point, this study undertakes the case of Lady Macbeth and contends that her presumable madness has strong suggestions of desperate attempts at protecting secrets rather than a guilty conscience.Moving to a close dhvani reading of a significant scene, that is, Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene in Act 5, one may wonder if it demonstrates guilty conscience, or the burden of secrecy and shame leading to the psychological changes in her. Three of her utterances can be isolated:

- "What need we fear? Who knows it, when none can call our power to account?" (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.30–34)
- "Wash your hands, put on your night-gown, look not so pale." (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.50–54)
- "To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate: Come, come, come, come, give me your hand." (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.55–60)

Applying vastudhvani, these utterances re-enact or re-imagine the murder, the reasoning and actions performed by the couple – Macbeth and his wife – to keep their crimes a secret. An important thing about secret is that it remains so until it becomes "public knowledge" (Hall & Birchall, 2006, p. 294); thus, the heavier the secret is the greater is the anxiety to protect it, and the more the secret is vulnerable to public knowledge the greater is the need to guard it. This leads us to three major conclusions. First, Lady Macbeth's frantic efforts at wiping out imaginary spots of blood from her hand while sleepwalking– "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.25) – has less to do with guilt or repentance and more to do with guarding their dark secrets from the society, be it for fear of social rejection or loss of power. Second, her attempts at covering up the murder, and references to her

pitiable condition – "… all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. O, O, O" (Shakespeare, 2001, 5.1.42) − bears a possible suggestion that she condemns herself as a transgressor of the socially defined boundaries of femininity, and fears the social gaze should it find out. Lady Macbeth's troubling conception of (her) femininity is revealed through her lengthy monologue in Act 1 where she asks spirits to "unsex" (Shakespeare, 2001, 1.5.31) her to fit her for the murder of a king.What persuades readers to find only remorse and guilt in Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking speech is apparently asamlaksayakrama-vyangyai.e. strong suggestion of underlying emotions in her speech, and the fact that Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking is seen and interpreted entirely through the gaze of the Doctor and the Gentlewoman who construct our understanding of her condition as such (Couche, 2010, p. 136). Drawing the boundaries of in/sanity based on surface phenomenon like sleepwalking narrows down the scope of understanding, if possible, what madness is. For example, is madness simply an outer manifestation of psychic troubles so that sleepwalking marks the starting point of it for Lady Macbeth? But prior to it, what makes us take Lady Macbeth's "sanity" for granted; confined as she seems to domestic spheres, how does Lady Macbeth manage to appear so calm, comfortable, and eager about the killing of King Duncan from the planning to its very execution whereas the valiant warrior Macbeth himself shrinks several times from the very thought of murdering such a national figure? Again, sleepwalking hardly qualifies Lady Macbeth's state as mental condition. According to contemporary medical science, sleepwalking, often genetic and merely a form of sleeping disorder, begins most commonly during childhood and usually continues even after it (Thackery and Harris, 2003, pp. 902–903; First & Tasman, 2006, p. 421), a hypothesis perhaps impossible to prove within the linguistic limits of the text yet cannot be dismissed altogether as a form of suggestion. Moreover, if the suggestions of incoherent/inconsistent speech patterns during sleepwalking marks her transformation from "sane" to "insane," what about the three witches whose speeches are full of inconsistencies? Neither the "imperfect speakers" (Shakespeare, 2001, 1.3.71), i.e.the female supernatural agencies nor their male listeners who rely seriously on what they listen to are brought under the heavy judgment of "insanity," rather such incoherence seems to add to the witches' uncanniness, endorsing madness as a human condition, a deviation from a supposed normalness.

Conclusion

In theory, the emergence of comparative literature within the academia marked the initiation of transcultural literary studies with utopian aspirations, yet in practice, fact remains that "the collective cultures of 'the West' have functioned as the center, the interpreter, and the point of reference for all others" (Behdad& Thomas, 2011, p. 6). The central objective of this paper has been to map the intricate

nature of Eurocentrism within the field of comparative literature and explore ways to counter/overcome it. For the decolonial comparatist to "write back" more effectively, the paper contends it necessary to deconstruct the dichotomic structure of counter-discourses that mostly results in the re-endorsement or reversal of established hierarchies. It is from this understanding that the paper (i) solicits an extension of the focus and range of counter discursive enterprises so that one not only writes back to the centre but also writes back to oneself and to one another; and (ii) proposes a tripartite comparative model encompassing the spatio-linguistic locations of the critic, the text/s, and the critical framework concerned, demonstrating how such a model may function to counter the Eurocentism of the comparative field through its dhvani reading of madness in Shakespeare's Macbeth. The fact that such an exhaustively studied text like Macbeth can be re-interpreted, even deconstructed, by the use of dhvani theory is a testimony to the theoretical strength and transcultural validity of non-Western literary and linguistic theories. Again, why it is more than simply "deconstruction" is that it provides the critic with a method/ology and the freedom to pursue meanings, offering a synthesis between contextual and closed readings through its comprehensive framework; after all, any reading that is either contextual or divorced from its context provides a partial understanding of the work. Finally, both of the strategic engagements suggested here demand academic activism on the part of the decolonial comparatist in order to dis/mantle hegemonic apparatuses and truly democratize literary studies as well as our ways of seeing the world.

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