

Ideas

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Note from the Editor-in-Chief

It is with great pride, enthusiasm, and anticipation that we invite you to read the fourth issue of *Ideas*. We are very happy to see the journal's gradual recognition in the national as well as in the international realm. The 5th Volume (2019-2020) of *Ideas* contains articles by a wide range of scholars from different corners of the world writing on topics related to language, literature, film, law and cultural studies highlighting the inter- and cross-disciplinary nature of the journal.

Ideas strives to attract and engage an international readership that is primarily academic. University libraries and individual academics are the primary target group for the journal. However, the journal seeks to attract professional audiences as well. The journal includes up-to-date, high-quality, and original contributions - research papers, reviews, and syntheses as well as book and conference reviews -for disseminating new knowledge. *Ideas* remains dedicated to providing space for fresh researchers and promising academics.

With **Institute of Advanced Studies'** continued support in improving its editorial platforms we aim for even higher standards in all aspects of the journal's management and operations.

Any papers that you wish to submit, either individually or jointly, are much appreciated and will make a substantial contribution to the development and success of *Ideas*. If you are uncertain about the suitability of your work for *Ideas* or have any other questions concerning the journal, please do not hesitate to make contact (using the email address below).

We look forward to working with all of you as we continue to make this Journal of Literature, Arts and Culture a success and we welcome your submissions, as well as feedback as authors, readers, and reviewers of the journal.

We welcome your submission of your original research. Please send them to-

ideas.bangladesh@gmail.com
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Best wishes and thank you in advance for your contribution to the Journal of Institute of Advanced Studies.

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Review Policy

The paper, which meets the editorial criteria, will be assigned to at least two anonymous reviewers for peer-review.

Based on the reviewers' comments, the Editors will make a decision on a paper as one of the following three conditions:

- a. Accept without any revision
- b. Accept with some minor revisions
- c. Reject

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Shakespeare as text and/versus performance in the academic arena of Bangladesh

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I

And I will kill thee / And love thee after. (*Othello*, 5.2.18-19)

A few days before we were going to celebrate Shakespeare's 455th birth anniversary at DELL, PU on 23rd April this year, an incident happened that shook the whole of Bangladesh. A female student of a madrassa college in a village in Feni was burnt to death on the rooftop of a building inside the college premises. On investigation it came to light that she had earlier filed a lawsuit against the principal of the college--who was a Maulana--for sexual abuses, and as police arrested him on that charge, he conspired with others from inside the jail that the girl should be pressed to withdraw the case or otherwise would be burnt to death. According to the plan, the principal's cohorts managed to call the girl on an examination day to the rooftop on a ruse that one of her friends (a girl that is) was attacked by some miscreants. Immediately she rushed to the rooftop, where her assailters were waiting for her. Failing to force her to withdraw the case, they soaked her with kerosene and set her on fire, to which she succumbed eleven days after in the hospital.

On a Shakespeare Celebration Day, we at DELL usually offer an assortment of programmes that include speeches, seminars, books and photographs exhibitions, movies and stage performances by students. One of the scenes they chose to perform was the Bedchamber Scene (5.2) from *Othello*. As I was attending the rehearsals, I could not avoid being wary of the fact that the whole country was at the time geared up to cry down on anything resembling the circumstance of the death of the college girl. And the boy-student as Othello and the girl-student as Desdemona were all too keen to act out a scene of asphyxiation credibly. Othello would enter the bedroom with a lighted candle, and during that two weeks of rehearsal every time he entered the stage with a lighted candle, I literally shook in fear that what might

happen if the candle slipped off his hand and caught the girl's dress by accident. At the time our society's mindset was such that even if such an accident occurred, they would swoop on us for allowing that scene to be performed at all. And the other fear that came to my mind grew out of my watching the performance of the actors. In trying to make the presentation of death with a high degree of verisimilitude, he would press down the pillow on her with such great force that the girl would wriggle wildly throwing out all her limbs for life, her legs shooting out from under the blanket, and finally becoming still as the act of smothering was complete. On the first stage rehearsal day the girl wore a thin georgette corset, the most inflammable of the costumes. And she said that she would wear it on the final day too, as it was all white suggesting Desdemona's purity (as if white could represent purity). And the boy assured me that he would carry a long candle, so that it would never slip off from his hand. Still my worries would not leave me and I sent a word to the director (Mrs. Shantanu Das, an assistant professor of DELL) that the boy did not need to carry a lighted candle on the stage. Just an unlighted candle would do as much, would make the audience realize the actual impact of a lighted candle. I also told her that in the play itself Othello's speech, containing the line, "Put out the light, and then put out the light" (7) does not specify the use of a candle, and it was the director's choice to use anything that stands for a 'light'. So, an unlighted candle would serve as much dramatic purpose as a lighted candle would do. After all, the effect of dramatic presentation did not depend on literal representation but on metaphorical representation. The director apparently agreed, but on the performance day just before the show would begin, she halted me on my way to my seat in the auditorium, and took me behind the curtain where I found the whole ensemble waiting eagerly. They pleaded to me in a chorus that I should allow Othello to carry the burning candle on the stage, otherwise the scene would lose its appeal. I gave consent, and the performance was done to a great applause from the audience, and I breathed a great sigh of relief.

The description above—the pyromaniac act on the madrassa student and the subsequent socially entrapping fear of not causing a similar incident to happen even by accident—maybe stating a temporary phenomenon of a temporary situation, but it at the same time suggests how the presentation of a Shakespearean work (or any writer's work for that matter) maybe impacted by particular circumstances of a given time in a given society.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595) Shakespeare actually provides guidance to us to understand the worries that I said above I had gone through in connection with the presentation of the Bedchamber Scene from *Othello*. When the irresistible Bottom aspires to play the lion too, he confirms his eligibility for it by saying, "Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me" (1.2.57-8). And the Duke will urge him to roar on: "I will roar that I will make the Duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again'" (1.2.58-9). But his roaring is what might offend the ladies in the theatre, Peter Quince, the writer-cum-director of the play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, informs him: "And you should do it too terribly, [Meaning: if you roar that horribly], you would fright the Duchess and the ladies that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all" (1.2.60-2). Bottom at once acknowledges the problem. For the sake of acting in great verisimilitude they cannot afford to be executed. But Bottom will perform anyhow even if it requires the shifting of the role from a lion's roar to a dove's or nightingale's cooing: "I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove. I will roar you and 'twere any nightingale." (1.2.64-7)

Of course, Bottom's agreeing to shift his acting from roaring to cooing is primarily intended to be taken as pure fun, but behind it Shakespeare has let us know about the social prerogatives that cannot be challenged by the representation of art. The Duchess (though she is not an English Duchess) and the elite ladies cannot be offended. Shakespeare's worries expressed through Bottom are similar to mine I went through during the presentation of the *Othello* scene.

As my above narrative clarifies, I was worried about staging a scene under prevailing circumstances, which would not have been the case if I had been just teaching it in the classroom as a text. So, I want to discuss these two experiences from my pedagogical standpoint. I don't want to give any final verdict on either of them as being superior to each other, but I want to state both the cases with the support from scholarly views forwarded on this subject—Shakespeare to read or to stage, or to do both simultaneously. This should also be made clear that while I discuss text, I do not only mean the play-texts, but also the critical writings on them. Similarly, when I discuss performance, I do include the performance studies as well.

II

A poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage. (*Macbeth*, 5.5.23-24)

When Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor published their volume, entitled *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* in 1988, Wells finished his General Introduction to the volume by emphatically saying that as Shakespeare was foremost a man of the theatre so they published the volume keeping the version as closely possible to the stage performances of Shakespeare's time.

Nevertheless, it is in performance that the plays lived and had their being. Performance is the end to which they were created, and in this edition we have devoted our efforts to recovering and presenting texts of Shakespeare's plays as they were acted in the London playhouses which stood at the centre of his professional life.”¹

This view held sway for many decades until a counter trend started in Shakespeare scholarship, which has been stated in a critical term as the “return of the author,” in the category of which three outstanding works were published in the beginning of the twenty-first century, namely *Shakespeare and the Book* (2001) by David Kastan, *Shakespeare as a Literary Dramatist* (2003) by Lukas Erne, and *Shakespeare, National Poet-Playwright* (2003) by Patrick Cheney, each of which states that Shakespeare's plays should be primarily adjudged as literary texts to be used for stage only selectively.²

¹ Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Gen eds. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. xxxix.

² W. B. Worthen, “Intoxicating Rhythms: Or, Shakespeare, Literary Drama, and Performance (Studies),” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 3, Shakespeare in Performance (Fall 2011), pp. 309-339. This reference is to P. 310.

III

How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,

In states unborn and accents yet unknown! (*Julius Caesar*, 3.1.112-14)

As I see it the nature of the conflict between the stage and the page mainly resides in the difficulty of adjudging which certain factors are only unique to the stage and which factors are to be had in the plays as literary texts. For example, Shakespeare's plays can be read in their authentic compactness, though in the case of some plays there may be a debate as to which one is the authentic text. Out of this confusion Wells and Taylor include both the Quarto Text, 1608 and the Folio Text, 1623 of *King Lear* in *Oxford Shakespeare* as two different texts. But so far as staging or filming is concerned editing becomes an essential requirement, but that editing once and for all is exclusionary in nature. In the case of reading the text, we can read the edited versions in their full gamut, both the passages that have been added or omitted, the phrases and lines that have been added or omitted, or as Philip Edwards explains in the Introduction to his 1985 New Cambridge Edition of *Hamlet* why he thought that the Folio 1623 edition did the right thing by omitting the 7th (4th in his labelling) soliloquy, "How all occasions do inform against me" (4.4.32), as in his understanding it was Shakespeare who suggested its omission on a side note on the manuscript, but which could have been mistakenly ignored by the printer, though despite this argument Edwards includes the soliloquy in the proper sequence of the text.³ Wells and Taylor, on the other hand, published it in *Oxford Shakespeare* just after the main text, in the section called 'Additional Passages'⁴, while Greenblatt et al include it but print it in italics in their volumes, entitled, *The Norton Shakespeare: based on the Oxford Edition* (1997).⁵ But the fact that Edwards retained the soliloquy is proof enough that the force of the soliloquy and its aptness he could not have but acceded to. My argument here is that whatever Edwards had thought about his editing of the soliloquy can be read by us. But in the stage presentation or the screen version such

³ Philip Edwards, ed. *Hamlet: Prince of Denmark* (Cambridge: The New Cambridge Shakespeare, 1985), pp. 17, 19 and 30.

⁴ Wells and Taylor, p. 689.

⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, Gen. ed, *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition: Tragedies* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 357.

luxury is not to be had. We have to go by an either/or option so far as the staging or screening of Shakespeare's plays is concerned. Whether to carry a lighted candle on the stage or not is the question.

The second problem is that how would the DELL students know how much of terrorizing to act out! In a sense, does the text (in my discussion in this essay I conflate the terms 'dramatic text', 'dramatic script' and even the 'prompt-book' as meaning the text for performance) give them any specific idea of how that scene would be performed, or should it be taken as an open mode leaving it to the independent interpretation of the director/actor or director and actor! How close or how far should he take the burning candle to the face of the girl to detect lechery in her eyes—very close, just close, or not at all close! On the stage the action has to be accomplished at one go, while in reading we can allow our imagination to reconstruct the vision of asphyxiation in any number of ways—differently by different readers, or differently by the same reader at different times. But on the stage the action is marshalled to present one particular interpretation. This problem is identified, as Margaret Jane Kidnie says in her essay, "Text, Performance, and the Editors: Staging Shakespeare's Drama," by Marco de Marinis as the "irreversibility of theatrical transcoding"⁶. Marinis summarizes the point by saying that "[t]here is no necessary link between dramatic literature and the stage, and, consequently, not only can dramatic text be profitably studied as literature, but the script can in no sense achieve its 'realization' or 'fulfillment' in the theatre"⁷. Noting the indeterminacy of the quarto texts as against the Folio, Kidnie says: "the written text has survived, while the oral text has been irrecoverably lost"⁸.

W. B. Worthen in his essay, "Intoxicating Rhythms: Or, Shakespeare, Literary Drama, and Performance (Studies), gives a sustained account of this debate between the stage and the page, and while he tries to find a way out by suggesting that the dramatic text ultimately becomes functional on the stage, he yet discusses Erne's view of the "return of the author", by which Erne meant that Shakespeare's plays had 'double existence'⁹ for he

⁶ Margaret Jane Kidnie, "Text, Performance, and the Editors: Staging Shakespeare's Drama" in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Winter, 2000), pp. 456-473. She quotes Marinis at p. 458.

⁷ Kidnie, p. 459.

⁸ Kidnie, p. 459.

⁹ Worthen, p. 316.

simultaneously had written for a reading public. Before refuting him, Worthen summarizes Erne's views:

Whether Shakespeare was self-consciously part of a systematic publishing program or not (and regardless of whether supervising the publication of the quartos was even a realistic possibility), as house playwright and company sharer, Shakespeare could not have been unaware of efforts to publish the company's plays, of the general trade in printed drama, or of a potential readership for plays, including his own.¹⁰

Worthen mentions Erne's treatment of *Antony and Cleopatra* and says that stage directions like

“Enter Pompey, Menecrates, and Menas, in warlike manner,” “Enter Ventidius as it were in triumph,” “Enter Caesar . . . with his Counsell of Warre,” “Enter the Guard rustling in”—strike Erne as “descriptive stage directions that are directed at readers rather than at the bookkeeper,” because in the theatre the conspirators’ warlike manner would be evident from their appearance, Caesar’s council would be identified by the dialogue, and the guard would enter with the usual bustle of officious underlings. As the pictoriality of such directions is functionally inconsistent with the pure instrumentality of most early modern stage directions, Erne believes that they are intended to provide readers with “information” essential to assembling a dramatic fiction in the mind’s eye.”¹¹

Disagreeing with Erne’s proposition to prioritize reading over acting as regards Shakespeare’s plays, Worthen suggests that though “*Antony and Cleopatra* is larded with narrative stage directions intended for readers [,] [yet] in the context of the play, it is unusually difficult to know how to

¹⁰ Worthen summarizes Erne’s point. P. 311. But Greenblatt’s view is that the company was reluctant to publish Shakespeare’s plays for fear of losing audience.

¹¹ Worthen, p. 322.

segregate descriptive directions and descriptive dialogue from writing proper to theatrical performance.”¹²

Erne, however, bases his idea, as Worthen says, on Harry Berger, who coined the phrase “imaginary audition,” by which he asserted that “the inherent complexity of Shakespeare’s texts is not sizeable on the stage,” and designated “reading as a more complex (ambiguous, multiplex, simultaneous) version of what he [Berger] takes to be the spectator’s (unambiguous, singular, sequential) activity in the theatre.”¹³

Then Worthen questions:

“ . . . is Philo’s opening speech, mourning Antony’s transformation into the ‘bellows and the fan / To cool a gypsy’s lust’ (1.1.9-10), also expendable in the theatre? It is immediately illustrated in action, of course—or is it? A production of *Antony and Cleopatra* without Philo’s lines opening and closing the first scene, without Caesar’s description of Antony’s physical decline from exploits at Modena, without Enobarbus’s description of Cleopatra, and of course without Cleopatra’s theatrically redundant ‘boy my greatness’ (5.2.219) would omit the play’s determined oscillation between ‘textualized,’ even literary accents of ‘information,’ and information-in-the-making, performance.”¹⁴

Worthen would rather view the “text-and-performance problem” not as one cancelling the other but as “complementary and incommensurable.”¹⁵

While Worthen is taking issue with Berger and Erne for subordinating performance (and performance studies) to reading, Greenblatt maybe seen as anticipating both Berger and Erne in his discussion about the positivity of the arrival of Caxton’s printing machine in early modern England. In pursuance of his argument Greenblatt pointedly compared the Globe Playhouse with

¹² Worthen, p. 324.

¹³ W. B. Worthen, “Intoxicating Rhythms: Or, Shakespeare, Literary Drama, and Performance (Studies)” in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 3, Shakespeare in Performance (Fall 2011), pp. 309-339). These references occur at pages 323 and 328.

¹⁴ Worthen, p. 324.

¹⁵ Worthen, p. 325.

the Folio 1623 edition. While the Globe Playhouse did not finally survive, the Folio went through multiple editions and copies because of the technological help provided by the printing machine.

For if Shakespeare himself imagined Prospero's island as the great Globe Theatre, succeeding generations found that island more compactly and portably figured in the bound volume. The passage from the stage to the book signals a larger shift from the joint-stock company, to the modern corporation, with its primary interest in protecting the common property, to the modern corporation, with its primary interest in the expansion and profitable exploitation of a network of relations. Unlike the Globe, which is tied to a particular place and time and community, unlike even the traveling theater company, with its constraints of personnel and stage properties and playing space, the book is supremely portable. It may be readily detached from its immediate geographical and cultural origins, its original producers and consumers, and endlessly reproduced, circulated, exchanged, exported to other times and places.¹⁶

But the recognition of the durability of the reading text over the stage text does not seem to me to be an answer to the problem I have in mind. There are two problems as I see it. Greenblatt's passage is taken from his essay, "Martial Law in the Land of Cockaigne" published in his book, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, which came out in 1988. By this time because of the proliferation of an area of science suitably captioned as "Digital Humanities" (DH), Shakespeare scholarship has turned into an exercise that accommodates multiple and repeated visual representations of his plays through YouTube, and such dedicated Shakespearean websites as 'BardBox', etc. So today Shakespeare teaching is being increasingly aided by virtual projections, and the movies and video clips are as easily accessible now as are the reading texts. Not true. It is the virtual texts that are more readily available now than printed texts, as online access to library archives

¹⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 160. Berger's book, *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* was published in 1989 from Berkeley, University of California.

such as jstor.com, Amazon.com, etc., have become possible. There is no way now that one can complain about not having enough material to research on. Probably, the problem can be one of arranging adequate funds to develop the facilities on campus for DH functionalities.

IV

O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters.

(*Hamlet*, 3.2.7-9)

Even then my original problem remains unanswered: how to know how to act on stage or how to react while reading. We enjoy watching plays or reading them by automatically activating our imagination which makes its own appropriation of the play we watch or read. Our imagination works both by believing in the illusion as Johnson explained or by willingly suspending our disbelief as Coleridge said. So, we accept the stage as the battlefield of Troy (Johnson) or enjoy watching the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Coleridgean way. No problem. But as I was editing *Hamlet* this year for the Albatross Publishers, I became aware about another additional necessity that I had to perform which I did not deem necessary before I undertook the job. I felt that the target audience--students, teachers and general readers alike--would be sufficiently helped if I could supply certain hints as how certain actions were to be imagined while one was reading it. Then I found that the solution lay in the very play I was working on. It is Hamlet's directives to the Player-King, which I will quote here at length.

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you, avoid it.

“Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others.” (3.2.1-25)¹⁷

Fortunately, additionally, I had in my collection Kenneth Branagh's screenplay of *Hamlet*, which I found very useful to help visualize some particular actions, the Bedroom scene of 3.4., for example. Of course, Branagh's screenplay cannot have universal applicability, but it at least helps us (those not directly connected with the theatre, but with teaching and research) to see how neatly actable it is. Moreover, Branagh's screenplay hasn't omitted anything from the text ('full text' as he says without specifying which text he actually based his screenplay on).¹⁸ I only wish I had a similar screenplay available for the text of *Othello*, when DELL students were rehearsing the Bedchamber scene from it.

To understand how the virtual presentation can be taken as a thrilling experience, I will refer to a video clip that I downloaded and played in the class few years ago. The clip in question is the Deposition Scene (4.1) from *Richard II* done by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 2013, available on YouTube, which dramatizes the significance or lack of significance of the crown from diametrically opposite angles. The actor playing Richard II, David Tennant, appears on stage bare feet in a flowing silky white robe and offers Bolingbroke (Nigel Lindsay) the crown to accept it: “Here, cousin, seize the crown” (4.1.181). But the moment Bolingbroke stretches his hand and grabs it, Richard does not let it go off his hand, and momentarily a tug-of-war holds the stage in suspense, that in turn symbolically casts a long shadow into the internecine civil war of England, the Wars of the Roses: “On this side my hand, and on that side thine” (4.1.183). Then in a stunning move, by the mere flick of his hand, Tenant turns the crown upside down to make it look like a well: “Now is this golden crown like a deep well” (4.1.184). The deep well, Richard says, is used with two buckets, one up and one down. The figure of the buckets is thus

¹⁷ Downloaded from

https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/hamlet/page_150/.

¹⁸ Kenneth Branagh, *Hamlet by William Shakespeare: Screenplay, Introduction and Film Diary* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1996), p. vi.

denoting the rise and fall in one's fortune.¹⁹ The one down under water is him, full of tears, and the one up is Bolingbroke, shorn of cares, and thus—with a mild irony attached—"The emptier ever dancing in the air" (4.1.186). In this video clip, Bolingbroke looks totally baffled not knowing how to react to the offer.

So, in a desperate tone, he cries out: "Are you contented to resign the crown?" (4.1.200), to which Richard's reply, "Ay, no; no, ay: for I must nothing be" (4.1.201), which Derek Jacobi, with Jon Finch in a 1978 film, acts out with such pathos—choking voice mixed with a sense of remiss—that both demonstrates Bolingbroke's (Finch's) hesitant manner and Richard's rueful acquiescence to the fact that he must resign: "I must nothing be."

The viewing of the video clips surely enhances the students' comprehension of the pains and sorrows attached with losing the crown.

V

What is the end of study, let me know? (*Love's Labour's Lost*, 1.1.55)

That is true. But at DELL the problem is bigger. Given the general background that in the recent time students coming to take admission in the English Departments show progressively declining standard in English with each new year, they readily welcome the presentation mode or performance mode as it saves them from reading and comprehending the 'hard' texts. That is, instead of appearing for a written test, they would rather prefer to go by the performance mode. So, their reading of Shakespeare remains fragmented. Their comprehension of Shakespeare also becomes fragmented. In a way alluring a student away from the reading table to the stage may hamper both his intellectual development on Shakespeare and his power of expression through written language. I would rather have my students write about Shakespeare than perform him on stage with all the linguistic deficiencies retained.

Normand Berlin, who published an essay in *Massachusetts Review* in 1999, entitled, "Traffic of Our Stage: Shakespeare in Stratford," expressed similar anxieties when he found that at Stratford the RSC was performing plays by paying attention, more particularly, to the formal aspects of the drama (like

¹⁹ See Peter Ure, ed. *King Richard the Second*, The Arden Shakespeare (London and New York: Routledge, 1956, 1994), Act 4, Scene 1, n 184-9.

setting, costumes, paraphernalia) at the expense of the core beauty of Shakespeare's poetry, which the actor dramatizes. He called them the director's plays. So, Berlin suggests:

. . . we must aspire to productions that place primary importance on the actor and the words that Shakespeare gives the actor. Allow the setting and the costume and the visual effects to overwhelm the poetry and we have lost something precious. Allow liveliness of performance for its own sake and reaching for easy laughter (something that a dumbed-down audience can handle!) to squelch the texture of words and meaning of words and we have lost the unique pleasure that Shakespeare offers us.²⁰

This choice of sticking to the text assiduously is however not easy to make. For the kind of jubilation and excitement the students display towards performance activities in terms of wearing colourful costumes, not missing any of the rehearsal schedules, while missing lecture classes, and forming a high degree of camaraderie with the other members of the group cannot be considered as non-contributory to an understanding of Shakespeare. So, the situation is such that though we feel the traditional reading-based approach to Shakespeare was healthier in terms of improving the language skills of students in written English and, perhaps, developing their intellectual souls too, I would say that the performance strategy is also as much essential to pursue.

²⁰ Normand Berlin, "Traffic of Our Stage: Shakespeare in Stratford," in *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring, 1999), pp. 137-153. This reference occurs on pp. 151-2.

Rabindranath's Gender View as Reflected in Sucharita's Position in *Gora*

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When critics laud Sucharita's intellectual ability and critical faculty, they overlook her conformity to the nationalistic construction of a modern woman. After his one-month imprisonment, when Gora returns home, he realizes for the first time the necessity of including women in the nationalistic mission. The omniscient narrator describes Gora's feelings about Sucharita, "The womanhood of India was revealed to him in the figure of Sucharita, and he regarded her as the manifestation of all that was sweet and pure, loving and virtuous in the homes of his Motherland" (Tagore, *Gora* 272).⁵ In the narrative language, Sucharita becomes the "incarnation of the grace which shone upon India's children, served the sick, consoled the afflicted, and consecrated with love even the most insignificant" (*Gora* 272; emphasis added). She becomes the embodiment "of the power which never forsakes the meanest of us in our sorrows and misfortunes, which never despises us, and although entitled to worship offers its devotion to even the most unworthy amongst us" (*Gora* 272; emphasis added). Her praise continues: she represents a dedicated person whose "skillful and beautiful hands put the seal of sacrifice on all our works . . ." (*Gora* 272; emphasis added).

Conforming to the discourse of nationalism, the narration here fixes some attributes—such as love, devotion, providing consolation, and sacrifice—as the virtues of a woman. Though these qualities are worthy of admiration, by essentializing these particularly to be feminine, the narrative decides and restricts the activities and space of women. It may seem that the text elevates the woman to the position of a deity ("incarnation"), but it is a deity whose functions are predetermined and limited to those of healer and nurturer.

Through Gora, the narrator here expects Sucharita to perform the tasks of sacrificing self, nursing the distressed, and loving the downtrodden. Sucharita is not choosing her actions; rather, being a woman, she is expected to accomplish the actions that Gora determines for her. Thus, a woman may receive a sanctified position being "consecrated with love," but must suffer the restraint of subjectivity within the frame of the expected or imposed essentialized feminine image.

Very disturbingly Rabindranath personally approves the division of space and action based on gender (Azad 116-27). In the poem "Sonara Bandhana," Rabindranath addresses the woman as "gnhalakshml" ("The Goddess of Home") who is deeply tied with the virtues of "sneha" ("affection"), "prem" ("love"), "karuna" ("pity"), and "sheba" ("providing service") (Rabindra-racanabali 3: 2627). Analyzed in this context, it clearly shows that Rabindranath articulates his notion about specific gender through the narration and character of Gora and thus plays the role of an accomplice to specify women's function. Later, we will again find that Rabindranath's fictional voice in Gora fails to conceal his subjective views on gender and thus loses objectivity.

In some places in the novel, Gora shows Rabindranath's tendency to view women with the values traditionally imposed on women. For example, Gora invites Sucharita, "For my India, as a man, I can only work and if necessary die, but who, except you, can light the lamp of welcome to her? If you stand aloof the service of India can never be beautiful" (Gora 313-14). In the duties required to form a nation, the role of the man is that of a worker, an active agent, who can choose to lay down his life. But the woman's role is decorative and symbolic. Her contribution includes passively "welcom[ing]" or receiving the country, holding out a lamp and beautifying the nation. It reminds us of the cultural role of women to make a home graceful. We can also sense that Gora's invitation reflects Rabindranath's vision about the grihalakshmi. But the woman's proposed activity of welcoming and ornamenting the land appears to be indolent and unassertive compared to the man's commitment to work and even, if necessary, to die for the nation.

The third-person narrator sketches Sucharita in images of shade and silence. Apparently, the image patterns reflect a New Woman's modesty and gentle demeanor. For example, in chapter 20, while listening to Haran's reading of an English article, Sucharita shades "her eyes from the glare of the lamp with

a palm-leaf fan" (Gora 98). In the same chapter, when Gora is engaged in debate with Haran, "Sucharita was gazing at Gora from behind the shelter of her fan ..." (Gora 99). Here the fan is not merely an object to protect Sucharita's eyes from the light. It is also a screen behind which Sucharita can keep modest distance from direct eye contact with the gaze of a male, such as Haran or Gora. But Sucharita's placement behind the shadow of a fan denotes her diffidence. She is attracted to Gora's charismatic personality but she is under the "shelter" of the fan. She cannot come forward to have an open look at Gora. While indicating her bashful nature, the narrative voice ensures her self-resignation: "If she had been conscious that she was staring at Gora she would doubtless have felt ashamed, but she was utterly oblivious of herself" (Gora 99). Sucharita, whom critics praise for her critical faculty, becomes unobservant of her own opinion. She engrosses herself so much in the charm of Gora's oratory that she is "oblivious" or "aatmablsmita" to her own presence.⁷ One might argue that this is the beginning of Sucharita's love for Gora. But, in my view, this is also the beginning of Sucharita's self-effacement under the supposedly feminine attributes of modesty and love.

It is not merely Sucharita's intelligence, earned through her education and Western learning from Paresh Babu, that Gora admires; rather he is also impressed that Western influence, through education and public socialization, and though imparting her with keen intelligence, fails to make her undomesticated. In chapter when the text describes Gora's observation of Sucharita, the implied narrative voice seems to share Gora's elation at finding a perfect embodiment of the feminine virtues:

Where was the least trace of the immodest forwardness which he [Gora] had always associated with educated girls? No doubt her [Sucharita's] expression was one of bright intelligence, but how beautifully softened it was by her modest shyness. Her brow was pure and stainless like a glimpse of autumn sky: her lips were silent, but how like a tender bud with the soft curves of the unspoken word. (Gora 101)

The quotation here records the removal of Gora's misconception about educated woman. Through Gora's new realization, the implied narrator imparts the message that the educated New Woman does not mean to be arrogant. The New Woman also possesses delicate traits such as modesty and softness or in other words, hrday sampad as Rabindranath has described elsewhere. But paradoxically, through the praise of an essentialized feminine

virtue (modesty), the narrator impedes the operation of Sucharita's selfhood, for she has no voice besides the voice of Gora. Her lips are silent with the "unspoken word," "anuchchaiita katha".⁸ If her silent lips indicate her humility, they also characterize her unassertiveness. Indeed, the qualities that the narration, impelled by Gora and also Rabindranath, picks out for fulsome praise themselves exemplify the passivity they impose upon Sucharita. The appreciation of Sucharita's feminine virtues in the text conforms to the patriarchal ideology of ascribing fixed or pliable attributes to a woman. The image of Sucharita's silence recurs in the narration repeatedly. A list of examples can be drawn: "When Gora saw that Sucharita listened to him without attempting to make any answer his mind was filled with compassion ..." (Gora 295). "As with these parting words he [Gora] left the room the very air seemed to tremble for a long time after he had gone, and Sucharita remained sitting motionless like a statue" (Gora 301). "She [Sucharita] merely suffered in silence without finding any remedy" (Gora 312). "For a long time she sat with her hands in her lap, still and silent like an image in a picture" (Gora 317). "Sucharita made no reply to this, but that she was ready to rely upon him to the full was manifest even in her silence" (Gora 330). This series of quotations emphasizing Sucharita's silence may reflect her calm and composed nature, but in most cases her silence preceded by Gora's long and powerful speeches implies her unchallenging and sometimes compliant spirit.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the narrative device of this novel demotes the major woman characters to subordinate status. As I show in the following and in next sections, sometimes the equivocal meanings of words and situational irony in the story demonstrate the working of discriminating gender politics in the text. Another of Rabindranath's novels—*The Home and the World*, which is my concern in another paper—also bears words and images, the uncertain meanings of which expose the heroine to an ambiguous, often subjugated position. Moreover, we also see in this chapter that in other places the description or representation of woman in the text manifests her yielding and vulnerable image.

Sucharita's company enlarges Gora's views, especially about women's role in the national space. However, ironically, the novel presents Sucharita as a passive listener to Gora's preaching. When Gora discusses religious and national topics with her, Sucharita's reaction is mostly inquiring—receptive but rarely argumentative. The narration describes her in these words:

"Sucharita listened with bowed head, her heart palpitating to find Gora addressing her specially, with such great eagerness" (Gora 103). Elsewhere, "Sucharita remained lost in thought awhile, and finding her silent, Gora went on: .(Gora 104). Apparently, the image of her bowed head (nata mukh implies both the concentration of her thoughts to Gora's words and also the expected modesty of a "bhadramahila" ("respectable woman"; Chattejee 628) before a male stranger. But, with her "bowed head" and obliviousness of self, surely she appears to the readers to be intellectually defenseless before Gora's eloquent spirit.

The image of her bowed head also recurs later in the novel. In some examples, Sucharita's bowed head seems to denote her loyalty, obedience, or dissatisfaction. But as we will see, it conveys other meanings as well. The readers find Sucharita "listening with her head bowed" (Gora 296) to Gora's enthusiastic speeches about patriotism and immediately asking him for direction of her action. Here the gesture of a bowed head apparently shows her loyalty to the leader of a patriotic mission. In another example, on hearing Gora's support for idol worshipping, Sucharita "did not answer, but remained with head bent low" (Gora 311). As a Brahmo girl, Sucharita does not believe in the idol worship that Gora's Hindu practice requires. The meaning of her silence and bowed head is here a humble gesture of her dissenting belief about religious practice. But the readers do not find her expressing her objection in strong terms or even verbally. In both examples, Sucharita's loyal and humble gesture of a bowed head also shows her acceptance of Gora's authority over her. Of all the women Sucharita employs her intellectual faculty the most. In an example we are told, "These were not words [Gora's words] which Sucharita could be expected fully to understand, but the first tide of impending realisation sets in strongly, and the realisation that life is not confined within the bonds of family or sect overwhelmed her with a painful force" (Gora 104). The unidentified narrator exposes Sucharita to a wider intellectual domain beyond the teachings of her father, Paresh Babu, or her potential husband, Haran Babu. She also begins to develop her intellectual capacity with her new "realisation." But she fails to swim in the "first tide of impending realisation;" rather, its "painful force" submerges her. Again, in the narrator's view, Sucharita loses agency. Looking closely at the semantic choices of the narration, it is evident that Rabindranath's narrative device presents Gora before the end of the novel not only as an enthusiastic nationalist, but also as a strong male subduing this intelligent

and educated New Woman, Sucharita. For instance, in chapter 23, the unidentified narrator is sympathetic to her confused intellectual state, but gives her no defense to overcome it. Failing to resist the living spirit of Gora's words associated with the "power of faith" (Gora 122), Sucharita succumbs to him emotionally. The narrator asks rhetorically, "How could she have the heart to raise her hand against him [Gora] in rejection?" (Gora 122). The remark is meant to indicate Sucharita's love for Gora, which begins to bloom at this point in the novel. Nevertheless through this question, the narrative voice welcomes Gora's authority over Sucharita. It establishes the restriction imposed by Gora's influential speeches on Sucharita's heart and hands, the organs of her individual thought and action.

Sucharita's life choices are influenced by male opinions. Some critics, such as Sarada and Bimanbehari Majumdar, find her to be a silent rebel, especially in her refusal to meet Kailash, the potential groom selected by her aunt. But for the most part the influential men in her life control her choices. Her rebellion is fragile before Gora and Paresh Babu. Initially, Gora's militancy creates repugnance in Sucharita thus indicating some degree of independence. But very soon, being overwhelmed by his verbal fervor, she turns away from many of her lifelong beliefs. After having intellectual discussions with Gora about country and religion, Sucharita begins to change her own views. The text notes Sucharita's exclamation to herself: "'How insignificant my life has been,' she felt. 'What I thought of as certain up to now has become full of doubt; what I have been doing every day seems meaningless'" (Gora 119). It is noteworthy that Sucharita chooses the passive position for herself. Sucharita feels secure with Gora, as expressed by her acceptance of him as her "guru" or master (Gora 335).

Sucharita is willing to serve the nation, but the shape of her work depends on Gora's instruction. The narrative records, "She felt that Gora ought, at such a time, to come to her and give her his commands, and show her the way" (Gora 358-59). She willingly accepts her position as a subordinate needing direction. Overwhelmed by Gora's preaching of Hindu nationalism, she comes out of her long-practiced Brahmo faith and confesses to her foster-father, Paresh Babu, "Look here, father, I tell you the truth when I say that I am really a Hindu, though before this I could never have got myself to acknowledge it. Now I say, without any hesitation, and even with emphasis, that I am a Hindu!" (Gora 354-55). Upon Paresh Babu's inquiry about her new faith, Sucharita informs him that she "read widely on this subject and

had many discussions on it" (Gora 355). But her information sources are actually interviews with Gora and articles written and supplied by him.

A most unsettling part of the narration regarding Sucharita's religious transformation from Brahmoism to Hinduism is the implied narrator's indeterminate attitude toward nationalism. Gora's view of religion-based nationalism is the narrator's object of criticism. But the narrative device does not direct any indictment to Sucharita's conversion when she embraces Gora's philosophy. We can see the course of Sucharita's religious conversion in two ways. First, Sucharita's conversion exhibits conflict between the Brahmo and Hindu faiths, Western and Eastern ideas, and tradition and modernity on the evolving stage of Indian nationalism. In this view, the sequence of her progress—her initial repugnance toward Hindu idolatry, her emerging consciousness about India's heritage as gradually awakened by Gora's preaching, her acceptance of the Hindu faith, her simultaneous acknowledgement to Brahmo Paresh Babu as her father, and finally her approval of Binoy and Lolita's inter-communal wedding—traces a balancing between multiple faiths in a common space. Second, her journey records mental confusion, indecisiveness, and intellectual dependence of an educated woman who, unlike Harimohini and Barodasundari, ought to have deeper critical faculties. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the latter interpretation of Sucharita's journey through some extracts.

Gora's arguments in favour of the Hindu caste system begin to alter Sucharita's repulsive feeling about Hinduism and, until Paresh Babu shows her a counter-rationale, she undergoes tremendous inner turmoil. The omniscient voice reports, "As Paresh Babu was speaking, she felt for the time relieved of her internal conflict.... It was for the same reason that she now felt this restless desire in her heart to be constantly taking shelter under Paresh Babu's wing, as she had done when a child" (Gora 121). Sucharita here seems to find temporary mental relief through a healthy discussion with Paresh Babu about Gora's views.

Like a "child" she learns from her father about differing views. But unconsciously, she is inclined to be "relieved" by Paresh Babu's fatherly assurance; she is relying on Paresh Babu's intellectual support. In seeking intellectual shelter, the suggestion presented is that of a child, associating her with helplessness and dependency and thus reinforcing the view of Sucharita's intellectual subjection.

Another example of Sucharita's marginalization in the text is evident in her decision to marry the Brahmo fanatic, Haran Babu, while she is in a stage of spiritual vacillation. In the story the readers see her exercising her own will to choose her groom, but the decision itself is presented in an objectionable way. She seeks to shift her dependence from Paresh Babu to Haran Babu by "clutching at any support for setting at rest her distracted condition" (Gora 127) and "shaping her life according to his [Haran's] ideas" (Gora 128). She is again presented as a weak, unstable human being, groping for support and strength outside of herself and her own faculties.

After Sucharita becomes familiar with Gora's ideas, "the conflict which was taking place, at every step, between the habits and customs which had their roots in her very childhood, and the new life towards which Gora was drawing her," as we are told, "made her restless" (Gora 311). The choice of the word "restless" ("asthrl") reveals the inner anxiety that she undergoes because of this spiritual conflict. However, "restless" also connotes unsteadiness and inconsistency, mirroring Sucharita's failure to show any firm belief of her own.

Later, when Sucharita takes Gora as her master and echoes his teachings to Paresh Babu, she cannot maintain her own stand rationally. Rather, her responses to Paresh Babu's inquiry into the drawbacks of Hindu society are emotional: "'I understand nothing about that,' said Sucharita in a pained voice. 'If this is true, that to-day all are forsaking it [Hindu society], then at such a time I at least will not forsake it [Hindu society]. Because we are children of this unfortunate time we must all the more stand by our society in its distress'" (Gora 357). Sucharita, who has already crossed the long road of spiritual tension and finally accepted the Hindu faith, recognizes herself as a child of restless times. By the word "child," she may mean the intellectual helplessness of an individual in a transitional time in history, but like a "child," she also acts unreasonably here.

Indeed, like a child, she claims to "understand nothing" of Paresh Babu's rational refutations of her positions. After she offers herself in response to Gora's appeal to work for India, "she asked herself why Gora had not put her to the test, and called her to undertake some well-nigh impossible task—in the whole of his party was there a single man who could, like herself, sacrifice everything so easily?" (Gora 359). Apparently the narration describes a woman's eager desire to be involved in work for her nation.

Nevertheless, there is a disturbing implication here. While "sacrifice" conveys the dedicated nature of Sucharita's patriotism, it also has the connotation of renouncement. Thus through this word, she is associated with the effacement of herself. Rather than actively choosing how to channel and prove her patriotic dedication, she is prepared to surrender her active agency through a "test" that she passively receives to prove her ability. In the narrator's presentation, Sucharita's patriotism is to be approved rather than proved.

To summarize, diction such as "restless," "internal conflict," "child," "clutching support," "understanding nothing," and "distracted condition" in the extracts presented here reflect not only the conflict between the Hindu and the Brahmo faiths, but also identify a New Woman's mental turbulence, her intellectual subjection to an influential man, and, finally, the surrender of her self.

Sucharita has received a liberal education but she is not allowed in the narrative to exercise self-determination that comes with that education. She is in a dilemma until she chooses among options presented by males, whether the option is Paresh Babu's affectionate teaching, Haran Babu's wedding proposal, or Gora's masculine appeal to rethink India.

Words such as "sacrifice," "self-forgetfulness," "disciple," and "devotion" are used to reflect Sucharita's character throughout the text. Nationalistic discourse may celebrate a character like Sucharita for these essentialized feminine virtues and, within its framework, a New Woman is allowed to be more educated, enlightened, and rational than women of lower classes or of the previous generations, such as the working girl, Lachmi, or the deprived widow, Harimohini. However the material changes effected by education cannot erode the spiritual characteristics expected from her. Ultimately, independent power lies with the male in the ideology of male-dominated nationalistic discourse (which ideology Gora and Rabindranath's narrative device share in complicity), which constructs this spiritual image of the woman and denies her autonomy. That is why Gora can be certain that Sucharita expects his "summons" (Gora 376).

If we appreciate that Rabindranath shows utmost honor to women by prioritizing feminine virtues over masculine ones, it will be blind glorification. Rabindranath's gender view is reflected through the narrative

device in *Gora*. It limits women's space behind the shadow of what Rabindranath terms as feminine virtues or spiritual strength and establishes their dependence on male characters. Thus Rabindranath appears to deliver a biased-message regarding gender through this novel. Moreover, in other parts of the narration the ironies and paradoxes unfold a marginalized image of the women. In *Gora*, the women are backed into vulnerability in two ways. First, the narrative voice describes the actions and emotions of the female characters in a way that establishes their surrender. Second, the unidentified narrator's description of some male characters'—such as Gora's and Binoy's—feelings and reactions toward women determines the space of women and limits their power and ability through the ironic glorification of feminine virtues.

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Shakespeare in Bollywood

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Abstract

The exuberant world of Shakespeare seems to have always fascinated Bollywood filmmakers, inspiring them to interpret or adapt his texts in the context of their own socio-cultural milieu. In Postcolonial India, the Bard's magnificent and “universal” tales of love, revenge, intrigue and violence have played a remarkable role in shaping and influencing Indian imagination and ethos. The dramatist began to appear in Bollywood cinema several decades ago, and over the years he turned into the Bard of Bollywood. From Gulzar's *Angoor* (1982), an adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors*, to Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* (2014), a remake of *Hamlet*, the playwright has appeared in diverse and myriad avatars on the big screen. Bollywood has domesticated Shakespearean texts, popularising them with its own *masala* formula – the inclusion of dance, music, item songs and so on – to entertain and cater to the taste of the *desi* audience. Thus, bollywoodised adaptations/interpretations of Shakespearean dramas have become part of popular or mass culture in this part of the world. Filmmakers have translated the Bard's works in their own tongues and tones, and as Shakespearean-plots interweave almost all the subtle and intricate components of human-psyche/life, thus endowing the texts with a crowd-pulling ability, they help fulfil the filmmakers' commercial interests. In this paper, we aim to examine how Bollywood has remained, over decades, a fertile field for Shakespearean texts to be re-explored, reinterpreted or reinvented. The essay also aims to decode the politics of appropriating and commoditising literary and cultural artefacts as a means to catering to popular and mass consumption. Furthermore, the paper

aspires to bring into fore how Shakespearean texts' intrinsic/embedded modernity has enabled their writer to transcend the boundary of individual subjectivity and to ultimately become a metaphor for heterogeneous or "global" humanity.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Bollywood, Filmmaker, adaptation, commoditising, popular culture

The English poet and playwright William Shakespeare is universally acknowledged as one of the greatest literary icons, and over the years, a huge academic industry as well as a consumerist cultural market has grown around him. Bollywood's filmic engagement with Shakespeare undoubtedly underlines the commercial aspect associated with the Bard of Avon, whose plays have been adopted, appropriated and commodified in order to cater to the popular taste and interest of a vast spectrum of audience. The relationship between Bollywood and Shakespeare, which seems to have a fairly long history, might have been cemented upon the industry's fascination and admiration for the works of the Bard, but at the same time there runs a very palpable and a complex matrix of economic interest that points finger at the essentially commercial nature of Bollywood's engagements with this literary and cultural phenomenon called Shakespeare.

Shakespeare, with his strong and impressive global reach, "represents "international cultural capital" as well as "universal values" which has turned him not only a cultural asset but also an economic one.¹ On the other hand, with the advent of globalisation and India emerging as a powerful economy, Bollywood has not only transformed itself from an "indigenous product" into a "global brand" executing influence on the international culture industry, the global economy and the Market, but also has carved out a niche for itself as one of the influential film industries in the world. Thus the combination of Shakespeare and Bollywood happens to constitute a cultural capital and together they have become a signifier of a new global culture.² This seemingly incongruous nexus – between Shakespeare the

¹Paromita Chakravarti, "Interrogating "Bollywood Shakespeare": Reading Rituparno Ghosh's *The Last Lear*", *Bollywood Shakespeares*, Eds. Craig Dionne and Paramita Kapadia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2014), p. 128.

²Ibid.

highbrow, elite and Bollywood the lowbrow, popular – across two different cultures may appear natural, but it is deeply fraught with commercial concerns and marketing/profit-generating potentials.

The present paper³investigates into the politics of adaptation and appropriation informed and shaped by commercial and profit-making purposes; it also seeks to delve deep into the intertwining relationship between Bollywood and Shakespeare,⁴ which nevertheless opens up windows to conversations between divergent cultures and communities, transcending the confines of insular binaries of the high/low, elite/subaltern, East/West and so on. The paper also examines how Shakespearean texts' inherent modernity and contemporaneity allow the Bard to speak to "states unborn and accents yet unknown!"⁵ Finally, we argue how our doing "Bollywood Shakespeare" yields fresh meanings and newer ways of looking at texts and these distinct avenues of critical engagements can fruitfully constitute a "part of the larger framework of reading alternative Shakespeares, involving an essentially interdisciplinary critical exercise."⁶

In post-independent India film-makers have not only adapted or appropriated Shakespearean plays into their own geo-political/cultural context, but with their adaptation and appropriation they have also redefined and reshaped the cinematic cartography of Bollywood, India's premier film industry located in Mumbai, which is arguably one of the world's largest film-producing centers. The term "Bollywood" is claimed to be an equivalent also, the alternative to the "nerve centre of the film world, Hollywood," and this is also considered as an appropriate term mediating the cultural cross-currents of the East and the West.⁷ One of the extraordinary characteristics of Bollywood cinema is that it is an immensely complex heterogeneous genre,

³A shorter version of this paper was presented in the seminar titled "The Shakespearean Legacy" organised by the English Discipline of Khulna University in 2018.

⁴In this write-up we have primarily focused on the bollywoodised adaptations of Shakespeare; however, this is not a comprehensive survey of the films that have borrowed themes and storylines from the Bard.

⁵ William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, I. 113, A Norton Critical Edition, Edited by. S. P. Cerasano (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), p. 41.

⁶A F M Maswood Akhter, "Encountering Shakespeare's Gobbos Through Gerontological Imaginary", *Praxis* 9 (2017): 7-14, p. 8.

⁷Poonam Trivedi, "Afterword: Shakespeare and Bollywood", *Bollywood Shakespeares*, op. cit. p. 194.

having layers of associations; its institutional cartography, from the beginning, is stretched enough to accommodate and absorb diverse traditions, ranging from mythology to religious scriptures, folk to urbane cultures, melodrama, the pop cultures such as the mix of supernaturalism and magic realism, romance and fantasy characterising the songs and dance numbers. This catchphrase “Bollywood cinema”— which over the years has acquired a “brand value” representing a specific style of filmmaking— involves a spectacular abundance of music and dance items. A typical Bollywood production becomes a synthesis of a wide range of features— Indian, national, local, hybrid or even global and transnational. Thus, due to its potentials for flexibility and adaptability, Bollywood cinema has been able to inculcate an enormously vibrant institutional and cultural matrix, which has won this film industry a large audience across continents, and over the years Bollywood has also become a signifier representing mass culture in the country, in the sense that the Bollywood cultural representations have almost become metonymic of Indian cultural ethos and values.

Bollywood cinema or “Bombay cinema”⁸, according to Ashis Nandy, is “mass culture” or “popular mass culture.”⁹ The structure of a commercial film in Bollywood is designed in a way whereby it can accommodate deep (repressed) fantasies of a varied group of people, from illiterate day-labourers to sophisticated urbanites.¹⁰ Cinema remains a “cultural dominant” for India, its model of national unity. Bollywood thus provides a “simulacral realm of mass culture”¹¹ where an individual’s spectatorial fascination with visual media— which Fredric Jameson has described as the pornographic fascination of the mind with cinema— finds an outlet and is meted out; and also, where the filmic representations of the issues, such as patriotic nationalism, the notion of a “pure”, native identity, a sense of community as well as caste and gender issues play formidable roles in shaping the consciousness of the mass audience. In this regard Vijay Mishra rightly

⁸Earlier the largest film city of India was called Bombay.

⁹Ashis Nandyqtd.in Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* (Routledge: New York & London, 2002), p. 15.

¹⁰Mishra, op. cit. p. 4.

¹¹See Mishra, p. 3.

argues that Indian film production and reception are “shaped by the desire for national community” and a “pan-Indian popular culture.”¹²

Now, the acceptance of Bollywood as a global phenomenon and a “culture industry” has precipitated new interests in “Indian Shakespeare,” and Shakespeare in Film has emerged as one of the vast growing branches of Shakespeare studies in recent years. The film industry’s ties to the Bard of Avon however stretch further back than recent years. The Bard shares a long history of engagement with Indian cinema which has interpreted and domesticated his plays in their own socio-cultural milieu. The Indian cinema itself, in the early phases of its inception, was strongly influenced by the Parsi theatre which not only incorporated highly melodramatic plots, elements of violence from the works of Shakespeare but also brought forth multilingual indigenous stories. Once in an interview Naseeruddin Shah, a veteran Bollywood actor who has appeared on stage as well as on screen playing the leading roles of Shakespeare’s plays, remarked: “The roots may look lost but every big story in the Hindi film Industry is from Shakespeare.”¹³ Although it may seem to be an oversimplification of (Bollywood’s) sources, Shah’s comment not only sheds light on the linkages between the Bard and the Bollywood, emphasising on the industry’s dependence upon this great playwright’s themes and storylines, but also generally hints at the generic relationship between film and drama as well as the issue of the Film adaptation of Literature.

According to some film-critics, the relationship between the history of cinema and literature, in the context of India specifically, is an integral one.¹⁴ It can be said as well that the history of cinema has paralleled the history of film adaptations. Cinema as an art form has developed considerably due to its close ties to literature, and Bollywood cinema specifically seemed never hesitant to borrow and adapt from European dramas as well as (melodramatic) novels. Adaptation, however, raises the issue of authenticity and the variegated relationship between film and literature. The debate around the authenticity of representation of literary texts into films comes

¹²See Mishra, back cover.

¹³For more details see <<http://www.tadtoonew.com/influence-shakespeare-bollywood>>. Accessed 23 Nov. 2017.

¹⁴M. Asaduddin and Anuradha Ghosh, “Filming Fiction: Some Reflections and a Brief History”, *Filming Fiction: Tagore, Premchand and Ray*, Eds. M. Asaduddin and Anuradha Ghosh (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2012), p. xix.

into being perhaps from the beginning of the cinematographic history. According to some writers, cinemas share a kind of parasitical relationship with literature¹⁵; D. H. Lawrence for example, considered cinema as a “vulgar medium” since he believed that it “homogenized popular culture.”¹⁶ On the other hand, Virginia Woolf affirms the profound and intense power of figure of speech, word and the uniqueness of literary expression over the limited canvas and objective of cinema.¹⁷ No doubt, both of the novelists’ observations seem to specifically revolve around the relationship between film and fiction and provide a perspective that underscores a sort of supremacy of literature over film. However, it is important to note here that the relationship between drama and film is more immediate and direct, more interactive and reciprocal. Both of these performative mediums are able to offer choices which the written narrative would not be able to do; the agencies and devices which are applied and used in their production also carry some shared features. Adaptation of drama into films is, therefore, a less debatable issue and over the years has become a customary practice.

Some film critics have, therefore, celebrated the positive potentials of adaptation, considering it a norm rather than an aberrance; they do not regard adaptations as passive imitation, rather they view it as an essentially dynamic enterprise where questions of creativity, cultural negotiation and representation are at play. It would not be an exaggeration to say that each and every act of adaptation is, ultimately, an act of interpretation.¹⁸ Interpretation, according to Edward Said, is very much a “worldly” phenomenon, meaning that it exists in a particular historical moment and originates from a specific geo-cultural/political setting, and can vary from age to age, from individual to individual.¹⁹ While adapting/appropriating, the filmmaker or director does not provide a word-by-word translation of the text on screen rather she tries to negotiate with the cultural contexts and values, with different historical moments in which they are located and interpreted. And the very act of her selection of a literary text for screen and its interpretation at a certain period of time may indicate her wish to

¹⁵Ibid. p. xiii.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid. pp. xiii-xiv.

¹⁸For more details see Asaduddin and Ghosh, op. cit. p. xxv.

¹⁹For details see Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

represent it as a symbol of some cultural value.²⁰ The cinematic projection of the text can also be regarded as the director's commentary on a specific social or political issue. As in the case of literary texts, films, which "embrace both elitist and popular concepts of art and work closely with literary aesthetics,"²¹ also play formidable roles in representing certain ideologies and propagating certain cultural values.

Now to return to Shakespeare and Bollywood: each age has interpreted and re-interpreted Shakespeare in its own way, and the poet's works, viewed through multicoloured lenses and plural perspectives, have opened up an unceasing spectrum of meanings and possibilities. Shakespeare delves deep into the darker recesses of human consciousness and explores human psyche through many possible details, offering penetrating insights into the general human condition. His plays promote views of cultural pluralism, emphasising on cultural transactions and conversations. Bridging the gap between tradition and modernity and questioning the hierarchical concept of elite and popular culture, the Bard has democratised the genre of drama itself, opening its gateways for people coming from every race, colour, culture and nation. Therefore, it is only natural that filmmakers, directors, screenplay writers would turn to this "millennial poet" and to this "university" of human feelings for inspiration. Bollywood is no exception.

Bollywood film-makers seem to be intrigued by the "tantalising way" Shakespeare substantiated the meanings of tragedy and romance; the way he reflected upon human predicaments, the "contentious nature" of human subjectivity, and the existential crises many of his protagonists suffer from. The worlds his historical/political plays and even apparently apolitical ones construct are revealing of the dark contemporary turmoils, and they dramatise the dethronement of kings and princes, and the unbridled desire for power and authority. Bollywood cinema has assimilated and indigenised these and many other Shakespearean conceits and motifs into popular Bollywood idiom. The cinema seems to be replete with indirect or subtle references to popular dialogues or characters of the Bard, and it is clearly evident that the Industry has an incorrigible fascination for Shakespearean themes and devices: the theme of mistaken identity, the story of cross-

²⁰Vijaya Singh, "Fiction to Film: A brief History and a Framework for Film Adaptations", *Filming Fiction: Tagore, Premchand and Roy*, op. cit. p. 24.

²¹Jasbir Jain and Sudha Rai, "Introduction", *Film and Feminism: Essays in Indian Cinema*, Eds. Jasbir Jain and Sudha Rai (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2015), p. 1.

cultural romance embodied through the notion of star-crossed lovers, the issue of inter-racial, inter-class, inter-religious relationship or marriage, and the themes of friendship, betrayal and revenge.

The first and the pre-colonial Shakespearean sound film adaptation on the Hindi film screen was *Khoon Ka Khoon* (1935), also called *Hamlet*, directed by Sohrab Modi, who is credited as “the man who brought Shakespeare to the Indian screen.”²² It is regarded as one of the earliest talkie versions of this revenge tragedy. Though the film failed to fare well at the box office, it garnered laudatory reviews mainly for the dialogues and the “quality of the play.”²³ The 1982 film *Angoor*, an adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors*, was a big hit at the box office and is cited by the film critics as one of the successful and remarkable remakes of the dramatist’s plays. In contemporary India film-makers such as Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Habib Faisal, Vishal Bhardwaj have offered localised and indigenised versions of Shakespeare’s plays, by addressing the present-day issues of the conflict between ethnic clans, the concept of honour killing (also known as Khap killing in Hindi), gender disparity, as well as the issue of political feuds among rival political parties/groups. Bhansali’s *Ram-Lella* (2013) and Faisal’s *Ishaqzaade* (2012) are the *desi* adaptations of the Bard’s romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, both of which set the love stories of the star-crossed lovers against the backdrop of political disputes between two rival families/clans. These two films mirror the modern-day conflict-ridden scenario of the hinterlands of India, where tensions or instances of violent inter-caste or inter-religious clashes are quite the routine.

Though the tradition of borrowing is more than a century old, the first Bollywood-acknowledged adaptations of Shakespearean dramas are Bhardwaj’s films: *Maqbool* (2003), a remake of *Macbeth*; *Omkara* (2006) an adaptation of *Othello*; and *Haider* (2014), a modernised equivalent of *Hamlet*. Bhardwaj, famous for his Shakespearean tragic trilogy, has introduced the audience to the myriad and diverse avatars of the Bard, appearing on screen with alternative interpretations as well as contemporary versions of his plays. His recent movie *Haider* (2014) is an adaptation of the Bard’s famous tragic play *Hamlet*. Set against the backdrop of contemporary Kashmir, the movie brings to the fore the subject of civilian disappearances

²² See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khoon_Ka_Khoon>. Accessed 29 June 2018.

²³ Ibid.

and tries to closely examine the political atmosphere of the insurgency-hit Kashmir conflicts of 1995.²⁴ Haider, a bollywoodised version of Hamlet, is a young student and a poet; he returns to Kashmir from Aligarh at a very crucial juncture of the on-going conflict and embarks on the journey of solving the mystery of his father's disappearance but ends up being entangled in the essentially duplicitous politics of the state. Bhardwaj adopts the theme of revenge, or *inteqam* (the Urdu word for revenge), and takes a classic approach at interpreting the Bard. However, deviating slightly from the source text, Bhardwaj provides an alternative interpretation to the revenge narrative by making his protagonist forgive his father's murderer. Haider, deeply influenced by his mother's dying comments, decides against taking revenge for his father's death by his uncle, and refuses to get entangled with the vicious cycle of revenge or *inteqam*, which the protagonist's mother believes will fail to bring freedom or *azadi* not only for Haider, but also for the people of Kashmir: '*Inteqam* will give birth to more *inteqams*, and until we do not free or *azad* our souls from *inteqam*. . . no freedom or *azadi* can bring us the kind of *azadi* we aspire for,'²⁵ remarks Haider's mother before she kills herself in a suicidal bomb-attack.

The point we want to make here is that bollywoodised adaptations or versions of Shakespeare have not only come up with unique and meaningful articulations of a specific or diverse cultural consciousness, or with the ways of envisioning their socio-cultural or geo-political structures, but they have also paved passages for the imagination, creation and celebration of "alternatives." Movies, in all their variations and variety, "allow for a great many applications of human thinking power."²⁶ And the entire process of film making, as Satyajit Ray— the great Bengali film-maker and writer— pertinently puts it, involves three "broad stages" of "writing, filming and editing,"²⁷ all of which are essentially creative in nature. Thus filmmakers, even if they borrow from divergent sources, may happen to write their individual texts too. The reason we have specifically focused on the film *Haider* here is because the movie not only redefines the concept of revenge by offering an alternative paradigm of forgiveness, but it successfully traces

²⁴ For more details see <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haider_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haider_(film))>.

²⁵ Our translation. For more details see *Haider*. Check out the Works Consulted section at the end of this paper for the bibliographical details of the movie.

²⁶ Tim Bywater and Thomas Sobchack, *Introduction to Film Criticism: Major Approaches to Narrative Film* (New Delhi: Pearson Education, 2009), p. xiv.

²⁷ Satyajit Ray, *Our Films Their Films* (New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 1976), p. 3.

the roots of human tragedy in the negative emotion of revenge. Addressing an immensely significant and sensitive issue in the subcontinental history – Kashmir and its independence – the film seems to suggest that the greatest battle of humankind lies in liberating themselves from the manacles of the destructive and debilitating emotions of revenge, and the protagonist's epiphanic decision to opt out from translating the act of revenge is a telling gesture that prioritises the transformative potentials of forgiveness over conflict and violence.

While Bollywood adaptations of Shakespeare on the one hand bring to the fore the fact that diverse versions of a text can exist simultaneously, on the other hand they raise para-literary issues, such as, the politics of commoditising cultural artefacts for mass reception and consumption, the politics of manufacturing deeply flawed and potentially violent nationalist ideologies, the question of popularising literary texts through dance and song performances, and thus catering to the tastes of the mass audience, and also the production of stereotypes. The inclusion of item songs and dance numbers undoubtedly constitutes the core of entertainment purposes; however, the phenomenon is unmistakably associated with the commercialisation of cinema. *Desi* blonde girls wearing chiffon sarees and dancing amid rural/urban police cops in a local bar, where the men ogle at the women as an object of desire, or the duet song and dance performances of promising lovers in an exotic setting and so on not only have sensual appeal for the mass audience, but are potent with crowd-pulling abilities. No doubt the pornographic representations of female body, the sexualisation of women, and the portrayal of male and female sexual desire help the sales of tickets soar, thus fulfilling the film-makers' commercial interests.

It is true that huge investments are made into the production of a film, and sometimes in order to recover the cost of production and to make profit, the film-makers make some compromises by spicing up the film to “pander to popular” taste, the factor which one may argue, originates from a “market-driven anxiety.” However, the mindless objectification of women as fetish of “male desire” and as source of voyeuristic pleasure have given birth to deeply disturbing notions about womankind, generating multiple socio-cultural and gender related problematics. Can we really deny the association between the uncritical, pornographic depiction of women and the alarming rise of “rape culture,” of violence, of physical and mental abuse hurled at the female-folk? Or can we overlook the fact that the aggressive

commercialisation and stereotyping of women have turned them into glamorous signifiers and commodities for consumption, reducing their essential humanness and worth as individuals? Our general engagement with Bollywood cinema, therefore, must address these grave issues.

Interestingly for Bollywood film-makers, the task of translating Shakespeare into the cultural milieu of India proves to be a less daunting and less challenging act. As Shakespeare's texts explore human-psyché and emotions, they refuse to remain confined within a specific time and place, or within a particular geo-political and cultural setting. They become the embodiments not only of universal ideas and values, but they remain testimonials to a fine fusion of divergent cultural classifications traversing different cultural categories, such as high, low, popular or mass culture, and reflecting local as well as global concerns, thus democratising the space of movie theatre and celebrating the essential "glocality" of texts. It is thus possible to have myriad reincarnations of Shakespeare's plays due to their intrinsic glocality and modernity. And we should not forget that translations or adaptations always exist as a viable possibility because "cultures" are, ultimately, more similar than different.

We shall wind up this brief discourse on Bollywood adaptations of Shakespearean plays with a general reflection on the politics of film production and reception, and on the role of the perceptive audience: the experience of movie-going, as Vijay Mishra persuasively argues in *Bollywood Cinema*, plays a central part in the construction of self and the community,²⁸ thus we must not remain unmindful about the poetics and politics embedded into such kind of experience. Since the whole world now is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry, the experience of old moviegoers has altered significantly. At the multiplex the audience becomes a consumer not only of films but of all the paraphernalia related to it, such as, snacks, drinks, popcorns, advertisements, or featured music. Venues like Universal City Walk in Orlando, Florida, and the cineplex of Bashundhara City situated in the capital-hub of Dhaka, have emerged as 'gated communities,' barring the entrance of the lesser mortals. Within these gated communities, where multiple screens are merely part of a larger "merchandising and recreational enterprise,"²⁹ money becomes the sole

²⁸ See Mishra, back cover.

²⁹ Andrew Dix, *Beginning Film Studies* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2010), p. 309.

determinant of one's ability to occupy a "space." These posh places can only be occupied by the upper and upper middle-class or middle-class strata of a society; the multitudes at the fringe of society are barred an entrance, and they loiter on the outskirts of these supermodern mega-complexes; the situation, as many would agree, testifies to the glaring marginalisation and discrimination. Moreover, movies have made real life indistinguishable from them; it becomes a real challenge for the viewers to draw clear and tangible lines of demarcation between the world/reality that they inhabit and the phantasmagoric world that is projected on the screen. No space is left for imagination;³⁰ the creative canvas and critical spectrum of interpreting the world one inhabits have shrunken. Individual as well as collective lives happen to be entrenched in mindless consumerism, hideously narcissist and superficial concerns. In this critical time of ours where "the end of imagination" seems absolute, and where the ghosts of capitalism loom large, one cannot afford to remain mindless spectator and consumer of films; rather, one requires to examine and decode, and be aware of the poetics and politics associated with film production and reception. Needless to say, this critical consciousness should be applied too when we look at Shakespeare in Bollywood.

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How does Prospero establish the Brave New World?

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Abstract:

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), one of the best playwrights of all time, is still talked about as much as before in the same rich vein of form. His characters transcend all boundaries. There is no end to interpretations when it comes to dealing his works. He allures both old and new with piqued interests. Prospero, from *The Tempest*, is one such character who has been evaluated by an avalanche of scholars from left, right and center. Critics hope to shed a new light on him amid the conventionally established ideas. In this paper, I am going to rediscover Prospero as father, father-in-law and a master. I aim to examine how Prospero builds up his **empire**, quashes **subversive** elements and manages to create a **settled (?) empire**.

Keywords: empire, subversive, settled (?)

In “To The Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare: and What He Hath Left Us”, English poet and playwright Ben Jonson (1572-1637) wrote, “Triumph, Britain, thou hast one to show/ to whom all scenes of Europe homage owe/ He was not of an age, but for all time” (quoted in Bloom 3). His words still ring true in our ears. The Bard of Avon, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) has an aura about him even 403 years after his death. There will be no other playwright as celebrated as him. He had a natural flair for writing plays. He had a nose for finding raw information and zeroing in on human foibles. The maestro brings a moment of joy among his ardent followers, a tinge of sadness and a source of exasperation among naysayers. They find joy in entombing him into one confined room. The

more we attempt to ostracize Shakespeare, the more he entralls us, and is going to do so in future.

Unarguably, *The Tempest* (hereafter, *TT*) was first staged in the Royal Court in front of James I in 1611. Seven years after Shakespeare's death, *First Folio* (hereafter *FF*) was published, in 1623. The origin of *TT* divides opinion but Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen in their *William Shakespeare: Complete Works* assume that William Strachey's *A True Reportory of the Wreck and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight*(written in 1610, published in 1625); Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Bermudas* (1610), Virginia Company's *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia*(1610) gave Shakespeare significant groundings for writing *TT*. The ship *Sea Venture* faced thunderstorms and had lost their way in the middle. There was no further news on that missing ship for almost a year. Surprisingly, the lost ship returned unharmed before dropping its sail in Jamestown. The sailors were welcomed in. Their collective experience attracted public imagination. Shakespeare seized upon that moment. He revved up his own imagination for enabling public to recall that incident and fictionalize the historical events.

Michel de Montaigne's essay, "Of Cannibals" could have given Shakespeare some ideas about the relationship between whites and blacks. Montaigne was brave enough to criticize the European whites; something otherworldly during the English renaissance period. Being a white man himself, Montaigne criticized whites for dehumanizing blacks. He did not spare blacks either from his scathing criticism. He was ambivalent towards the issue of race and color. He wrote, "In plain truth, these men are very savage in comparison of us; of necessity, they must either be absolutely so or else we are savages, for these is a vast difference betwixt their manners and ours" ("Of Cannibals", quoted in Harold Bloom, 43). Critic Abdul R. Jan Mohamed alludes to white European colonialists' othering of blacks.

By thus subjugating the native, the European settler is able to compel the other's recognition of him and, in the process, allow his own identity to become deeply dependent on his position as a master ("The Economy of Manichean Allegory", Mohamed, 20).

Shakespeare's Prospero is like a European settler who never reveals his real intention behind the buildup of his cell. If we take Mohamed's view into account, Prospero becomes a "master of a full poor cell" (*TT*, Act 1, ii, 13-21) by getting into the swing of things. He subjugates Ariel for getting some kind of mileage out of him. When he establishes a tight rein on the ruling system of his island, he casts his magic spell on others for hemming everyone in with his ideology. He says to Miranda that the world means everything to him. As a father, Prospero is caring towards his daughter. He does not want her to suffer with her innocent idea on the world. She takes a dim view of her father's magic spell that leaves the oncoming ship stranded. She cogitates on the sufferings of passengers in the ship. She says,

Had I been any God of Power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth; or ere
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
The fraughting souls within her (Act I, ii, 10-13)

Prospero replies,

No harm.
I have done nothing but in care of thee,
Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing
Of whence I am, nor that I am more better
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
And thy no greater father (*TT*, Act I, ii, 18-24).

Prospero's island is also like a daughter to him. By vowing to protect Miranda's virginity, he aspires to protect his colonized land grabbed from Sycorax, mother of Caliban. He also wants his daughter to shrug off her positive approach about people. Prospero indoctrinates Ariel and enforces him to work as his subject. When there is any clamor for freedom from Ariel, then Prospero upbraids him for his loss of patience. He says to Ariel:

If thou murmur'st, I will rend an oak
And peg thee in his knotty entails till

Thou has howled away twelve winters (TT, Act I, ii 294-6).

Prospero restricts the movement of Ariel. He needs Ariel for his own purpose and vice-versa. Prospero's bigger plan is to get his Dukedom back. For that reason, he needs Ariel as his active worker. But he does not allow Ariel to demure at anything. Ariel cannot dash off without Prospero's jurisdictions. Prospero is very well aware of the need to establish his own empire. He takes effective measures to rule out Caliban's subversive activities. His curse becomes one of his tools for subjugating others. One of Shakespeare's famous languages of curse is Caliban's speech:

You taught me language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!

Before Caliban utters the above-mentioned dialogue, Prospero admonishes him for attempting to rape Miranda. She reminisces about tutoring him, a member of the “vile race” (Act 1, ii.). Miranda feels hard done by the attitude of Caliban. He does not repent for his action. Instead, his dormant thought is to people the “isle with Calibans” (Act 1, ii). Shakespeare keeps Father Prospero’s sentiments in check. Despite hearing of Caliban’s rape-attempt from the victim herself, Prospero does not take the bull by the horns. He reprimands Caliban but levies no further charge on him at the initial phase. Prospero enables Ariel to work as an intelligencer. Ariel and Caliban remain a foil to each other. Shakespeare shows that a colonial settler can run an empire by creating a rift among colonized subjects.

In “*Decolonizing the Mind*”, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o writes, “Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both as a means of communication and a carrier of culture” (quoted in Ryan & Rivkin, 1132). To him, language is a form of showing resistance. Caliban uses language as a tool for showing resistance but his tussle with Prospero does not alter their present much. Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* says, “Inside a single nation religion splits up the people into different spiritual communities, all of them kept up and stiffened by colonialism and its instruments” (quoted in Vincent B. Leigh, 1584). Caliban has his own

indigenous language, culture and religion. But Prospero and other white supremacists make Caliban feels that his language, culture and heritage are of inferior nature. Colonialists use ideological state apparatuses for obliterating natives' original religious thoughts. Prospero calls Caliban "a thing of darkness" and questions his decision-making abilities. Mohit Ul Alam in "Shakespeare: Ours, theirs, or everybody's?" argues, "whatever peoples were found living beyond the known world were considered 'Barbaric' --- say, for example, the deformed Caliban in *The Tempest* being one" (*Ideas*, 27). Prospero ruminates on Caliban's black complexion. He looks down on him for that color of darkness. Only Gonzalo, the wise counselor appreciates the black peoples' restraining nature which Prospero overhears and agrees in an aside.

Gonzalo: if in Naples

I should report this now, would they believe me?

If I should say I saw such islanders---

Who though they are of monstrous shape, yet note

Their manners are more gentle-kind than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many, nay almost any.

Prospero (aside) Honest lord,

Thou hast said well; for some of you there present

Are worse than devils. (Act 3, Scene 3, 165).

Prospero knows about white peoples' domination of black natives. Shakespeare has mixed feelings about white colonization. Gonzalo reflects on human rights abuses minorities receive at the hands of whites. Also, Shakespeare rummages through racial tensions. Shakespearean critic Stephan Greenblatt argues that the rewriting of *TT* from second and third world countries would give Caliban a new voice to have wider narratives and a plurality of thoughts. He heaps praise on Shakespeare for displaying "cracks in the glacier front of princely power and to record a voice, the voice of the displaced and oppressed, that is heard scarcely anywhere in his own time" (Bloom, "Introduction" 244). However, it does not take away the fact that Shakespeare racially profiled Caliban. In *TT*, Shakespeare shows the

colonial duality in Prospero, who echoes with Gonzalo's statement that white Europeans coerce blacks into submission. Prospero's commiseration about whites' ill-treatment on blacks does not stop him from plotting on his colonial mission. He becomes belligerent when he deals with Caliban. The loss of his dukedom pummels him to earth, and in retrospective, makes him bitter for his brother's betrayal. He calls Caliban "a traitor" (*TT*, Act 1, ii 459) and threatens to "manacle" (Act 1, ii 460) his bodies and make him gulp ocean-water which we know brings one's life into a catastrophic end.

Prospero: Hag-seed, hence!
Fetch us in fuel, and be quick, thou'rt best,
To answer other business---shrug'st thou, malice?
If thou neglec'st, so dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,
That beasts shall tremble at thy din (Act 1.2, 121).

Caliban is enamored of Prospero's power.

Caliban: No, pray thee.
(Aside) I must obey. His art is of such power,
It would control my dam's god Setebos
And make a vassal of him (121).

Chinua Achebe in "Colonialist Criticism" argues that European settlers did not think that the natives would be good enough to create anything out of their own. What Achebe wants to show is that people have preconceived notions for which they are unable to look into one race without the stereotypical image. He thinks that a colonial mind taps into the brain of colonized subjects' simplicity. Before colonizing the land of Caliban, Prospero loses his Dukedom to Antonio in Milan. His own brother abdicates him. The pain of losing that powerful position haunts Prospero throughout. It makes him much more businessman-like and shrewd as an individual. In previous times, Prospero would trust anyone and have thought through things not as maturely as he does while dealing with his people now. He tries not to wallow himself in despair. Richard P. Wheeler argues in "Fantasy and History in *The Tempest*":

The story Prospero tells Miranda about their past, whatever its claim to historical veracity, contains a simple and important truth at the heart of his post-Milan life. Once when he gave his brother his trust he lost his inherited political power, now that he has found another source of power he will trust no one (297).

Prospero is ready to do anything to get his power back. The bitter experience has taught him that power is something he needs to dawdle along on his way to the capture of lost dukedom. Nicole Machiavelli, The Italian critic, in *Prince* argues that people around the prince are greedy, covetous, pretentious, opportunistic, mercenaries and cowards, who, Machiavelli warns, should not be trusted with. He says, "...And that prince who has founded himself entirely on their words, stripped of other preparation, is ruined" (Erica Benner, "Natural Suspicion and Reasonable Trust: Machiavelli on Trust in Politics", 53). Prospero does not trust anyone but himself. Moreover, he tries to remain a man of words and actions. He carves out his own niche as a leader. Although Prospero is authoritarian, others feel that he is not harmful for them. He frees others only when he wants. However, Prospero talks about losing the enjoyment of using power when his missions are complete.

But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required
Some heavenly music, which even now I do
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book (Act V, I, p.)

Harold Bloom praises Caliban for the following blank verse:

The isle is full of noises Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not:

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices, That if I then had waked after long, sleep, Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming,

The clouds methought would open, and show riches

Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd

I cried to dream again (Act 3, ii, 126-35, quoted in Bloom 19)

Caliban mentions that the island is a happy place for roaming around, dreaming and sleeping. It is an island full of wealth. Prospero finds a rich island upon his arrival. Caliban shows his welcoming nature. Prospero faces hardly any resistance from Caliban and his mother. What Shakespeare shows is, Prospero, a man of territorial nature, has earned the right to re-territorialize his land. Prospero behaves like a demigod in front of Caliban whose religious identity is obliterated and altered by the colonizer's persuasion. Caliban feels that his own culture is inferior to the European culture. He continues to see black as an inferior color. Frantz Fanon will be of significance for understanding Caliban's position. He says, "in the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity" ("The Fact of Blackness", 323). Caliban finds it difficult to form his independent identity without thinking about the issue of complexion . His free-spirited nature is thwarted by Prospero's colonial vision. Caliban's life is pinned against the wall. He does not want to lose his land even though it is colonized. But he has fear of being an exile. To exonerate himself from that existential crisis, Caliban says,

Caliban: I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries

I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough...

I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;

And I with my long nails will dig thee pignuts;

Show thee a jay's nest and instruct thee how

To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee

To clustering filberts and sometimes I'll get thee

Young scamels from the rock (Act II, ii, 137-49).

Caliban, a native of the island, opens himself to the idea of sharing all the knowledge of his once treasured island for ensuring his own survival in the place. Caliban has lost a large space. The island has become a congested place for him. He is pondering over any potential trouble that risks his security and safety in the island.

Ferdinand is also well-aware of Prospero's power. He draws a comparison between Prospero and his daughter by saying, "O, she is Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed, And he's composed of harshness" (Act III, I, 7-9). Ariel vilifies the numb Antonio for supplanting "good Prospero" (Act III, iii, 68-82) and putting the father-daughter duo in danger in the ocean. Ariel has both fascination and abomination for his master. For his freedom, he is obliged to stick by Prospero. But sometimes Ariel heaps praise on Prospero out of his soft-corner for him. Prospero manages to dominate proceedings over Ferdinand. He considers his daughter to be his prized-possession. He gives freedom to Ferdinand and Miranda to woo each other but not without his surveillance which the young lovers do not even take cognizance of. Prospero warns Ferdinand not to make love with his daughter before getting married. In so doing, he clamps down on his future son-in-law's freedom of desire. Prospero is making all the decisions for Ferdinand and Miranda. As a responsible father, he has his daughter on his mind. He hankers after power and Miranda's welfare. Ferdinand cringes away from making love to Miranda. Therefore, Prospero, feeling happy, says, "You do look, my son, in a moved sort,/As if you were dismayed; be cheerful, sir"(Act Iv, I46-8). Prospero ensures the settlement of Ferdinand and Miranda. And, he gets his long-cherished dukedom. He releases Ariel and requests his audience to forgive him from all the shenanigans. Caliban, his former slave in the laborious , mistakenly views Alonso's butler as a supreme being.

Prospero's whiteness is an advantage, but it is not an unfair one. Before *TT* begins, Prospero spends his time in the library. He studies hard in the first twelve years of his dukedom. Antonio capitalizes on the situation. Prospero's absences make Antonio present among the citizens. During his life in exile, Prospero has a thorough review on his past deeds. He boosts up his own ego; sets up his own strategy, lives through trials and errors, and cracks down on rivals with words and actions. As a result, he is able to teach

Antonio a lesson and recapture his desired position. Prospero has earned his right to rule the island. It is his ruse---more than his complexion---gives him the right to rein the land. In Prospero, Shakespeare sifts through the process of colonization. He shows that bloodshed is not required to get someone's lost kingdom back. Miranda says,

MIRANDA: O, wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, That has such people in't!

At the end of the play, Miranda remains innocent. She does not understand Prospero's hidden politics; or she pretends not to understand. The mollycoddled Miranda shares her delight to live in this goodly world. Has Shakespeare kept a place for Caliban there? The answer is in the negative. By removing Caliban from major parts of the discussion at the fag end of the play, Shakespeare reestablishes the idea of a European empire perpetually reconstructing the brave new world.

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The Universal-Truth View of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

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Abstract

The article presents the universal-truth view of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This view imparts invaluable suggestions, instructions and information on innumerable subjects. The play *Hamlet* also has many incidents which, through a created world, echo this very view. As his method, the author closely studied the view and the play, and then pointed out the similar messages in them. That, the author finds, Shakespeare thinks like a universal view is not the wonder; the wonder is rather his quality that helps him create a human world to reflect messages even from the sources like the Quran and the Bible dealing with universal truth. In the fantasy world of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare advocates virtuous, righteous, courageous, thoughtful, faithful, mortal human beings— some of the important issues the view concerned deals with.

Keywords: *Hamlet*, allusions in *Hamlet*, The universal-truth view, Truth, Shakespeare

(I) Introduction

The universal-truth view encompasses the whole code of life and society. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, like other great literatures, is a source of instruction rather than enjoyment (Morsey, 1965). Thus the view and the play overlap in providing instructions, overtly and covertly, in different subjects. Through the span of a great deal of instructions, the view unites all men on the basis of faith in God, and appeals to them to realize the mysterious nature of their journey from womb, via tomb, to eternity. Similarly, in *Hamlet*—a five-act fantasy, Shakespeare depicts men's lifespan enabling them to see all of them as equal travelers on the way to the ultimate goal of life. Giving allusions to the ultimate suffering of evil, the view addresses men to hold truth firmly. Juxtaposing good and evil in the play, Shakespeare admits their presence in human life—wishing good triumph over evil. The characters in *Hamlet*,

while giving arguments in favor of their interests (Legouis and Cazamian, 1981), take ideas from a variety of sources including Science, Politics, History, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, as well as exclusively from the sources like the Bible and the Quran dealing with universal truth.

(II) Interpretation

(i) Superiority of man

Man is the noblest creation of God. A religious view, say, in the Quran, declares that man has been created in an excellent shape:

Lakad khalaknal insana fi ahsani takowim (95:4) **
[=I created man in an excellent shape.]

Not only that, man has been provided with a thoughtful creative mind—centre of knowledge (Muhiuddin, 1999) — ears and eyes which have made him unique and given him superiority over other animals:

Kul huwallaji ansha a kum wa ja ala lakumus sam a wal afsara wal afida(67:23)

[=Say, it is He who made you and provided you with ears, eyes and heart.]

On the superiority of man, the Bible also says:

God clearly says from creation that people (male and female) are superior to animals. and that--

Men are more intelligent than animals. (“Animals and Humans: Dominance, Superiority and Value of...”)

Hamlet also echoes this note regarding man’s excellencies. Hamlet observes that man is the superb artistic work, that he has the highest form of beauty, that he has the most wonderful powers of reasoning, that he possesses limitless faculties, and that he has the highest excellencies of all the animals in the world:

What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason... the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals— (Act II, Scene ii)

(ii)Being well-behaved towards parents

The Quran, in many chapters, orders men to respect their parents, to deal with and talk to them politely, gently and softly. In no way, says the Quran, should parents be hurt:

...Bil wali dini ihsan (17:23)

[=Deal with your parents courteously and kindly.]

**95:4 refers to 95th chapter, 4th ayat. Henceforth, two figures written in this way will indicate No. of chapter and ayat respectively

On this issue the Bible also gives the same note:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"

(this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that

you may live long in the land." ("20 important Bible verses for parents")

Hamlet's mother along with his uncle is involved in his father's murder. But though the ghost orders him (Hamlet) to take revenge upon the murderers, it tells him not to do any harm to his mother any way, it rather tells him to leave her to God for her punishment:

But howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven. (Act I, Scene v)

Though Hamlet, being shocked, speaks to his mother cruelly, he ultimately wants to do her some good:

I must be cruel only to be kind. (Act III, Scene iv)

(iii) Brother's murder

The Quran in 5th chapter refers to the murder of a brother by another brother, Abel by Cain (Hafiz, 2003). Cain became jealous of Abel when he (Cain) failed to win the woman he desired. Finally he murdered his brother, Abel, and got included among those who will suffer:

Fatau wa at la hu nafsuhu katla akhihi fakatalahu fa asbaha minal khasirin (5:30)

[=Finally his soul made it easy for him to murder his brother. He murdered him and got included among those who will have to suffer.] (Muhiuddin, 1999)

In *Hamlet*, Claudius realizes that he has done the most foul deed—he has murdered his own brother, and this murder has on it the same curse as the first murder in the history of mankind had. The smell of this murder (by Claudius), as if, rose to heaven, and it lies heavily in his heart. He suffers continually from his sense of guilt for this murder:

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven,
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't—
A brother's murder. (Act III, Scene iii)

(iv) Incest

The Quran describes incest as offensive, indecent and detestable to follow, and forbids men even to approach it. Those who prove guilty of committing incest are ordered to be killed:

Wa la takrabuj jina inna hu ka na fahisha (17:32)

[=Never approach incest, it is obscene and offensive to follow.]

Wal la ti yatinal fahishata min nisaikum fas tash hidu alai hinna arbatam minkum fain

shahidu fa am sikuhunna fil buiyuti hatta yata waf fa hunnal mautu au yaz alallahu la
hunna sabila (4:15)

[=If a woman among you commits incest, send for four male witness for them. If they prove guilty by the witness, keep them detained at house until they die or God does something else for them.]

The Bible also forbids incest:

And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his

brother's nakedness; they shall be childless ("56 Bible verses about incest—Quotes
Cosmos")

In *Hamlet*, the ghost mentions Claudius as 'incestuous' and 'adulterate beast'. He tells Hamlet that he should not allow the sinful pleasure his mother and his uncle have entered into to continue, it is incestuous because their religion does not permit such marriage:

Ay that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
... won to his shameful lust.

Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest. (Act I, Scene v)

(v) Revenge

The Quran legalizes the theme of equal revenge, that is, one can take just as much revenge as one has suffered, and just in the way one has suffered:

Wa in akabtum fa a kibu bi misli ma u kibtum bihi(16:126)
[=If you want to, take as much revenge as you have suffered.]

Wa katabna alaihim fiha annan nafsa bin nafsi wal aina bil aini wal
anfa bil anfi wal uzuna

bil uzuni was sinna bis sinni wal juruha kisas (5:45)

[=In that I gave them the rule that (as a revenge, take) life in exchange of life, eye in exchange of eye, nose in exchange of nose, ear in exchange of ear, tooth in exchange of tooth, and similar injury in exchange of injury.]

Hamlet is a revenge play. The ghost orders Hamlet to take revenge upon his father's murderers. Hamlet, as revenge, stabs his uncle Claudius. Life in exchange of life:

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. (Act I, Scene v)

O villainy! Ho! Let the door be lock'd.

Treachery! Seek it out. (Act V, Scene ii)

The point envenom'd too! Then, venom, to thy work. (Act V, Scene ii)

(vi) To drink wine, a sinful deed

The Quran strictly forbids man to drink wine because it is greatly sinful, unholly, offensive and detestable:

Ya ai u hallazina amanu innamal khamru wal maisiru wal ansabu wal azlamu riz sum min

amalish shaitani faz ta ni buhu la allakum tuflihun (5:90)

[=O the believers. Wine, gambling, images and arrows to know Fate are obscene, unholly, and are nothing but devilish deeds. So avoid them, you may succeed.]

Hamlet, in order to kill Claudius, waits for an opportunity—the opportunity that must befit his father's unnatural and horrible murder by Claudius. So, he thinks, not the time Claudius says his prayer but the time he is involved in anything obscene, unholly and profane such as drunkenness, furious mood or incest is the proper time to kill him:

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game a-swearling, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't. (Act III, Scene iii)

(vii) Everything predetermined

In 57th chapter the Quran says that all the misfortunes that befall the earth and men individually had been written down (by Allah) in the Book before the universe was created:

Maasuaba mim musibatin fil ardi wa la fi unfusikum illa fi kitabim
min kabli un nab rwa
aha (57:22)

[=The misfortunes that befall the earth and you individually had been written down by Me in the Book before the universe was created.] (Farid,2015)

The same note is reflected in the Bible:

Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he

is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. (“What does the Bible say about Fate? —

Open Bible.info”)

Hamlet echoes the same message when Hamlet tells Horatio that our Fate is determined by the will of God, it does not matter what efforts and endeavors we ourselves may make to achieve our aims:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will. (Act V, Scene ii)

(viii) Death

In many chapters, the Quran tells about death, whose taste every soul shall have obligatorily today or tomorrow:

Kullu nafsin ja i katul maut (3:185)

[= Every soul shall have a taste of death.]

Ai na ma takunu yud rik kumul mautu (4:78)

[=No matter wherever you are, Death must arrest you.] (Matiur, 2003)

On the inevitability of death, the Bible says:

For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any

longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. (“30 Bible verses about how death is

inevitable”)

In *Hamlet*, Hamlet’s mother forbids him to mourn his noble father who is dead. She tells him that death is a must to everyone and that ‘all those who have life must ultimately die’(Lall, 1992):

Don’t forever... seek thy noble father in the dust,

Thou know’st ’tis common: all that lives must die. (Act I, Scene ii)

(ix) Death-time fixed

For everybody’s death there is a time fixed. None can die before or after that time. This is what the Quran says about one’s death-time:

Wa ma ka na li nafsin un tamuta illa bi iznillahi kitabam muwazzala
(3:145)

[=None can die without the permission of Allah, and there is a time fixed for that.]

Hamlet says that even a tiny creature like a sparrow can die only when God wills its death. That is, death-time is fixed. He believes that if he is to die now, he won’t die in the future. Conversely, if he is to die in the future, he won’t die now. None can stop death occurring at the time fixed:

There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, ’tis not to come; if it be

not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. (Act V, Scene ii)

(x) Dust, man’s ultimate goal

According to the Quran, man is made of dust, and after a certain period—his life—when he dies and is buried, he returns to the same:

Minha khalaknakum wa fi ha nuidukum wa minha nukhrifikum tarwatan ukhrwa (20: 55)

[=It is dust that I made you of, that I’ll make you return to, and that I’ll make you rise from again.]

Though man possesses highest excellencies of all animals, it seems to Hamlet that he (man) is no better than dust in its most essential character:

... what is this quintessence of dust? (Act II, Scene ii)

Hamlet also realizes that all men, high or low, ultimately die and are buried in the grave where their dead bodies eventually get mixed with dust:

Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes, but to one table.

That's the end. (Act IV, Scene iii)

(xi) No exchange to evade justice

Pointing to the Day of Judgment, Allah asks men to fear the Day. On that Day everybody will receive the legal consequences of what they did. None will come to the help of others, and no exchange will be taken from anyone to help them escape justice:

Wattaku yao malla tazzi nafsun al nafsin shaiao wa la yuk balu minha adluo wa la tan fa u

ha shafa atuo wa la hum yun sarun (2:123)

[=Fear the Day when no one will come to the help of others, no exchange will be taken from

anyone, no recommendation will be of any use, nor will they be helped.]

The murder of Hamlet's father lies as a heavy deed in Claudius' heart. He is now afraid of the consequence of this murder. He wishes there be a way anyhow for him to escape the punishment. Like the criminals in this world who offer their wealth as bribe to the court officials to evade justice, he also expects a similar strategy. But he is frustrated by the fact that no such corrupt dealings of this world can happen in heaven:

In the corrupted currents of this world

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice.

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself

Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above: (Act III, Scene iii)

(III) Conclusion

Some passages/lines in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are in tune with the universal truth as found in the Quran and the Bible. These sources of universal truth deal with infinite number of subjects directly and indirectly, make men aware of right and wrong, and dos and don'ts. Shakespeare, as a master psychologist, creates diverse variety of character in *Hamlet*. Through the activities of the characters, he presents the themes of right and wrong, revenge, universal moral conception, proper course to follow in difficult situation and conflict, etc. The thoughts and feelings these characters express to gain their interests and to make them convincing, persuading and knowledgeable are not uncommon in the sources like the Quran and the Bible dealing with universal truth.

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Translating the aching Absence and screaming Silence: A Study of Diasporic Experiences of the Characters in the selected stories of Jhumpa Lahiri.

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Abstract:

The exquisite and emotionally intricate short stories of Jhumpa Lahiri are designed to reveal the inner lives of the first, second and third generation diasporic characters in a convincing way. The acclaimed storyteller with her powerful literary style embodies the plight of Bengali Americans who are not comfortable with their multifarious identities. The characters are perilously living in a place temporarily having a self-imposed perception of exile. The accurate depiction of scars and fractures of the characters forces the readers to perceive the condition of traumatized bodies as ‘living here and belonging elsewhere’ (Clifford1994:311). The two most analyzed texts, Mrs. Sen’s from *Interpreter of Maladies* and Hell-Heaven from *Unaccustomed Earth* will be taken into consideration to explore the hopeless state, yearning, parting, agony and struggle of the characters that constitute the family life. The present essay will also concentrate on the incompatible emotional feelings that is kindled by migration, exilic relegation and homelessness. The paper also intends to examine a world where the diasporic characters missing India as an open wound.

Keywords: Diaspora, Migration, Exile, Trauma, Homelessness, Wound

1. Introduction

The term ‘diaspora’ has immensely attracted the attention of the people in the contemporary world which is identified by the rapid flow of human beings across the world. In the modern years the word ‘diaspora’ has been extended to denote the situation other than the experience of Jewish peoples outside a Jewish homeland. This discussed word has diverse meaning in

Hellenic language and civilization. Thus the Greek word *diaspeirein* etymologically springs from dia- meaning “through” or “apart,” and – speirein “to disperse” or “to scatter,” as has been pointed out in the literature recurrently. Later on, *diaspora* came to denote a scattering of people who unwillingly leave their place of origin in Hebrew’s translations of the Greek word.

In this progressively globalized world, it has become common to have his/her diasporic experience. The characteristics of human world have changed so radically that it is, therefore, not unexpected to meet a person vouchsafing allegiance to four or five households in different parts of the world. *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas* emphasizes on the four benchmarks for the diaspora experience. It mentions that ‘the collective forced dispersion of a religious and /or ethnic group; collective memory, which transmits both the historical facts that precipitated the dispersion and a cultural heritage; the will to survive as a minority by transmitting a heritage; [and] the time factor. Only time decides whether a minority that meets all or some of the criteria described above having insured its survival and adaptation, is a diaspora’. (Chaliand and Rageau 1995, xiv-xviii)

Emmanuel S. Nelson in his book of critical essays ‘Reworlding: The Literature of Indian Diaspora’ has examined the diverse aspects of diasporic nature of people. The renowned writers like Salman Rushdie, V.S Naipaul, kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Raja Rao have been taken into consideration to sketch evocative presence of India and the extreme mental anguish of personal loss.

The first generation diasporic characters of Jhumpa Lahiri behave in a unique way. They display a deep sense of grievance as well as a tendency to accept incomprehension. In other words, the truth of their grievance can never be defined, except as an absence. They transform themselves as silent speakers. Memory works for them as silent speakers and they want to voice their memory as an idealization of absence.

Born in 1967 in London, Lahiri was raised in Rhode Island and went on to study at Boston University where she earned a PhD in Renaissance Studies. As a second generation Indian-American author, Jhumpa Lahiri mirrors the silent traumas and unexpressed aches of the characters lost in the baffling

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new world. The elegant stories navigate the characters struggling to find peace in a completely dissimilar culture and atmosphere that they encounter everyday. Lahiri as a chronicler of a cultural interface carefully weaves her tales to narrate the saga of first generation immigrants with firmly grounded Indian ethos in her Pulitzer Prize winning collection of nine short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). The stories of second generation Bengalis raised in the United States with a sense of belonging, search for it or live without it has been meticulously focused in her Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award and was a New York Times, Time and Outlook book of the year, *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). The works of Lahiri abounding with the diasporic experiences of the characters evince a vivid portrait of emotional isolation and painful nonexistence of uprooted individuals. In fact, separated from the familiar habitat exhibits mourning and melancholy of the characters living abroad. Lahiri, the offspring of Bengali immigrants acknowledges that she feels at home in the midst of her relatives in Kolkata. Moreover, her parents also display similar kind of emotional feelings while staying far away from their homeland.

Lahiri's diasporic fictional characters appear to be magnificent and lifelike in translating the depressed and agitated feelings of displacement. She is skilled enough to interpret the void of the characters while attempting to adjust in a novel atmosphere. Lahiri goes deeper in projecting the world of feelings, personal ordeals and life altering clashes of the physical world. Her fictional world projects the loss of dreams, new expectations, mourning for the invisible roots. Hence her fictitious characters stand for the real lifelike characters and the experiences of dislocation and estrangement have become universal.

2. Analysis

The present discussion focuses on apprehending and probing the 'in-between' state of the characters to translate the ethos of the culture they raised in, feeling of 'unhomeliness' they experience every single moment, and above all, the psychological crises that the characters encounter in a diasporic setting.

In examining the reactions of the displaced Bengali subjects trying to internalize a divergent set of values, two outstanding short stories, *Mrs. Sen's*(*Interpreter of Maladies*) and *Hell-Heaven* (*Unaccustomed Earth*) will

be handled to illustrate the highly emotional and multiple stages that the characters move through. *Interpreter of Maladies* is Lahiri's first story collection as a writer of neatness which unites readers to characters so craftily that the readers aspire for the narrative to continue. What makes Lahiri so singular in the world of fiction is her superb mingling of the expected and unexpected facts through the story of *Mrs. Sen's*. As a chronicler of cultural interface, Lahiri weaves the anguish of Aparna in her another short story *Hell-Heaven*. Her keen and sincere observational skill is made crystal clear in these two amazing fictions.

It will not be inappropriate to bring the reference of her parents to evaluate the sense of homelessness and inability to feel recognized in an alien land. Parmanand Jha in his essay, "Home and Abroad: Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*" details this sense of 'nowhere' which Lahiri amply expresses in one of her interviews with Newsweek. She says, "It's hard to have parents who consider another place 'home'-even after living abroad for 30 years, India is home for them. We were always looking back so I never felt fully at home here. There is nobody in this whole country that we're related to. India was different-our extended family offered real connections."(Jha 2008, p.139). The exact sense of in-between-ness, agonizing pain, feeling of unsureness has intensely been delineated in the said two short stories.

The 2000 Pulitzer Prize winning short story collection, *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) occupies an unparalleled place in the world of fiction. The sixth short story, *Mrs. Sen's* depict the state of unease and disorientation of the protagonist in an unknown world. She repels American society and regards herself as a stranger in her own home.

To translate the extreme grief of Mrs. Sen, who is the first generation female immigrant, we need to take into account the ideas of Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha explains, "the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (1992, p. 141). Mrs. Sen undergoes the similar sort of disaffection, isolation about a place that is considered as her home in an unfamiliar, strange place. She is having a mental journey to India while sitting in her room in the U.S. As for example, Mrs. Sen is seen dividing the pimpled yellow fat off chicken parts with a blade which she brought from India. She asks Eliot, 'if I began to scream right now at the top of my lungs, would someone come? At home

that is all you have to do....But just raise your voice a bit, or express grief or joy of any kind, and one whole neighborhood and half of another has come to share the news,...' (Lahiri 1999, p. 116). Here she finds no laughing and gossiping of her near and dear ones while performing the household chores. She wants to give a long loud scream, but there is no one to listen to what she wants to utter. Looking at a pine tree framed by the living room window of their apartment, she murmurs, "Here, in this place where Mr. Sen has brought me, I cannot sometimes sleep in so much silence." (Lahiri 1999, p.115). The still place has silenced her inner cry and the absence of her very own home in India throws her into a pool of extreme unhappiness.

Moreover, Mrs. Sen's unwillingness to stay in an unfavorable environment is also sensed by the eleven year old boy Eliot, who is looked after by Mrs. Sen. Eliot realizes that when she mentions 'Home', she actually refers to India not the apartment she lives in the U.S. She even cannot hide her discomfort in the process of adaptation. Clifford (1994, p.314) has painted the portrait of psychological life of a diasporic human trapped in a new life.

Sigmund Freud's masterly synthesis of loss and grievances can better be explained by analyzing the situation of Mrs. Sen. The distinctive psychological features displayed by Mrs. Sen can profoundly be recounted by referring to Freud's pivotal essay 'Mourning and Melancholia.' He articulates that a person in a melancholic state painfully dejects what he/she observes around him, loses interest in the outside world, negates to love and suspends himself/herself from all activities.

The extreme feeling of melancholy and wish to meet with her own people have deeply been exposed when Mrs. Sen mentions about her relatives living in India. She feels she is invariably distant from the life that goes on in India. She even cannot imagine herself as a stranger to her niece. She shares her dejected position to Eliot, mentioning her sister who has a baby girl. Whenever time will come to meet her "she will be three years old. Her own aunt will be a stranger." (Lahiri 1999, p.122). Thus she opens up her mind to narrate her life similar to a doleful life, a life without hope. How painful it is for her to become a stranger to her own niece.

This utterance of Mrs. Sen is not merely a cry of a particular diasporic character, rather it echoes the ultimate scream of all the characters of a world who are trying to settle in an unwelcoming land. To quote Vijay Mishra,

“The necessity of understanding a diaspora’s agony, its pain of adjustment with reference to other pasts, other narratives becomes decisive”(The Literature of Indian Diaspora, Theorizing the diasporic Imaginary, Introduction,2007,p.17). Hence it is worth notice to grasp a bit of Mrs. Sen’s indifferent mind in arranging the furniture of her apartment. She keeps the furniture covered. It is as if she has no emotional involvement with them. Covering the furniture with manufacturer’s plastic denotes a sterile relationship, absence of connection that she forms with her surroundings. This nomadic characteristic of the protagonist exhibits the scenario that she is far away from her desirable, normal way of life.

However, the argument of Ashutosh Dubey is crucial to explain Mrs. Sen’s indifferent mind. She solely rejects to drive the car. Dubey argues that her refusal to learn driving can be interpreted as a display of her free soul which is not ready to settle in a new land. On the other hand, the denial also showcases her screams of an agonized exilic life when she says, “I hate it. I hate driving. I won’t go on.” (Lahiri 1999, p. 131). In answering the question of Mrs. Sen, Eliot mentions that she can go anywhere whenever she gets her license. She instantly picks up his point and asks whether she will be able to drive all the way to Calcutta. As she senses the impossibility to drive away back to her near and dear ones, the driving turns to be a useless job. Again mentioning of a “driver” that they have “At home” to Eliot’s mother (Lahiri, 1999, p. 113) is the striking evidence of a life which she misses profusely. She articulates that everything is there in India.

To record Mrs. Sen’s emotional exile, the observation of Eliot is vital as the boy notices the differences of his babysitter. He meticulously enjoys watching Mrs. Sen chop things using a blade. Actually, she has carried it to her current home from India. In fact, the preparation of Indian food in a grand manner reveals her never ending attachment to ethnic identity. In the words of Eliot, “Each afternoon Mrs. Sen lifted the blade and locked it into place, so that it met the base at an angle. Facing the sharp edge without ever touching it, she took whole vegetables between her hands and hacked them apart:”(Lahiri, 1999, p. 114). In reality, Mrs. Sen uses food to create an indelible impression of her past memory as she has no physical community to share the intense feeling that she yearns.

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Not only the cooking tools help her to surrender herself to her happy past, but also a cassette recording of her relatives manifests how she misses them. The death news of her grandfather has made her absent minded. The blade never appears from the cupboard, even getting a whole fish from the fish market does not interest her. She keeps her confined in the apartment and refuses to learn driving. Moreover, Beethoven fails to cheer her up. While listening to a tape which sounds voices of her relatives, Mrs. Sen starts translating for Eliot what they say. As the succession of voices begin to laugh, she identifies each speaker saying: "My third uncle, my cousin, my father, my grandfather." (Lahiri, 1999, p. 128). Actually she never desires to detach herself from India, she wails to roam in her imaginary homeland. By listening to those voices and hear the same story, Mrs. Sen posits her existence in the perpetual past.

Eliot observes two things that make Mrs. Sen joyous. Firstly, the letter from her family. At first Eliot cannot comprehend the gesture of Mrs. Sen when she unlocks the mailbox. His mother also has a mailbox but she collects mail rarely. So he fails to translate the anxiety of his babysitter. Mrs. Sen cannot but embraces Eliot when he furnishes the letter to her. The letter makes her so contented that for the time being she disremembers her lamentation to go back to India. When she reads out the letter to Mr. Sen, Eliot senses that she is "no longer present in the room with the pear-colored carpet." (Lahiri, 1999, p. 122).

Secondly, buying a whole fish makes Mrs. Sen happy. However, she expresses her utmost disgust saying, "It is very frustrating" to prepare croquette with a fish called tuna not with bhetki. She further adds, "To live so close to the ocean and not to have so much fish." (Lahiri, 1999, p. 123). It gives her an immense pain to observe that the fish here in her new country does not taste like the fish in India, "at least it was fresh." (Lahiri, 1999, p. 123). Again, she connects her experiences to her new city, weaving the reminiscences with glimpses of the people of her own having the habit of eating fish twice a day. Even the detail description of eating the tail, the eggs and the head surprises the American fish seller of the supermarket. Thus the tale of fish serves as a symbol of her inharmonious sojourn in an atmosphere where she discovers herself as a lone figure and far away from the natural cycle of life.

Vijay Mishra in his seminal essay, “Diaspora and the multicultural state”(2007,p. 179) mentions, “Recalling homelands from a diasporic space is not uncommon among writers of the diaspora. From the space of the new state, memory captures the experience of displacement as the migrant subject remembers a past, a history, a continuity from which he/she has been wrenched”. Jhumpa Lahiri also creates the recreation of India as Mrs. Sen’s homeland. The act of restoring India has been reflected the way Mrs. Sen wears her attires. She wears saris, in spite of fully aware of the discomfort in wearing saris in an unfavorable atmosphere. Her display of colorful saris identifies herself with that of her innate culture which she is not eager to abandon. Eliot for example, acknowledges the distinct trait of her character when he first meets her: “She wore a shimmering white sari patterned with orange paisleys, more suitable for an evening affair than that of quiet, faintly drizzling August afternoon.” (Lahiri, 1999, p. 112). He further adds that she wears a diverse pattern of sari which clarifies her unadaptable life spirit.

By comparing each wave of the ocean to a sari, Mrs. Sen may momentarily give us a signal of her attempt to forget aches and pains, but the very expression “I cannot move” (Lahiri, 1999, p. 130) instantly reminds us that she is in constant pain and the experience is not only physical but also psychological. She is leading a suspended life between a tradition she has already left and way of life that denies to enter. Bhatia claims that memory helps a migrant to create stories for refashioning a space which becomes a meaningful site to subside his/her internal bleeding of heart. Mrs. Sen does the same.

It is needless to say that the first generation diasporic insight is profoundly hegemonized by the powerful ambience of culture and traditions. This connection with the cultural identity and rhapsody in a foreign land is enthusiastically delineated in the character of ‘Aparna’. What is crucial to her is to preserve her fully developed self like Mrs. Sen in spite of experiencing extraneous influences. Aparna, similar to Mrs. Sen does not feel inclined to lose her true self despite the misery she lives through. She bleeds internally to uphold her genuine self amidst the opposing forces she encounters.

Lahiri’s portrayal of Aparna’s character in the short story *Hell-Heaven* displays the same cultural identity that Mrs. Sen possesses firmly. Usha, the

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daughter of Aparna introduces her mother saying, “My mother was wearing the red and white bangles unique to Bengali women, and a common Tangail sari”. (Lahiri, 2009, p.61). Such an introduction manifests the attempt of a woman to uphold her identity as an Indian living in a foreign country.

It is Usha who vividly narrates the profound crises of Aparna. Aparna is the first generation diaspora character who is married off to Shaymal Das and comes to settle down in an alien country leaving her parents in Calcutta (Kolkata).Usha reveals that her father has agreed to marry her mother as a way of compromising his personal life with professional goals. The inner torment of Aparna increases as she finds nothing in common with her husband. So she (Aparna) feels suffocated in her way of living. Her suffocation becomes more intense when she meets Pranab Chakraborty, a bachelor from a wealthy family in Calcutta who intends to study engineering at MIT.

In the course of time he becomes a family member of the narrator’s family and joins them in the meal. Usha notices some remarkable changes in her mother’s manners. However, it is important to discover what factors are responsible for bringing the changes in her character.

As we have mentioned that Shaymol Das marries Aparna not out of love rather to pacify his parents. He is a lover of “silence and solitude”. (Lahiri, 2009, p.65). Usha further adds that her father has wedded to his work and research, and “he existed in a shell that neither my mother nor I could penetrate”.(Lahiri, 2009, p.65). Hence the agony of being lonely in her apartment, the desperate attempt to escape the apartment where she stays all day long, directs her to find an alternative world of happiness. She begins to enjoy the company of Pranab Kaku of the narrator. When it hurts her to be alone in an unfamiliar land, she does not receive any words of sympathy from her husband rather she is asked to go back to India if she finds it uncomfortable staying in a new land.

Through the character of Aparna, Lahiri projects the intense pain of staying far away from her homeland and explores a complicated diasporic life in an unfamiliar land. Usha relates the pitiable life of her mother as she recalls it from her childhood memories. She narrates, “ I began to pity my mother; the older I got, the more I saw what a desolate life she led. She had never worked, and during the day she watched soap operas to pass the time. Her

only job, every day, was to clean and cook for my father and me.” (Lahiri, 2009, p.76) What a dreary and dull domestic life she gains through marriage. Thus her desperate attempts to escape the apartment she stays all day long paints the life that she hates most.

However, Pranab Chakraborty brings all the differences in her somber life. How joyfully they share the happy events back in India. Through their conversation the readers are informed that both of them hail from well off families in North Calcutta. They also share similar sort of tastes. They share love for music, film, poetry and common memories of neighborhood in Calcutta. The void of Aparna’s desolate and loveless life is filled with happiness by the very presence of Pranab Chakraborty. At this point Aparna reminds us the way Mrs. Sen tries to fight back her somber, barren life by babysitting. To quote from Lahiri “.....he played for mother medley after medley of songs from the Hindi films of their youth. They were cheerful songs of courtship, which transformed the quiet life in our apartment and transported my mother back to the world she’d left behind...”(Lahiri, 2009, p. 65). Aparna’s yearning for a smooth life is obstructed when Pranab Chakraborty marries an American woman, Deborah. The readers to their utter surprise discern the failed suicide attempt of Aparna which is significant enough to apprehend the untold anguish of Aparna in an outlandish place.

Thus the psychological landscape magnificently sketched by Jhumpa Lahiri has arrested the readers’ attention to vividly comprehend the anguish, unsaid grief that the characters live through. The seclusion from the near and dear ones afflicts Mrs. Sen, Aparna’s disharmonious relationship with her husband exemplifies agonizing pain of Aparna and finally, the readers as well as the critics of the world visualize an extremely inconsolable abode of the migrants. Hence the fictional characters of Jhumpa Lahiri emerge as powerful tools to narrate the mournful tale of the diasporic characters of the universe.

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Pedagogy for Children's Education: Perspective *Taare Zameen Par*

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Abstract

This paper profoundly observes Amir Khan's *Taare Zameen Par* (*Stars on Earth*), a Bollywood film with a view to exploring pedagogy for children's education that comprises different socio-psychological and individual factors e.g. social and cultural viewpoint regarding education and success, traditional teaching system, parenting and different personality factors of children that affect their learning process. The study found the faulty and hackneyed teaching system; deformed parenting – a tendency to satisfy parents' enthusiasm to see their children as toppers without considering children's cognitive flourish; and different socio-cultural conditions, values and beliefs set by the competitive world and their pressures on education as the obstacles to the flourish of individual talents. However, providing some constructive suggestions for effective pedagogy for children the film wishes to bring changes in attitudes and practices of teachers, parents, administrators, educationists and others involved in education.

Keywords: Children's education, socio-psychological factors, traditional pedagogy, teachers' role, parenting. **Pedagogy for Children's Education: Perspective *Taare Zameen Par***

Education, though generally is “the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits”, is unfortunately treated in many countries including India as “a positional good” (“Education,” n.d.) i.e. a untiring competition to provide a better education or an aggressive consideration of obtaining a good grade or academic certificates as a yardstick to get a prestigious job in the competitive world of

the 21st century. However, this approach may sometimes result in unfair treatment, even ensue some traumatic experiences to some students, especially to those who cannot keep pace with the race, and to some individuals who possess some special potentials other than the trite value of talents. Even for the societal gluttony of competition and parents' ambition some lives can be lost psychologically and physically forever. The film *Taare Zameen par* directed and produced by Amir Khan portrays some cruelty existing in our society regarding children's education where a young learner, Ishaan Nandkishore Awasthi (a child of 8-9 years) tremendously suffers psychologically for inappropriate pedagogy and unfortunate parenting. Though Ishaan is an individual, his learning experience can be generalized to all the unprivileged but special children whose journey of learning is affected by the traditional teaching system and different social and cultural factors.

In fact, pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching that reflects "the aims of education and the ways in which such goals may be achieved" (Peel, n.d.) and mirrors "different social, political, cultural contexts from which they emerge" ("Pedagogy," n.d.), and thus varies greatly in style. The present study aiming to observe pedagogy for children's education, therefore, was accomplished in some different but interrelated phases i.e. the analysis of social view of education and success in general; academic teaching techniques; attitudes and role of parents to children's education; and of some social and psychological variables facilitating or debilitating for children's learning.

The society portrayed in the film is a typical society of today's world where the concept of success is meant to become the toppers and the rankers by having prestigious professions, and education is the apparatus to execute that goal. The motto of education is defined as to prepare children for life's race, to compete, to succeed, to make a future in the crazy world. To achieve that goal 'order, discipline and hard work' are considered as the foundation of a complete education as well as three pillars of success, and the traditional pedagogy as a catalyst for that achievement. So, competition starts from the very childhood i.e. from the very beginning of their education life. Besides, parents being concerned about children's future become so much enthusiastic about their children's education that obtaining less than

'95.5%, 95.6%, 95.7%' marks becomes blasphemy. Such egoistic desire and belief of success, achievement and failure of parents, and their "immediate placement of a way to be" obscure the ability for the child to develop their way because then the main battle becomes that their child is not what they thought it would be (Shefali, 2018). The same battle has been observed in the relationship between Ishaan and his father (Nandkishore Awasthi), a successful executive to whom the purpose of education was to grow worthy for the competitive world, and so he expected his sons to become brilliant enough to be Doctors, Engineers or have MBA. The nature and purpose of such enthusiasm regarding his children's future seems surprisingly to satisfy his own ambitions, to maintain superior positions in the society, and to remove his lifelong burdens ("Kea sari umar mae uche ghar pe baethke khilate rahunga!").

However, education, though, can be without schooling but from the world itself i.e. from nature, human experiences, actions and so on, formal education i.e. learning to read and write that needs to be taught (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998, p. 318) are usually provided in schools. Unfortunately, schooling sometimes can be without education and even can ruin learners' lives if the pedagogy is faulty. In fact, children's pedagogy cannot be the same as adults' because children having highly inquisitive minds enjoy learning by using their imagination, "observing and copying, doing things, watching and listening" ("The child as a Learner 2," n.d.); through interesting activities like songs, rhymes and games (Ara, 2009, p. 168); and by taking an active role in the learning process, performing experiments, making observations, and interacting with the world around them ("Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development," n.d.). So teachers should adopt appropriate teaching strategies and provide facilitating feedback towards children's effort to promote better learning.

This film presents some significant conflicts existing in the traditional pedagogy and highlights teachers' and parents' role in children's education. Firstly, teachers' failure to identify individual differences and treating all the students equally reflect faulty pedagogy as all students do not possess the same ability to learn ("har baccho ko apni kabeliat hoti hai"). Effective teaching can be ensured if errors of each learner can be identified and analyzed, and then attempted to improve because errors provide

“information which could be used to sequence items for teaching or to devise remedial lessons” (Ellis, 1985, p.51) and thus the weaker students can be improved. However, in the film Ishaan, who possessed special talents of art, yet unrecognized, was suffering from a psychological disease ‘dyslexia’ for which he was facing problems in identifying the letters and conceptualizing words. As the speech sound represented by the letters, according to Fromkin and Rodman (1998), signifies the concept (p. 23), Ishaan could not create an image of the letters combined, or visualize the meaning of the words, and so could not read and write properly. Surprisingly, none of the parents and typical teachers tried to identify the patterns of mistakes Ishaan frequently did, though indeed showing his mistakes and encouraging him to correct himself, and repeating and praising to build confidence and to overcome mistakes would smoothen the learning process and help him succeed (“The child as a Learner 2,” n.d.).

However, every child is blessed with some natural and special potentialities what precisely the tag line of the film ‘Every child is special’ suggests. A child having “come into this world with a throbbing spirit” is “whole” in its “ordinariness” (Shefali, 2018). The responsibilities of parents and teachers are to discover the latent talents, nurture the spirit and provide guidance to bring them out by education. But the traditional pedagogy instead of providing encouragement to explore and grow individual talent seems to be reluctant to appreciate any creativity and change. Though Ishaan had difficulty in reading and writing, his internal world was rich with creativity, powerful imagination, magical sense of art and colour, and excellent analytical ability e.g. his catching fish in a different style with socks, his making moving boats with very ordinary materials; and his interpreting the true meaning of the poem ‘Dristikon (Perspective)’ only understood by Rajan Damodran, the first boy in the class (“Actually Kabita ki asli matlab to tumne samjhaya”), though unfortunately, misunderstood by one of the typical teachers, Tiwiri sir who was used to appreciating only memorizing and faithfully reproducing the trite interpretation of the lesson. This is nothing but the common picture of teaching that, instead of facilitating the learners, forces them to memorize and swallow the lesson without understanding.

“Children”, according to Margaret Mead, “must be taught how to think, not what to think” (“Margaret Mead Quotes,” n.d.), as in the film it is tuned- “Tu dhup hae, ...tu hae nodi,... bahe chal kahi, uur chal kahi, dil khush jaha, teri to manjil hae ohi”. But the traditional pedagogy does not allow children to be open and “focus more on the transmission of the knowledge, of more or less absolute truths”, rather than teach them “to think for themselves and draw their own conclusions” (“Teach Your Children How to Think, Not What to Think,” n.d.). The students also become habituated with the system as noticed in the film a student asking for a topic to draw (“Kea paint kare sir? Table par to kuch nehi hae!”). But education, as George Washington Carver says, “is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom” (qtd. in Mitchell, n.d.). Hence, a good education inspires learners’ creativity by making them ask, think (“socho”) and search many more; helps them enjoy studying (“What Does Good Education Mean?,” n.d.) and makes them motivated to do the best what exactly the new art teacher, Ram Shankar Nikumbh wanted to provide to the young learners. He asked children to do whatever e.g. drawing, painting they like and not to confine the wonderful world of their imaginations to the narrow confines of the classroom -“Yea Table bari chota hae meri jaan, itna chota kea tumhare khubsurat khyalo ka wajon utha ne payega (The table is much too small to contain the wonderful world of your imagination)”. At the first meeting with Ishaan he asked for his interest (“Painting karwa accha nehi lagta?”) Through the inspiring song ‘Bum Bum Bole’ he wanted to motivate the students to look into the window of their mind, to ‘search out a beautiful picture’, to make their mind free, to spread their wings, to let the colors of their mind fly and to let them spin new dreams (“Chalo chalo naye khab ke liye”). Besides, the song ‘Why can’t you?’ and Ishaan’s symbolically running into a circle portray a child’s fear of abstract learning, and desire for getting rid of the pressure of the traditional teaching system. Moreover, the song ‘All I need is to be free’ indeed reflects a child’s longing for freedom.

In fact, “learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned” (Richards and Rodgers (1986:99) (qtd. in Brown, 1994, p.97). Whereas Tiwiri sir appreciated parrot like imitation, the new art teacher inspired the children to think differently and, encouraged their reasoning and thinking abilities as

expressed through the song ‘Bum Bum Bole’ (“Who says fish don’t fly? / Ever thought of it?These stars, are they twinkling? / Or in anger, grumbling at each other?”). Besides, he wanted to raise children’s self-esteem by showing respect to their different thoughts (“dunya mein aisay aisay heeray peda hue jinhun ne dunya ka naqsha badal diya, q k wo dunya ko alag nazar se dekhtay thy”) and individual brilliance (“har baccho ko apni khubia hoti hai, apne kabeliat hoti hai, apne chahat hoti hai”), and convince them that they were the world’s eyes and the world would be what they made of it, and so they should not be disheartened in any failure in learning. Moreover, the teaching strategies he applied in the classroom were different from the traditional teaching system. As children feel comfortable and motivated, and learn better in “a natural and anxiety-free” learning environment (Ara, 2009, p.168), he started his class with fun activities e.g. acting, singing, dancing, playing flute, though, sarcastically his teaching method was ridiculed by the typical teachers as ‘singing and dancing method’ and classroom environment as ‘fish market’. But he did not submit himself to be clay in the traditional system. Instead, he promoted task based learning, inspired children to think out of the box and create something different or whatever in their mind using real life materials e.g. sticks, stones, rubbish or anything, and finally taught through a variety of context clues children understand.

However, another key fault in the traditional pedagogy, as focused in the film, is to provide “too much negative cognitive feedback – a barrage of interruptions, corrections and overt attention to malformations”, that according to Brown (1994), – “often leads learners to shut off their attempts at communication” (p. 220). Ishaan had to face a constant confutation from his teachers and family for his poor performance. The film started with teachers’ negative expressions regarding Ishaan’s obtaining poor marks in the examinations (“3 out of 25”, “2 out of 25”, “Fail! Fail! Fail!”). Some other moving scenes that portrayed Ishaan’s suffering humiliation were Physical teacher’s shouting “Out! Out! Shoe polish nehi hae!”; English teacher’s reaction “Get out! Get out of my class!”, “Shameless boy!”, shame of being ridiculed and belittled by his teachers, classmates and others surrounding him: “Looser”, “Idiot” “Duffer”, “Lazy”, “Crazy” “Why can’t You?”, “Why are you so dumb”, “You are a failure”; his mother’s blaming

him for leaving her job; his father's negligence towards his capability, comparing of the two brothers for making him feel failure ("Mera baro beta har class mey, har subject mey first aati hae"), and finally, sending him to a boarding school as punishment. On the very first day in the boarding school Tiwiri sir made Ishaan feel inferior by comparing him with other students of his age; the art teacher punished him for being inattentive and threatened him to give more punishment if he would not draw proper shapes; English teacher's deductive teaching of certain grammatical rules were really confusing to him as children "cannot easily understand the theoretical concepts of grammar rules of a language" because "learning rules confuses them even more". Moreover, a page full of red marks, "crossing out and corrections" for his inability to write was very "demotivating" ("The child as a Learner 2," n.d.). This sort of demeaning and inauspicious attitude affected his inner impulse so acutely that his self-confidence was completely shattered, and he started to feel indifferent to any reactions and sank into such a state of fear and depression that he was about to lose his life.

On the contrary, the new teacher's role towards Ishaan was exemplary for all the teachers and parents concerned with children's education. His affective affirmation and inspiration to Ishaan e.g. praising him for his powerful imagination, artistic ability, and creative work to make him feel good of himself; encouraging him by giving examples of some successful persons like Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Alva Edison, Pablo Picasso, Walt Disney and Abhishek Bachchan who experienced the same like him at the early age; and finally, drawing Ishaan's picture in the art competition to make him feel worthy revived his self-esteem to go ahead. Moreover, he started to use different remedial techniques to help him make progress. He started to provide extra tutoring; teach bookish materials in different techniques e.g. involving him in real life activities, teaching in playful and practical manner, using motivating teaching tools children usually feel interested in (e.g. color, paintings, games, shapes, figures, sands, etc.), providing him assurance that he can do it, appreciating his good performance so that he can overcome frustration for his inability to perform, and making him feel that he is making progress. Finally, the teacher's organizing an art fair for the staff and students with a view to exploring Ishaan's strikingly creative and artistic style, and Ishaan's

being declared the winner revived his confidence such a way that in a very short interval, he could learn to read and write everything, and in the ending of year, he achieved a great progress in all the subjects.

In fact, children possessing different personality factors are different learners e.g. visual learners, auditory learners, kinesthetic learners, interpersonal learners, intrapersonal learners, deductive learners, or inductive learners and, thus have their own ways of learning (“The child as a Learner 1,” n.d.). Both parents and teachers should acknowledge the area of interest of the children and provide them proper guidance by applying appropriate teaching strategies instead of comparing one with another because that may create many psychological problems for the children, affect their self-esteem and, thus cause failure in life.

Finally, good parenting is the root of a child’s overall development and contributes essentially to build up a child’s future. Parents should encourage children to do their best, but should not pressure them by setting goals too high (“The child as a Learner 2,” n.d.) and force their ambitions onto the immature shoulders of their children unbearable to them. They should assure their children, according to Mr. Nikumbh, that whenever they (children) face any problems or slips, they (parents) are there for them (children) (“Mae hu na”). They should not make children realize as if they (children) are burdens. Instead parents should give quality time to help their children learn, and change their mindset that providing only financial support to their children is the only responsibility to be performed. Moreover, parents’ active and meaningful involvement with the learning process i.e. providing an enjoyable learning environment at home with fun activities, placing learning in context, and providing facilitating feedback to their mistakes help them succeed.

To conclude, the film *Taare Zameen Par* is an eye-opener to the traditional teaching system, home culture, and to the society simultaneously, as it mirrors the consequences of hackneyed pedagogy, insensible parenting, and a society’s typical vision of education and success for children’s education, and hopes for changes in societal, familial and institutional perspectives and practices regarding the matter. The film suggests some significant amendments to the traditional pedagogy and typical parenting for children’s education e.g. appreciating children’s individual talents, and

helping them thrive instead of sticking children with the arrows of parents' ambitions; providing children an enjoyable and stress free learning environment by showing friendly and unthreatening attitude towards them; encouraging their self-esteem; applying appropriate teaching strategies e.g. making learning fun by using interesting teaching tools and ensuring their active participation in learning; and finally, parents' giving quality time to their children and being a source of inspiration and trust with a hope for creating a fear-free, comfortable world to help their potentialities flourish.

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From the Mother's Daughter to the Daughters' Mother: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Study of Nazneen's Transformation in *Brick Lane*

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Abstract:

Since its publication in 2003, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* has drawn the attention and acclaim of the readers and the critics alike. As a result, it is found to be discussed and analyzed in manifold ways, for example—as a post-colonial fiction, a diasporic novel, a multicultural text, a feminist or quintessential bildungsroman etc. Since the transformation of Nazneen—the protagonist of the novel—from a fate-believing submissive Bangladeshi village-girl to a self-defining assertive British-resident works as the focal point of the novel, several essays are seen to deal with Nazneen and her evolution in a number of illuminating ways. However, no such essay looks into the text from a feminist psychoanalytic viewpoint. This article, hence, reads the novel in the light of the theory of mother-daughter relationship by Nancy Chodorow to provide the readers answer to the following question: How does Nazneen change from a mother-doting and fate-fearing daughter to a supporting self-reliant mother of her own daughters?

Keywords: Feminist Psychoanalysis, Mother-Daughter Relationship, Transformation

Introduction:

Brick Lane (2003), the debut novel of the Bangladeshi-born British novelist—Monica Ali, is generally regarded as a significant Anglophone novel of the 21st century by a non-native writer. The novelist's smart handling of diverse contemporary issues like migration, racism, religious extremism, garments business, women's empowerment along with different age-old issues like patriarchal oppression, familial crises etc. in the novel has

drawn the attention of both the readers and the literary scholars alike. Naturally, the critics and the researchers are seen to interpret the novel in diverse ways, for instance—as a feminist fiction, a multicultural novel, a post-colonial narrative, a diasporic text, a bildungsroman and so on. However, the protagonist's revolutionary change from a fate-believing passive village-girl of Bangladesh to a self-sufficient inhabitant of England is undoubtedly the focus of the novel. A number of papers, consequently, are found to look into the issue of Nazneen's transformation from different angles, and to present interesting analyses of the novel. However, no such analysis of the text can be claimed to have been done from a feminist psychoanalytic point of view. This article, therefore, provides an intensive reading of the novel in the light of Nancy Chodorow's theory of mother-daughter bonding and separation, and answers the following question: How does Nazneen's character change throughout the novel, i.e. how does Nazneen change from a mother-doting and fate-fearing daughter to a self-reliant supporting mother of her own daughters? Along with focusing on the characters of the mother, Rupban, and the daughter, Nazneen, the essay also sufficiently refers to Nazneen's younger sister Hasina, who has been presented in the novel as her sister's foil. References to other relevant characters like Hamid—Nazneen's father, Chanu—Nazneen's husband, Raqib—Nazneen's son, Shahana and Bibi—Nazneen's daughters, Karim—Nazneen's lover, Razia—Nazneen's friend, and so forth are given in the necessary places to explicate the issue of the psychological development of Nazneen. Providing in-depth analyses of the relevant points taken from the novel, the essay finally claims *Brick Lane* a successful novel in its presentation of socio-psychological growth of Nazneen from a mother-centric passive village girl to a supporting single-mother of her growing up daughters.

The Mother-Daughter Bond and the Psychological Growth of the Daughter: Nancy Chodorow's Feminist Psychoanalysis: The issue of mothering children has started getting the attention of the feminist, psychoanalytic and sociological thinkers and scholars since the late 1970s. In this connection, theoretical discussions on the essence and implications of the bond between a mother and her daughter have also been developed to a

significant amount. Among all these diverse analyses, the ones provided by the feminist psychoanalytic scholars are generally regarded as the most complex as well as the most complete ones (see Hirsch, 203). The feminist psychoanalytic scholars like Melanie Klein, Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnerstein have written on the subject of mother-daughter bond from a feminist perspective using relevant points from Freudian psychoanalysis. However, Nancy Chodorow's analysis of the mother-daughter tie from the female child's birth to her adulthood, presented in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, offers the most acclaimed interpretation of this very special relationship (see *Theories* n.pag.). According to Chodorow, a mother relates to her female child "as an extension of herself", and senses "a double identification with her own mother and herself" through the child (*Theories* n.pag.). The mothers, thus, generally view the lives of the daughters "as an extension of their own" lives, and "experience their daughters as their 'doubles'" (Nayar 74). The daughters, likewise, also define themselves mostly in relation to their mothers not only in their early childhoods but also in their adult lives. In fact, the deep socio-psychological intimacy with their mothers often motivates the daughters to take their mothers as their idols and to follow them blindly throughout their lives. This "inability to discover autonomy from their mothers", thus, causes improper psychological development in the daughters and makes them grow up as fragile beings having "narcissism", "weak ego-boundaries" and "lack of self-control" (Nayar 74). The very strong mother-daughter attachment often becomes a major cause of boundary confusion and identity crisis in adult daughters who then find it extremely difficult to separate themselves from their mothers and to form "their own identities" (Nayar 74). Shared parenting by the mother and the father, however, according to Chodorow, may reduce the chance of the daughter's over-identification with her mother as well as the possibility of the mother's treating the daughter as her double (see *Theories* n.pag.).

Nazneen's Development in *Brick Lane*: A Literal Sketch: Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* undoubtedly revolves round the socio-psychological development of its female protagonist, Nazneen. Starting with the description of the problematic birth of the protagonist in her paternal

residence in a remote village in Mymensingh in 1967, the novel ends in the year 2002 with Nazneen's turning into a self-reliant single mother of two growing up daughters in the city of London.

The birth and early days of Nazneen's life are narrated by the omniscient narrator in the first few pages of the first chapter of the novel. The premature birth of an apparently dead daughter makes the mother decide to leave the child to her fate. Even after seeing the critical situation of her newborn daughter, Rupban, Nazneen's mother, says, "Whatever happens, I accept. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate." (14) Thus, the physical and mental development of Nazneen starts with her being left to her fate by her family, especially by her mother. Little Nazneen is frequently told the story of her being left to her fate. Also, she is always encouraged, by her family members and relatives, to be all-enduring and indifferent like her saintly mother. Naturally, Nazneen soon turns into a "wide-faced, watchful" girl who has "no complaints or regrets" (15). So, the fully submissive young village girl readily accepts the match chosen for her by her father, Hamid, and moves away to the far-way city of London with her almost middle-aged husband, Chanu. The new episode of the protagonist's life, which covers the most part of the novel, this way, starts in Tower Hamlets, London in 1985. On the early days of her married life, Nazneen is seen to try her best to think and act like a devoted traditional Bangladeshi wife. She tries to concentrate on the religious practices as well as to act according to her husband's instructions. Ignoring the dominating attitude of her aged and unimpressive husband, she tries hard to love him wholeheartedly, consoling herself with the belief of his being quite "kind and gentle" for a husband (22). Thus, Nazneen is seen to remain busy most of time with different household chores. In her leisure time, likewise, she is found to think about Chanu's interests like his getting a better job or a promotion and such. So, the first few months of her married life is spent mostly in her efforts to prove herself an ideal wife like her saintly mother who taught her to believe in fate, "What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne." (16) Nazneen, thus, is sporadically seen to recall her past days in her parental residence in Bangladesh along with trying to adjust herself with the new environment of the new country and her new family. She is found to think

about her mother, Rupban, as well as her sister, Hasina, and to compare her fate and marital life with those of theirs: "It worried her that Hasina kicked against fate. No good could come of it. ... But then if ... fate cannot be changed, ... then perhaps Hasina was fated to run away with Malek. Maybe she struggled against that, and that was what she could not alter." (22) Different other incidents of her life like the death of her first child—Raqib—within a few months of his birth, the gradual degradation of Chanu—her husband—in his career, the birth and growth of her two daughters—Shahana and Bibi, the development of her friendship with self-supporting Razia etc. also affect Nazneen's understanding of herself as well as the world. Thus, the timid village girl of Bangladesh slowly starts turning into an emotionally strong woman by going through different adverse situations. She, hence, decides to support her family financially by sewing dresses for a garment factory. This effort of Nazneen, taken in her mid thirties, makes her independent not only financially but also psychologically. Her meeting with the young man who soon turns into her secret lover happens in connection with this sewing work. Karim, the smart and handsome young man, comes to her residence to work as a middleman between her and the garment factory. The oratory and the knowledge of this radical person not only attract her but also open her eye about many socio-political issues of the land of that time. This year-long passionate-affair between the two, however, ends with her refusing his proposal of marriage since Nazneen finds Karim's philosophy of life much different from hers. His traditional outlook to women along with his politics-torn turbulent life makes the man an unfit match for her. So, she says to him, "I don't want to marry you. ... It would be too difficult ... for us to be together. So I think we had better stop now." (451-52) In the same way, Nazneen is seen to refuse the proposal of her husband, Chanu, to go back to Bangladesh thinking about the future of her daughters as well as of herself since Britain offers much better and more secured environment to all of them. The novel, then, ends in 2002 in England presenting a picture of the protagonist as a happy and successful single mother who can not only carry out all the responsibilities of the daughters properly but also dare fulfilling her long cherished dream of skating in a sari.

The socio-psychological growth of Nazneen that starts with her birth in her paternal residence in a remote Bangladeshi village in 1967, thus

by the end of the novel, reaches the extent that she successfully transforms into a self-reliant single mother of two dependent daughters in the city of London in the year 2002.

The Mother-Daughter Bond and Separation in *Brick Lane*: A Detailed Analysis: The socio-psychological development of Nazneen, the protagonist of *Brick Lane*, might be understood well when it is scrutinized in the light of the theory of mother-daughter bonding and separation provided by the feminist psychoanalytic thinker, Nancy Chodorow. Hence, a close reading of Nazneen's relationship with her mother, Rupban, and, to some extent, with her sister, Hasina, is presented below. Though the focus of the novel as well as the present discussion is Nazneen, references to Hasina are a must since she has been presented in the novel as her sister's foil.

Nazneen's relationship with her mother, undoubtedly, starts with her being in the woman's womb. The novel, however, does not provide much information regarding that time of Nazneen and her mother. Rather it starts with a description of her sudden and problematic birth as well as her mother's response to the incident. Nazneen arrives to the world as a premature and almost stillborn child. Ignoring the advice of the midwife and the relatives, her mother keeps her at home saying, "Whatever happens, I accept. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate. That way, she will be stronger." (14) Miraculously, Nazeen survives, and starts growing up into a devoted daughter as well as a loving sister under the strict guidance of her parents. Being herself a victim of male-domination, her mother—Rupban—teaches her to be all enduring and non-complaining so that she can adjust with this very harsh world of men. Rupban herself has lived her whole life believing in the "mantra" or basic idea, "What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne." (16) So, she frequently says to her daughter, "Just wait and see, that's all we can do." (46) She also discourages them to ask any kind of question about their father's activities. She says, "If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men." (80) For her having such a tolerant and passive attitude to life, Nazneen's father takes her as a saintly woman. Hence, every now and then he is seen to say to his daughters, "Your mother is a saint.... Don't forget that she comes from a family of saints." (80)

However, this apparently very submissive and all tolerant woman, in reality, carries a heavy heart beneath her outward calm and passive look. Often she weeps and cries to relieve her mental agony. Also, she is seen to share her sorrowful life experiences with her sister when the sister visits her. The two weep, and exchange feelings and experiences as such:

‘We will suffer in silence.’ ...
‘In silence,’ said Amma. ...
‘That is all that is left to us in this life,’ said Auntie. ...
‘We are just women. What can we do?’
‘They know it. That’s why they act as they do.’ (103)

Thus, Rupban, who appears as an all-enduring saint-like figure to her husband and a mysterious passive person to her daughters, definitely is a sensitive and conscious human being. She is pained by the injustices done to her just for her being a woman. But as she is powerless, she just suffers and keeps faith in fate. Knowing no solution to this condition, she tries to teach her daughters—Nazneen and Hasina—to be as calm and patient as possible so that they might better adjust with the day to day sufferings of a woman’s life in times of necessity. Being too young, the two sisters do not understand the sufferings of their mother properly. Nazneen, however, for her being two years older than her sister, feels a bit agitated sometimes, especially when she sees Rupban to weep or cry. She also tries to find out the causes of her mother’s troubles. But as she fails to do that, she tries to make the mother happy by abiding by her advices. She can feel the deep love of Rupban for them hidden beneath all her scolding and weeping, “Amma scolded and cuddled, and smelled as sweet as the skin on the milk when it had been boiled all day with sugar.” (45) The close physical as well as mental bond developed between the mother and the daughter in the very early days of her life, thus, turns into a strong psychological tie in Nazneen’s girlhood and early youth. Her psychological bond with the mother remains similarly close even in the physical absence of Rupban, that is, even after Rupban’s sudden and mysterious death at a quite young age. Nazneen, thus, regardless of her losing her mother just at fourteen, goes on following her for a long period of time. She, following her father’s choice, gets herself married to a London-residing middle-aged expatriate Bangladeshi, named Chanu, just at the age of eighteen. The teaching of her mother regarding fate leads Nazneen to act

this way. So, she is seen to say to her father, “Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma.” (16) Likewise, in her early conjugal life also, she tries hard to be a good wife and an ideal mother. She does all the household chores neatly, and takes good care of her son—Raqib. She strives to love her middle-aged unimpressive husband whole-heartedly. Up to this point of her life, Nazneen can undoubtedly be said to define herself mostly in relation to her mother. Taking Rupban as her idol and guide, she tries to follow her teachings blindly.

However, Nazneen gradually starts feeling the presence of a kind of confusion or contradiction in herself too. When she thinks of her sister—Hasina, who runs away from her parental residence just at the age of sixteen with her lover, she feels doubtful whether she is “beginning to love Chanu, or just getting used to him?” (40) She also sometimes feels critical of the relationship between fate and human action. Hence, she thinks:

... Hasina kicked against fate. No good could come of it. Not a single person could say so. But then if you really looked into it, thought about it more deeply, how could you be sure that Hasina was not simply following her fate? If fate cannot be changed, no matter how you struggle against it, then perhaps Hasina was fated to run away with Malek. Maybe she struggled against that, and that was what she could not alter. Oh, you think it would be simple, having made the decision long, long ago, to be at the beck and call of fate, but how to know which way it is calling you? And there was each and every day to be got through. If Chanu came home this evening and found the place untidy and the spices not even ground, could she put her hands like so and say, don’t ask me why nothing is prepared, it was not I who decided it, it was fate. (22)

Nazneen also, thus, gradually starts thinking about her own life comparing her condition with those of her sister and her late mother. The teachings of her mother regarding fate and life, with the passing of time, seem to become insufficient to pacify her inner urge for self-understanding and self-fulfillment. So, she is seen to have a kind of internal conflict between her mother-taught as well as socially-inflicted reason and her very own passion for self-realization:

It was her place to sit and wait. Even if the tornado was heading directly towards her. For her, there was nothing else to be done. Nothing else that God wanted her to do. Sometimes she wanted to get up and run. Most of the time she did not want to run but neither did she want to sit still. How difficult it was, this business of sitting still. But there was nothing really to complain of. There was Chanu, who was kind and never beat her. There was Raqib. And there was this shapeless, nameless thing that crawled across her shoulders and nested in her hair and poisoned her lungs, that made her both restless and listless. What do you want with me? she asked it. What do you want? It hissed back. She pretended not to hear, but it got louder. She made bargains with it. No more eating in the middle of the night. No more dreaming of ice, and blades, and spangles. No more missed prayers. No more gossip. No more disrespect to my husband. She offered all these things for it to leave her. It listened quietly, and then burrowed deeper into her internal organs. (101-102)

Defying the suggestions of her husband, Nazneen, hence, learns English, makes herself acquainted with the locality, befriends a working-class woman—Razia, and dreams of doing ice-skating. She later starts supporting her family financially by sewing dresses for a garment factory when her husband faces acute financial hardship. She even dares to respond positively to Karim, the middleman of the garment factory, when he approaches towards her to make love. Her affair with this handsome young man not only makes her feel the true passions of love but also makes her realize her capability and significance. Still, Nazneen finishes her year-long relationship with Karim and refuses his proposal of marriage as soon as she notices the presence of a traditional chauvinistic mentality in him. She even refuses to go back to her motherland when her frustrated husband returns there being utterly unsuccessful in his career in London. Though she is frequently seen to recall her premarital life with her mother and younger sister in Bangladesh as well as to eagerly wish to meet her unfortunate sister living there, Nazneen does not go back. This very tough decision of staying back in England as a single mother, taking the challenge of looking after two growing up daughters all alone, demonstrates the complete evolution of her.

This Nazneen is brave, rational, proactive and fully self-directed. She no more needs the instructions of anyone, not even those of her mother, to walk in the thorny path of life. She is no more worried about the anger of her deceased mother whose soul she believes to roam around her and to monitor her all the time. Also she is not afraid of fate anymore, and so, can take steps on her own about herself as well as her daughters rather than just passively waiting for something good to happen or just to accept anything that comes on her way on its own. The novel, hence, ends with a picture of a happy and carefree Nazneen in company with her daughters, Shahana and Bibi, and her best friend, Razia, doing ice-skating as a pastime.

The total socio-psychological growth of Nazneen, thus, takes a long time to come about. However, the novelist—Monica Ali—is seen to depict it with great skill and much success. She effectively uses the third person omniscient narrator to bring out the innermost issues of the mind and the heart of Nazneen to us—the readers. She also uses dreams or hallucinations to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the central character of the novel. Her use of letters not only adds another dimension to the style of the novel but also to the issue of plot and theme development. As can be noticed from the earlier discussion, Nazneen arrives to the world as a fighter. As her mother leaves her to her fate, she also fights against it with all her power. In her girlhood, she is found to be intelligent and inquisitive enough to observe her surroundings keenly. So, her passive behaviour in the first two decades of her life is mostly the result of her strong bonds with her mother who teaches her to be submissive and fate-fearing. Nazneen’s inner thoughts regarding her mother are explicitly depicted in many places of the novel some of which have already been mentioned in the essay. The emergence of a kind of dilemma regarding following her mother’s guidance or acting on her own decision is also portrayed with mastery in a number of points of the narrative. References to a few of these have already been presented in the essay too. Even, the culminating part of the protagonist’s development, taking place in the last two chapters of the novel, has also been mentioned earlier in the essay. Only the issues triggering the last episode of Nazneen’s psychological growth are now left to be referred. Hence, the dream cum hallucination of Nazneen—presented in Chapter Eighteen, and the last letter of Hasina—presented in Chapter Nineteen, are shortly mentioned now. The

nearly three-page long hallucination scene starts with Nazneen's dreaming of Gouripur, waking up and asking her mother for necessary directions. It ends with her crying aloud against the directions of her mother.

'What shall I do now, Amma?' She said out loud.

Amma walked through the door wearing her best sari.... 'You modern girls. You'll do what you like'.... 'But you should remember one thing at least.'

'What's that?' Nazneen closed her eyes. Now that Amma had come, she wanted her to go away again.

There was no reply.

Nazneen opened her eyes.

'That's better,' said Amma...

'Don't think I wasn't watching you,' Amma snapped.... 'When you stood between your son and his Fate, you robbed him of any chance.' Amma walked towards her. ... 'Now say this to yourself, and say it out loud, "I killed my son. I killed my son."

'No!' screamed Nazneen. (431-32)

The last letter of her sister, Hasina, plays a very significant role in solving Nazneen's dilemma regarding accepting fate blindly or making her own choice. In the letter, sent from Dhaka in October 2001, Hasina reveals the secret of her mother's mysterious and sudden death in her early thirties. She writes:

Amma always say we are women what can we do? If she here now I know what she say I know that too well. But I am not like her. Waiting around. Suffering around. She wrong. So many ways. At the end only she act. She who think all path is closed for her. She take the only one forbidden.

Forgive me sister I must tell you now this secret so long held inside me.

...

May Allah forgive her. It she who leave.

May Allah show His Mercy onto her. She see no other way.
(434-36)

The letter, in association with the hallucination, works as an eye-opener to Nazneen. She understands the reason behind Hasina's continuous strives for

happiness. She also realizes the necessity of her self-establishment leaving everything behind. Thus, Nazneen becomes able to break away with her mother fully after a long many years.

Conclusion: *Brick Lane*, in sum, is a tale of Nazneen and her socio-psychological development. The novel, definitely, is an account of both her struggles and empowerment. Two relevant characters—Rupban, her mother, and Hasina, her sister—work separately to help her understand the tough realities of female life in this male-dominating world. They also work as two totally different models of life that a woman can choose. The passive life of her fate-believing mother which ended with her committing suicide just at the age of thirty-four works as an example of self-compromise and self-denial to her. The turbulent life of her fate-denying sister, on the other hand, appears as an example of unsuccessful efforts for self-assertion and self-reliance. Nazneen's realization of all these, however, come a bit late, i.e. in her early thirties. She is found to walk the path of life mostly following the directions of her mother. The strong mother-daughter bond here provokes her to take her mother as her guide. The sisterly bond with her sister, on the other hand, makes her feel for the unfortunate younger sister, but not to follow her path since that does not match her mother's. The different lessons of her life gradually make the mother-daughter bond shaky, and lead her to try her own possible route. And the final development in Nazneen's outlook happens with her knowing the secret of her mother's death. Since her mother has got no positive result in her life following the fate-decided path, Nazneen separates her way from that of her mother. She rather decides to try proactively to write her own fate. Here she, to some extent, follows the path of her sister who is repeatedly seen to try to make her own luck. However, the difference between the two lies in one's choosing rationally and the other's choosing emotionally. The novel, thus, successfully depicts the issue of mother-daughter bonding and separation as well as its impact on a daughter's life with the help of the characters of Rupban, Nazneen and Hasina.

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Bankim's *Rajmohan's Wife* : A Portrayal of Gendered Subaltern

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Abstract

Critical appraisal on the life and works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is abound but, even after more than one hundred and fifty years, a very few studies have delved into studying his first and only novel written in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864;1935), also happened to be the first novel in English by an Asian writer. Among those very few studies, analysis on national allegorical significance is a major and common issue. A few critics have interpreted this novel from colonial perspective. Sufferings of Indian wives and emergence of unshackled womanhood have been upheld in one or two articles. But no researcher has yet attempted to examine the novel from postcolonial perspective by exploring the fact that women are considered as 'subaltern' or 'other'. Under the texture of a typical familial story of nineteenth century Bengal Bankim has knitted another story of exploitation where, within the same social structure, one gender is subverting another from the center to the periphery and making them 'other' as the colonizers, exercising hegemonic power, do to the colonial people. Specially, by depicting male dominating society through the actions of Rajmohan, Mathur and Madhav as well as by depicting vulnerability of female characters in *Rajmohan's Wife*, Bankim has shed some light on the patterns and textures of subalternity, surveillance and subordinance that are inscribed and re-inscribed in the social and individual psyche of the then patriarchal society. So, this research, qualitative in nature, will explore the novel, *Rajmohan's Wife*, using post-colonial analytical tools alongside the feminist approach, and show how women are considered as "Subaltern or the other".

Keywords: Gendered Subaltern, Hegemony, Subjugation, Women as Other, Althusserian trick.

The concept of subaltern as is used and understood by post-colonial critics and theorists was first introduced by Antonio Gramsci in one of his notebooks titled *Notes on Italian History*. The term subaltern, in Gramsci's content, refers to "any 'low rank' person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same notion" (Louai 5). The term has been adapted to post- colonial studies from the work of the Subaltern Studies group of historians who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Studies. Ranajit Guha is one of the core members of this group who, in the 'Preface' to *Subaltern Studies* Vol. I, provides a working definition of 'subaltern'. The term is used "as a name for the general attitude of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (Guha vii). Bankim's major characters in *Rajmohan's Wife* correspond to this concept in terms of gender where women are treated as subaltern.

The ideological heft of hierarchy and power, the problem of subtly generated spaces of binary oppositions, and the dynamics of superiority and inferiority travel across every realm of human experience. Among various forces oppression, law, language and ideology are powerful tools employed by the dominant groups in order to create binary opposites. Prioritizing one group naturally creates the Other. Driving certain groups to the periphery, away from the vibrance of the centre, necessarily involves the process of cultural Othering. Thus 'subaltern' is created, freighted with the dimensions of subordination and always remains on the right side of the binary oppositions. The subaltern is infused with the negative associations at all levels, be it personal, sexual, social, political or cultural. His or her voice or dignity is bereaved, authentic presence is denied and considered as Other or mere zero, a cipher with no sense of being. The sobriety of the situation is aggrandized when the subaltern is a woman. "She is even denied a subject position. Being at the precarious juncture, crisscrossed by multiple forces of oppression, she is the one who occupies the lowest position in the social ladder. Her presence is not even authenticated; if at all it is done, it is only to enforce the superiority of the male counterpart. She is the deviant, the deformed, signifying all the lacks, the voids" (Dhanya). Bankim Chandra Chaterjee has depicted such portrayal of women subaltern in his first and only novel written in English, *Rajmohan's Wife*, where patriarchy as a dominant ideology inscribes inferior status to women and make them signifiers of

frailty and dependence. The very title of the novel, *Rajmohan's Wife*, represents the vulnerable, parasite like, condition of women. In spite of having a name Matangini is being identified as Rajmohan's wife, not as an independent entity, as if she exists in response to her husband's existence. All through the plot of the novel, Rajmohan represents the main stream of a patriarchal society whereas Matangini, being a woman and a wife, represents the subaltern or the Other. This is the typical scenery of the patriarchal society where existence of women, the inferior, depends on that of men, the superior. Simone de Beauvoir, in her *Second Sex*, elaborates this process of cultural Othering:

She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject; he is the Absolute- she is the Other (Beauvoir 16).

The predicament of the women subaltern is the most pitiable of all oppressive states. It is a pernicious combination for the subaltern to be a woman. Her life, hope, even, the basic right to an esteemed survival are contravened by multiple forces of oppression. And oppression is the strongest tool to subvert and make her subaltern. A number of signs of oppression to women by men and the male dominated society prevail in *Rajmohan's Wife* that have worked as the catalyst of subjugation and perversion of women. In the very first chapter of the novel, listening the question about her husband asked by Kanak, her neighbor, Matangini's face turns unusual. Bankim has depicted this in the following quoted extract:

[...] the other laughed and said, "Oh, it's Didi. What kindness! Whose face was it that I first saw on getting up this morning?" The guest laughed back and retorted, "Who else but the person you see every morning?" At this, the face of the younger woman clouded over for a moment, while the smile half lingered on the lips of the other (Bankim 2-3).

This is the first implication that indicates the notion of oppression which is followed by many others:

[...] Yet even those keen glances charged with fire of youth betrayed anxiety. The small lips indicated the sorrow nursed in her

heart. The beauty of her figure and limbs had been greatly spoilt by her physical or mental suffering (4).

Alongside the racism and classism women are victim of subjugation and subversion manipulated by the patriarchal ideology. Lois Tyson explains that “patriarchy continually exerts forces that undermine women’s self-confidence and assertiveness, then points to the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally, and therefore correctly, self-effacing and submissive” (Tyson 85). They cannot transcend the threatening power of oppression rather, more pathetically, the dominant forces naturalize the subjugation with such a craftsmanship that women often fail to recognize the snare with which they are circumvented. They lose power even over own selves for which Wollstonecraft, in her *Vindication of the rights of woman*, says “I do not wish them [women] to have power over men; but over themselves” (Wollstonecraft 68). Consequently, they doom and repine at that dungeon forever, considering it as their preordained destiny. Actually, women are brought up in such a manner that they themselves feel right or comfortable in a shackled situation. They consider the life in the *zenana*, a different place in a home especially for women where men are not allowed to enter without permission and which remains aloof from rest of the world, as safe and right from every manner- socially, morally even religiously. As Matangini thinks fetching water from the river is a derogatory task. Good women never do this. She even thinks it as dangerous for she has heard that there are crocodiles in the river Madhumati that may drag her away. This notion is found in the following quoted conversation of Matangini, the protagonist of the novel, and Kanak:

[...] At this the speaker invited the young woman to come with her to fetch water. She had in fact come there with a view to making that invitation. The younger woman refused, and when her companion began to press her, said, “There are crocodiles in the Madhumati. They will drag me away.” [...] Kanak pointed to the sun which was still above the trees and said, “It’s still noon.” At this the younger woman became grave and said, “You know, Kanak Didi, I never fetch water.” “That’s why I am asking you to,” replied Kanak. “Why should you remain in a cage all the day. Do not all other housewives draw water?” The younger woman said, disdainfully, “That’s a work for servant- girls (Bankim 5).

This concept doesn't grow in Matangini's mind simply, rather it is a result of continuous frightening attitude of a male dominated society where a woman leads her life under the surveillance of her father, brother and husband respectively who always want to keep the women inside the zenana, aloof from outside world. That's why 'the young woman said firmly, "I cannot argue about it, Kanak. You know my husband has forbidden me to fetch water, and you know him well" (6). As this has turned into a conventional collective behavior to women, they can't understand the trick rather they think that they are leading a safe life according to their own choice. This is actually the Althussarian 'trick' (Barry 158) where the *other* think that they are choosing their choice whereas the system is built in such a way that they have no other way to choose anything else. Besides, femininity and womanhood appear to them as identical. They cannot perceive the fact that these two are different and it is patriarchy that has made them identical. Besides this male chauvinistic ideology have marginalized women from the supremacy of the phallocentric order. Consequently, they have occupied a position allied to inferiority, fragility, irrationality, chaos and so on. Women imbibe these negative images from the vibes of the society and they acclimate themselves to the male definitions of ideal womanhood. And so, they consider the behavior of going beyond the established system set by the main stream of a patriarchal society as wrong, sometimes as sin. That's why, even when Matangini is convinced to fetch water she says to Kanak, "Let us go, but is it wrong?" To avoid this man- made moral crisis women choose the so-called safe, conventional and shackled way of living which push them to the margin, to the periphery, away from the vitality and vivacity of the centre necessarily involves the process of cultural Othering.

Indoctrination is a naturalizing process that caters patriarchy to the consumption of women and makes them the supporters of an ideology that enslaves them and keeps them secluded in zenana, a forceful exclusion by the dominant group from the outer world. Among the women, married ones are more wretched, especially the married women of Indian subcontinent and of course of nineteen century Bengal. They feel they have been doomed forever as Matangini feels lying in her bed and recollecting her past with wet eyes. She even finds that her eight years of married life has made her forget to laugh loudly, suppress the wish to see her loving faces. She feels that her life will be continued through misery (Bankim 36- 37). And this scenery of suppression is so common and conventional that it is treated as granted. The

typical Bengali wives like Hemangini couldn't speak to her husband freely rather she becomes afraid. When Matangini asks Hemangini to inform her husband about the conspiracy of dacoity she refused it at once with an alarming tone saying, "Ah! sister, do you want to frighten me only [...] I confess I am frightened" (55- 56). It seems husband is someone superior to wife and she is someone subordinate to him. Actually, this fear was a common fear among nineteenth century Bengali wives generated by the dominating system of keeping the subaltern silent, under the veil and maintaining the so-called order of society. At that time wives were not allowed to meet their husband during the day. Talking to husband publicly was considered as derogatory. So, wives felt so ashamed and afraid that they wouldn't talk to their husbands publicly even if their lives were at stake. They would rather die than think of unveiling themselves. In *Abordh-Bashini*, Begum Rokeya has recorded a number of stories of socially granted suppression of nineteenth century Bengali women (Rokeya). Among those horrible stories one can be noted to make the scenario vivid which has been quoted and translated by Ghulam Murshid in his *Reluctant Debutante: Response of Bengali women to Modernization*:

Accompanied by a maid servant and veiled by a heavy burkha, an upper-class Muslim woman, a relation of Rokeya, was boarding a train at Kiul station. She accidentally fell down in the space between the train and the platform. The maid servant pulled her by the burkha. But the burkha caught and the woman was unable to rise. Some porters present there offered to help, but the maid servant would not allow them to do so. The train was due to leave. However, it waited for about half an hour and at last ran her over (Murshid 32).

Though this fact of choosing death than raising voice or unveiling her was a horrible accident, apparently, it was actually an incident groomed and executed by the ideology made by patriarchal society. That's why neither the lady nor her maid servant didn't act differently. At that time, for women, so many do's and don'ts were considered as derogatory and praiseworthy respectively. Such as going outside the home, speaking to men, speaking and laughing loudly, eating before male members of the family, studying, boarded on vehicle, wearing shoes, involvement with any sort of income source etc. were considered as derogatory. Whereas keeping under veil, obedience to male members of the family, not playing outside, low voice,

smiling, passing the life within home, doing house-hold chores, rearing children, not to join any source of income etc. would have been praised and considered as qualities of a good lady. This ideology made them more vulnerable and drove them to the periphery, aloof from the central contribution to the society which generates power. Ideology is always created by the dominant group to run the process of domination smoothly, as Karl Marx proclaims, and it works more subtly with rigorous intensity of manipulating the dominated people to be dominated willingly and becoming the ‘other’. Nineteenth century men used the same tool, ideology, to make the women other. Such specimen is also found in the observation of H. A. D. Phillips, an officer in the Bengal Civil Service of that period:

As any caste or portion of a caste becomes wealthy or influential, the seclusion and jealous appropriation of the weaker sex becomes stricter... The upper classes of cultivators are introducing the purda system more and more and a low caste man, on becoming well-to-do, invariably builds his pucca (masonry) house, with a brick wall surrounding it, constructs a private privy, and has a well dug in his yard, so that his women shall not have to go out (Phillips 128-129).

Although this seclusion of women was not a unique invention of Bengali or Indian men, as both in ancient Greece and Rome women were kept in seclusion like the Muslim women, nineteenth century Bengali women experienced possibly the worst kind of seclusion. Apart from physical seclusion like a caged bird they had no mental freedom (Murshid 30-32). They even didn't have any religious freedom rather they had to worship as their husbands did and follow the superstitions of their husbands blindly (Ghosh 138). This seclusion made them dependent, powerless and subaltern.

In *Rajmohan's wife*, Bankim has narrated the story of women subaltern. All the female characters are depicted as precarious which indicates the vulnerable condition of women as a whole in a patriarchal society where they either continue a veiled existence in a twilight zone or lost themselves. Along with Matangini and Hemangini Madhab's aunt, Rajmohan's aunt, Rajmohan's sister, Kanak, Tara, Champak, Karunamayee, Suki's mother all are living in this metaphoric twilight zone. They have no place, no voice, no right of their own. That's why despite being nephew Madhab dares to show male chauvinism threatening his aunt to drive out her from house. He says, “My aunt! [...] The wretch! I'll kick her out of the house” (Bankim 29). So

does Rajmohan with his aunt. When fetching water Matangini returns home Rajmohan blazes up with anger and pours all the water on the dust- heap. His aunt scolds him for wasting water. But instead of remaining quite Rajmohan shouts at his aunt, "Shut up, you old hag" (Bankim 14). Both Rajmohan and Madhav dare to show their male chauvinism because they know that Indian widows have no place to live except their father's home. They have to depend on and lead their lives according to the wish of the members of that home, especially of the male members. Even if she has a son that son gets the authoritative power over her. But if the lady doesn't have any son her property automatically goes to her nephew. So, these two elder ladies are bound to depend on Madhav and Rajmohan respectively. This dependency has paved the way to suppression, exclusion and humiliation they have experienced later in the novel. Actually, this social custom is made by the men and for the men which empowers them to subordinate women. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak has discussed the problems of Indian widow and their sacrifice in detail. She has reiterated her vantage point that subaltern cannot speak and among them condition of the woman is more complicated, since, though women abide by the whims and fancies of their men, they have a voice within themselves. For Spivak, this voice is a voice of dissent and disapproval which is always denied by men, the hegemonic power holders of the patriarchal society, using the trick of ideology as well as social and economic exclusion (Spivak).

Such phenomena of denial, exclusion or limited access of women to social, economic and cultural institutions are very common and also happen to other female characters of the novel. All through the novel no voice of Rajmohan's sister, Karunamayee, Suki's mother is found. Bankim has depicted them just as the beck and call. When Rajmohan tortures Matangini his sister never come to save her though their relation is not bad. The reason is fear to her brother. The same fear, fear of a subaltern, to be excluded from the family or to get the stigma of a disloyal, bad girl as father or brother is the authority of the family. She even doesn't get any name in the novel rather she has been acquainted with the reader as Rajmohan's sister. As if her existence depends on her brother. Kanak and Suki's mother are also experiencing such kind of vulnerability with poor status. Whereas Karunamayee doesn't have poor status, yet she is poorer than suki's mother as her husband has died childless and so she can't be the owner of the property that her husband has left behind. The law doesn't allow this. She

can be just a pensioner depending on some other male persons. As Bankim narrated:

[...]his ample estates must be left to the enjoyment of those who had been to him almost strangers, and that though they might remain in the possession of his wife during her lifetime, she could not, with her hands fettered by the law, be anything more than a pensioner on her own estate (Bankim 18).

Karunamayee had to obey the law and depend on Bangshibadan, new owner of her husband's wealth, till death. But this widow doesn't get enough favor rather she dies before her age - "A fever originally slight, but which from unintelligible or rather very intelligible causes, became fearfully violent, forced the anxious widow to part with her domestic and with the world before age" (Bankim 19). This 'unintelligible or rather very intelligible causes' conceive the implications of denial, suppression and exclusion that drive her to death, the ill conclusion of a subaltern.

Tara and Champak are also wives of a wealthy family and have no power to execute anything as their own wish. They have to obey their husband, Mathur. Mathur's second marriage with Champak and living with Tara, his first wife, together in the same home testify the denial of feelings and voice of both the ladies considering them as powerless, the 'other'. Besides, despite passing so many years in the family Tara doesn't get the power to execute her word as she wishes. She can't keep the distressed Matangini at home for long time though she assured Matangini to live with her as long as she wishes. Mathur neither cares about her word nor her request. He drives away Matangini while she was badly needed a shelter. Mathur takes the side of Rajmohan, another oppressor of the novel, and exercises the hegemonic power over these ladies as usually because of the patriarchal ideology that justifies him as right.

Through the character of Matangini, the female protagonist, Bankim has epitomized the 'otherness' attributed by the male characters, especially by her husband Rajmohan, and the male dominated society as well. This tone of 'otherness' pervades all through the novel. Matangini has been suppressed, oppressed, denied and secluded. She has to obey Rajmohan's constitution otherwise is tortured badly. At the beginning of the novel, she has been tortured for ignoring the order of Rajmohan and going out to fetch water for

the first time. Though Matangini raise her voice it is denied by Rajmohan with blazed eyes and firm fist. She is forced to obey him:

“To fetch water!” taunted Rajmohan, “but with whose permission did you go out?” “With nobody’s permission!” he shouted, “have I not forbidden you a thousand times?” [...] The woman proudly replied, “I am your wife.” Her face reddened and her voice began to be choked. “I had gone because I thought there was nothing wrong in it.” At this display of boldness, Rajmohan absolutely blazed up. [...] She didn’t move away one step [...] After a moment’s silence Rajmohan dropped his wife’s hand, but immediately shouted out, “I’ll kick you to death” Even then the chidden woman did not reply. Only tears were streaming down her face (Bankim 15).

The oppression continues. At the midst of the novel, it is found that Matangini is being tortured again for going out of home and saving her sister and sister’s husband from the conspiracy of Rajmohan with the dacoits—“knowest thou, harlot, why I have whetted my knife tonight? You answer not and I will kill you” (Bankim 73-74). Despite being threatened to death several times Matangini has to live with Rajmohan suppressing her voice since, like other women, she knows there is no other place for her in this male dominated society which always try to keep women secluded from everything and make ‘other’. This vulnerable feeling of homelessness becomes obvious when Kanak says to Suki’s mother, “[...] no women ought to go. She will never trust herself again to that house to receive insults and reproaches. But alas, poor woman, whither, else can she go. Is her father’s hut close by to give her shelter?” (Bankim 87). Still, she tries to save her life, her prestige leaving Rajmohan’s home but later she is forced to return by Mathur and Rajmohan, the representatives of patriarchal society. At the end of the novel, Matangini dies in her father’s home. So, it is very open-and-shut that despite several attempts to establish her own voice, own identity Matangini is forcefully subverted and secluded by the male members who hold the hegemonic power of the patriarchal society. Kanak also tries to walk along her own road but for this she has been condemned and stigmatized as ‘bad woman’. In fact, in the whole novel, only Matangini, Kanak and, to some extent, Tara try to fight against the dominant group but all of them are subjugated and treated as subaltern. Moreover, unlike all the male characters, no female character is engaged in any economic, social and cultural institution which paves her way to contribute to family and the nation as well as to find her own voice, confidence and power. It also

manifests that women are considered as subaltern who are deliberately excluded from the centre of the power and driven to the periphery.

No position is neutral, no product is apolitical. A sensitized seeking eye can recognize the overt and covert play of power and politics in the multifarious systems by which patterns and textures of subalterity and subordinance are inscribed and re-inscribed in the social and individual psyche. All the cultural artifacts, social relationships, multifaceted institutions including family, education, religion, as well as art, literature, sports, sexuality – all bear the imprint of hegemony and subjugation (Dhanya). Like ideology with some other tools of hegemonic power the dominant group subjugates the subaltern people both implicitly and explicitly. Four major characteristics: exclusion from socio-economic institution by the powerful group, denial of the voice by the dominants, limited access to cultural imperialism and being subverted by the social groups who hold the hegemonic power are engraved in the definition of ‘subaltern’. All these characteristics are inscribed in the plot of the novel, especially in the actions of male and female characters. Here, the phallocentric, patriarchal world has seized every means of control and expression to itself that the women, as self-respecting individuals, find themselves at loss and eventually become subaltern. Apparently, this novel is a portrayal of the oppression of women but allegorically *Rajmohan's Wife* is a portrayal of gendered subaltern where women are considered as the ‘Other’.

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Promise of an “indefinite life”: Revisiting the world of Gauranga Mohanta’s “A Green Dove in Silence” (Forty prose poems in translation)

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Abstract

Since Gauranga Mohanta’s vision in “*A Green Dove in Silence*” has transcended particular time and place, it becomes a living symbol. He does not know how to compromise love with mere facts, nor does he want to know how to lose mystery or desire for knowledge to be lost unattended and ignored in the human experience and human sensibility. The adventure of life as he delineates in his prose poems “The Tale of Ever-flowing Life” and “Self-Division” with skilful handling of emotions and sensibilities—sometimes passionate and sometimes poised—brings forth a new wonderland of serenity of vision where all intuitions and expectations, promises and performances are baked in the warmth of mystic resonance. In fact, he has a promise, quite unlike others, to look at himself not merely in isolation but also in association with all experiences of life—sane or sinful, insignificant or otherwise.

Gauranga Mohanta’s collection of forty prose poems in translation titled “*A Green Dove in Silence*” entails more than an act of ‘doing’: doing must be the final outcome of an amalgamation of many faculties interacting with one another and determining the final shape of the thing made. The poems of Mohanta have easily earned their attraction by dint of their evocative power, and hence can readily be chewed and digested by avid readers of all climes. Some poems are at times obscure, for sometimes the form, the manner of writing, the language, and the imagery may have a private meaning for the poet, yet convey another aspect of experience to another. This is the joy of his creation, for even when he is obscure he is compelling. Half the joy of poetry comes in discovery of the unknown beneath the facade, and the other

half comes in sharing the poet’s experiences or emotional responses to the world of nature and of man at the same time.

Mohanta is the master of the unusual, the paradoxical, and the unknown: his great virtue is that his poetic vision embraces all from top to toe. He has successfully conjured up the whole gamut of human experiences in a way that deserves accolades. “Literature is always personal,” says W.B. Yeats, “always one man’s vision of the world, one man’s experience, and it can be popular when men are ready to welcome the visions of others” (115). Mohanta speaks out some of his personal passions in words and types and metaphors that draw one’s imagination as far as possible from the complexities of modern life and thought. His is a personal world, world of broken dreams, cessations, and all sorts of longings. But once he completes his personality, Mohanta sinks back to enrich the mass. Whitman’s concept of “en-masse” is echoed when the poet speaks representatively in both “The Fiery Palas Posture and Homeland” and “Rajbari Camp”:

“Escaping the ruthless eyesight of the bullets, we stealthily made an onward journey in the deep dark paths of the village... As we desired to come back, catfishes proliferated in our ponds; courtyard would be covered with beans’ verdant tenderness.”(GDS 61)

“In the enclosed field of ‘Rajbari’ the stinking tents could not provide the reflection of solace, the villages by the Tista could offer... No dark could overcast the festivity in the anxiety-free villages of Bangladesh. The musical wave of the *dhol* would be played again.”(GDS 64)

Mohanta’s prose poems can be read as critiques of the urban world. His realisation that poetry is but a vision of reality comes to colour many of his poems. In “Orchid and Inner Scene”, the contemporary urban world, the world of the machines, is envisaged as cold and cruel one, which distances the poet from the world of nature:

“I get surprised at the characteristic role of reality. Being associated with machines, I forgot the name of the *Phuljor* river. As the sound of machines

blocks ears, the intensely colored gerbera inscribes shiny remorse on the everlasting wall.”(GDS 37)

The notion of heterocosm, the promise of an alternative world, is shrouded in mystery. “Darkness and the Flared Bell of Dreamless Air” acquaints us with a dark vision of existence:

“The pitcher of prosperity may shudder with the distress felt by decayed, old stone; the sense of futility exudes from secret existence.”(GDS 77)

In the “Preface”, the poet defines what poetry has been to him: “To me poetry is the unending records of conscious and subconscious mind.”(GDS 11) He always puts emphasis on the structure of the sentence in a poem itself which in a way displays the prowess of his poetic inventiveness. Even human psyche gets reflected through love, nature, darkness, voidness and so on. The poet has also maintained, “I have made every endeavor to translate my poems as I desire to reach the readers with faithful rendering across the globe.”(GDS 11) Most of his poems have a theme of journey in their thematic texture, the purpose of which is to explore the inner self which often is “more distant than stars and nearer than the eye” (Eliot 103):

“Immersed in contemplation of a *pankauri*, I find a natatorial territory beside the brightness of a fish” (GDS 33)

With the absence of urban outcry, the images get quiet and peaceful: “I have been waiting under the white birches since snowy dawn to see the fish swimming around the Jyvaskyla Lake. I keep an eye on the length of forest sensing the fish will take time to come out from the deep mire” (GDS 38)

Since Mohanta’s vision has transcended particular time and place, it becomes a living symbol. He does not know how to compromise love with mere facts, nor does he want to know how to lose mystery of desire for knowledge. The adventure of life as he delineates in his prose poems “The Tale of Ever-flowing Life” and “Self-Division” with skilful handling of emotions and sensibilities is sometimes passionate and sometimes poised. It brings forth a new wonderland of serenity of vision where all intuitions and expectations, promises and performances are baked in the warmth of mystic

resonance. In fact, he has a promise, quite unlike others, to look at himself not merely in isolation but also in association with all experiences—insignificant or otherwise.

W.B. Yeats rightly asserts in his *Autobiographies*, a poet “had to take the first plunge into the world beyond himself, the first plunge away from himself that is always pure technique, the delight in doing, not because one would or should, but merely because one would or should, but merely because one can do.”(167) The entire sequence of this realization matured into that fine poem, “Rajbari Camp”:

“In the enclosed field of Rajbari the stinking tents could not provide the reflection of solace, the villages by the Tista could offer. The muddy byways of camp were filthy with stagnant water and toilet dirt. Everyday wet fire woods became fit to be burnt by the heat of the earthen oven. The refugees were introduced without fail to the unpleasant taste of rationed rice-lentil.”(GDS 64)

“Night and the Fight of Green Sight” is such a work in which Mohanta’s mature style—“violent and terrible”—is fully evinced. The picture of Nature at evening induces a strain of melancholy since the poet imagines it to be tainted by life’s pale residue. He could hear “virile groaning” (GDS 70) coming out of sands and rocks. But “fragrance of fading twilight” (GDS 70) allows the poet to search for certain noble qualities of beauty, certain forms of indefinite life, separated from all the purposes of life. It is indeed a beautiful movement of the theme from the stigma of darkness to the desired promise of an anchorage:

“I often visualise the picture of Nature at evening full of melancholy-incarnate tainted by life’s pale residue; I get sunk down in the inevitable gloom of evening as I stare at the moody sky and grey sapless creepers and pale trees. I hear virile groaning that comes out of sands and rocks. The fragrance of fading light permeates indefinite life; such an evening is sure to shelter me in fine!”(GDS 69-70)

So, the poet here stops and thinks back: in a world of ‘virile groaning’ (GDS 70) suddenly everything is changed, changed utterly. The transformation, whatever its cost, has occurred on account of “the fragrance of fading twilight” (GDS 70). The promise of indefinite life runs counter to the tragic bias of the work. The longer Mohanta is blessed with ‘blue flower’ arising out of the very essence of night, the more its appeal will take on his inner soul that he esteems as the ‘gift of ageless flower.’(GDS 70) Indeed, Mohanta has completed his emancipation from the inevitable gloom of evening, has securely achieved the self-conquest, and has fought his way to “embrace the icy isolation in the depth of night’s vibration.”(GDS 70)

Mohanta has also touched upon the then Nationalist movement of Bangladesh. After the formation of Pakistan, the idea of religious nationalism began to be replaced by a sense of ethno-linguistic nationalism among the people of then Bangladesh within a short period which was primarily caused by the cultural, economic and political discrimination by the West Pakistani elite. The immediate causes of disintegration of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh were the military atrocities committed by the Pakistani Army against unarmed Bengalis. As a result, the influx of millions of refugees from Bangladesh into India has not escaped the notice of Mohanta. After having trodden long distances on foot in grim agony and in a desperate effort to escape from the ruthless atrocities of the Pakistani Army, the poet speaks representatively:

“Escaping the ruthless eyesight of the bullets, we stealthily made an onward journey in the deep dark paths of the village. The veil of the cow-pulled cart engulfed the thrilled light of the last bright dreamy lamp of the village. In the depth of my frightened eyes arose the trepidation of the burnt houses of *Mritinga...* ” (GDS 61)

The refugees seem to be everywhere – sitting in the streets, crouching in doorsteps, sleeping on porches, occupying empty buildings, and cooking in the fields. They appear anxious and troubled, looking for someone to answer their questions. Mohanta is nowhere more explicit than in the progressive elucidation of their miserable plight in “The Fiery Palas Posture and Homeland”:

“Crossing the river we needed to go to border to safeguard ourselves. The refugee attendant hid us in blithe darkness to ferry us to the open quay. The misfortune of the paralyzed, stooped co-journeymen pierced our chest until the countless refugees found shelter in the camp. They cooked rice in the open kitchen and spent the messy night with their cattle.”(GDS 62)

“My father who took shelter in the tent of *Rajbari Camp* stood beside the oppressed people and we confined ourselves to the hut built in the moist courtyard of the village. Walking along the borderlines of paddy and jute fields, I glanced at the dipping of the bright colisa in the swamp, I was enchanted by the delightful flight of *hariyal* and thought life might remain in absolute darkness. During the war my father risked his life for the essence of the homeland and urgent news. When he disappeared, we spent gloomy period.”(GDS 62)

“Rajbari Camp” further narrates the story of inhuman condition in which the refugees most haplessly find themselves:

“ The muddy byways of the camp were filthy with stagnant water and toilet dirt. Everyday wet fire woods became unable to be burnt by the heat of the earthen oven. The refugees were introduced without fail to the unpleasant taste of rationed rice-lentil.”(GDS 64)

“Beside the well there remained the undeclared rubbish dump - the horrible sight of vomit and stool; the life cycles of mosquitoes, flies, maggots and earthworms were distinctly visible. Even in the camp with no rivals death waited in ambush. The itching became more unbearable than the blow of cholera and diarrhoea. There was no arrangement to perform the rituals of the dead. Lifeless bodies of the infant and the aged were wrapped in cheap, coarse mats to take them to graveyard or burning-ground. A grave did not appear to be the ritualistic, ultimate shelter. Wrapped in coarse mats an oedema patient was thrown into the hole of five feet by two feet; in that unidentified bamboo-clumps no one from Bangladesh would come to pay homage. Life and death were synonymous in the camp.”(GDS 64)

The story of the 1971 refugees – their exodus, reception, and eventual return – forms part of a wider narrative of some of Mohanta's poems which bring to life the disintegration of one nation – Pakistan – and the birth of another – Bangladesh:

“We used to stand in a row by the side of the road to get rationed rice-lentil-oil-fire-wood watching trucks full of firmed faces of allied force and freedom fighters. We would like to believe that the darkness would be dispelled soon.”(GDS 62)

“As we desired to come back, catfishes proliferated in our ponds; courtyard would be covered with beans' verdant tenderness. The day we returned, *Pakra* howled a lot at the feet of my father. Our pet dog *Pakra* did not get frustrated even though he saw the unexpected reign of weeds in the homestead. No one did welcome us with the warmth of heart of this pet.” (GDS 62-63)

Mohanta has desired to show in a vision something of the face of Bangladesh to his own people who care for things of this kind. He has therefore written down accurately and candidly much that he has heard and seen, and, except by way of commentary, nothing that he has merely imagined. Thus, his oblique yet succinct reference to the nationalist movement of the time is one way of recapturing identity, culture, and society. His goal is to restore voice to those who he believes not only possessed a greater visionary awareness, but indeed maintained a link to the true national identity, lost due to years of aggression. Mohanta thought that the critical mind of Bangladesh is subjugated by misapprehensions of politics and social necessity, but ordinary life has rejected them more resolutely. The poet conjures up a vision of pre-colonial identity:

“Let the *basmati* fragrance be covered with *muslin* restless in air; the wind has no stigma.”(GDS 75)

“The poet is”, according to Graham Hough, “a maker: he makes things that have never existed before. Yet he is also an imitator: he makes them by analogy with things that have existed.”(Quoted in Roy 4) Indeed, art and life

are close analogues. In an “Introduction” to *A Green Dove in Silence*, Dr. Bina Biswas reiterates what art is for man:

“Each poet has his own beliefs, his scheme of values, an outlook of life as inspired in a world seen refracted through his imagination.”(GDS 31)

Breaking down the traditional forms of poetry, Mohanta’s poems are abounding in symbols that connect the poet with the world of life, and to be more precise, with the world of nature. The artistry of hybridization which freely mingles nature and human life is the hallmark of Mohanta’s genius:

“I identify sky as a symbol. Our life is surrounded by numerous feeble skies. Those skies epitomise us. In the sky rises the inscrutable *parijata* of love, the contrary sprout of the heart. The sky is valueless before the speck of dust of the universe; we fight for this sky, we rejoice over a victory. May be the value of psychological history of the sky has not yet been appraised.”(GDS 66)

In “Sparkling Wine”, Mohanta reaches the richest texture of poetry. His poems come up with the presence of absorbed existence. As a result, there are contradictions and a strain of bitterness. Bitterness is strange, for he is sometimes a happy fortunate sage. Mohanta achieves a kind of ripeness in disillusionment. He turns with a pang from the sensual magic of the world, and is drawn towards the “psychic soil” (GDS 79). This is the voice of one who knows intellectual passion. He does not deceive himself. His regrets help him to find out an antidote: “Let the drops of sparkling wine ooze out of the roots grown in the minds of my friends.”(GDS 79) He has achieved a delicate sincerity. The vision that he gains in exploring themes and techniques in *“A Green Dove in Silence”* partly germinates from his intense personal experiences of life where societal issues do not rule the roost. Even he charts out solitude not for mankind but for himself. There are longings for the far-off or the long-ago, memories of broken dreams and cessations of all kinds:

“Staring at the unrealistic sights I grow simultaneously delighted and melancholic. To view the sights of my own past that rejuvenate the existence

is entralling, the confusion as to reproduction of coveted sights gives rise to the sense of dejection. But vision cannot be the fountain of sustained delight. Deceit-less immersion is essential for exploring delight, melancholy is often ineradicable—its subtle roots pervade all sights.”(GDS 76)

Apart from art’s fictionality, the dialectic drives too act as stilling, transforming agent. Whenever nature, asserts Schopenhauer, “presents itself to our gaze all at once, it almost always succeeds in snatching us, although only for a few moments, from subjectivity, from the thraldom of the will, and transferring us into the state of pure knowledge.”(WWR 196)

As Joseph Conrad pointed out in *Heart of Darkness*, ““Droll thing life is -- that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself -- that comes too late -- a crop of inextinguishable regrets.”(87) Mohanta started building a ‘mound’ for his mother in his consciousness and ends up returning to ‘you’ after ‘crossing time zones’. ‘Mother’ has been so miraculously metamorphosed into ‘you’, the desired ‘motherland’. This longing to reach ‘you’, to identify with one’s own identity, as depicted in many of his prose poems in the collection, establishes a strained, tumultuous and torturous relationship with a sense of dislocation and displacement.

Mohanta’s drive towards creative instinct as a consummate artist as enunciated in *“A Green Dove in Silence”* accords well with C.G. Jung’s theory of the artist:

“Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument. The artist is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him.”(*Modern Man in Search of a Soul* 195)

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Human Brain: Perspectives from Second Language (L2) Learning

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Abstract

The educators have been using the discovery of cognitive sciences to improve both student learning and current teaching practices. The associations of neuroscience for educational improvement regarding second language (L2) learning can evidently be seen in the following categories: brain structures and the corpus callosum; neuronal development and the parts of the brain dedicated to language; the Brain Plasticity Theory and Language Mapping; memory and the information Processing Model, and of course, developing and utilizing a brain – attuned language curriculum that is meaningfully integrated into the basic content areas covered in all grade levels. This article describes and addresses relationships between corpus callosum and bilingual capacity; and provides recommendations to language teachers regarding brain-based learning through content – based language teaching for student learning and teaching practices.

Keywords: brain structures, corpus callosum, attuned brain, neuroscience, second language learning

Introduction

“The human brain, a 3-pound mass of interwoven nerve cells that controls our activity, is one of the most magnificent--and mysterious--wonders of creation. The seat of human intelligence, interpreter of senses, and controller of movement, this incredible organ continues to intrigue scientists and layman alike.” (Presidential Proclamation 6158, 1990)

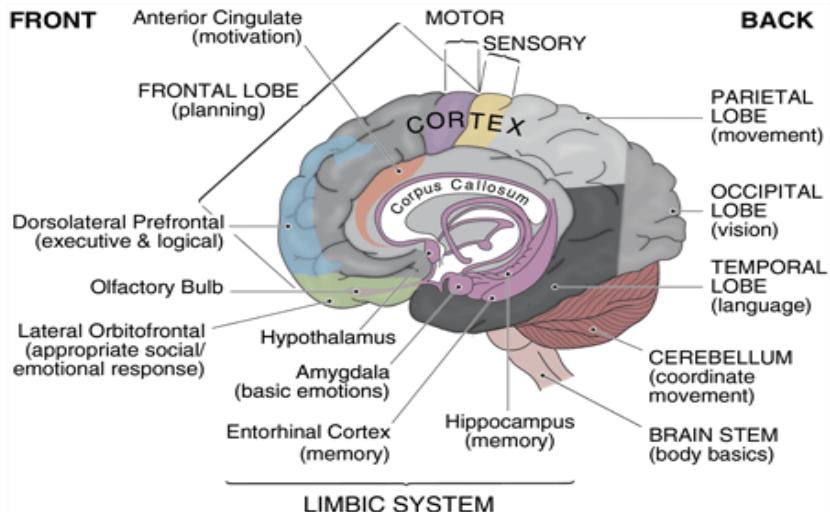
Researchers actively began to study and propagate new information since 1990s that helping us to understand how the brain¹ functions. Meanwhile, thousands of new discoveries continue to be reported on regular basis,

because of the advancement of technology that allows researchers to look inside the brain, inspect its physical structure, and monitor the constant activity taking place. Studying how the brain functions through the course of thinking and understanding can provide valuable insight into the learning process. Many researchers believe that the brain research findings highlighted now will ultimately give rise to comprehensive changes in education, especially guiding instructional practice followed in the classrooms in the future. Hence , pedagogically speaking, the vital next steps must be to apply new findings to the development of practical strategies and lesson plans that assist student learning in general, and more specifically, facilitate second language acquisition (SLA) for all students.

Brain Structures and the Corpus Callosum

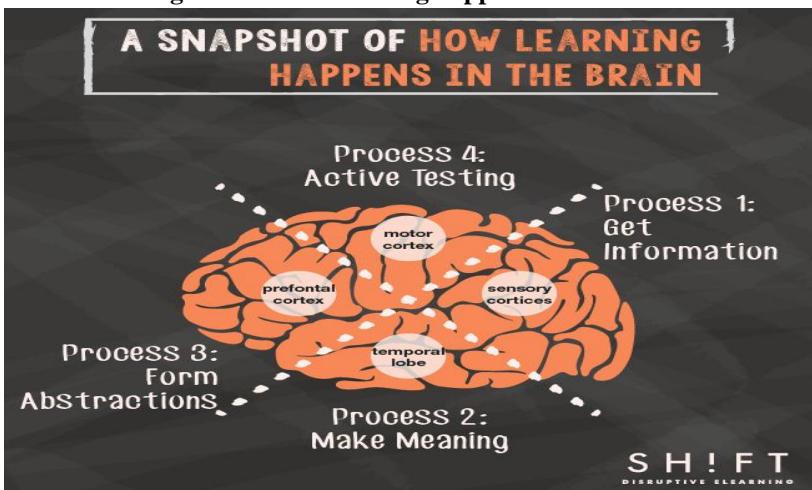
The ways about how the brain receives and processes information is pretty a complex procedure. We know during the course of any given moment in time, sensory input travels through the brain by way of the thalamus on its way to the cerebral cortex. This sensory input is filtered by the brain stem and limbic system. It is affected, and sometimes altered, by its passage through the lower, limbic systems of the brain, totally in control of our physical and emotional needs. The limbic brain is made up of clumps of specialized cells rather than the modularity found in the cortex. The thalamus is especially important to second language (L2) learners, as is the amygdala, which controls the emotional response to learning the new language. Information that survives the passage described above arrives at the frontal cerebral cortex, where information processing and learning begin to take place. It is at this point that the brain attempts to understand and make sense of the information registered via the senses. Information deemed meaningful and/or relevant is then stored in different localizations or modularity found in the cerebral cortex. The frontal cortex of our brain is the highly developed area that allows for problem solving. This is where sophisticated levels of thought processing occur and where information is processed so that one can understand it. Knowing why you do, what you do and having an appreciation for the potential consequences of your actions can help shape our behavior.

Figure 1: Limbic System



The various parts of the brain communicate by way of neurochemicals. During the last few decades, the chemical nature of nerve cell communication has been clarified significantly. Many neurochemicals, which serve as neurotransmitters, derive from dietary protein that must be included in daily consumption. Over 100 such compounds have been described. Studies have demonstrated that the human brain can and does grow new cells in the hippocampus (Eriksson, Perfilieva et al., 1998) and that brain is capable of building an infinite number of neuronal connections that strengthen the modularities found within the brain.

Figure 2 : How Learning happens in the Brain



Cortical pyramidal cells grow by adding dendrites, which given appropriate stimulation, will branch and re-branch. Enriched experiences enhance neural growth and thus enhance learning, indicating that brains construct themselves through life experiences. The more stimulation received, the greater the learning (Diamond, 2001). As Diamond has explained, environmental enrichment changes our neuronal network patterns or “maps of meaning.” Time, stimulation, repetition, novelty, and motivation are essential to laying the foundations for later learning, which in turn results in either an impoverished or enriched neuronal composition (Jensen, 1998). By reflecting on this process, we can easily see how learning is directly affected by our students’ emotional and physical well-being. Krashen’s (1982) affective filter hypothesis is clearly in line with this notion, stating that the acquirer must be motivated, self-confident, and possess a low level of anxiety in order to receive the comprehensible input necessary for language acquisition to occur.

Physical development also plays a significant role in dendritic growth and the development of an enriched neuronal composition. The brain continues to grow new cells and change throughout a person’s life. From birth to about three years in age, babies expand their knowledge of the world around them through their senses, storing information related to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch in their attempt to understand their immediate environment. These sensory experiences produce millions of connections. In order to become more efficient, the brain begins its first “pruning” stage, losing excess connections not being fully utilized at about the age of four. At this

point, brain growth steadily decreases until about the age of five or six due to a competing period of extensive body growth. Around the age of seven, a strong growth period occurs in the brain before it engages in its second phase of pruning that occurs close to age 10 to 11, when the process of focusing on dendritic growth begins again. Age 14 to 15, the beginning of adolescence, marks the third phase of pruning, as the brain is focusing on emotional development, and in many cases continued bodygrowth. During the period of 16 to 20 years of age, strong connections are developed in the frontal lobes responsible for problem solving and higher-level thinking skills. These major connections continue to grow through adulthood, with new connections continuing to be established, however not as easily as they were during the periods of strong dendritic growth experienced in early youth. This pattern indicates that the brain progresses through formative stages of development during maturity. Understanding these developmental stages of the brain and tailoring instruction in a manner that maximizes students' abilities can make learning more relevant and lasting for students (Franklin, 2005). Although the brain is not fully functional until ages 23 to 29, it is hypothesized that some variation in growth may influence learning (Thatcher, 1991). The size and combination of modularities found within the brain ultimately gives an individual his or her unique mental potential. Both nature and nurture are essential components of this equation. Varied experiences then continue to mold each individual's brain throughout life. The permutations and combinations of modularity type and size are infinite, as are the number of experiences one could have.

The two hemispheres of the brain are connected through axonal links at the central corpus callosum², a broad, thick band, running from front to back and consisting of millions of nerve fibers, in essence, connecting the two cerebral hemispheres of the brain down the middle (see Figure 1). Since the corpus callosum is the major commissure, or bundle of axons connecting the two cerebral hemispheres, there is a direct correspondence left to right and front to back in connections through the corpus callosum. Information received in the brain is transferred from left-to-right; therefore the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and vice versa. Generally speaking, the left and right hemispheres of the brain process information in different manners. Although the exact function and interplay between the two hemispheres is not yet totally understood, in most people, the left hemisphere is more specialized for linear, logical thought and communication, while the right hemisphere deals with spatial relationships

and is more active when we are relaxed, and in a dream state. As the brain develops, the corpus callosum is responsible for transferring information across each hemisphere, reinforcing connections related to tasks that one is genetically predisposed to, or connections related to areas that are adapting and strengthening. For example, when the left eye sees a word, the right hemisphere will pass the information about the word over to the left hemisphere for processing by the language centers. Therefore, even though we tend to process information using our dominant side, the learning and thinking process occurs only when both sides of the brain participate in a balanced manner. When not actively engaged in learning, the corpus callosum acts as a bridge between both hemispheres, enabling the accomplishment of tasks of varying difficulty levels. Again, it is important to note that the research cited above has not conclusively determined that all communication between regions in the different halves of the brain are transferred only via the corpus callosum. In spite of the linguistic processing dominance of the left-hemisphere (in most people), behavior, including cognition and communication, are the result of unconscious and seamless coordination of activity between both hemispheres via the cerebral commissures. Although investigations into the organization of multiple languages indicate that in some instances, functional aspects of two different languages may be mediated by overlapping cortical regions, in cases where two languages are processed by separate cortical regions, one would clearly suspect that the commissures would undergo some adaptive modification in response to the organization of both languages. In cases where different languages do not make use of overlapping or convergent cortical regions, it has been postulated that commissural modification, though less extensive, still happens because of increased processing requirements of linguistic switching (Coggins, Kennedy, & Armstrong 2004).

Parts of the Brain that Make Way for a Second Language

The bilingual children who learn an L2 store that capacity, together with their native language, in one sector of the brain, while adult language learners store each new language learned in a separate area. This explains why children who learn two languages develop the ability to speak both with native pronunciation and proficiency when provided adequate time, supporting the argument that foreign language instruction should be included in the elementary and middle school curriculum. In response to second language acquisition (SLA) and use, the human brain undergoes cortical adaptation to accommodate multiple languages either by recruiting existing

regions used for the native language (L1), or by creating new cortical networks in distinct adjacent areas of the cortex to handle certain functional aspects of L2. However, regardless of how the cortex organizes the circuitry required to handle multiple languages, all non-reflexive behavior, including cognition and communication, is normally the result of unconscious and seamless coordination of activity between both hemispheres via the cerebral commissures. Although language is lateralized to the left hemisphere in over 90% of the normal population, language (subsumed under cognition and communication) normally involves information processing between both hemispheres. Different centers in the brain cooperate to understand and produce speech. Broca's area, in the left frontal lobe, controls the production of speech sounds. It is located close to the area specialized in the formation of words by the mouth, lip, tongue, and larynx. Wernicke's area, located in the left temporal lobe, allows for the formulation of meaning gathered from words and sentences to be connected into speech. Other regions in the brain assist Broca's and Wernicke's roles. For example, one part of the temporal lobe supplies nouns, and yet another joins the two together into logical sentences. Another example of the interconnected nature of the areas of the brain in relation to literacy skills is to examine the brain of a dyslexic reader, which would highlight the lack of distinct modularities communicating with one another—linking vision to sound to meaning.

Studies involving sophisticated brain imaging technologies called functional magnetic resonance imaging, fMRI, have also revealed some intriguing patterns in the way our brains process first and second languages.

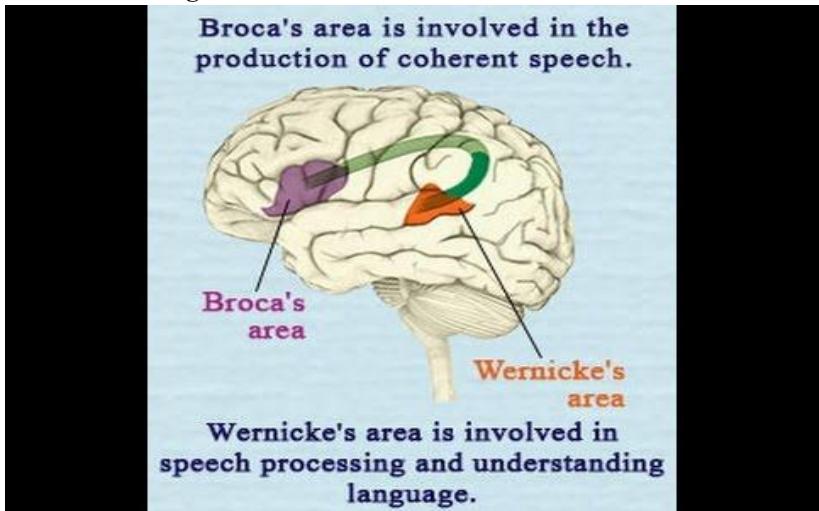
Joy Hirsch and her colleagues at Cornell University used fMRI(Brain Connection, 2001) to determine how multiple languages are represented in the human brain. They found that native and second languages are spatially separated in Broca's area, which is a region in the frontal lobe of the brain that is responsible for the motor parts of language-movement of the mouth, tongue, and palate. In contrast, the two languages show very little separation in the activation of Wernicke's area, an area of the brain in the posterior part of the temporal lobe, which is responsible for comprehension of language.

The fMRI studies (Brain Connection, 2001)suggest that the difficulty adult learners of a second language may have not with understanding the words of the second language, but with the motor skills of forming the words with the mouth and tongue. This may explain why learners of a second language can oftentimes comprehend a question asked in the new language, but are not always able to form a quick response.

Thus, for adult L2(English language) learners, techniques that emphasize speaking may be more successful than methods that focus more on reading and listening. For example, rather than lecturing to a class about vocabulary and grammar, an instructor perhaps should encourage his/her adult students to have conversations in L2, or to act out short skits incorporating the day's lesson, which would more closely link the students' abilities to understand and speak the new language. Speaking would thus equal understanding.

The Cornell researchers also studied the brains of people who were bilingual from a very early age. Presumably, this group of people is able to speak the two languages as easily as they can comprehend both languages spoken to them. The researchers found that these subjects showed no spatial separation in either Broca's or Wernicke's areas for the two languages, indicating that in terms of brain activation at least; the same regions of the brain controlled their ability to process both languages.

Figure 3 :Broca's area and Wernicke's area



The idea that second languages learned early in childhood are not separately processed in the brain is supported by fMRI studies of brain development in children. Researchers at UCLA (Brain Connection, 2001) report that the language areas of the brain seem to go through the most dynamic period of growth between the ages of 6 and 13. In contrast to the "first three years" idea of child development that has received so much press in the past few years, the UCLA study instead suggests that the elementary and middle

school years are the biologically most advantageous times for acquisition of a second language.

These various neuroscience studies tell us that the brain is a remarkably plastic entity. A combination of listening and vocalization seems to be the most biologically advantageous method of acquiring a second language for both adults and children. Incorporating what we know about the way the brain processes language into the way languages are taught will benefit not only students who want to learn L2 (English), but also all those who wish to extend their linguistic range.

One theorist, Gazzanaga (2000), has implied that the corpus callosum provides clues to high conceptual level individuals. The Gazzanaga team noted that each hemisphere has specialized functions, but the corpus callosum allows these developments to be integrated into a constant functional system.

With respect to L2 education, it seems that bilingual learning and use can have a profound effect on brain structures in general, and on the corpus callosum in particular, since callosal adaptation might facilitate increased interhemispheric transfer by way of increased myelination, or by way of an increased number of fibers that provide greater cortical connectivity.

Neuroscience and Educational Reform

Theories have been developed to investigate the optimal age to undertake the study of an L2. Research has shown that the Brain Plasticity Theory (Nash, 1997), the Biological Predisposition Theory (Genesee, 1996), the Imprinting Theory (Celestino, 1993) and the Native Language Magnet Theory (Kuhl, 1994) commonly share the theme that the younger the individual is when he or she is exposed to a new language, the greater the probability of acquiring native pronunciation as well as proficiency in that language. Lending further support to this thought, researchers often refer to a newborn's mind as unprogrammed circuits of a computer that have almost infinite potential, additionally comparing the mind to Pentium chips found in a computer before the factory has preloaded the software (Begley, 1996). Begley reported that the circuits in the auditory cortex of the brain are wired by the age of one year, concluding further that the learning window for total language learning is from birth to 10 years of age. This implies that the critical periods for language learning close with each child's passing birthday. More recent research has concluded that the window for acquiring syntax may close as early as age five or six, while the window for allowing

for the addition of new words may never close (Nash, 1997). However, Nash found that the ability to learn an L2 undergoes a steady and inexorable decline after the age of six. Many researchers suggest that after this critical period, brain plasticity becomes slowly less effective, in other words, the brain may be less able to make particular changes that organize the location of specific information processing functions resulting from experiential effects ("Language Learning and the Developing Brain", 1996).

Examining the methods that enhance L1 learning, and the types of activities and environments that positively affect the learning process, provides teachers with an insight into truly creating a brain-compatible classroom for students that are trying to acquire an L2 after the initial neuronal pruning stages have occurred. Almost all language skills are more easily acquired through natural language acquisition experiences, even for adult learners. The natural approach to language learning outlined by Krashen and Terrell (1983) maintains that beginning language learners should be taught a new language in the same manner that they acquired their first, encouraging observation, listening, and understanding before developing skills in speaking, reading, and writing. Of particular importance is the variable of time. Studies have shown that it takes thousands of contact hours to achieve the ability to function beyond the tourist level in Spanish and French; four to five times longer for other languages such as Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, or Russian (Brown, 1997).

It is important to note that in nearly all adults (90%), the language center of the brain resides in the left hemisphere, but interestingly enough, the brain appears to be less specialized in children. According to a recent PBS special on the brain, "scientists have demonstrated that until babies become about one year old, they respond to language with their entire brains, but then, gradually, language shifts to the left hemisphere, driven by the acquisition of language itself" (*The Secret Life of the Brain*, 2002)³. Emotion, experiences, and learning of meaningful information strengthens useful connections and results in cortical pyramidal cell branching.

The physiological architecture of the brain changes in response to life experiences, adapting in response to environmental stimuli. It is not surprising to find that studies show young infants are predisposed to attend to the language spoken by others around them, using context to figure out what someone must mean by various sentence structures and words. Language development studies illustrate that children's biological capacities are set into motion by their environments (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Research has also shown that we are born with an ability to

distinguish among different language sounds (Kuhl, 1994). Similar sounds are chunked together into one single category, and according to Kuhl, “language magnets” are developed that attract babies’ ears to the specific phonemic sounds found in the language(s) they are accustomed to hearing. For example, a baby that listens to Swedish (16 vowel sounds) will have different language magnets than a baby who hears Hangul (10 vowel sounds), English (8 or 9 vowel sounds), Bengali (7main vowel sounds), or who hears Japanese (5 vowel sounds). According to Kuhl, while the Swedish baby retains all the distinctions, the babies lose the ability to distinguish those vowels because their languages do not contain or utilize them. Kuhl’s research postulates that infants’ perceptual systems are established by six months of age and are at that time configured to acquire their native languages. She further explains that this wiring, or perceptual map, accounts for the accents that signal our national and regional origins. In contrast, the perceptual map experiences a certain amount of language interference with adult language learners. For example, many times, adult language learners have difficulty readily separating similar sounds in a foreign language. Basic examples include the difficulty experienced by adult native English speakers in regard to distinguishing the difference between a [B] sound and a [V] sound in Spanish, or that adult native Japanese speakers typically have difficulty hearing the difference between the [L] and [R] sound in English. This is explained by the opposite linguistic filters listening to the [B] and [V] or the [L] and [R] sound for English and Japanese speakers. However, it is misleading to characterize the acquisition process as simply easier for children in comparison to adults. The fact remains that the most difficult task for children and adults alike may be the attempt to acquire second language proficiency in academic environments. Older students typically excel in their initial rate of L2 learning since input is more comprehensible for them due to their extensive background knowledge and advanced learning skills they have already acquired and are prepared to apply—they are faster acquirers as well as faster learners, and because of this they have a greater ability to consciously learn grammar rules, and due to their past experiences, more easily make connections with vocabulary between L1 and L2. However, it has been shown that younger students excel in long-term L2 achievement, especially in pronunciation. And, for adult English language learners, techniques that emphasize speaking may be more successful than methods that focus more on reading and listening. For example, rather than lecturing to a class about vocabulary and grammar, an instructor perhaps should

encourage her adult students to have conversations in L2, or to act out short skits incorporating the day's lesson, which would more closely link the students' abilities to understand and speak the new language. Speaking would thus equal understanding. The basic points to remember are:

- Language processing involves many senses, including vision, both in early infancy and in adulthood.
- Time and age are critical factors that affect the processes associated with language acquisition.
- Favorable and enriched environments promote neuronal development.
- The brain stores information based on functionality and meaningfulness.
- Emotions drive attention.
- Attention drives learning and memory.
- Repetition is necessary but it requires novelty with regard to instructional design (which should incorporate all five language processes—observation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and utilize a variety of methods and approaches).

Acquiring new vocabulary involves actively storing information gathered by explicit memories that have been processed combined with implicit learning, including skills and conditional responses. Access to long-term memory is an immediate goal in language acquisition. Given the average retention rate after a 24-hour period, we must help our students move information into long-term storage by providing them with higher level activities promoting application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. As a result of participating in small-group activities that promote practice by doing, and verbally working through meaningful problems, students are able to retain 90% of newly acquired knowledge.

In order to stimulate active involvement and evoke memory hooks that engage the learner, it is recommended that teachers provide their students with multiple opportunities to use vocabulary in meaningful and creative ways that stimulate the mind, which directly affects the growth of enriched neuronal connections (Jensen, 1998). Words should be heard and spoken before seen in written form to assure correct pronunciation as well as to facilitate memory recognition and word retrieval.

The Multiple Intelligences theory (Gardner, 1999) suggests that there are eight or possibly nine, intellectual variables associated with human performance. This theory is supported by the contention that the frontal cerebral cortex is made of thousands of modular units responsible for our

conscious thinking, remembering, and behaving (Gazzanaga, 2000). This theory suggests that some individuals could possess different language competencies due to their experiences in each of the areas, as identified by Gardner, which allow them to readily make connections with the vocabulary. Since vocabulary must be heard between 40 to 80 times, depending on the complexity of the word, before it is stored in long-term memory, language teachers must create learning experiences for their students that are centered around many different activities. The multiple intelligences theory provides a guide for language educators to create meaningful experiences using language in a variety of areas, and more importantly, developing areas that may not have extensive experience.⁴ The finding of plasticity, and the growing understanding that brain activities are directly linked by networks of neurons that simultaneously perform a variety of operations, suggests that education must broaden its scope to integrate language learning across the entire school experience.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Brain-based learning through content-based⁵ foreign language teaching utilizes multiple teaching strategies, takes into consideration the different learning styles and intelligences represented in the classroom, and of course, follows the guidelines set forth by national as well as local standards in all areas of instruction. Teachers must employ curriculum design focused on high-powered, content-based lessons that truly keep the learners' brains in mind. The challenge ahead for teachers will be to incorporate brain-based activities framed around content-related topics into their classroom teaching, and of course, to promote programs that begin language learning as early as possible in a sequentially organized framework. The various neuroscience studies including the study of Joy Hirsch and her colleagues at Cornell University (Brain Connection, 2001) tell us that the brain is a remarkably plastic entity. A combination of listening and vocalization seems to be the most biologically advantageous method of acquiring a second language for both adults and children. Incorporating what we know about the way the brain processes language into the way languages are taught will benefit not only students who want to learn L2, but also all those who wish to extend their linguistic range.

NOTES

1. The **brain** is made of three main **parts**: the forebrain, midbrain, and hindbrain. The forebrain consists of the cerebrum, thalamus, and hypothalamus (part of the limbic system). The midbrain consists of the tectum and tegmentum. The hindbrain is made of the cerebellum, pons and medulla. For more details on brain see <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/bb/kinser/Structure1.html>.
2. The term *corpus* refers to the main portion of any anatomical part, structure, or organ. The ***corpus callosum*** is an arched mass of white matter, found in the depths of the longitudinal fissure of the brain. It is composed of three layers of fibers, the central layer consisting primarily of transverse fibers connecting the cerebral hemispheres. The subsections, from anterior to posterior, are called the rostrum, genu, trunk (truncus), and splenium. An extended definition can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corpus_callosum.
3. ***The Secret Life of the Brain***, a David Grubin Production, is a five-part series that initially aired in the United States on PBS in the winter of 2002. It revealed the processes involved in brain development across a lifetime and provided new information in the brain sciences from the foremost researchers in the field. See <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/brain/3d/index.html> for visual imagery that can help explain the complicated manner in which the brain functions.
4. For more information regarding the **brain research** discussed in this article as well as suggested activities associated with each of Gardner's ***Multiple Intelligences***, refer to the following Web site: *Language Study and the Brain* (<http://www.teresakennedy.com>).
5. **Content-Based Instruction (CBI)**: Content-Based Instruction is an approach to language teaching that focuses not on the language itself, but rather on what is being taught through the language; that is, the language becomes the medium through which something new is learned. In the CBI approach the student learns the TL by using it to learn some other new content. For example by studying the French Revolution while using the French language. The language being learned and used is taught within the context of the content. The theory behind CBI is that when students are engaged with more content, it will promote intrinsic motivation. Students

will be able to use more advanced thinking skills when learning new information and will focus less on the structure of the language. This approach is very student-centered as it depends entirely on the students' ability to use the language. There are many things that can be considered 'content'; what is important is that what is being taught or discussed through the language not be language instruction related. Aspects of the curriculum, discussions about current events and world cultures or even general topics of interest are all valid 'content' options. See <https://sites.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.bilash/Best%20of%20Bilash/content.html>

FIGURES:

1. http://www.brainwaves.com/images/brain-basic_and_limbic.gif&imgrefurl=<http://www.brainwaves.com/>&h=317&w=450&tbnid=IPtIL8CR9hJyVM:&tb
2. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Image+of+Information+Routing+Through+the+Brain+Step+by+Step&source=lnms&tbo=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwin1qW2yPfUAhUHq48KHWTTBAQQ>
3. <https://www.google.com/search?q=broca's+area+and+wernicke's+area&source=lnms&tbo=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjxv>

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A Focus on the Legal Framework of Consumer Protection: Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract

A review of the condition of consumers in Bangladesh shall reveal that the majority of people live in a vicious circle of cheating and deception. They face the great challenges of commodity adulteration, cheating in weights and measures, hoarding, artificial price hike and so on. The reason responsible for this problem is that there prevails a state of discordance between legislation and judicial power. The framework of consumer protection is mostly executive driven; it does not provide unfettered right of protection to the victim. It does not recognize consumers' preferential right of selection with respect to the modes of civil and criminal remedy. Along with this, the matter that has worsened this situation is the absence of appropriateness in legislation, the dysfunctional state of redressal forum, the absence of welfare in legislation, absence of socio-legal activism. This paper is a rewarding exercise in bringing out the loopholes in the existing legal framework pertaining to consumer protection in Bangladesh. The utility of this study is vital from the point of view of evolving more practical provisions and principles and creating concept of a legal framework, which is equitable, respectful of the dignity of the individual and mindful that the right should be the focus of the varied dimensions.

Keywords: Consumer, Consumer protection, Legal framework, Law, Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Any inquiry into the problem of consumer protection in the least developed country like Bangladesh should begin with the existing fundamental difference between consumer protection philosophy in the developed and in the developing countries of the world (Rahman, 1994, p. 349). While a consumer in a developed economy is literally submerged in an ocean of alternative choices, his counterpart in a developing economy suffers from an

acute lack of purchasing power. Hence, from third world point of view, most important consumer right is right to satisfaction of basic needs, which under pressure from the developing countries was subsequently incorporated as one of the eight basic rights of consumer in the UN Guidelines for Consumer protection. The remaining consumer rights, now internationally recognized, are the right to safety, right to be informed, the right to complaints and representation, the right to choose and get things at fair price, the right to get compensation, the right to consumer education and right to a healthy environment. Needles to say, in a country like Bangladesh where “poverty for the great majority of the people is a grim struggle for survival”, consumer rights have little, if any, practical appeal to general people (Rahman, 1994, p.70). The government, on the other hand, could not also attach due importance to consumer protection since the inception of this tiny nation-state.

As neighboring country of Bangladesh, India possesses the same legal culture and heritage and the Indian model in the field of consumer protection have long experience. Legislation and precedents of India on consumer protection have a strong referral value (Khan, 2016, p.10). In this respect, it may be relevant to mention that the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is a great example for Bangladesh to introduce a comprehensive legal framework for consumer protection.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to strengthen the consumer legislation framework of Bangladesh. In view of this, the study tries -

- To clarify the concept of consumer protection framework of Bangladesh;
- To evaluate the measure for enforcement of consumer protection;
- To identify the legal problems related to consumer protection;
- To make some recommendations to strengthen the consumer protection framework.

3. Methodology

This study will follow the combination of primary and secondary research methods based on a combination of qualitative and theoretical research analyses in the context of Bangladesh. As the study concerns about the analysis of laws and rules, so, this study

will not approach the empirical methods of data analysis. So, this research will adopt the method of evaluation, dissemination sharing, interviewing and consultation in which the thematic and juridical analysis of laws, interview with informants, resource personnel, case-law review will be given emphasis.

4. Limitations of the Study

- The limitation of this study is that the regime of consumer protection in Bangladesh is based mainly on statutory legislations. The aspect of consumer protection is dealt with indirectly by much legislation. But, in this short span of discussion, it is not possible to offer discussion on all these laws.
- It may be noted that there are many deficiencies in the consumer protection framework of Bangladesh but the study will discuss important issues which are undeniable to protect the consumers. Due to limitations, the scope of this study has kept limited to the Consumer Protection Act of Bangladesh with a few laws and issues only.

5. Significance of the Study

This study is a rewarding exercise in bringing out the loopholes in the existing legal regime pertaining to consumer protection in Bangladesh. The utility of this research is vital from the point of view of evolving more practical provisions and principles and creating a legal regime, which is equitable, respectful of the dignity of the individual and mindful that the consumer right should be the focus of the varied dimensions of law. This study will contribute significantly to the researcher goals as a legal researcher.

6. Development of Consumer Protection in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a development country with a huge population containing the largest consumer. Since the independence of 48 years have been lapsed but consumer rights are yet been formulated in a notable manner in Bangladesh. Consumer's rights protection legislation is very essential for a country to protect consumers. In case of Bangladesh, there had no specific law to protect the consumers in Bangladesh for a long time. After prolonged

advocacy and lobbying by the Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) with the government and the policy-makers were formulated a draft of Consumers Protection Law and last Non-Party Care-taker Government passed the Law through an Ordinance in this regard in 2008 (Azad, 2003, p.12). The Ordinance was not approved by the parliament but the present Awami League Government had enacted a “Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009” on 6th April 2009 (Ahamuduzzaman and Hussain, 2009, p.193).

A review of the legal framework of the consumer protection of Bangladesh reveals many deficiencies, such as it failed to provide the guarantee of protection, defective framing and incorrect legal procedure, lack of standardization principles in the legislation, improper and inapplicable redressal forums, absence of appropriate choice to reliefs and so on. Furthermore, the government body has failed to formulate effective policies to protect consumers and civil society also failed to take initiative for consumer movement.

In view of this, a study focusing on development of consumer law in Bangladesh, legal frame-work of consumer protection law, the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 principles and practices with jurisprudential have been undertaken below.

7. Legal Framework of Consumer Protection Law

Same as the Indian legal framework, the legal framework of Consumer protection laws of Bangladesh are divided under statutory and non-statutory aspect. The Consumer protection system is mainly controlled by statutory laws. In this context, statutory laws are divided into contextual aspect (laws on food, health, goods and services) and conceptual aspect (essentiality of commodity or goods, monopoly and restrictive trade practices, competition, qualitative and quantitative aspects of goods etc). The non-statutory laws (Caveat Venditor, implied warranty, perceived value etc) are also part of the legal framework on the Consumer Protection.

7.1 Goods and Services

The main area of the legal framework of consumer protection law is centered around goods and services. From this point of view, a review of legal framework concerning these two matters.

7.1.1 Goods

The main area of the consumer protection is goods and services and it has been dealt with many laws in many ways but the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009 can be considered as the prime law on it. According to the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009, section 2(11) “goods” or “product” means any movable commercial commodities which the buyer buys or contracts to buy from any trader in exchange of money or price. Section 2(7) of the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 states that “Food product” means any food including fruits and drinks which are necessary for living, nutrition and health of human, domestic animal and birds. Under section 2(22) of the Act, “service” means service of any description which is made available to potential users and includes the provision of facilities in connection with transport, telecommunication, water supply, drainage, fuel, gas, electricity, housing construction, residential hotel and restaurant and health service, but does not include the rendering of any service free of charge or under a contract of personal service.

The Competition Act 2012 does not provide any definition of goods, but, it provides a sanction to the relevant provision of the Sale of Goods Act 1930 as its guiding principle on it. Under the Sale of Goods Act 1930, section 2(7) “goods” means every kind of movable property other than actionable claims and money; and includes electricity, water, gas, stock and shares, growing crops, grass, and things attached to or forming part of the land which are agreed to be served before sale or under the contract of sale.

7.1.2 Services

The Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 is totally silent on this aspect due to which a vast area of services, private or public, remains out of the purview of this Act. For this reason, the services like banking, insurance, educational, municipal and other related services for promoting the interest or happiness not fall either within the purview of private or public services. So, for the

purpose of expanding the regime of protection to consumers, the wider amplitude of services is required to be refurbished (Khan, 2016, p.57).

7.1.3 Banking and financial services

There is no specific law for regulating consumers' financial services. The Bangladesh Bank Order, 1972 or the Bank Companies Act, 1991 is tried to claim as the laws in this regard. But, a critical analysis of the finance related laws reveal that there is no law for controlling and regulating or dealing with consumers' credit or banking services. The Bangladesh Bank Order, 1972 which is regarded as the principal law on banking deals only with the operation and management of the central bank, not with other affairs of the consumer. Similarly, the Bank Companies Act, 1991 deals only with the operation and management of privately operated banks, this capital, constitution of the management board, privileges of board members and so on. It does not deal with the rights and privileges of the consumers. Actually, the consumer has no right of protection for any violation under both the laws.

7.1.4 Food

Ordinarily, the matter of food falls under the legal framework of goods and the Penal Code, 1860 is the first among the laws that provided provisions on it. It provides penal measures against the offence of adulteration of food or drink under section 272 and selling or offering for sale of adulterated or noxious food or drink under section 273. In the 1950s, when the problem was hoarding, black-market, unfairness in pricing, purity, and so on. A few laws were enacted the focus of which was providing food at affordable price. These were defined the article of food as an essential commodity by respective laws. During the same time, with a view to ensuring the purity of food, the Pure Food Ordinance, 1959 was enacted. It provides some provisions which were both judicial and administrative in nature simultaneously. As part of the administrative measure, it provides provision for constituting a 'National Advisory Committee' on the Purity of food under the chair of Minister for Local Government, appointing food analyst for every municipal body, providing standards (national standard) for different category of food. Recently, the main concern with aspect to food has been shifted from purity to 'safety' in furtherance of which a new law on food – the Safe Food Act, 2013 has been enacted. This Act has replaced the Pure Food Ordinance, 1959.

7.1.5 Health and medicine

The legal framework may be divided into health goods and services and the laws into no-health and health laws exclusively. At the very outset of statutory protection, the matter of health was dealt with by non-health law—the Penal Code, 1860. After this Code, the law by which the regime of health laws (health goods) was revolutionized includes the Drugs Act, 1940 and the Drugs (Control) Ordinance, 1982. Presently, the whole of activity relating to drugs and medicine revolves upon this. From this point of view, these two laws are considered as the principal laws forming part of the legal framework of drug and medicine. But, due to the ambiguity in legislation or contradiction with other laws, it faces the apprehension of legal battle or challenges. According to the main provision of the Drugs (Control) Ordinance, 1982, the matters relating to drugs and medicine are tried by the Drugs Court under this Ordinance of 1982. Whereas, apprehension of denial of protection is created by the provision of the principal law on consumer protection under section 73, which provides that these offences shall be tried only by the Special Tribunal constituted under section 26 of the Special Powers Act, 1974. Being a special law, although this Act deals with adulteration of drugs and medicine, it cannot be defined as health law in the strict sense of the term. While this Ordinance provides provision for the trial of drugs related offences by a special court (i.e. drugs court), such insertion of provision curbs the inherent capacity of this law (the Drugs (Control) Ordinance, 1982) and it ceases to exist as a vibrant law forming the legal framework of the health law. With a view to providing special emphasis on laws regulating the production and sale of health goods, the regime of health laws of Bangladesh provides some laws on the traditional system of medical treatment (Homeopathic, Ayurvedic, Unani, and Bio-chemic). These laws also form part of the legal framework of the health laws of Bangladesh.

7.2 Essentiality of Goods and Services

To meet the urgency of smooth supply of goods, to secure equal distribution the goods at fair-prices, especially with food and medicine, are considered essential commodity in the legislation of Bangladesh. There are some laws adopted in 1950s on essential commodities, such as, the Essential Articles (Price control and anti-Hoarding) Act 1953, the Control of Essential Commodities Act, 1956, and the Essential Commodities Act 1957. Nature and remedy system of these laws are criminal in nature not civil. The

provisions of these laws are only on goods, not on services. Although, various kinds of goods has been dealt with by Acts but these laws focused on food and medicine and the Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance 1982 and the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Ordinance 1985 were enacted on the qualitative and quantitative aspect of goods. For the purpose of clarity, a brief discussion of these laws is given below.

7.2.1 The Essential Articles (Price Control and Anti-Hoarding) Act, 1953

The Act was promulgated to control the supply and distribution of, and trade and commerce in, certain limited number of essential commodities (Das, 2015, p.35). The Act empowers the government to fix the maximum price at which the essential commodity can be sold, or the goods can be procured for sale. The Act provides to fix the quantity of goods that can be held for possessing by a trader and trade may obtain trade license for food and essential commodity. It also provides compulsory sale of essential goods at such quantity and price as may be determined by the government.

7.2.2 The Essential Commodities Act, 1957

Under this Act, ‘essential commodity’ means any of the classes of commodities mentioned in the scheduled in this Act, and such other classes of commodities as may be declared by the Government by notification in the official Gazette to be essential commodities. This Act was passed to provide for price control and regulation of trade and commerce between different areas in Bangladesh in respect of certain commodities which is described in its preamble (Das, 2015, p.35). The Act also provides provision for summary trial under section 260 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

7.2.3 The Food (Special Courts) Act, 1956

Under section 4 of this Act, the Government may appoint as many Special Magistrates to try and punish contraventions of any notified order in respect of foodstuffs. If any person commits an offence punishable under this Act, he shall be punishable with an imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with any one or both of them and the Court of Special Magistrate trying such offences may direct that any foodstuffs in respect of which the said Court is satisfied that a notified order has been contravened shall be forfeited to the Government under section 6 and section

7(2) of the Act also provides provision for summary trial under the procedure laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

7.2.4 The Special Powers Act, 1974

The Special Powers Act, 1974, is not related to consumer protection but some provisions against the adulteration of food, drugs and other daily consumables. It provides more severe punishments including death penalties than the Penal Code for hoarding or dealing in black-market, smuggling, adulteration of food or sale of adulterated food, drink, drugs or cosmetics. For example, section 25C of this Act is an example of penal measures against adulteration of food and drugs. Section 26 of the Act also provides for trial of cases by a special tribunal constituted by Sessions Judge, Additional or Assistant Sessions Judge or a person who shall be Metropolitan Magistrate and under section 27(2) provides that the trial of offences under this Act may also be conducted by the procedure of summary trial as provided by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

7.2.5 The Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982

The Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982, has been promulgated to make provision for the establishment of standards of weights and measures based on metric system and units of measurement. The units of weights and measures to be used throughout Bangladesh shall be units known as system international (SI) units. For the purpose of signifying the correctness of the standards, it requires sealing of every scale of a standard of weights and measures by BSTI. It also provides penal measures for contravention of this Ordinance.

7.2.6 The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Ordinance, 1985

The preamble of the BSTI Ordinance declares that “An Ordinance to provide for the establishment of an Institution for standardization, testing, metrology, quality control, grading and marketing goods”. Section 19 provides that without a license, no person shall use in relation to any article or process or in the title of any patent, or in any trade mark or design, the Standard Mark or any colorable imitation thereof. Under this Ordinance, the Institution is authorized to grant and revoke license. The Ordinance explicitly prohibits the use of any mark or trade mark express “Bangladesh Standard” or

“Bangladesh Standard Specification” or any abbreviation of such expressions to deceive the public under section 20(2). The Government may, in consultation with the Institution, by notification in the official Gazette, prohibit or restrict the export of certain articles and prohibit the sale of certain articles. It provides provision for the confiscation of articles or any other thing used for committing the offence under this Ordinance.

7.3 Competition

In the context of global economic development of the country it is expedient and necessary to enact law to promote, ensure and sustain congenial atmosphere for the competition in trade, to prevent, to control and eradicate collusion, monopoly and oligopoly, combination or abuse of dominant position or activities adverse to the competition. In Bangladesh, the Competition Act, 2012 plays an important role to protect the rights of the consumers and on this aspect, it is considered as the principal law. The provision of this Act is applicable to goods and services. Anti-competition activity is ban, such as, acquisition, oligopoly, cartel, combination, monopoly, collusion, tie in agreement and agreement of exclusive nature, practice of predatory price, dumping of goods and so on according to the Act. It provides provision for the establishment of the Competition Commission. The Commission may inquiry about anti-competition agreement or misused dominant position and takes any-one or more than one measures which includes discontinue and not to re-enter such agreement, impose an administrative penalty (not more than 10% of the average of the turnover for the last three preceding financial year) and injunction on anti-competition activity. If any person, without reasonable cause, contravenes any order or direction made or any condition or restriction imposed or any approval given by the Commission shall be deemed to be an offence and for such offence he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or fine not exceeding one lac taka for each day of non-compliance. There are some limitations of this Act, such as, it does not authorize the closure of the factory, warehouse, shop suspected of being engaged in the anti-competition activity.

8. Review of the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009

In Bangladesh the first draft on consumer protection law was prepared by the Ministry of Commerce in 1998. The Law Commission suggested various changes in October 2000. In 2006, a revised draft on Consumer Protection Act was framed and in 2008, the Non-Party Care-taker Government passed the Law through Ordinances. The Ordinance was not approved by the parliament and the Awami League Government passed the Consumer Protection Act, 2009.

8.1 Major areas of protection: Goods and services

The main area of the consumer protection is goods and services and it has been dealt with many laws in many ways but the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009 can be considered as the prime law on it. According to the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009, section 2(11) “goods” means any movable commercial commodities which the buyer buys or contracts to buy from any trader in exchange of money or price. Under section 22 of the Act “service” means service of any description which is made available to potential users and includes the provision of facilities in connection with transport, telecommunication, water supply, drainage, fuel, gas, electricity, housing construction, residential hotel and restaurant and health service, but does not include the rendering of any service free of charge or under a contract of personal service.

8.2 Major areas constituting the offence of violation

‘Offence’ means something which is a violation of a law in force and for the violation of which the law prescribes a penalty. In the perspective of consumer protection, anti-consumer activity and different types of violations which have punishment under the law those will be identified as offences. Consumer protection offences are enforced by authorities who adopt compliance strategies in preference to formal prosecution (Reiss, 1984, p.23). A compliance strategy has as its aim “to secure conformity with law by means of ensuring compliance or by taking action to prevent potential law violation without the necessity to detect, process and penalize violations (Reiss, 1984, p.23). In the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009, the term ‘offence’ has not been defined. But, under section 2 (20), a consumer will get protection under this Act against the some anti-consumer activity. To clear about it, a brief discussion is required.

8.2.1 Adulteration

Under Section 2 (20) (b) of the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 discussed about the adulteration is an anti-consumer activity. It mentioned that to sell or offer to sell adulterated goods or medicine knowingly is an anti-consumer activity. And, according to section 41, whoever knowingly sells or offers to sale adulterated product or medicine will be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years, or with fine not exceeding two lac taka, or both.

8.2.2 Inconsistence with high price

It is a problem for the consumers in Bangladesh who are facing high price and the price is inconsistent. According to section 2 (20) (a) of the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009, to sell or offer to sell any goods, medicine or service at a higher price than the fixed price under any Act or rules is an anti-consumer activity. According to section 40, whoever sells or offers to sale any product, medicine or service at a price higher than the fixed rate prescribed by any Act or rule will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not exceeding fifty thousand taka, or with both.

8.2.3 Deceptive advertising

The agency of the advertisement is making deceptive advertising by the instruction of their clients and consumers are being injurious to buy the product of the advertisement. Because, advertises are influencing to the consumers by false information and consumers are taking it with their innocent mind and being deceptive. Section 2(20(d) provides that to deceive consumers by untrue or false advertisement for the purpose of selling any goods or service is an anti-consumer activity. Whoever deceives the general customers with the purpose to sell his product or service by untrue or false advertisement will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not exceeding two lac taka, or with both.

8.2.4 Deceptive packaging

Consumer buys a product to know the branding and the identity of the branding shows by the package. If the packet is showing a brand which a consumer is expecting but the product is not related to the brand or the

packet is showing about same as the original packet of the reputed brand then it will be fall under deceptive packaging. For example; Mr. “A” bought a 500g Horlicks jar. The weight of the jar was written on the body. After coming home, he observed that the jar was not 500g, it was 400g then he realized that he was cheated. So, according to section 37 of the Act, whoever violates the obligation enforceable by any Act or rule of selling products by without packing and not mentioning clearly the highest selling weight, amount, ingredients, instruction for use, price, date of production, date of packing and the expiry date shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not more than fifty thousand taka, or with both.

8.2.5 Counterfeit product

Counterfeit product is harmful for consumers and it is available in the market of Bangladesh. Many consumers are cheated and being injurious with the counterfeit product. If any person make or produce any product which is counterfeit then he will get punishment under the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009. According to section 50 of the Act, whoever is making or producing any counterfeit product will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding fifty thousand taka, or with both.

8.2.6 Selling expired product

Expired product are available in the market of Bangladesh and it is using by the consumers. By using the expired product, consumers are being injurious from different side even they can loss their life. It is an anti-consumer activity by the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009. According to 2(20)(k) of the Act, to sell or offer to sell goods or medicine the date of which has expired is an ant-consumer activity. Punishment also provided by this Act under section 51. It provided that-whoever is selling or offers to sell expired product or medicine will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not exceeding fifty thousand taka, or with both.

8.2.7 Fraud or deceive with weight

To sell or deliver less quantity of goods than the weight offered to the consumers while delivering or selling any goods or to show more than the actual weight by the weight stone or any other weight measuring instrument

used for measuring weight in selling or delivering goods in commercial enterprise is an anti-consumer activity. Under section 46 and 47 of this Act whoever deceives the consumers by selling or supplying products giving less weight than the actual weight or show extra weight than the actual weight by using the weight or scales of weighing things for the purpose of selling or supplying products will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not exceeding fifty thousand taka, or with both.

8.2.8 Fraud with measure or measuring length

To show more than the actual weight by the weight stone or any other weight measuring instrument used for measuring weight in selling or delivering goods in commercial enterprise is an anti-consumer activity or to show more than actual length by the length measuring gauge or anything else used for measuring instrument used for measuring length in selling or delivering goods in commercial enterprise is an anti-consumer activity. Punishment also provided by this Act under section 48 and 49 is that whoever supplies or sales products in less than the promised measurement to the consumer during supply or sell or whoever shows extra length than the actual length by using gauze or scale for the purpose of selling or supplying products at shop or business institution will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not more than fifty thousand taka, or with both.

8.2.9 Fake goods or medicine

Fake goods or medicine are dangerous for consumers. It is forbidden by law to sell or keep it in the store. Consumers are always being deceiving to buy this fake product. According to the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009, provides that to make or manufacture any fake goods or medicine is an anti-consumer activity.

8.3 Major remedies available under the CRP Act, 2009

There are three types of remedies available under the Act- civil remedy, criminal remedy and administrative remedy. The main purpose of these remedies is to protect the consumers from anti-consumer activity.

8.3.1 Criminal Remedy

The Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009, chapter IV (section 37-56), provides criminal remedy against the offences of anti-consumer activity. These types of anti-consumer activity constitute different types of offences such as adulteration of food and medicine, inconsistence with high price, deceptive advertising, deceptive packaging, counterfeit product, selling expired product, fraud or deceive with weight, fraud with measure or measuring length, mixing prohibited chemicals in food products, producing product in an illegal manner etc. Criminal remedy has been provided for these offences under this Act, such as, imprisonment, fine, confiscation. But, these types of remedy don't fulfill the demand of consumers to protect themselves from anti consumer activity because these remedies have some lacks of dynamism of criminal justice system.

8.3.2 Civil Remedy

In the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009, civil remedy has not been clearly specified. Some provisions of this Act are the nature of civil liability such as, non-disclosure of necessary information, or the failure to cause the proper package of goods displaying price list or not preserving and displaying price list of services etc. have been made punishable with criminal remedies under this Act but these aspect of liability is based on some legal principles- *Caveat Venditor*, Perceived value, Implied warranty and so on. Analyses the Consumer Protection system of UK, the court of England has considered these breaches as fundamental breach of contract. Some countries also incorporated these principles in their respective laws. But, in the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 has failed to incorporate to these principles.

8.3.3 Administrative Remedy

The Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 provides administrative remedies and the Directorate of Consumer Protection engage with this type of activity. This remedy provides acts in *Rem*, not in *Personem* (Saharay, 2010). For this reason to prevent anti-consumer activity, the Directorate of Consumer Protection deal with investigates complaints, forfeit document, equipment, materials suspected to be used for any activities are punishable under this Act, pass an order of injunction and impose ban on the production or impose

ban on the import of such goods, order for temporary closure of shop, factory, warehouse or undertakings being used for the production, sale, and storage of such goods. The Act empowered the Directorate to collect samples of any goods or medicine for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation and provides that the Directorate may take measures with respect to health services or weights and measures but same measures have been forbidden by section 72 and 73 of this Act.

From the above discussion, it may be presumed that the administrative function is not sufficient to prevent anti-consumer activity by this Act.

9. Recommendations and Conclusion

To analyze the current consumer protection legislation of Bangladesh, this study has shown that there need to more work with the current legal framework to address some issues that have not been properly mentioned such as, the Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009 fails to take a rights based approach, fails to recognize strict product liability principle, fails in devising an effective grievance redress mechanism and so on (Islam, 2017, p.20). Additionally, alternative dispute resolution methods have not been addressed in the current legislation. Moreover, there are different aspects that were not covered adequately under the current legislation of Bangladesh, such as misleading advertising, the right to withdraw, jurisdiction issue, unfair terms and practices and so on. These aspects have been affected to the consumers' interest negatively and the legal regimes of consumer protection are being weakened. So, the following steps may be taken in addition to the proper application of existing laws:

- I. The legislation should emphasize on individuals' right of protection with necessary provision of law.
- II. Measures may be taken for the constitution of consumer courts. This process of constitution should also include the constitution of small causes court with an emphasis on the potentials of informal system of Village courts for settling disputes of small value or price.
- III. To better ensure the safety of Bangladesh consumers in relation to services liability, the Act should be amended to incorporate provisions on unfair conduct or unfair contract terms.
- IV. Administrative mechanisms need to be developed to make all responsible for putting goods and product into circulation aware

- of their liabilities in the event of defects cause loss or damage to consumers
- V. Current consumer protection law is not enough for criminal penalties to protect consumers from rogue traders. This law should be amended by the legislature by increasing the amount of fine and imprisonment.
- VI. In respect of food and health, individuals' right of protection should be given utmost emphasis in furtherance of which the authority of lodging complaint should also be devolved upon the individual consumer also.
- VII. Emphasis should be given on legal activism for which the potentials of PIL and Suo Motu rule on consumer matters should be explored by the proactive judges.

The recommendations mentioned above may help develop the legal framework of the consumer protection of Bangladesh.

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Domestic Inputs in Bangladesh Foreign Policy: An Overview*

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Abstract

Foreign Policy of Bangladesh aims at securing its economic, social, and political and security interests which together we call our national interests. The shaping of a foreign policy of a country like Bangladesh is conditioned by many factors, certainly these factors necessarily differ from country to country. Like other countries of the world Bangladesh foreign policy also conducted and influenced by domestic inputs and global determinants. It is true that any domestic factor might be boon for one country and bane for another. Gather knowledge from history, unalterable geographical reality, resource deficiency, stark reality, weakness of military capability play significant role on Bangladesh foreign policy. Although all domestic factors contribute more or less influence on Bangladesh foreign policy formulation.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Geography, History, Security, Domestic inputs, National interests, Constitution.

Introduction:

Foreign Policy of any country all over the world is moulded not only single input but also various inputs consist it. These inputs are country's aims and objectives of foreign policy, internal and external security environment, national unity, resource strength, social values, norms, different pressure groups etc. Regarding the role of domestic inputs in foreign policy in this aspect Professor Padelford, Lincoln and Olvey say, "Foreign and Domestic policy must be mutually supporting if national policy aspirations are to be achieved in an atmosphere of political stability".ⁱ Social scientist William Wallace has aptly argued that 'Foreign policy is that area of politics which bridges the all-important boundary between the nation-state and its international environment'.ⁱⁱ Foreign policy does not confine itself to political

and diplomatic relations. It covers the entire gamut of external relations in areas such as trade, foreign aid, humanitarian and environmental issues. The domestic inputs act as a capability or constraint for the foreign policy of a country depending on their nature. Any input might be boon for one country and bane for another. Domestic inputs can be divided into tangible and intangible.

Foreign Policy of Bangladesh aims at securing its economic, social, and political and security interests which together we call national interests. Former U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger once upon a time mentioned, “a nation’s values define what is just, its strength determines what is possible, its domestic structure decide what policies can be implemented.”ⁱⁱⁱ In this regard renowned theorist about foreign policy James N. Rosenau says, “Domestic factors may be considerable significance even if they are not primary sources of foreign policy, and on some issues they may well be dominant”.^{iv} When the shaping of a foreign policy of a country like Bangladesh is conditioned by many factors, certainly these factors necessarily differ from country to country. But whatever the differences, each country is guided in its foreign policy formulation by certain basic considerations which are indivisible part to its continued well being.^v Like other countries of the world Bangladesh foreign policy also conducted and influenced by domestic inputs and global determinants.

Geography: Geography and its impact on state and human being are tremendous. It is not possible for any state to ignore in its foreign policy what Sir Halford Mackinder called ‘geographical realities i.e. facts of location, territorial space, boundary and terrain etc.’^{vi} For this reason Jules Cambon says, “The geographical position of a nation is the principal factor conditioning its foreign policy”.^{vii} Geography of a country is so important in the foreign policy decision-making process that, Napoleon once said, “the foreign policy of a country is determined by its geography”.^{viii} Geography is an unalterable fixed element for formulating foreign policy, which is recognized in international politics since long ago. In the formulation of foreign policy the role of geography mentioned by scholar Kautilya “----- a circle of states forming a kind of political solar system and tending to gravitate toward one another as friends or come to collision as enemies according to their respective positions in the circle. Thus states adjacent to each other and therefore in the nature of things bound to have a greater number of points of friction, are to be regarded as national enemies”.^{ix}

Bangladesh is situated on the north eastern corner of the subcontinent, playing the role of a bridge between South and South East Asia. The country shares international border with India and Myanmer. The country is bordered by India on the West, North and East, while there is a short common border with Myanmer on the Southeast. The Southern border is marked by the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh border with Tripura is 856 km, Meghalaya 443 km, Mizoram 318 km, and Assam 262. Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh though do not have common border but Manipuris have their ethnic kins in Bangladesh in the greater Sylhet region. A major percentage of population in Tripura has migrated from territories of present day Bangladesh after partition of the subcontinent in 1947.^x This geographical situation has made the safety and security of Bangladesh dependent on India.

Because of the small size of the territory, there is no depth of the territory and it could act as a disadvantage during armed conflicts. The sea frontage is small and the coast is of concave nature (opposite convex nature) that limits its protuberance into sea that in turn adversely affect in claiming large marine areas of the Bay of Bengal.^{xi} This type of geographical situation, the conduct of foreign policies has not been easy.

Bangladesh, once upon a time called a basket case, now has huge geo-strategic and geo-economic importance in all over the world. Its geographic location in South Asia has made it a crucial country in the region. On the other hand, three sides of the country is surrounded by Indian States, which makes the Bangladeshi citizens feel India locked.^{xii} Overlooking the Indian Ocean strategically located at the mouth of Bay of Bengal Bangladesh attracts the attention of all big powers like India, U.S., China and Russia. The geostrategic significance of Bangladesh originates from the fact that Indian access to its north eastern states is sandwiched between Bangladesh and Nepal by a narrow territory of only 18 miles of Silliguri corridor. The location of Bangladesh has tremendously increased its strategic importance.

In addition, Bangladesh is seen as a potential transit route and connection point for social and commercial interactions between South and Southeast Asia. Besides, Bangladesh is also located between two strong economies, China and India, both of whom are also looking at Bangladesh as a potential market for trade and investment. Geography is more vulnerable than capability to Bangladesh. Its size, topography, climate and location have

more negative features than positive. Bangladesh is sensitive to its geopolitics in present world order.

Public Opinion: Public opinion is another dominant factor in the formulation and conduct of Bangladesh foreign policy. It is true that foreign policy is not static. It is a dynamic process and the decision-making process would invariably take into account the public opinion both in the prevalent domestic and international scene. James N. Rosenau says about priority of public opinion in foreign policy, “Occasionally, to be sure, inquiries will focus directly of foreign policy, but, since they deal exclusively with public opinion, these are also single factor analyses rather than systematic attempts to link basic societal processes to the behavior officialdom.”^{xiii} Another scholar V. O. Key says about definition of public opinion, “those opinions held by private persons which government find it prudent to heed.”^{xiv} It is true that public opinion is formulated and interpreted in various ways by different regimes to suit policy planning. The press and media also play an important role by covering news and views, highlighting major issues on foreign policy and analyzing the government’s policies. Press and media create public opinion and exert influence on the foreign policy decision-making process. Mass media helps people know facts and figures. With regard to border killings by the Indian Border Security Force, media play dynamic roles in forming public opinion.

Nothing so reliably reflects internal environment as public opinion. Its influence is maximum when constitutional guarantees ensure freedom of political institutions, free flow of information and free expression of opposition views.^{xv} Mass public opinion is scarcely involved at all, because political parties do not perceive any “votes” on foreign policy, except Bangladesh’s relations with neighbouring countries, in particular with India or Pakistan, or with major powers, such as, the US are involved.^{xvi} In different periods of glorious history of Bangladesh, public sentiments played vital role. Its glaring example is during the war of liberation. In standing firm and united against tyranny, it helped sustain the popular upheaval. All attempts in Bangladesh to defend national interests have always enjoyed unified massive unprecedented support. Bangladesh’s public opinion has been particularly sensitive to events. In regard to Bangladesh foreign policy issues, where popular perceptions of national interests were clear, our domestic public opinion has always shown mentionable unity. Preserve sovereignty of our country is pragmatic example.

Islamic Solidarity: Yatollah Khumayni said about the importance of Islam in Iran's foreign policy, "Islam motivates Iran's foreign policy decisions, commitment and strategies"^{xvii} In this regard R.K. Ramazani also said, "Islam is also used to communicate, rationalize and justify foreign policy behavior".^{xviii} Islam is an influential determinant of Bangladesh foreign policy. Although the good relationship started between Bangladesh and the Muslim World during Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman regime. Afterwards Major Ziaur Rahman hatched Bangladesh and the Muslim World relationship under constitutional framework.

The majority of the Muslims of Bangladesh, although non-communal and tolerant to all faiths, is mentally tied with Islamic Ummah (brotherhood) and wish to maintain fraternal relations with Islamic countries. Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim State its foreign policy has a natural bias towards other Muslim States of the world particularly the Middle East countries. So the Islamic solidarity of the people plays a very important role in the formulation of Bangladesh foreign policy.

History: Bangladesh emerged as sovereign independent state on the 16th of December, 1971. Bangladesh is one of the youngest nation states of the world but on the basis of the history of the region since ancient period it can legitimately claim that it is an old nation. History of Bangladesh, its past riches and glories are a source of inspiration to the people. History plays an important role in moulding foreign policy. In moulding foreign policy need focus on internal compulsion, history, national character and political, economic and social development.

History is another important determinant of Bangladesh foreign policy. Historically we are allied with the India from the time of independence who was the ally of the USSR. That is why Bangladesh foreign policy was pro Indian and USSR. With the change of time policy of Bangladesh changed towards the USA and the Muslim World because of Bangladesh national interest but still Bangladesh pro Indian policy exists because of national history.

Style of Leadership: The role of leadership in policymaking has always attracted the attention of political scientists. Leadership is an important element in foreign policy. The direction of foreign relations depends on the leader of a country at a given time. Conspicuously leadership play vital role

formulating foreign policy. A country's directives concerning foreign policy come from leader intended country. Fixing policy depend on ruling political party leader. Statesmen should have sufficient knowledge about international politics, geography, history including other determinants of foreign policy. Because success of foreign policy or failure depend on leader. Regarding the role of leadership fixing foreign policy William D. Coplin say, "As the decision maker moulds his environment, he is simultaneously moulded by it. A product of his times, he is able to follow policies that break with historical tradition, but is still forced to deal with conditions as he finds them".^{xix} The personality of national leader rationally influence decision making process in foreign policy. In this regard Professor Michael P. Sullivan says, "As with instinct, the intuitive and logical plausibility of personality as a determining force make it hard not to utilize it. Merely to question the importance of personality, especially in foreign policy decisions, often raises the specter of national leaders as determined robots, acting at the whim of external forces".^{xx} For example, Singapore with no natural resources (it has to even import fresh water from Malaysia) has attained economically a position which no Asian country except Japan can compete. The instances suggest that leadership can provide a state more power than its geopolitical situation may suggest.

At the present time in our country the Prime Minister determines in broad terms the direction and thrust of the foreign policy. The Prime Minister is accountable to the Parliament and to the people for the decision. The Prime Minister is the executive head of the government in the country and the Prime Minister entrusts to a great extent the Foreign Minister with the responsibility to explain why such a decision on a particular issue has been adopted in respect of foreign policy. Bangladesh foreign policy also vastly influenced by nature of political leadership. In Bangladesh political leadership continues to dominate the foreign policy decision process. Although fundamental characteristics of foreign policy not changed.

Ideology: Ideological beliefs of the ruling parties have always mattered in shaping foreign policy orientations in Bangladesh. Incumbent governments align their foreign policy priorities with the party ideology.^{xxi} Ideology is also a basic link between political party and foreign policy. It is a comprehensive framework of doctrines inculcated into the society by its political leadership. Ideology provides the intellectual framework through which policy makers observe reality.^{xxii} A state's political ideology,

historical roots, style of leadership and other societal forces cast on reflection in foreign policy.^{xxiii} Edward Shils says about ideology, “Ideology is one variant form of those comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral beliefs about man, society and the universe in relation to man and society which flourishes in human societies”.^{xxiv} Again the role of ideology in foreign policy Norman J. Padelford and George A. Lincoln say, “Ideology is, of course, only one of the factors that shape events and policies and may often be only a relatively minor factor in actual decision making on foreign policy. Ideologies do not operate in a vacuum. Born in a unique historical context, they are conditioned, adjusted, revitalized, and altered by changing social and political environments”.^{xxv} The constitution of independent Bangladesh adopted nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism as elements of state ideology. Bangladesh follows the principle of peaceful co-existence and encourages nonviolent change and development in international affairs.

All political parties in Bangladesh have some ideological leanings, reflected in foreign policy and are determined to implement them they get elected to power. Foreign policy appears to have ceased to have a bipartisan support of major political parties in Bangladesh politics. Ideology is an important determinant in foreign policy and its position for the fix up in front. Bangladesh followed the non-aligned foreign policy as its development strategy and ideology during the Cold War period. Bangladesh is no space for religious extremism. For this reason Bangladesh in internationally recognized as a moderate Muslim country, open for all trade and investment.

Security Concern: National security is a fundamental concern for every country and it major determinant among states for mutual relationship in international politics. For achieving this security most of the countries bear expenses military institutions and all states making coalition and friendship alliance among respective nations. In fact, security main determinant which created bitter relationship among nations. Nations adopt seeking this security diplomatic, psychological, economic and military ways. Arnold Wolfers say about the definition of security, “Security points to some degree of protection of values previously acquired”. Again Walter Lippmann say, “A nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war. What this definition implies is that security rises and falls with the ability of a nation to deter an attack or to

defeat it".^{xxvi} It is true that the security of small states is very much related to cooperation among small states themselves.

Security means territorial integrity, sovereignty and protects lives and resources of state. These three elements of security priority differ country to country and time to time. In the background of international relations security means firstly external security. Internal security related to national interest- whose existence strengthens external security. Long term and sustainable security form economic development, formation of state, effective and fruitful foreign policy.

Security means many things to many people. Politicians use it as a rhetorical phrase and military actors use it as a policy objective. It is true that now-a-days security encompasses elements in a broad spectrum. The chief security objective of a nation is to improve its relative power position and it can be subdivided into three categories: military, economic and political.^{xxvii} Many Third World countries are concerned with threats to their security that are domestic in origin or emanate from conditions in neighboring countries.^{xxviii} Bangladesh is also no exception above mentioned aspect. Surrounded on three sides by India and the only sea outlet to the south, the Bay of Bengal, being patrolled by the stronger Indian naval ships "there is only one imminent source of danger for Bangladesh – India".^{xxix} It is stark reality that geographical situation severely restricts vis-à-vis India.

Domestic Politics: Nineteenth century Prussian diplomat and statesman Prince Otto Von Bismarck once commented that the extension of domestic policy is foreign policy. Foreign policy of any nation is a complex and dynamic political course that she pursues in relation to other states with a view to promoting and protecting her national interests. In the foreign policy decision-making process, policy makers have to maintain a balance between domestic and external environments. International relations and domestic politics are so interrelated that they should be analyzed simultaneously, as wholes.^{xxx} The domestic environment includes the domestic political situation, people's aspirations, needs and requirements. Professor Northedge says about the role of domestic politics in foreign policy of a country, "The formation of foreign policy represents on its domestic side, a continuous series of compromises and adjustments between the different elements of government and social structure".^{xxxi} Public opinion plays very important role to formulate foreign policy. If the policy government wants to

implement is controversial or against with the public opinion government most of the time cannot implement that policy because of resist from the people.

For these reasons the decision makers of foreign policy when decision will make must actively consider internal political situation and try to understand mindset of people. Political parties play a very important role in influencing the foreign policy of the country outside the government in Bangladesh. On the major foreign policy issues they give suggestions to the government, express their opinion through public meeting, public protest, and newspaper statements and influence the foreign policy decisions.

The confrontational nature of domestic politics has begun to affect almost all established institutions in Bangladesh. The views of many academics and bureaucrats have been rarely found objective. It appears that increasing politicization of administration and academic institutions has led to a society where objective and neutral discussions hardly take place on all national issues including Bangladesh foreign policy. The aims of Bangladesh foreign policy not strongly supported within Bangladesh because of internal political chaos and confusion and fail to gain massive support. These circumstances it is not possible to Bangladesh conduct effective and fruitful foreign policy.

Military Capability: Military capability is an important domestic determinant influencing the foreign policy of a country. It includes the size of the armed forces, arms and equipment of the forces and the quality of the manpower of forces. It is urgently need for the protection and promotion of politico-security objectives of foreign policy. Foreign policy's bargaining of a state depends upon its military capability. Militarily, Bangladesh is not a weak state. It has well-disciplined, regular armed forces, pledged to maintain the security and territorial integrity of the country. The regular government spending for the Bangladesh army huge amount of the national budget.

Military lobbies also influence decision making to great extent. The Foreign Office has to accommodate military personnel in designated posts at home and abroad. The Bangladesh army contributes to the foreign policy making of Bangladesh. It is clearly manifested by the invitation of the UN Security Council to Bangladesh army to form the part of the UN peacekeeping forces in Namibia, Iran-Iraq border, Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Congo and Liberia. The role of the Bangladesh armed forces in the

multinational forces of Saudi Arabia, during the Persian Gulf crisis of 1991, also demonstrates its significant role in the foreign relations of Bangladesh.

Constitution: The constitution of Bangladesh defines the broader guidelines of Bangladesh's foreign policy and its objectives. The constitution is a determinant of foreign policy of Bangladesh. Part 2 of the constitution of Bangladesh in article 25 mentioned the principles of foreign policy of Bangladesh government "The State shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of those principles shall-

- (a) Strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament;
- (b) Uphold the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means of its own free choice; and
- (c) Support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism.^{xxxii}

In constitution article 145A reads, "All treaties with foreign countries shall be submitted to the President, who shall cause them to be laid before Parliament:

Provided that any such treaty connected with national security shall be laid in a secret session of Parliament."^{xxxiii} These above mentioned articles of the constitution of Bangladesh are provided with vigorous role in the area of foreign policy input.

National Interest: The foreign policy of a state can be considered as a complex and dynamic political course that it maintains in relation to other states to protect its own national interest.^{xxxiv} National interest is a generic term and differentiates one country to another. It is a contested concept that cannot be defined precisely because the perception of national interest can vary in different situations and at different times, although a minimal notion of national interest exists. National interest is the prime criterion in taking foreign policy decisions, by which policy maker 'judges situational factors,

determines the relative priorities to be given to different goals, and establishes, and evaluates courses of action.^{xxxv} Alfred Thayer Mahan once said that, “self interest is not only a legitimate but a fundamental cause for foreign policy, it is vain to expect governments to act continuously on any other ground than national interest.”^{xxxvi} Ensuring the national interest is one of the main objectives of Bangladesh foreign policy. W.W. Rostow said that, “national interest is the conception which nations apply in trying to influence the world environment in their advantage.”^{xxxvii} It is states ultimate goal to achieve in any way. That’s why British Prime Minister Lord Palmerstone once said that, “we have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow.”^{xxxviii} Keeping these keywords in mind Bangladesh foreign policy makers emphasize national interest the highest priority. Precise assessment of national interest is the key to the successful conduct of foreign policy.

Intelligence Agencies: Civil and military secret intelligence agencies have a vital role to play in the process of formulating foreign policy. These agencies are, generally speaking, answerable to the Bangladesh’s Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister’s domain to obtain information from intelligence agencies. In Bangladesh, the impact of the views from the intelligence on foreign policies appears to be considerable. But the prime minister generally trusts the options put forth by the intelligence services than formal decision making authorities.

Business Groups: Business groups keep close contact with high ups of the government to promote their interests in foreign policy decision making. Individuals in these groups tend to have similar preferences and thus strong incentives to seek policies that will benefit themselves.^{xxxix} Business groups have tremendous power in persuading government to take trade favourable measures. In case of other countries visit Bangladesh’s prime minister, it is seen that business community takes part. Business communities always want may have secured trade benefits from the foreign policy decisions taken by incumbent governments. It is very tough job to proven this type of nexus between foreign policy decision making process and business groups in Bangladesh.

Conclusion: For the successful foreign policy of Bangladesh needs evaluate and fix up all domestic determinants. It is true that any domestic factor might be boon for one country and bane for another. Gather knowledge from

history, unalterable geographical reality, resource deficiency, stark reality, weakness of military capability play significant role on Bangladesh foreign policy. Although all domestic factors contribute more or less influence on Bangladesh foreign policy formulation.

Bangladesh's options in foreign policy appear to be limited because of its geographical location, small size of the territory and weak economic and military capability. On the contrary, Bangladesh is sandwiched between the rising giants of Asia- China and India. The challenge is how to take great advantage of the geo-political situation of Bangladesh, regionally and globally.

Bangladesh foreign policy will successful if it will proactive and result oriented. Once upon a time archaic Indian politician and philosopher said that the “welfare of a state depends on an active foreign policy.” The foreign policy of Bangladesh has to be evolved in the context of national interests of Bangladesh which is dependent not only on the contemporary international developments, but also on national development and progress taking into account the geographical location of the country.

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Regime of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty: Opening Bengal's Window to Outer World

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Abstract

The Regime of Iliyas Shahi dynasty gave a new shape to Bengal keeping it's freedom strengthened, sovereignty unharmed, people cooperative, trade and commerce spread to the international world and the country's own art, culture and intellect patronized and well evaluated. Iliyas Shah was able to build up a well-balanced social harmony in Bengal. This social harmony produced public cooperation that helped Bengal obtain a nature of rejecting the foreign rule and become a state sensitive to its own sovereignty placing the regime of Iliyas Shahi dynasty to a distinguished position in the history of India. Undiscriminating Hindu-Muslim ego, paying due respect to the country's language and literature, rewarding and providing assistance to the scholars and poets of the country, giving a set up of Muslim culture in Bengal and expanding Muslim architectural device in local design and style are especial distinctiveness of Iliyas Shah Dynasty rulers. A new stream was created in the social life of Bengal during their reign. Their contribution is great in driving the trades, commerce and business of Bengal to the outer world like Arabia, Persia, China and so on.

Keywords: Sultan, Islamic culture, Money Economy, Trade and Commerce, Bengal's Art, Linguistic Unity, Social Cohesion

1. Introduction

The regime of Sultan Shamsuddin Iliyas Shahi dynasty continued in Bengal for 125 years in two phases with an interval of 20 years intervened by Raja Ghanesha dynasty (Karim, 1988). The first phase continued during 1342 to

1415 A.D and the second phase continued from 1435 to 1487 A.D. After Iliyas Shah, Bengal was ruled by three of his descendants in the first phase including Sikander Shah, Ghyasuddin Azam Shah and Saifuddin Hamja Shah. In the second phase, Bengal was ruled by five other descendants of his dynasty: Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud shah, Rukanuddin Burbak Shah, Shamsuddin Yusuf shah, Sikandar Shah and Jalaluddin Fateh shah. The entire regime contributed to Bengal with momentous changes in the arena of linguistic unity and awareness, nationalistic augmentation, communal harmony, social cohesion, political and economic development, expansion of trade and commerce, attaching Bengal with the outer world like far-east, south Asia, and countries of Europe and Africa (Tarafdar, 1987). The ancient Natural *Economy* turned into *Money Economy* and Bengal moved to city civilization from Agriculture civilization (Tarafdar. Ibid.). Geographically, Bengal received a great expansion and tremendous growth of Muslim architectural device occurred (Rahim, Chowdhury, Mahmud, Islam, 1977). Iliyas Shah himself set up an independent Sultanate *Bangalah* for the first time by uniting the Bengali speaking territories of Satgaon, Lakhnauti and Sonargaon and a sense of nationalism grew up. In fact, the political, social, economic and cultural interests of the country developed and all people of Bengal came under the banner of one politico-social and linguistic platform which infused a new life in the society by adopting a liberal policy and bringing cohesion among the people (Banglapedia). Indeed, the regime of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty gave a new shape to the 14th -15th century Bengal keeping its freedom strengthened, sovereignty unharmed, people united, trade and commerce spread and the country's own art, culture and intellect patronized and evaluated (Hasan, 1991). This paper concentrates and analyzes the issues of both the phases of Iliyas Shahi dynasty regime, (1342-1415 A.D &1435-1487 A.D) by nine distinguished sultans, that gave a newer foundation to the all-round development of Bengal bringing momentous changes.

2. Objective

To investigate and analyze the cultural, political and socio-economic augmentation in the 14th and 15th century Bengal during the regime of Shamsuddin Iliyas Shahi dynasty

3. Methodology

The study is conducted through following the methods of documentary or content analysis. The information or data are mainly qualitative in nature. A number of relevant books, articles published in the recognized research journals and some web sides have been used as sources for collecting the data. Data have been analyzed and presented through logical description.

4. Historical Background

4.1 The State of Bengal

Bengal was one of the most prosperous lands in the orient in medieval age. With the Indo-Gangatic plains to the West, Himalayas to the East, Bay of Bengal to the South and mountain-forest to the north-east connecting it to Far East to its furthest reach, Bengal featured in all geo-strategic calculations of the empire-builders. Endowed with a climate and fertile land, Bengal reached a level of overall prosperity, which endured all vicissitudes of empires, conquests and trade (Ahmed, [Banglapedia](#)).

5. Iliyas Shah the Founder of the Dynasty

An officer Malik Iliyas Haji came to the throne of Firozabad (Pandua) in 1342 and then ruled as Shams-ud-din Iliyas Shah. He consolidated the independent Sultanate of Bengal in 1352 A.D by defeating Ikhtiyar-ud-din. According to a researcher, the king's full name, as known from his inscription and coins, is *Shams-ud-Dunya wa-d-Din Abul Muzaffer Iliyas Shah al-Sultan* (Dani, 1997.). By 1346 A.D, Iliyas conquered Satgao. He attacked Nepal, in 1350 and plundered Orissa up to the Cilka Lake, occupied Trihuta, Hajipura, and conquered Camparana, Goraksapura, Kashi and parts of Kamarupa. By 1352 A.D, he also conquered Sonaragao. He consolidated the independent Sultanate of Bengal in 1352 by defeating Ikhtiyar-ud-din Ghazi Shah and thus became the master of it. Shams-i-Siraj Afif adorned him with the title of *Shah-i-Bangalah*, *Shah-i-Bangaliyan* and *Sultan-i-Bangalah*. All this led him to conflict with the Delhi Sultanate. Firoz Shah Tughluq came and occupied Lakhnauti but having failed to defeat Iliyas Shah, returned to Delhi and Iliyas Shah's supremacy in united Bengal was unchallenged (Ahmed, Ibid.). According to '*Sirat-E-Firuz Shahi*', '*Tarikh-E-Mubarak Shahi*' and '*Rias-Us-salateen*' Iliyas Shahi died in 1358 A.D (Rahim, Chowdhury, Mahmud, Islam. Ibid. 1977).

6. Descendants of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty in the Regime's First Phase in Brief

6.1 Sikandar Shah

Iliyas Shahi was succeeded by his son Sikandar Shah ruling for long 35 years (1358 A.D –1393 A.D) who built the historic Adina mosque in Pandua

(1369 A.D). Sikander Shah was assassinated by his son Ghyasuddin Azam Shah. The reason of the assassination was not clear.

6.2 Ghyasuddin Azam Shah

Ghyasuddin Azam Shah was not a good warrior but a good governor, a just ruler, impressive patron of the scholars and poets and a man of character. Exchange of envoys with China and other countries took place in random during his period.

6.3 Saifuddin Hamja Shah

Saifuddin Hamja Shah, son of Ghyasuddin Azam Shah was the next successor to the throne. So far the evidence of coins implies, he ruled from 1410 A.D to 1411 A.D and declared himself as '*Sultan us Salatin*'. Exchange of envoys with China took place in his period too. He was a brave, liberal and a patient Sultan. Under the conspiracy of Raja Ghanesh, a slave called Shihabuddin assassinated him in 1415 A.D and with his death, the first phase of the regime of Iliyas Shahi dynasty ended after 73 (1342 A.D -1415 A.D) years.

7 The Interval Game by Raja Ghanesha

In between the two phases by the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty regime, Raja Ghanesha of Dinajpur played an important political game. It is said that the death of Ghyasuddin Azam Shah was a murder by Raja Gahnesha and Ghyasuddin's son Saifuddin Hamza Shah, a weak ruler, was ousted and Ghanesha is said to have gained supreme power. How he achieved this still remains a mystery (Dani. Ibid.). Bengal was ruled by Shihabuddin and by his son Alauddin Firoz Shah for a time being. Next to that Raja Ghanesha and his successors came to power and ruled for 20 years. Oppression heightened to an intolerable state. Finally, in request of Hazrat Nur Qutub Alam, the neighboring Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi ousted Raja Ghanesha and Ghanesha's son Jadu was converted into Muslim under the name of Jalaluddin Muhammad (Ibid.).

8 Descendants of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty in the Regime's Second Phase in Brief

8.1 Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah

However, nearly after 1432s, the military high officials and the elite class of Bengal placed one of Iliyas Shah's successors Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah on

the throne usurping power from Raja Ghanesha dynasty and once again the Iliyas Shahi dynasty revived and ruled Bengal for the next half a century (1435 A.D–1487 A.D). In 1435 A.D, the 2nd phase of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty regime restarted.

8.2 Rukanuddin Burbok Shah

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah died in 1459 A.D and his son Rukanuddin Burbok Shah ascended the throne. Coins of Burbok Shah Regime indicate that he ruled up to 1474 A.D.

8.3 Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah, Sikandar Shah and Jalaluddin Fateh shah

After Rukanuddin Burbok Shah Shamsuddin Yusuf (1474-1481 A.D), Sikandar Shah and Jalaluddin Fateh shah (1481-1486 A.D) respectively ascended the throne and ruled Bengal. With the assassination of Jalaluddin Fateh shah by a *Habsy* slaves, the second stream of Iliyas Shahi dynasty regime ended after 52 (1435-1487A.D) years.

9 Economic Aspects

Agriculture, trades, business and commerce, and industrial sectors were the major aspects of the economy of Bengal Sultanate.

9.1 Currency

For the general exchanges of goods or products, *Cowrie* was used among the common people. In the marketing system, exchange of goods was a conventional procedure.

Ma Huen first came to Bengal in the first part of 15th century A.D when most probably Sultan Ghyasuddin Azam Shah of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty was on the throne. At that time, the currency used for marketing was called *Tanka*. Besides Ma Huen's writing, this information (about *Tanka* as currency and trade and business of that period) is found in the Chinese descriptions like '*Ying Yai Shenglam*', '*Sing Yang Ch'ao Tien Lu*' etc. (Bagchi; 1944, I: 117, 123 & 125).

Ma Huen wrote that Bangala was a great city of the richest persons. He points out-

“... And here there are the richest merchants I ever met”
(Ludovico di Varthema: 212)

In writings of Barbosa, it comes out that the people of Muslim community were rich, luxurious, and fond of entertainments. Actually, Barbosa and Ma Huen both recorded the economic conditions of the upper class people of the society.

9.2 Trade, Business and Commerce

9.2.1 International Trade Management System

There was a wide trading route from Alexandria- Kush- Aden- Cumbe to Malacca of south-east Asia. When this route got importance, then Malabar shore, Karmandal shore and Bengal region were connected to an international trade management system. This was the preparatory stage of trade expansion in the history of Bengal. Just in this period,

9.2.2 Monitory System Based Economy

Monitory System Based Economy was set up in Muslim Bengal. The change in the economy that occurred during the Sultani period is very important. Emphasizing on the monitory system, it can be said that the sultans introduced an innovative system in the economy through using currency instead of the system of *goods exchange*.

9.2.3 City Civilization in Place of Agriculture Civilization

With the Monitory System Based Economy, the Sultans of Ilyas Shahi dynasty regime began a new era of city civilization in place of agriculture civilization. It is an epoch making event in the history that *Natural Economy* turned into *Money Economy* during the reign of Bengal Sultanate (Tarafdar. Ibid.).

9.2.4 Classification of coins

The coins the Muslim rulers inscribed regularly were not only the symbols of their sovereignty; those were the medium of their trades and business too. Through the growing steadiness of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty regime, number of coins as well as classification of coins was also increasing.

9.2.5 Increasing Trend of International Trades and Business

And as a result of the increasing number of coins and classification of coins, the internal as well as international trades and business of the Sultans of Ilyas Shahi dynasty got an increasing trend which has been implied by Ma Huen-

. . . in every purchase and sale, they all use this coin for calculating prices in petty transactions. The cowrie goes by the foreign name of k'ao-li; [and] in trading they calculate in units [of this article]

(Ma Huen, Translated and edited by J.V.G. Mills,
1970:161)

9.2.6 Export of Cotton and Silk through Turkey-Syria-Persia-Arabia-Felix-Ethiopia

During 14th and 15th centuries, the river ports or sea ports like Satgaon (Chittagong) controlled Bengal's trades and commerce. Lists of industrial and agricultural goods are given in Ma Huen and other Chinese descriptions (Ma Huen. Ibid: 161-163: translation of other Chinese descriptions, *Visva-Bhrati Annals*, 1945, pt. I: 119-20,123, 125-26,132) in which there are implications of commercial assets of the country. In writings of Varthema, it is found that the country exported cotton and silk cloths –

. . . through all Turkey, through all Syria, through Persia, through Arabia Felix, through Ethiopia, and through all India

(*Ludovico di Varthema*, Translated by Jones and edited by Badgar, 1863: 212)

9.2.7 Great Market Value of Bengal's Cloths

That the products of Bengal's cloths had a great market value was proved in the writings of Barbosa and Tome Pires (Pires, ed. Cortesao, 1944, Vol. 1: 93). The Eastern and European markets had a high demand of very thin, white, cotton cloths of Bengal. Meilink-Roelofsz made use of some valuable information in his book *Asian Trade and European Influence* (Pires: I, ed. Roelofsz, 1893: 68).

9.2.8 Other Products of Export

Giving emphasis on the information of tom Pires, Arun Das Gupta, in the article- “Aspects of Bengal’s Sea-Born Commerce in the Pre European Period” (3rd Annual Conference of History, 1973:141-154) mentioned that during 14th and 15th centuries A.D, products of this country were exported to Malacca and Passei, under Sumatra, in four or five ships every year. These products included cotton cloths, sugar, rice, salted and dried fishes, meats, oranges, lemons, vegetables, ginger etc. On return, the ships used to bring camphor, black peeper, cloves, mace, joifal, sandal wood, pearl etc. from Bornio of Malacca and green earthen pots, tin, lid, ornamented damask, carpet etc. from China and Liu Kiu island. They also brought opium from Aden and daggers, swords etc. from Java (Pires, Ibid. 1: 88,92,93; Roelofsz: 68,69; Gupta:154).

9.2.9 Other Trade Links of Bengal

Bengal had also trade link with countries or states like Bornio, Liu Kiu group of islands, Syam, Psgu, Barma, and Arakan etc. (Pires, Ibid. I: 96,97, 100, 104, 109, 111, 130, 131,133,136,139,140,142,143,174,186,227; II: 70-271, Gupta. Ibid.).

Barbosa, Varmetha and Roelofsz have indicated the Bengal’s trade link with Shinghal, Malabar, Maldwip, Choul, Dabol, Cambe, Arabian shore and the territory of Persian sea (Pires, Ibid. 1: 13,17,45; Roelofsz, “India, Ceylon, Pegy, Malacca, Sumatra and other countries”, Purchas His pilgrims, vol. X, 1905: 185).

9.2.9 Rate of Profit of the Bengal Trade

That the business was very profitable is clearly mentioned by Tom Pires. The rate of profit in Malacca 3.25%, including export tax and in Bengal 35%, profit including import tax was 200%-300% (Pires, Ibid. 1: 93; Meilink-Roelofsz: Ibid.: 8).

9.2.10 Bengal’s Currency Run in Malacca

Tom Pires described that in the earliest 15th century, which indicates the reign of Ghyasuddin Azam Shah, a group of Bengali merchants was established in Malacca. Possibly centering this group some common Bengali could also make habitat there (Pires, Ibid. 1: 93; II, 240,265,270-271). It is also remarkable that Bengal’s currency was running in Malacca (Pires, Ibid.

1: 92; Meilink-Roelofsz: Ibid.: 69). The foreign merchants came with their currency and got profit by exchanging this. It is a sign of Bengal's favorable balance of trade.

The merchants coming to Bengal were from Abyssinia, India, Persia, and Arab etc. (Pires, Ibid. 1: 142- 43).

9.3 Industrial Sector

9.3.1 Production of Paper, Thread, Drinks and Wines

Writing paper was made of a kind of barks of tree. Thread was made and sold in the open market. Different kinds of drinks and wines were produced from paddy, coconuts, palms etc. (Ludovico di Varthema.Ibid.).

9.3.2 Textiles

Although textiles were already prominent among locally manufactured goods at the dawn of the Muslim encounter in the 10th century A.D, the volume and variety of textiles produced and exported increased dramatically after the conquest.

9.3.2.1 Muslins

The thin cotton cloth (Muslins) of Bengal was highly praised in the description of Ma Huen. In the late 13th century A.D, Marco Polo noted the commercial importance of an especial kind of Bengali cotton, and in 1345 A.D Ibn Battuta admired the fine Muslin cloth that he found there. Between 1415 A.D and 1432 A.D Chinese diplomats wrote of Bengal's production of fine cotton Muslins, rugs, veils of various colors, gauzes (Pers., *shāna-bāf*), material for turbans, embroidered silk, and brocaded taffetas.

9.3.2.3 Silk

Silk cloth was available. Taffeta embroidered with golden lace ribbon was sold in the market. Ludovico di Varthema, who was in Gaur noted:

“Fifty ships are laden every year in this place with cotton and silk stuffs. These same stuffs go through all Turkey, through Syria, through Persia, through Arabia Felix, through Ethiopia, and through all India.”

Tome Pires described the export of Bengali textiles to ports in the eastern half of the Indian Ocean. Clearly, Bengal had become a major center of Asian trade and manufacture.

9.3.3 Water Vessels

The big merchants used to go abroad for trading. Water way was major in communication system. So, enormous vessels were made to go for trading.

The monetization of Bengal's economy and its integration with markets throughout the Indian Ocean greatly stimulated the region's export-manufacturing sector.

9.4 Agriculture

Most of the people were peasants who lived on the agrarian activities. They used to labor hard and cultivate paddy, wheat, sugar canes, sesame, bazaar basket, mustard seeds, pulses, lentils etc. Paddy was the main crop. Among the vegetables, onions, garlic, ginger, brinjal, cucumber, etc the people of Bengal in remarkably produced. Different fruits were also produced hugely such as coconuts, mangoes, palms, dates, bananas, jackfruits, pomegranate fruit etc. were produced.

9.4.1 Agricultural Products Exported

There are also remarks by the historians that many of the fruits were exported to too many countries during the regime by the Sultan Iliyas Shahi dynasty (Provatasu Maity. Ibid.) In the description of Ma Huen, it has been written that tea was not produced in Bengal and the inhabitants entertained their guests with beetle leaf instead of tea. Agricultural products, generally exported, were wheat, bazaar basket, mustard seeds, pulses, lentils, garlic, ginger, coconuts, palms etc.

10 Social Aspects

The independent Sultanate of Bengal that Iliyas Shah founded lasted for one hundred twenty five (125) years. The long reigned regime by the Iliyas Shahi dynasty provided Bengal with a multifarious development in its social sector including art, culture, language, literature, judiciary, religious harmony and so on (Ahmed. Ibid.). The culture of Bengal continued to grow and finally got assimilated into Bangla-Islamic culture. In the preservation of this

culture, Bengal life underwent a transformation which was blessed with the new spirit of living through Bengali heritage. As in literature, so in music and dance, and also in other forms of arts and crafts, the living character of the deltaic land never waned and waxed (Dani, Ibid.). People of all sections were distinctively happy in days of Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, marked for his justice and power of consideration. He concentrated on establishing architecture.

10.1 Language

During the regimes of Iliyas Shah, common language of people to speak was Bangla. Iliyas Shah, in his life time, set up an independent Sultanate called *Bangalah* for the first time. The state was named after the common language ‘Bangla’ (in English ‘Bengali’). Bangla was also the language of the neighbouring territories: Satgaon, Lakhnauti and Sonargaon. Iliyas Shah set up the independent Sultanate by uniting the Bengali speaking territories of Satgaon, Lakhnauti and Sonargaon. The neighbouring territories also happily agreed and became united with Bengal because of the homogeny of their language. And thus, a sense of nationalism grew up. Ilyas Sha’s language based political approach may be considered as the augmentation of Bengali Nationalism for the first time in the subcontinent. All over the state of united Bengal (independent Sultanate of Bengal); Bangla was randomly spoken in the educational institutions, offices and the court of the sultan. Official activities, especially the documents, were written in Persian language (Taraifdar.Ibid.).

10.2 Professions of People

Most people were farmers or peasants. Besides them a good number of people were traders and merchants. There grew a generation of architects, artists and scholars. Some people were engaged in industry and agro based manufacturing companies. A generation of dancers and musicians also developed. Besides all, magicians, astrologers, wrestlers and people of other professions also lived.

10.3 Life Style

Tarafdar informed that in 1415, a Chinese envoy wrote of men in Pandua who-

“ . . . wear a white cotton turban and a long white cotton shirt. On their feet they wear low sheep-skin shoes with gold thread. The smarter ones think it the correct thing to have designs on them. Every one of them is engaged in business, the value of which may be ten thousand pieces of gold (Tarafdar.Ibid.).

This demonstrates that the middle or upper middle class people of that period used to lead a luxurious life.

10.3.1 Men and Women of the Society

Aristocrat people were habituated to lavish expenditure and voracious in eating. Their dresses were embroidered with pearls and precious diamonds. They had a habit of demonstrating their wealth, power, dignity, aristocracy and status by exhibiting their gold or diamond ring. Wives middle and upper middle class people were often pleased with ornaments of gold and the thinnest cloth of silk. The women had the right to come out at night time to meet one another. They were also permitted to rejoice by drinking wines and playing tunes with music. The women folk had a unique hand in musical instruments (Rahman, 1956: 238).

10.3.2 Marriage, Houses and Religions

There was no convention of polygamous marriage system among the Hindus. Muslims were habituated to polygamous marriage system. Houses in which people lived were well furnished and decorated. People were conscious about hygiene and sanitation. People’s living rooms were often attached with bathrooms. Ma Huen marked that Lakhnauti was the greatest city. It was a city of beauty and splendour. It was the capital of the Sultanate where the Sultan lived with his cabinet. Most of the citizens of it were Muslims. Minority people were Hindus.

10.3.3 Foods and Dresses

In the description of Ma Huen, the inhabitants of Bengal were shown divided into two sections- the Hindus and the Muslims. Their culture was different. The Hindus did not use to eat beef. Hindu husbands and wives did not use to eat together.

The high officials, of both Hindus and Muslims, used to wear white turban. They also used to wear long cloaks or upper dresses with lace ribbon of gold and a belt around the neck. They used to wear shoes with sharp head. Muslim Sultans and *Ujirs* (adviser to the Sultan) also wore *Tupees* (a cap, religiously *Sunnat* to wear). The women folk used to wear short dress with a long piece of silk cloth (like *Urna*) around the body. They also used gold and valuable stones as ornaments. Among the ornaments they used, were gold necklace, finger rings on both hands and legs, anklets on feet, armlet and bangles etc.

10.3.4 Pastimes

Indication of different kinds of entertainments, sports and games of the people during the regime Iliyas Shahi dynasty has been cited in the description of Ma Huen. People wearing various and queer types of dresses acted in drama with the involvement of band concert. Information is kept about a kind of group singers who used to entertain the aristocrats by singing door to door at the lunch hour of the day. Magicians were to demonstrate different plays on the streets. Besides, animal fair, bullock race, cock fight, wrestling etc. were common pastimes and entertainments.

10.4 Law and Punishment

People got good governance, law and justice in the period of Bengal Sultanate. People themselves possessed an admirable sense of truthfulness, honor and dignity. Ma Huen wrote high of the honesty of the Bengal people. They seldom practised lying or cheating in executing trades and business even in cases of loss. Criminals would be punished to beating with heavy bamboo rods or had to be banished for a severe case. Right of living was given to the top criminals also. Reference of ‘hanging’ or ‘killing’ was not found as a legal measure.

Sikander Shah had different titles as ‘*Al Muzahid Fee Sabil Ur Rahman*’, meaning warrior on the way of Allah, ‘*Imam Ul Azam*’, meaning the chief of

the Imams, which were found in the discovered coins and inscriptions (Maity, 1991). 35 years of his good governance has obtained a good place in history for the prevailing peace and happiness among the commoners of Bengal.

Ghyasuddin Azam Shah ensured the rule of justice in his period. He himself was unhesitant to stand before the *Qazi*; the chief justice of the state. The judiciary of his state never indulged injustice even if the man is the Sultan (king) himself. There is a Saga:

Once the Sultan had to stand at the court as a convict and the *Qazi* (justice) penalized him perfectly as per the law of the state permitted. Ghyasuddin praised the *Qazi* saying that if he had not given the verdict properly, he would surely have to die. The *Qazi*, drawing his stick, replied, “If you had denied the verdict of law, you would have to bear it’s beating as punishment”.

The arms of the law were long in his period.

10.5 Architecture

Most of the sultans of Iliyas Shahi dynasty, including Iliyas Sha himself, were greatly fond of erecting architecture. The Iliyas Shahi sultans built different mosques, khanka (resort for the saints), mausoleum, palaces, castles and fords.

Iliyas Shah was the founder of the city of Hajipur and built a bath like the Shamsi bath of Delhi which caused a great war occurred through the invasion of Firoz Sha Tughlak.

Ekdala castle where Iliyas Shah took shelter was set up in the Ekdala village of present Dinajpur district. It was an enormous infrastructure made of mud and soil, which was completely surrounded and protected by forests on one side and by the rivers- Balia, Chiramoti and Mahananda on the other. Iliyas, taking shelter here, technically made Firoz negotiate with him and return from Bengal.

Sikandar Shah having passion and affection for the *Sufee saints* constructed a mosque at the mausoleum of Molla Ata near the district of Dinajpur in 1363 A.D. He also constructed the historic Adina mosque, which made him

immortal. The mosque is a remarkable edifice of Muslim architecture, incomparable in history. It is 507 feet in length and 285 feet in width.

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah concentrated on setting up different architectures. A great number of mosques, resort, gates, bridges, memorials, palaces and courts were constructed during his reign. It is a saga in Khulna area that one of his military high officials Khan Jahan Ali set up a Muslim colony there. It has also been discovered from the inscription written on the mausoleum of Khan Jahan Ali (1459 A.D) in Bagerhat that Jessor and Khulna regions were taken into the Muslim empire during Nasiruddin's reign. If it is so, then it comes that the historic architecture the Shat Gambuj Mosque (a world heritage site of Bangladesh) also received an indirect inspiration of Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah.

Sultan Burbak Shah contributed to erecting the architectural edifices. The king's palace of Goura and the big gate called '*Dakhil Darwaza*' are emblems of his architectural deeds.

Shamsuddin Yusif Shah, son and successor of Burbak Shah, also contributed in erecting architectural edifices in Bengal. The historical *Kadam Rasul Mosque*, *Dasar Bari Mosque* and *Tanti Para Mosque* of Gaura are his deeds. In the view of Cunningham, the Loton Mosque of Gaura is also his contribution (Banglapedia).

10.6 Patronization of the Scholars

All through the Iliyas Shahi dynasty regime, patronization of the scholars and creative persons was an excellent trait among the sultans.

10.6.1 Patronization by Iliyas Shah

Iliyas Shah had great veneration for the saints and Sufee-saints. It is noticed that like the *Sadat*, *Ulama* and *Mashaikh*, the non-Muslim hermits and saints (*sannyasis*) also received stipends from his state. As a nation builder like a true national leader, he gave equal treatment to all his people (Ahmed. Ibid.). It is known from 3 inscriptions and some coins of his time that Sufee-saints of his era were greatly patronized by him.

10.6.2 Patronization by Ghyasuddin Azam Shah

Ghyasuddin Azam Shah, having passion for the scholars and poets, possessed much respects for such people. He had relation with the sufee like Shayakh Noor Kutub-E-Alam, Shama Balkhi etc. Once he invited the great Persian poet Hafiz to visit his country. It is told that Hafiz completed one of his unfinished poems. It is found in the writings of some historians from Arabia as well as of the sub continent that Ghyasuddin set up two Madrasas in the cities of Mecca and Medina, which brought his international reputation as a pious leader, and a lover of education. Ghyasuddin established bilateral friendship with Jounpur. He also exchanged envoys with the emperor of China. It is written in the '*Tarikh-E-Mubaraq Shahi*' that contemporary Chinese emperor Yung Lu took policy of keeping relation with Bengal and the exchange of envoys continued for a span of time which is evident in the books of Ma Huen that Ghyasuddin sent envoys and gifts to the Chinese emperor in 1405, 1408, 1409 A.D and the Chinese emperor also did the same. Thus, they also patronized the historians and writers of the foreign countries. Some historians believe that Ghyasuddin patronized Krittibas in writing the great Indian classic epic *Rmayana* (Rahim, Chowdhury, Mahmud, Islam. Ibid.). These all created an extra ordinary socio-economic image of his reigning period.

10.6.3 Patronization by Burbak Shah

Burbak Shah also being a learned Sultan, patronized the scholarly persons. Two of his titles 'Al Kamil' and 'Al Fazil' remarkably express his affection for knowledge. With his patronization, Maladhar Bose wrote Sri Krisna Bijoy and was declared 'Gun Raj Khan' by the Sultan for his genius. His son Satya Raj was also entitled as 'Khan' by Sultan Burbak Shah.

11. Conclusion

The Iliyas Shahi rulers were completely independent because of the close tie between their government and their freedom loving people. Sultans of Iliyas Shahi dynasty were efficient enough to make a well-balanced social cohesion with their country people of all races which helped them resist foreign invasion e.g. the attack of Delhi and their regime has been placed to a distinguished position in the history of India (Karim. Ibid.). Undiscriminating Hindu-Muslim ego, appointing the Hindus in the higher ranked posts of the Sultanate, paying due respect to the country's language

and literature, providing assistance to the scholars and poets of the country etc. are distinctive features of the rulers which created a new stream in the politico-socio-economic life of Bengal during the reign of the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty. Bengal obtained a nature of rejecting the foreign rule and became sensitive to its own sovereignty. They contributed greatly in the unification of the nation through language based nationalistic approach, expanding Bengal trades and commerce to the outer world, creating architectural edifices and in bringing a strong social cohesion. (Rahim, Chowdhury, Mahmud, and Islam. Ibid.).

In fine, the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty gave a new shape to the Bengal keeping its freedom strengthened, sovereignty unharmed, people cooperative, trade and commerce spread around the outer world and the country's own art, culture and intellect patronized and well evaluated.

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