DOI: 10.9744/kata.16.2.61-70

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

# Co-Constructing an EFL Student Teacher's Personal Experience of Teaching Practice

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## ABSTRACT

This study inquires into how a student teacher's pedagogical narrative is co-constructed with a teacher educator. Viewed from a dialogic approach to narrative analysis, the current inquiry is to discover the ways these characterizations confirm and expand previous findings on (double-) voicing and positioning. Using Wortham's tools for analyzing voicing and ventriloquation, the present findings suggest that voicing is accomplished through positioning oneself in relation to other characters and interlocutors, as reflected in the use of specific references, evaluative indexicals, and quotations. A closer scrutiny to voicing also sheds light on a narrator's positioning with characters in a past narrated event and with an interlocutor during storytelling, as well as on how the interlocutor views the narrator's positioning. The narrator's interlocutor, through questioning in a storytelling event or beyond, resists the narrator's finalizing tendency of constructing her self. Resisting narrative finalization is important in reflecting on English-language-teaching (ELT) experiences.

Keywords: Dialogical narrative analysis, voicing, positioning, self-reflexivity, unfinalizability

## INTRODUCTION

That English language teachers should be reflective has been suggested in the ELT literature (e.g., Ferrara, 2011; Richards & Farrell, 2011; Wyatt, 2010). However, it is still important to examine student teachers' narratives that contain stories of interpersonal tensions in the context of English language teaching in an EFL setting like Indonesia between a mentor teacher and a student teacher, especially when the latter lacks in self-reflexivity. Being reflective is the main ingredient of being self-reflexive (or self-critical), but there is a fundamental difference between reflection and self-reflexivity. In Edge's (2011) view, reflection "assumes the continuing identity of the person doing the reflecting," while reflexivity (or "self-reflexivity" in this paper) "questions that continuity…" (p. 38). Extending Edge's view, I regard self-reflexivity as space for a person doing a reflection to disrupt and challenge his or her beliefs and past practices that have shaped the person's current sense of identity.

Inquiring into a story of a student teacher who lacked self-reflexivity can be done through analyzing an interviewer's ways of questioning a narrator's story details, which might occur in the storytelling event, or as the interviewer analyzes the recorded interview with hindsight. To make such inquiry possible, I will first review briefly the literature on the conceptualizations of *voice*, *voicing*, and *double-voiced discourse*. Elucidations of these concepts make it possible to understand an EFL student teacher's self-construction and identifications, as well as conflicts, in an educational setting more fruitfully. The ways and why an interlocutor challenged a narrator's constructions of self and others—during and after a storytelling event—will be discussed, too. This paper ends with some possible implications for pedagogical practices of, and further research into, extending conversations based on a person's characterization of self and others and positioning in his or her narrative of personal pedagogical experiences.

## A DIALOGICAL-NARRATIVE-ANALYSIS APPROACH AND ITS INSIGHTS INTO NARRATED ELT EXPERIENCES

The notion of voice plays a major role in dialogical narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008; Wortham, 2001; Wortham & Gadsden, 2006), especially when researchers are analyzing how narrators, together with interlocutors (Wortham, Mortimer, Lee, Allard, & White, 2011), position and characterize themselves and others. Inspired by Bakhtin (1981), Wortham (2001, pp. 38, 40) states that "[s]peaking with a

certain voice… means using words that index some social position(s) because these words are characteristically used by members of a certain group." In the light of his theory of voicing, Wortham believes that people ascribe voices—drawn from existing language repository, social "positions and ideologies from the larger social world" (p. 40)—to describe others. Moreover, voicing is the process of "juxtaposing others' voices in order to adopt a social position of one's own" (Wortham, 2001, p. 63). This is related to the notion of "double-voiced discourse" in which "the speaker's meaning emerges in part through an interaction with the voice of another" (p. 64). Jane's autobiographical narrative of her experiences of dealing with 'failed caregivers' (including her mother) and 'abusive institutions' (e.g., an orphanage), whose (double-)voices were Ventriloquated by Jane, constitutes a dominant part in Wortham's study (see e.g., p. 131).

How others' and the narrator's own utterances (or voices) in the past or during storytelling are said may determine how the narrator positions him- or herself with others being narrated. Positioning also transpires when a narrator is telling a story to one or more interlocutor. As Davies and Harré (2001, p. 264) put it, positioning is "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines." Inherent in this process is how a narrator positions him- or herself (or "reflexive positioning") in relation to others (or "interactive positioning") in the past or during storytelling. In Jane's case (Wortham, 2001), she distanced herself from past abusive institutions, for instance, and attempted to align with the interviewer during storytelling (e.g., being a cooperative interviewee in) or wanted the interviewer to align or empathize with her.

My present study is expected to contribute to the literature of dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), especially in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. At an initial stage, DNA pays attention to an interaction that occurs during storytelling. In Talmy's (2011, p. 27) view of interactional approach to studying narrative, "data analysis focuses not just on content, but on how meaning is negotiated, knowledge co-constructed, and the interview is locally accomplished." But what makes DNA differ from a heavy focus on how an interview is locally accomplished is how potential conversations beyond a single interview can be initiated. In the field of TESOL, Barkhuizen (2011, p. 396) argues that research writing shapes a narrative in its own right that transcends "narrative artifacts," including audio-recorded story and its transcript, that reflect what happened during a storytelling. Going beyond narrative artifacts is in line with Frank's (2012) commitment to *unfinalizability*, in the light of Bakhtin's (1984) work: "dialogical narrative analysis is not to summarize *findings*—an undialogical word, with its implication of ending the conversation… —but rather to open continuing possibilities of listening and of responding to what is heard" (Frank, 2012, p. 37, italics in original). Thus, not only a narrator, but also an interlocutor, as a person who is capable of producing "*rejoinder[s]* in an unfinalized dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 32, italics in original), is implicated in voicing. Wortham (2001, pp. 40-44) argues that subsequent utterances or paralinguistic cues (e.g., laughter or cry) may account for some emergence of obvious meanings for earlier utterances that may at first be open-ended. The question is what if more cues and verbalized elaborations very minimally or never materialize in a conversation, such that some earlier utterances remain relatively open-ended or indeterminate? Even when subsequent utterances and non-verbal cues emerge, which make earlier cryptic meanings become relatively more lucid eventually in a conversation, subsequent reading(s) or hearing(s) of the same narrative (Riessman, 2008) may result in questioning of similar or other parts of the narrative that are overlooked in the (earlier) conversation.

Based on the review above, one overarching question that guides my current inquiry is how a pedagogical story is co-constructed by a narrator and me, as an interviewer, in a storytelling event. In addressing this question, emerging issues and the implications of attending to co-construction of a pedagogical narrative during and beyond the storytelling event will be discussed.

## METHODOLOGY

### Context and Participant

In the present study, I delve into a narrative told by a female EFL student teacher, Helen (a pseudonym), who had just completed her teaching practicum in a junior high school in a town in Central Java, Indonesia. Helen's narrative of a "good" experience is part of a larger set of data I collected from 19 students (see e.g., Mambu, 2009). Her story is chosen here because she is one of the most vocal student teachers in terms of challenging a mentor teacher. The data is also exemplary in terms of how I as an interviewer and a teacher-educator challenged her positioning quite considerably.

### Data Collection Procedure

I asked my students including Helen to share their "good" and "bad" experiences during teaching

practicum they had just completed. The students were free to determine what they wanted to mean by "good" or "bad" experiences, as long as they were related to what happened during their involvement in teaching practicum at various high schools in a town in Central Java, Indonesia. The data collection took place in early 2007 and underwent three phases of narrating for each student: (1) in a written form, (2) in an interview, and (3) in a written form again—all of which were to be the same story (Chafe, 1998) for the "bad" or "good" experience respectively. The first written form was used because I assumed that students would have some time to think and reflect on their personal teaching experiences in a less face-threatening way. As the second telling was also about the same story they had composed in the first round in written form, I assumed that the students felt readier to talk about it with me and my fellow interviewer. Furthermore, by asking my participants to write their narratives in the first round, my colleague (Tom, a pseudonym) and I had the chance to prepare probing questions during the second telling in a sociolinguistic interview format. The average time split between phase (1) and phase (2) and between phase (2) and phase (3) was two weeks. In both written and spoken narratives, I gave my students freedom to use Bahasa Indonesia (i.e., my and my students' first language) when they were blanking on an English word or phrase. In this study, however, I will rely on Helen's second telling only in my analysis, as it is more robust: both Tom and especially I chimed in, asking her to elaborate on certain details. Regardless, her second telling is still relatively as open-ended as other tellings, thus making it still suitable to analysis of unfinalizability.

The notion of "revisit[ing] narrative data … years after their initial collection" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 152) is relevant here. In 2007, I was interested in knowing how narrators, in view of Labov (1972), structured and evaluated their stories, which culminated in Mambu (2009, 2013). In the current paper, I am revisiting how Helen, one of the narrators in my collected data, and I co-construct or challenge her positioning within and/or beyond a storytelling event.

### Data Analysis

To answer the question of how I co-construct or challenge Helen's story, I will use Wortham's (2001, pp. 70-75) some "analytic tools for identifying voicing and ventriloquation." The main reason is that Wortham's tools make it possible for me to understand how Helen positioned herself in relation to other characters in her narrative—the mentor teacher, in particular. In voicing her positioning with the mentor teacher—whether it was on Helen's own initiative or after being probed by her interviewers, Helen embedded some other characters' voices. These voices will be identified first in order to facilitate further analysis on how they are ventriloquated or appropriated. This voicing and positioning may transpire in Helen's use of "reference" (i.e., "the picking out of things in the world through speech"), "quotation," "predication" (i.e., the characterizations of "objects picked out"), and "evaluative indexicals" (i.e., "particular expressions or ways of speaking… associated with particular social groups when members of a group habitually speak in that way," including her use of first and/or second language). Based on some portions of Helen's second telling, I will identify voicing through these tools that help analyze how Helen depicted herself and other characters. See Appendix for transcription conventions.

By "co-constructing" Helen's narrative (or her characterizations of self or others) I mean either (1) my positioning that was aligned with hers (i.e., when I agreed with her) or (2) when I initially intended to ask for clarification, but then, in retrospect as I perused my data, became a subtle series of questions that may challenge her credibility, among others, as far as my view as a teacher educator is concerned.[i]

## FINDINGS

### Helen's Construction of Others' Voices

A person's construction of others' voices is one of the main ingredients in storytelling and is subject to one or more interlocutors' agreement or challenge. Prior to discussing how an interlocutor co-constructs a narrator's story, I will elaborate on ventriloquation grounded in the present data. Ventriloquated (or "quoted") voices sound like "real" wording produced by other characters in a narrator's story. These voices may support, or be parodized by, the narrator to imply his/her main point. In my current data, there is an evidence for the latter (i.e., parody; see Excerpt 1).

**Excerpt 1.** "Four is for [the mentor teacher] herself"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | Helen: | But u:h suddenly (.) uh some day (.) I found (.) on my: (.) friends' observation form [(.) that (.) yang sudah dinilai oleh [(.) pamong teachernya ((which has been graded by the mentor teacher)) u:h (.) he (.) and she |
| 11 | Joseph (Jos): | [hm<br>[°guru pamong° |
| ... | ... | ... |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 32 | Jos: | Uh before you go on with your story (.) do you know (.) why °uh or° why do you think the teacher wouldn't give a four for [her students (.) at first |
| 33 | Helen: | [oh uh: |
| 34 | | Actually uh I have- uh in my school there are two pamong teachers. |
| 35 | | Uh my own pamong teacher (.) said uh to me that (.) u:h the other pamong teacher suggest (.) my own pamong teacher (.)that (.) uh she (.) should not give [(.) four |
| 36 | Jos: | [four |
| 37 | Helen: | because four is for (.) u::h= |
| 38 | Jos: | [[=the guru pamong= |
| 39 | Helen | [[=but (.) heʔe ((yes)) buat guru pamong its- itsel- herself |
| 40 | Jos: | Oh ((smiles)) |
| 41 | Helen: | Buat guru pamong sendiri ((for the mentor teacher herself)) |
| 42 | Jos: | Hm |
| 43 | Helen: | Jadi jangan buat students nya ((so not for her students; laughs)) |
| 44 | Jos & Tom: | ((laugh)) |

Helen told Tom and I that 4 would not be given to student teachers, but she came across some 4s in her friends' teaching observation forms that had been graded by the mentor teacher (line 10). I was then curious why the mentor would not grant a 4 (see line 32). Helen's response was not only expressed in L1, but it also comprises a quotation (lines 37-43): "Because four is for … heʔe buat guru pamong… herself; buat guru pamong sendiri, jadi jangan buat students nya [because 4 is for … yes for the mentor teacher… herself, so not for her students]." Overall, lines 35, 37, 39, 41, and 43 could have been ventriloquated from the speech of the colleague of Helen's mentor.

From Wortham and Locher's (1999, p. 116) perspective, the incorporation of mentor's colleague in the mentor's speech constructed or quoted by Helen is an "embedded metapragmatic construction," a specific form of double-voicing. Such a construction occurs when "one quote [is embedded] within another and thus provide[s] the opportunity to voice and double voice two speakers *and* their relationship between those speakers" (p. 116, italics in original). In this specific context, Helen and her mentor seem to be "animators" (or "the person[s] uttering the message") of the grading policy and the mentor's colleague is apparently the "principal" (or "the person responsible for the substance of the message"; Goffman, as cited in Wortham & Locher, 1999, p. 120). Helen's mentor was likely to be the principal of the message (i.e., that 4 would never be given to student teachers), but as she violated this, she might have simply animated her colleague's adopted (and yet infringed) policy. Moreover, the animation of the mentor's speech can be interpreted as not only Helen's distancing from the inconsistent mentor, but also an implied distance between Helen's mentor and the mentor's colleague. The distance between colleagues then seem to have become a commodity for Helen to criticize their grading policy.

In this manner, the mentor's colleague might have been blamed, too, but this does not seem to be Helen's main point. As Helen, Tom, and I laughed (line 44), I am certain that at this stage Helen's narrative self-construction as a vehement critic of her mentor's policy—that is, Helen's main point—was successful. Assuming that the mentor's colleague statement was true, I have now begun asking why 4 is only for mentor teachers. Another series of questions that resist finalized interpretations of this seemingly simple theme of inconsistency are as follows: What is the relationship between Helen's mentor and her colleague? Did Helen's mentor have a lower rank or position than her colleague? If this is the case, was it fair that she was too vehemently criticized by Helen, because the mentor might have some disagreement with her colleague regarding the grading policy?

## My Attempts as an Interlocutor to Co-Construct Helen's Voicing

In the earlier section, the ways Helen constructed herself and her mentor were delineated, with my inquisitive rejoinders attempting to keep imaginary dialogues concerning pedagogical issues with Helen going. In this section, my focus is on how I co-constructed or questioned Helen's self- and other-characterization, especially during the storytelling event, and how I view my interaction with her as I write up this paper.

*Questioning or challenging Helen's narrative self-construction.* During Helen's storytelling, occasionally I attempted to construct her narrative by aligning with her position (e.g., my laughter that ridiculed the notion that "4" is for mentor teachers only; see line 44 in Excerpt 1 above) or by asking Helen (desperately) to elaborate on how exactly she did the inductive method in four attempts (see lines 65-81, 135-137, 141-161, and 167-177 in Excerpt 2 below). The latter began by my double questions in lines 65 and 66: "How did you do the inductive method? What was the topic at that time?" In retrospect, my question frames my hidden intention—"How on earth did Helen apply the inductive method, if she kept claiming it didn't work?" and yet immediately attempted to be specific about how it started: "What was the topic at that time?" To this Helen replied, "if I'm not mistaken it was about future, will and going

to" (lines 67 and 69). And then I followed up on my earlier question regarding how exactly she implemented the inductive method (line 72). She only said that she gave many more examples and then asked the students to "draw the patterns and conclusion by themselves" (lines 73, 75). She repeated saying "give examples' several times" (lines 75, 147), with no mention of any example. As an audience, I was not satisfied with Helen's explanation: "What are the examples of 'will' and 'going to'?! Show me that you really did your best before you keep claiming that the inductive method did not work!"—uttered only in my heart. But Helen started to describe that her students were passive and not very intelligent (lines 77, 79, and 157). I tried to dig out more by saying less straightforwardly (line 80), but Tom then interrupted (after line 81). I tried to revisit this later on during the storytelling, though I failed to do it effectively: "Oh okay, so you compared will and going to, but the students didn't respond" (line 135), which was very tersely responded to with "ya" (line 136; or, to paraphrase her remark, "That's correct"). Overall, Helen was more interested in constructing her mentor as her enemy rather than building her own pedagogical credibility by showing to me how well she was in applying the inductive method, apart from simply saying that she had given the students many examples.

**Excerpt 2.** "How did you do the inductive method?"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 65 | Jos: | How did you do the inductive method? |
| 66 | | What was the topic at that time? |
| 67 | Helen: | Uh: if I'm not mistaken it was about (1.0) future= |
| 68 | Jos: | =future |
| 69 | Helen: | =will and going to= |
| 70 | Jos: | =will and going to= |
| 71 | Helen: | =ya |
| 72 | Jos: | =and then how did you do °the inductive method?° |
| 73 | Helen: | Uh give the examples |
| 74 | Jos: | Mhm |
| 75 | Helen: | Ya (.) >°examples examples° and then< I asked the students to draw [the patterns and conclusion (.) by themselves |
| 76 | Jos: | [conclusion? |
| 77 | Helen: | But (.) ((laughs)) uh because (1.0) actually the students is uh were- were <u>passive</u> students |
| 78 | Jos: | Mhm |
| 79 | Helen: | And (.) ya °as what I said before (.) they were not so intelligent° |
| 80 | Jos: | Hm so you tried to compare between [the-<u>will</u> and going to |
| 81 | Helen: | [heʔe ((yes)) ya |
| ... | ... | ... |
| 135 | Jos: | O:h (1.0) okay hm so you compared will and going to (.) [but the students didn't respond |
| 136 | Helen: | [Ya |
| 137 | | Ya ((laughs)) pasif |
| ... | ... | ... |
| 141 | Helen: | [I was observed [(.) by |
| 142 | Jos: | [You were observed [by (--) |
| 143 | Helen: | [observed by my pamong teacher and also my peer. |
| 144 | Jos: | And your peer. |
| 145 | | What did they suggest that you should improve? |
| 146 | | Because you said that it didn't work? |
| 147 | Helen: | Ya give more examples ((laughs)) give more example I should give more examples |
| 148 | | But (.) I thought (.) [it was |
| 149 | Jos: | [do you think (.) you have given them mu- mo- uh many examples? |
| 150 | Helen: | Yes ((laughs)) |
| 151 | Jos: | oh okay and they said (.) they are not enough? (1.0) |
| 152 | | I mean that [the guru pamong said that [they're not enough? |
| 153 | Helen: | [uh yeah |
| 154 | | [I should (.) ask (.) or |
| 155 | | encourage (.) u:h the students more [(.) to be active |
| 156 | Tom: | [mhm |
| 157 | Helen: | Tapi (.) gimana? Emang .hh ((But how, in fact)) basically they were passive students |
| 158 | | I: couldn't [(--) |
| 159 | Jos: | [so you think that it's not because you are a bad teacher? |
| 160 | Helen: | ((laughs)) u::h I didn't think so ((laughs)) |
| 161 | Tom: | ((laughs)) |
| ... | ... | ... |
| 167 | Jos: | Uh (.) ((clears throat)) hang on hm (3.0) ya (.) so (2.0) >I'm still interested in the teacher's comments on- at that time after< after (.) your teaching. |
| 168 | | °So° (.) <u>give</u> more examples |
| 169 | Helen: | Ya |
| 170 | Jos: | And then? |
| 171 | Helen: | encourage= |
| 172 | Jos: | Encourage |
| 173 | Helen: | =the students <u>more</u> [(.) to be active |
| 174 | Jos: | [Mhm |
| 175 | | to be active |
| 176 | Helen: | To think by themselves (1.0) °but° it didn't work ((laughs)) |
| 177 | Jos: | It didn't work |

Even when I shifted to another topic of how she was observed by her mentor, she asserted again that the mentor wanted her to provide more examples (line 147). When I did another round of confirmation check of whether she indeed had given more abundant examples (line 149), Helen said "Yes ((laughs))" (line 150), which was still regarded as insufficient by the mentor. I think because I felt totally desperate in figuring out the narrative of how exactly Helen taught her students with the inductive method, I asked something that may sound intrusive. In

retrospect, I view myself as profoundly attempting to challenge Helen's positioning that made her secure as a vehement critic of her mentor: "so you think that it's not because you are a bad teacher?" (line 159), which was laughed at by both Helen and Tom, and downright negated by Helen (line 160). From this observation, the transference of hatred (toward the mentor teacher and the inductive method) seems to have prevailed not only in the past narrated event, but also the storytelling event: Helen resisted my attempt to flesh out details of the inductive method. Put another way, she was more preoccupied with critiqueing the mentor and her preferred method than focused on explaining to me what happened chronologically in class in greater detail. Power differentials between Helen and myself, especially after I cornered her somewhat harshly (line 159), may account for such resistance on Helen's part, but this speculation should be pursued in its own right elsewhere.

*Aligning with Helen's positioning, and questioning it.* Having almost given up, I tried again to ask her what she did next after giving more examples (lines 167, 169; Excerpt 2). Helen replied: "encourage [onto which I latched 'encourage,' expecting more elaboration] the students more to be active [again I latched onto it 'to be active, to think by themselves'], but it didn't work ((laughs))" (lines 171-176). And this insistent negotiation on my part resulted in a new inspiration for me to shift my attention to the mentor. I asked her if the pamong teacher could encourage the students herself (line 178; Excerpt 3). And her answer seems to be the punchline of our co-construction of her narrative: "I didn't think so ((laughs))" (line 179). Helen went even further to conclude that her mentor is "NATO." She suddenly seemed to forget what it stands for, but after I said the second word, she ecstatically, with a louder sound, said: "NO ACTION TALK ONLY ((laughs))" (line 185). NATO originally stands for North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Many English and Indonesian speakers, however, appropriated this acronym creatively to mean "no action talk only." Indexically, when someone is evaluated as "NATO," the person belongs to a group of myriad other people that talk but do not act. What is more, making a pun of NATO is a double-voiced discourse in itself: appropriating or refracting (Bakhtin, 1981) an existing acronym to index an entirely different context. Extending Canagarajah's (2011, p. 406) finding in an academic writing context, NATO here is part of Helen's "voice strategies." The "dominant code" of NATO (in English) has been "[boldly experimented with]" by English-speaking people and Indonesians, and is further appropriated by Helen to denigrate the mentor teacher. Labeling her mentor as NATO also suggests that Helen made use of a very strategic interactive positioning (Davies & Harré, 2001) that dissociated her with the mentor in the past narrated realm and convinced her present audience to align with her, spicing it up with laughter after saying what NATO stands for out loud.

**Excerpt 3.** NATO—No Action Talk Only

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 178 | Jos: | Hm do you think your teacher- your pamong teacher could (.) encourage the students herself? |
| 179 | Helen: | I didn't think so ((laughs)) |
| ... | ... | ... |
| 183 | Helen: | So (.) I can (.) conclude that (.) she apa ((what's the term)) NATO? |
| 184 | Jos: | No Action [Talk Only |
| 185 | Helen: | [NO ACTION TALK ONLY ((laughs)) |

Commitment to unfinalizability has now led me to think in what ways I, or student teachers, have been NATO ourselves. Yes, Helen (and maybe I) laughed at the mentor's being NATO. But I begin wondering if language instructors like me have been so once in a while in our pedagogical journey. How, then, can we guard ourselves against NATO in language teaching profession? Furthermore, the mentor teacher's being NATO is a finalizing cue that may have accounted for Helen's (and her friends') failure in implementing the inductive method in their real teaching practices. That is, the mentor did not provide a good role model in utilizing the method. But my question is nonetheless why Helen and her friends could not apply the method without a proper example from the mentor. Is this a failure on the part of our EFL teacher education program to provide sufficient teaching preparation and more supervision besides that of the mentor's?

## Discussion

The dialogic approach to narrative analysis (DNA) sheds light on the process through which a narrator's constructions of self in relation to other people (1) occurred in a storytelling event and (2) were responded to or challenged (a) synchronously in the storytelling event, and (b) beyond (i.e., the current analysis of what happened when I elicited Helen's story; see Figure 1). This process allows us to look into story contents (or themes), positioning through language forms (or use), and commitment to unfinalizably "responding to what is heard" (Frank, 2012, p. 37). In terms of content, Helen's narrative case reflects conversations in a larger context in terms of similar stories where student teachers challenge their mentor teachers (see Mambu, 2009) and blame their students. Emerging themes in Helen's narrative have also become bases for my rejoinders that attempt to call into question her (or my own) finalizing inclination in the storytelling event, despite my co-

construction of (or support to) her positioning (e.g., the NATO episode). With specific regard to positioning, stories of mentor-trainee relationship, represented by Helen's narrative, encapsulate power relations (1) in a past narrated event (e.g., a student teacher like Helen characterizes herself as being in a lower position than her mentor and yet characterizes herself as being in a higher position than his/her students; cf. Jane who was in a lower position the dominant society at the time [Wortham, 2001]) and (2) in a storytelling event when power relations in the past are re-enacted.

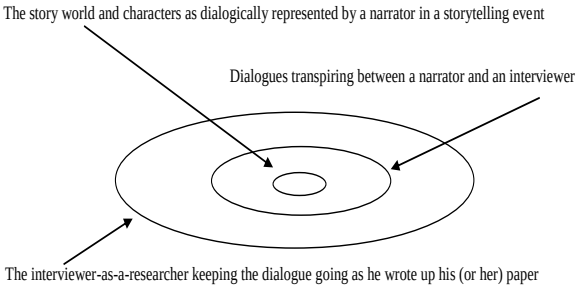


**Figure 1**. Multi-Layered Dialogues as a Narrative is Analyzed

In the storytelling event, Helen never confronted her mentor teacher frontally the way Jane in Wortham's (2001, p. 3) study did to a city orphanage woman (e.g., "bring me my baby") in a past narrated event. Helen's sense of agency only surfaced during the telling of her complaints about her mentor teacher's unfair grading and insistence on the inductive method by quoting her mentor and the mentor's colleague and by labeling the former with the predicate "NATO." However, this is a kind of "low-agency" which is restricted to demonstrating her "construction of a victim role," to use Bamberg's (2012, p. 106) words. Her agency during storytelling increased, though, as she resisted explaining much more fully her implementation of inductive method. From my view as someone who was actively involved in the interview, Helen did not want to be further victimized by me, a researcher who questioned her credibility as a student teacher. She got over my challenge by referring back to her mentor (e.g., using NATO as an evaluative indexical to mock the mentor). With her agency, she also became defensive and at times even blamed the students during the interview. I did not address this during the interview, but in retrospect I find it necessary for EFL teacher educators and student teachers to learn from Helen's positioning (i.e., demonizing a mentor teacher and blaming students' low proficiency) to problematize the tendency of merely reproaching other people, while accentuating one's own "comportment" as "morally" or pedagogically "superior to that of another protagonist" (Ochs & Capps [2001, p. 47]), and to be more self-reflexive.

As my meaning was negotiated, which turned out to fall flat when I insisted on knowing much more about how she utilized the inductive method during a teaching practicum session, we eventually came up with a "locally accomplished" goal, to appropriate Mann's (2011, p. 27) phrasing. For instance, we problematized the credibility of the mentor teacher by labeling her as NATO. As such, I personally abandoned my agenda to pursue the detail of her utilization of inductive method, and succumbed to my interviewee's agenda to simply criticize the mentor, thus confirming her initial alignment with me to say negatively about the mentor.

However, my questions during Helen's storytelling, especially about how she used the inductive method, remain alive. Time constraints forced me to stop the conversation with Helen. At least another question has emerged, though, as I analyzed the transcript: Can student teachers themselves or I be potentially NATO? Such a question acts as a centrifugal force, in Bakhtin's (1981) view, that keeps defying Helen's centripetal force of finalizing her story and my own centripetal force (e.g., of aligning with Helen to simply blame her mentor). In light of Edge's (2011) view, it is possible to ask whether ELT stakeholders, especially English language student teachers and teacher educators like Helen and me, are self-reflexive enough to disrupt and question their (finalized) views and past pedagogical practices that have shaped their current sense of identity (e.g., as a person who keeps hating his or her former mentor teacher; as a teacher who is always against a certain teaching method like the inductive teaching strategy).

## CONCLUSION

The current study delves more closely into what emerged dialogically between an interviewer and a narrator. Overall, this study confirms current literature (e.g., Wortham, 2001; Wortham & Gadsden, 2006) and expands on a nuanced understanding of a narrator's positioning by means of voicing (i.e., appropriating and ventriloquating) and evaluating characters in past narrated events through a storytelling event. Furthermore, dialogical narrative analysis allows stories told by narrators claiming to have been oppressed (e.g., Helen) to be listened to with critical ears from an audience (e.g., me as an interviewer in the storytelling event and a researcher who is writing up this paper) who problematizes things finalized by the narrators (e.g., that the inductive method never works for passive and dumb

students). An audience may still co-construct a narrator's story nicely by empathizing with a narrator's past misery (e.g., that Helen was unfairly graded), but an insatiable interlocutor also has the right to be committed to keeping dialogues moving to less finalizable, less predictable directions (Bakhtin, 1984; Frank, 2012) that the narrator—or even the interlocutor him- or herself—may not be aware of prior to, during, or even (long) after a face-to-face conversation takes place. As Bell (2002, p. 209) puts it: "Narrative [analysis] lets researchers get at information that people do not consciously know themselves." In turn, the audience of this paper will have similar or distinct responses to my inquiry into Helen's story.

## Implications and Future Directions

Having ears to listen critically to a narrator is not enough. Finding some blind spots in a narrator's story can be a humbling experience for an interviewer, too, when the interviewer is aware of possible shortcomings s/he might have were s/he in the narrator's position. I hope, therefore, that when reading this study EFL student teachers like Helen and any educator can self-reflexively begin taking stock of their pedagogical beliefs and practices before they label fellow teachers or students as NATO, "not consistent," "not intelligent enough," and the like. There is always a temptation to finalize one's own belief that some person is such and such. There is also a likelihood that someone else, if a person fails to be self-reflexive or insists on finalized belief(s), will exert some sort of unfinalizability force to problematize the person's deeply ingrained conviction(s). If I encounter other simplistic criticisms by a student teacher to a mentor, for instance, I will ask: "Have you ever made an unfavorable policy such that you sense your students begin to dislike you?" or "What would you feel if you were a mentor who later knew that your mentee stabbed you on the back for some reason you consider untenable?" I wonder how my student interviewee would respond to such queries. More importantly, probing questions may emerge from real interactions with student teachers, and will expectedly supplement a normative demand of being reflective in "microteaching and[/or] teaching an ESOL class" (Richards & Farrell, 2011, p. 4) among student teachers in particular and any English language teachers in general.

Viewed from a dialogic approach to narrative analysis, Helen's case also sparks more questions. In a full-blown ethnographic study, it will be worthwhile to triangulate researchers' (or ethnographers') own narratives when they observe how mentors guide their mentees before teaching a session and how the former provide feedback to the latter after teaching a session (cf. Mann & Tang, 2012). Another question includes, but is not limited to, how student teachers can reflect on, if not also problematize, past tensions (e.g., with mentor teachers) and come up with envisioned transformative teaching scenarios that will benefit themselves, students they teach, and mentor teachers. This question is specifically geared toward mobilizing student teachers, as well as mentor teachers and university supervisors, to question their tendency to have hopelessly finalized, non-self-reflexive views of themselves, their pedagogical beliefs, actions, and realities around them. The scope of being a self-critical (or self-reflexive) teacher-ethnographer (see Heath, Street, & Mills, 2008, pp. 122-125) may not be provided a priori in language teaching manuals; it has to be discovered and addressed through ongoing dialogues that involve language teacher educators, mentor teachers, student teachers, and other school stakeholders.

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[i] Due to space constraints, I will not analyze Tom's interaction with Helen. After all, it was I who did most of the questioning.

DOI: 10.9744/kata.16.2.71-76 ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

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# Male and Female Attitudes towards Swear Words: A Case Study at Binus International School

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## ABSTRACT

Swear words are generally used to articulate anger, pain, excitement, frustration, or surprise. It is often imitated by children who may not really understand the meaning of the swear words. This survey-based study aims to identify the swear utterances of male and female teenagers, find out their commonly-used swear words, and investigate whether bilingual male or female students of Grade 12, Binus International School, Simprug, Jakarta, use more swear words. A combination of multiple choice and open-ended questionnaire was constructed and the analysis revealed that swearing is inevitable and becomes a part of the male and female language repertoire. Both groups of students are said to employ the use of Indonesian and English swear words in carrying-out conversations in order to release stress and express intense emotions. However, male students tend to use more swear words that are associated with sexuality.

Keywords: Swear words; attitude; teenagers; gender differences

## INTRODUCTION

Swearing is a natural human practice in different corners of the globe. Ljung (2011, p. 4) defines swearing as the use of utterances containing taboo words. People swear for a number of different reasons. Many people believe that uttering swear words is often times socially unacceptable, but recent studies indicate that it helps relieve stress, anger, and tension (Jay 2009, Ljung 2011, Wang 2013, Stephens 2013). As stated by Stephens (2013), a senior psychology lecturer at Keele University: "[…] swearing probably works by making people feel more aggressive, in turn setting off the fight or flight response" (p. 651).

Pinker (2008) states that swearing is universal (p. 327), and that the words and concepts used in swearing may be considered taboo (p. 328) in some cultures. He further argues that in the history of world languages, we may observe that "many words stay taboo for centuries" (p. 329) but dirty words may have turned "clean" (p. 328). For example, in George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* in 1914, the character Eliza Doolittle utters an expression "not bloody likely" which was considered very rude and offensive at that time. However, in *My Fair Lady* musical play in 1956, the swearword *bloody* has lost its offensive nature and now it has been widely heard on TV and in regular conversations (p. 328).

Pinker (2008) further describes that there are five categories of swearing: dysphemistic swearing, abusive swearing, idiomatic swearing, emphatic swearing, and cathartic swearing. Dysphemistic swearing has a dysphemistic effect that makes the listener think about negative matter (e.g. That's *bull shit!*). The second category, abusive swearing, is used to abuse or insult others (e.g. *Fuck* you *asshole!*). The third one is idiomatic swearing, which is used to arouse interest or to show off (e.g. *Fuck*, man!). The fourth category, emphatic swearing, is used to emphasize something (e.g. It was so *fucking* big!). The last one, cathartic swearing, is often used when something bad happens and the speaker is undergoing a negative emotion (e.g. *Damn* this coffee!). In any case, swearing is likely to occur in almost any cultures, and it is basically associated with letting off one's emotion.

A cross-cultural linguistic study about swearing was conducted by Ljung (2011). The study, which reports the results of the application of a questionnaire to native speakers of different languages, indicates that despite the fact that swearing is often times regarded as an offensive and disrespectful behavior, it is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that is understudied and is worth for investigation (p. 3). According to Ljung (2011, p. 79), swearing in many languages contains euphemistic taboo expletives that are used to express

pain, surprise or annoyance. Some examples in his data are as follows (p. 79):

American English : *Son of a gun!* for *Son of a bitch!*
English : *Copulating inferno!* for *Bloody hell!*
French : *Mortbleu!* 'death of blue' for *Mort Dieu!* 'God's death'
German : *Verflucht (nochmal)!* 'forsworn' for *Verdammt (nochmal)!* 'Damn!'
Italian : *Cavolo!* 'cabbage' for *Cazzo!* 'dick'
Portuguese: *fogo!* 'fire' for *fodo!* 'fuck'
Russian : *Yaponski bog!* 'Japanese god' for *Yob tvojú mat!* usually translated as 'fuck our mother')
Spanish : *Caramba!* for *Carajo!* 'dick'
Swedish : *Gästrikland!* (name of a province) for *Jävlar!* 'devils'

Swearing does not always refer to the behavior of uneducated or low-social class people. All cultures, men and women, with no social boundaries are likely to practice this. Yet, it can be perceived that men and women differ in many ways. According to the "difference theory" (among others Uchida, 1992; Tannen, 2001), men and women are biologically different and so it is not surprising that they have different ways of speaking, although both groups live in the same environment. They establish different relationship with the society as if each belonged to a different environment and culture and the result of which is consequently reflected in their language. Lakoff (1973) and Spender (1980), on the other hand, see gender differences in speaking due to the inequality of power between men and women. Power, according to them, is often identified as a male patriarchal order. In relation to swearing, Ljung (2007, p. 93) claimed that "women seem to strive towards using the standard variety." This implies that women tend to use milder and fewer swear words than men. Likewise, Edlund (2007, p. 64) states that "male conversation tends to revolve around topics of public concern and is focused on establishing status." Sollid (2009) also reveals in her Swedish data that "Swedish men use swear words under all circumstances than women and they utter more offensive words when they swear."

In the Indonesian-environmental context, the issue about gender differences in the use of swears words has not been widely explored. A study by Suyanto (2010), focuses on the swear words used by five male Javanese university students living in a boarding house in Semarang. The study, which was based on 16 informal conversations, reveals that Javanese swear words are commonly used among peers to indicate solidarity and friendship.

To this effect, this mini research stems from our desire to identify the swear utterances of 15 male and 15 female bilingual Grade 12 students from Binus International School Simprug Jakarta and to find out the kinds of swear words commonly used by the two gender groups. Most specifically, it aims to investigate which group applies more swear words and also to find out the attitude of the students towards the use of swear words.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The participants of the study are thirty students of Grade 12 (15 male and 15 female) aged between 17 and 19 years old from Binus International School, Simprug, Jakarta. All of them are Indonesians and speak Indonesian as their first language. As they attend an international school, they have to speak English at school. English, thus, is their second language.

### Research procedures and analysis

A combination of multiple choice and open-ended questionnaire consisting of four items was constructed to allow the participants to give their own responses. The survey was conducted on October 21, 2013. Informal interviews were also utilized to clarify responses and obtain more in-depth data.

The first open-ended question in the survey (see Appendix) is used to find out the kinds of swear words that are often used by the male and female participants. It is also used to see which group employs more swear words. The multiple choice questions (no. 2, 3 and 4) are used to find the students' attitude and the reasons behind their swearing utterances. For the first open-ended question, the respondents are asked to write five swear words that they commonly use. For the multiple choice questions, they are allowed to give multiple responses. The analysis, therefore, is based on the number of responses given by the respondents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the study about the swear words used by the male and female students, the factors that lead them to swear, the age group in which they often swear and the media that has influenced them to use the swear words. Figure 1 below describes the choice of swear words by the male and female students.

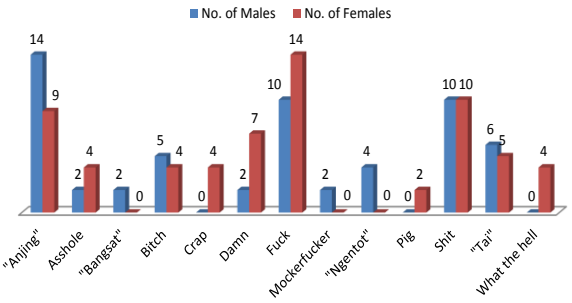


**Figure 1.** Swear words used by male and female students

It can be seen from the above table that the male students used four Indonesian and six English swear words, while the female respondents used only two Indonesian swear words and eight English swear words. The swear words *anjing*, *fuck*, and *shit* came out to be the top three for both male and female respondents. Fourteen male students and nine female students used *anjing*, ten male and fourteen female used *fuck* and ten male and female students stated that they used *shit*. Although there is a difference between the male and female participants' use of *anjing*, both groups stated that they could express their feelings better in their lingua franca. They mentioned that there was a very intense emotional connection when they conveyed the expression. Moreover, according to the participants, the swear word *anjing* was tantamount to comparing a person to an animal. The animals in this case, (e.g. *anjing* and *pig*) are associated with impurity and uncleanness.

Since all the respondents in this study are bilingual speakers, it is not surprising if they swear in their L1 and L2. Harris (2004, p. 241) argues that swearing in L1 is considered to be more emotional if the speaker is more proficient in his/her L1. However, when someone acquires two languages in early childhood, it is likely that they "elicit similar physiological reactions" (Harris et al., 2006, p. 266). In this case, the male respondents seem to have more swearing references in their L1 than the female counterpart.

Amusingly, the result of the study also shows that more female students (14) used the swear word *fuck* than male (10). During the informal interview, one female participant disclosed: "It is just a plain expression. It does not mean anything." While a male paticipant stated: "I heard this swear word used by almost all my friends. I am influenced yet I do not relate it to any bad connotation." This confirms Harris's (2004) claim that L2 is the language of emotional distance, and thus swearing in L1 is perceived to be more forceful than swearing in the later-learned languages (p. 223). Interestingly, however, both gender groups have more L2 swear words in their linguistic repertoire.

The responses of both genders are also the same with regard to the use of *shit*. However, one of the female participants said, "I use this swear word because it denotes that the person I am cursing is a piece of garbage." Pragmatically, using this swear word can be considered as conveying the speaker's communicative intention towards the interlocutor (cf. Wang 2013).

In relation to the different categories of swear words used by the participants, the data show that the male respondents use more words that are related to sexuality (*fuck*, *ngentot*, and *mockerfucker*) than the female counterpart (*fuck*). Interestingly, the number of swear words for the category of animals is the same for both male (*anjing*, *bitch*, *bangsat*) and female (*anjing*, *bitch*, *pig.)* However, the use of expletives can be attributed more to the female respondents (*shit*, *tai*, *damn*, *asshole*, *what the hell*, and *crap*) than the male respondents *(shit*, *tai*, *dam*, *asshole*). As stated by Jay (2009), men are less likely to use euphemisms publicly or privately. They use obscenities to signal group membership and to discourage outsiders from joining the group. This was proven by two male participants in this study who stated that "they swear to signal the female counterparts to back off from the boys' talk."

In relation to the reasons of swearing, the teenaged students reveal different reactions, as indicated in Figure 2.

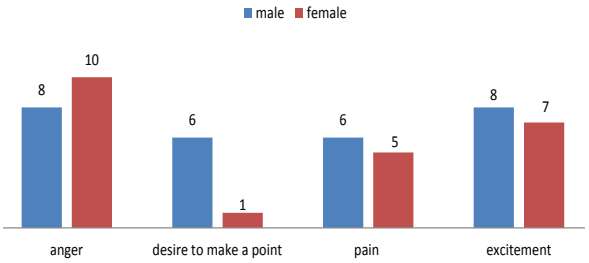


**Figure 2.** What often times leads you to swear?

In answering the question "What often times leads you to swear?", eight male and ten female respondents say that they swear due to anger, six male and one female swear due to their desire to make a point, six male and five female say that it is due to pain, and finally eight male and seven female mention that it is due to excitement. From the four indicators, it is revealed that *anger* shows the highest rate for the female participants. One of the female participants stated that "I swear when I am very angry. It releases my intense feelings. After that I feel a lot better." Interestingly, another female participant revealed: "After my utterances of swear words, I say sorry. I feel that I say bad words."

Seemingly, the data presented in Figure 2 shows that the male participants use swear words in any of those facets. It can be viewed that six of the male participants have more desire to use swear words than female counterpart (male: 6; female: 1). While eight male and seven female participants express their use of swear words when they are excited, this seems to be the case to most people across cultures. According to Montopoli (2010), Joe Biden, the current Vice President of the United States, swore due to his excitement over the passing of the health care legislation on March 24, 2010 when he congratulated President Barack Obama with an outburst, "This is a big f***ing deal." This can be viewed that more people are gradually accepting the fact that swearing is inevitable and it becomes a part of their linguistic repertoire in carrying out conversation and in releasing stress and even expressing intense emotions.

The question "In what age group do you often swear?" is to know in which age group the male and female students utter swear words.

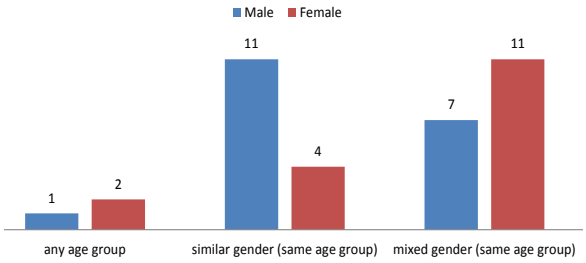


**Figure 3.** In what age group do you often swear?

Figure 3 shows that the female participants swear more in two different groups, namely any age group and mixed gender with same age group. The male participants, on the other hand, show a predominant swearing in similar gender with the same age group only. Two of the female students swear in any age group than the male counterpart (1), while in mixed gender with same age group, female participants (11) swear more than the male (7) participants. In similar gender with the same age group, female participants (4) swear less than the male ones (11). In relation to the mixed gender situation, a male participant commented: "I am not comfortable to swear in the presence of a female." Interestingly, it is revealed in this study that female participants do not show a sign of slowing down with regard to their use of swear words in a mixed gender with same age group. As stated by Jay (2009, p. 156), there is a tendency that "men and women swear more frequently in the presence of a group consisting only of their own gender than in mixed-gender contexts."

Considering that the younger generation nowadays are increasingly exposed to the media, the question "What media has influenced your use of swear words?" is to find out the types of media that have influenced the students in using the swear words.

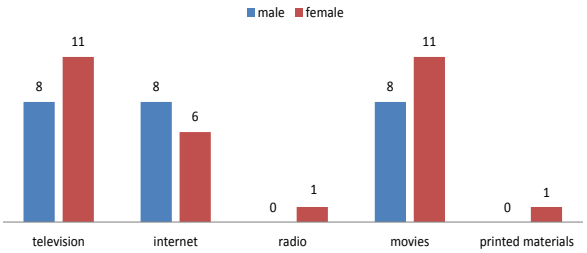


**Figure 4.** Media influence on the use of swear words

The findings indicate that television and movies are the media that have the highest influence over the use of swear words. Eight of the male participants and eleven of the female participants stated that they learnt the use of swear words from the two types of media which are television and movies. Internet influence ranks the second with eight male and six female participants. Finally, both radio and printed materials did not show a significant difference between male (0) and female (1) participants. It is noteworthy to mention that printed materials in this study include newspapers, tabloids and novels. According to a female participant, "I seldom read since I have a lot of homework to do in my different subjects. I guess those are my priorities." Another female participant added: "Once you watch a movie or television, translation is also provided. This exposes me more to swear words." Further, a male participant mentioned: "I am not fond of reading. Prefer to watch news in the television and watch movies."

Based on the responses of both gender groups, the female group seems to be more predominantly influenced by media. They stated that television and movies have greater clout since they utilized their visual and auditory senses every day. This confirms Jay & Janschewitz's (2013) finding that a greater portion of people who are influenced by media to swear are women. This is due to a greater proportion of women in public.

## CONCLUSION

The results obtained in this study indicate that Lakoff's (2004) idea concerning 'females are the experts at euphemisms' still holds true. Despite the fact that the female participants in this study employ more swear words than the male counterpart, female participants still apply more expletives than their male counterpart when they converse.

It is also interesting to underscore that both male and female participants prefer to use the swear words in

their L1 (e.g. *anjing, tai, bangsat*) to exhibit a greater impact in their emotional resonance. On the other hand, the male participants use more swear words that are associated with sexuality than the female counterpart.

Likewise, the use of swear words is inevitable when the speakers want to express anger, pain, excitement and desire. Female students in this aspect swear more when they are angry while the male participants swear in all facets. In addition, females employ more swearing in any age group and in mixed gender (same age group) in comparison with their male counterparts. And apparently, the impact of media like movies and television are contributory factors for the exposure of the participants to use swear words.

In conclusion, swearing is inevitable and it becomes a part of the male and female linguistic repertoire. The notion that male swears more than female is not proven in this study. Both gender groups are said to employ the use of swear words – both in their L1 as well as in L2 – in carrying out conversation in order to release stress and express intense emotions. However, further research on the use of swear words in naturally occurring data should be conducted to see whether the swearing expressions do occur in real-life situation.

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**Appendix: The questionnaire**

This is a survey questionnaire to discover the students' perception towards swearing. Please answer as honestly as possible. All the participants will remain anonymous and the data given will only be applied to this study.

1. What are the top 5 swear words that you are using?

1._____ 4._____
2._____ 5._____
3._____

2. What often times leads you to swear? (You may tick more than one choice.)

_____ Anger
_____ Desire to make a point
_____ Pain
_____ Excitement
_____ Insult someone

3. In what age group do you often swear? (You may tick more than one choice.)

_____ any age group
_____ similar gender (same age group)
_____ mixed gender (same age group)

4. What media has influenced your use of swear words? (You may tick more than one choice.)

_____ Television (series, soap opera)
_____ Internet
_____ Radio
_____ Movies
_____ Printed Materials (e.g. novels, newspapers, tabloids)

DOI: 10.9744/kata.16.2.77-86

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

# Rick Riordan's Intention in Writing *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* and the Reception of the Readers

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## ABSTRACT

This research studies *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. The objectives are to describe the Greek mythology presented in the novel, the intention of Rick Riordan, and the reception of the readers. The methodology is hermeneutic referring to Recoeur's theory. It was found that, first, the Greek mythology presented in the novel is blended with American real life; second, the main character is a son of a Greek mythology god and a real American woman and, third, the setting is a blend of places in Greek mythology and real American cities. The intention of Riordan is to open up American culture that is lived through by Americans, that a part of American culture is Greek mythology. The readers accept that the novel fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation of aesthetic enjoyment and of the incorporation of Greek mythology into real American life.

Keywords: Riordan; *Percy Jackson*; Greek mythology; hermeneutic; American life

## INTRODUCTION

Rick Riordan, best-seller novelist born in San Antonio, Texas, USA in 1964, is a prolific novelist. He has written as many as five novels of *Percy Jackson* series, six novels of *The House of Olympus* series, three novels of *The Kane Chronicles* series, the first book of *The 39 Clues* series, seven novels of *Tres Navarre* series, and two stand-alone books. The novels, in particular *Percy Jackson* series, are very popular, not only in America, but also in Indonesia. The film *Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief* is often broadcast in Indonesian televisions. It is very popular not only among young readers to whom it addresses, but also among adult readers. Oldon (2007) says, "*The Lightning Thief* is a great book for adults and kids. I've already recommended it to a couple of adult friends who experienced the same kind of can't-put-it-down pull that I did." (p. 1). A comment in Krishna (2013, p. 5) says, "These books seem to appeal to all ages."

USA is a Judeo-Christian country. The pioneers of the establishment of the nation and country were puritan immigrants from England. Puritanism was held firmly by the early immigrants establishing a colony in Massachusetts Bay, the colony which initiated revolution against British colonialism. O'Callaghan (2002) notes, "They passed laws to force people to attend church and laws to punish drunks and adulterers. Even men who let their hair grow long could be in trouble." (p. 18). Marsden (1996) says that eventually Amarican people in general liked to talk about America as New Israelits choosen by God to play a role in a new age of redemption. (p. 25). Puritan Ethics which were based on strict translation of the Bible have become the social ethic until today.

How can a novel having to do with Greek mythology become best seller in a country of which the foundation has been laid down by Puritanism? The *Harry Potter* series, as reported by Barrs (2003), have been attacked by many people in USA.

> There have been many passionate attacks on the Harry Potters series by many people and in particular by Christians. This has accord in United States – much more than in Britain or other places. In the USA, Christians on the radio, in magazine articles, on the television, on the websites, and on the growing number of books, have attacked this series very strongly. There are Christian Schools where the books have been banned. (p.1).

Most criticisms on *Harry Potter* say that *Harry Potter* teaches "satanic witchcraft" (Harry Potter Criticism, p. 1). Rick Riordan books, if not about witchcraft like

the Harry Potter series, are about Greek mythology which belongs to paganism. Wulandari (2004, p.1) finds that *Percy Jackson and The Lightening Thief* has the same formula as *Harry Potter*. The Calico Critic (2009, p.1) says, "The similarities to the Harry Potter books were so many I eventually quit counting them all. I almost felt like this author was simply telling his own Potter story and just changing a few of the basic tenants around."

The novel is about the adventure of the main character, Percy Jackson, who is a demigod, the son of Poseidon, Greek god of the sea, and an American Woman, Sally Jackson. His quest is to find Zeus' thunder bolt which is stolen by Luke, the son of Hermes, for Kronos, to return back to Zeus. In the quest he encounteres many monsters from Greek mythology. The setting of place is cities in USA; the entrance to the Underworld of Greek mythology, the Hades, is California, and the Olympus where Zeus dwells is located in New York, on top of Empire State Building. So it is a blend between Greek mythology and real American life. However, not all American readers accept it. The following quotation form The Calico Critic shows the readers' rejection of the blend.

> However, unlike *Potter*, this story wasn't able to get me to suspend disbelief in the reality of the tale. I can believe there's a Hogwarts School of Wizardry. I can believe there's a magical land of Oz and that Superman can fly. These stories have a way of getting me to believe their realities within the confines of their stories. But for some reason, I frequently was drawn out of the story in *Thief* and just couldn't accept its premises. Monsters in the St. Louis Arch? The entrance to Olympus in New York and the entrance to the underworld in California? Riordan gives reasons for these locations, but I still couldn't buy it as a reader. (The Calico Critic, 2009, p. 1).

So, it is strange to know this novel won best-seller status. What has made American people like to read this novel? This question makes us curious to study this novel more deeply.

In accordance with the background, the objectives of this research are, first, to describe the Greek mythology presented in *Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief*, second, to describe the intention of Rick Riordan, the writer, to present Greek mythology in the novel, and, third, to describe the reception of the readers toward the presentation of Greek mythology in the novel.

The readers' reception will demonsrate why the novel is so popular, not only in America, but also around the world.

## METHODOLOGY

This research belongs to cultural studies because the object of this research belongs to popular culture which is, according to Storey (2007), central in cultural studies (p. 3). As for the methodology, Barker (2005) explains, that "On the whole, cultural studies has favoured on qualitative methods with their focus on cultural meaning." (p. 25). McGuigan (1997) says it is "eclectic in the method it uses, drawing liberally from across the humanities and social sciences." (p.1). So far, Barker (2005) notes, "Work in cultural studies has centered on three kinds of approach: *ethnography*, […]; *textual* approaches, […]; a series of *reception* studies." (p. 25). So, in accordance with the focus of this research, the proper approaches of this research are textual theory, intentional theory, and reception theory.

Textual analysis is to reconstruct Greek mythology presented in the novel and it is focused on narrative analysis. Thwaites, et al. (1995, p. 118-131) explains "A narrative is a structured sequence of events in time," while "Events are the basic units of a story. They constitute the paradigm choices that are combined into the narrative syntagm." (P. 122). Narrative has two manifestations, 'plot' and 'story'; "**Plot** is the *narrative as it is read, seen or heard* from the first to the last word or image. That is, like signifier, it is what the readers perceive", (p. 121), while "**Story** is *the narrative in chronological order*, the abstract order of events as they follow each other. That is, like signified, story is what the reader conceives or understands." (p. 121). The theories really derive from the theory of tragedy in Plato's *Poëtics* and the theory of *Syuzet* and *Fabula* in Russian Formalism.

An element in narrative which is important to note is point of view, that is, the strategy taken by the writers to tell their stories, either from first person, third person, or objective point of view. Thwaites, et al. (1995, p. 127) says that "Narrative point of view is a specific kind of textual address." In the first person point of view, the narrator is one of the characters, very often the main character. The narrator narrates his/her story and makes account of what happens from his/her point of view. When making account of other characters, the first person narrator becomes third person narrator. Third person point of view, or eagle-eyes point of view, is a strategy of telling the story from third person, presumably the writer

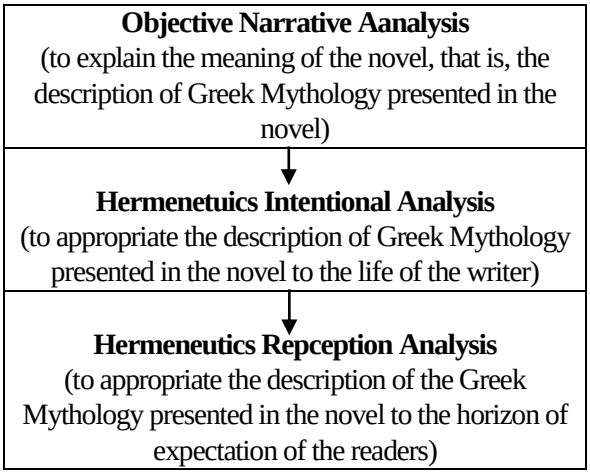
himself/herself. Objective point of view is a strategy of telling stories in which the characters tell their own stories. This point of view is also called dramatic point of view because it is like drama in which the characters speak themselves.

Intentional theory belongs to hermeneutics, even, the term 'hermeneutics' , as explained by Milner (1996), is used to refer to theories of 'interpretation' to 'understand' the intended meaning of others. (p. 44). As for the meaning of a text, Ricoeur (1975) says that according to the common trait, "which constitutes text as text is the fact that the meaning of the text has become autonomous in relation to the intention of the author" (p. 90.). This means, Ricoeur says further, "The question is no longer to define hermeneutics as an inquiry into the psychological intentions which are hidden in the text, but as the explication of the being-in-the-world shown by the text. What is to be interpreted in a text is the projection of a world which I could inhabit." (p. 93) Ricoeur proposes the concepts of 'distantiation' and 'appropriation'.

Distantiation is placing the text at a distance, as explained by Ricoeur (1975) in the following quotation, "This concept of distantiation is the dialectical counterpart of belonging-to in the sense that our manner of belonging to a historical tradition is to be related according to a distance which oscillates between remoteness and proximity." (p. 92). As for appropriation Ricoeur says that it is responds "to the thing of the text. It is therefore the counterpart of distantiation which established the text in its own autonomy in relation to the author, to its situation, and to its original destination." (p. 94). Moore (1990) explains that distantiation constitutes the 'objectivity' of the text and makes possible to approach the text in two ways, first, the readers suspend the judgment regarding the referential dimension of the text, that is, the approach adapted by struturalist, and, second, "to disclose the non-ostensive references of the text […] to understand the world projected by the text; that is, what it refers to, what it speaks about." (p. 95). As regards appropriation Moore (1990) explains that "Appropriation is movement from sense to reference." (p. 97). In an interview, Ricoeur (1996) explains that a completely objective study kills the text; inversely, reading which does not pass through all the mediations of an objective and structural approach is only a projection of the subjectivity of the reader on the text. "Consequently, it is necessary that subjectivity be held in some way at a distance and that the appropriation be in some way mediated by all the objectifying activities." (p. 92).

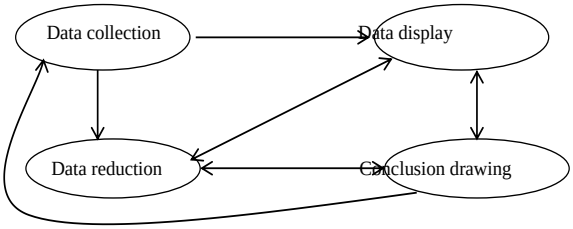
As regards reception theory which also falls under hermeneutic, Iser (1999, p. 79-80) says that "comprehension is an individual act of seeing-things-together […]. With a literary text such comprehension is inseparable from the reader's expectation, […]. The process is virtually hermeneutic." Jauss (1996) says that the author's anticipation of the specific reception can be achieved "first, by the familiar standards or the inherent poetry of the genre; second, by the implicit relationship to familiar works of the literary-historical context; and third, by the contrast between fiction and reality, between the poetic and the practical function of language, which the reflective reader can always realize while he is reading." (p. 84). So, reception is a kind of appropriation of objective analysis to the reader's expectation.

Accordingly, the frame of the methodology of this research is formulated as follows.




The data of this research consists of primary data and secondary data. The primary data, that is, the words, phrases, and sentenses constituting plot, setting, and dialogues, is taken from the novel *Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief* by Rick Riordan, published in 2005 by Hyperion Books (in the following text it is abbreviated *Percy Jackson*). The secondary data, that is, interviews with Rick Riordan and reviews and criticism toward the novel, is taken from internet. The samples are purposively selected based on the theme of this research.

The analysis is conduted through the following steps. First, the data is classified in accrodance with the objectives, second, the classified data is analysed inductively using the theoires presented in the methodology as the tools of analysis, third, drawing conclusion. The whole process from data collection, data reduction, data display, through conclusion is conducted interactively. (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 23).




## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Greek Mythology Presented in Percy Jackson

Percy Jackson, the hero of the novel, was a demigod, the son of Poseidon and a mortal woman, and suffering from ADHD and dyslexia. He was suspected by Zeus of having stolen the master bolt, Zeus' weapon. Firstly Zeus suspected Poseidon, his brother, the god of the sea. However, a god could not usurp directly another god's symbol of power, it was forbidden by the most ancient divine laws. Zeus' suspicion on Percy became stronger when Poseidon claimed that Percy was his son. Zeus believed that Poseidon, who broke the oath of not having children from mortal women anymore, had Percy steal the master bolt. To prove that he was not the thief and to prevent the war between Zeus and Poseidon, Percy conducted a quest to find the master bolt to give it back to Zeus.

In the quest, Percy was accompanied by Annabeth, the daughter of Athena, and Grover the Satyr. Percy's weapon was a famous sword called Anaklusmos or Riptide which was handed down to him by Chiron the Centaur. Luke, the son of Hermes, gave him a pair of winged sneakers which then were worn by Grover because the sky area was too dangerous for Percy. Annabeth had an invisible Yankee's cap which was able to make the wearer invisible. They decided to travel to the west in order to reach the entrance to the Underworld in Los Angeles. He encountered several Greek monster and Ares, the god of war, who told Percy that his mother was still alive. His entering the Underworld made Hades, the god of the Underworld, angry. Hades believed that Percy had not only stolen the master bolt, but also his helm of darkness that allowed him to become a shadow.

Later on, Percy and his friends learnt that it was not Hades who had stolen the master bolt, instead Kronos who plotted fight among the Big Three: Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. They also realized that Ares was in Kronos' side because he tricked him by putting the Master Bolt in Percy's backpack. Percy then fought against Ares and defeated him by hurting his heel. Ares gave the helm of darkness to Percy and Percy returned it back to Hades. Percy reached New York City to give the master bolt to Zeus in Olympus located on top of Empire State Building and thereafter, knowing that his mother was still alive, Percy returned to his apartment to see that his mother was there already. Percy then returned to the camp where he had been trained and met Luke who confessed of having stolen the master bolt for Kronos to destroy Zeus.

The demigods presented in the story are all originally created by Riordan himself and thus it leads into his creation of such a new mythological story. Although owning the same name, Percy and the original Perseus are two different characters. Riordan once confessed that he decided to create Percy as the son of Poseidon instead of Zeus' to make things more difficult for him to face (Rick Riordan - 2009 National Book Festival). Percy and the other new demigods, all made up by Riordan, still own the basic characteristics of their parents who are Greek gods and goddesses. There are so many examples of this if we look at all the demigods in the novel. Clarisse is depicted as a strong girl of her father, Ares, the god of war. Annabeth is depicted as a smart wise girl of her mother, Athena, the goddess of wisdom and battle. Luke does indeed own mischievous and cunning personalities as a son of Hermes, the Messenger, who is identical with thievery. This demigod stole toiletries for Percy when he arrived at Camp Half-Blood's cabin eleven and he admitted in the end of the story that he even stole Zeus' master bolt.

Riordan does also a kind of modernizing the Greek mythological characters as he needs to drag them into the modern world and make them fit into the setting of the novel. He attaches wheelchair to Chiron the Centaur, Hawaiian shirt into Dionysus the god of wine, sandals and short for Poseidon the god of sea, glasses and biker's looks for Ares the god of war, and so on and so forth. Related to the antagonists of the story, Riordan also has his reasons of why they become the villains. If we look at what happens in Greek mythology, Kronos can be classified into the 'dark area' and thus fits the characteristics of a villain. Luke has something happened in the past related to his father, Hermes, and many other things. It becomes his reason why he was on Kronos' side. Ares joined this side simply because he desired a great world war to happen.

This story uses the first person point of view, with Percy Jackson as its narrator. The whole plot is built upon what came into Percy's life, what he described, thought, and felt, and also his conversations with the other characters. This first person point of view shortens the distance between the story and the

readers as they can feel like they are talking to Percy or reading his diary. It also raises the acceptability of the story, helping the readers to understand the situations and accept the blend of modern reality and ancient mythology as Percy himself also could hardly believe in what had happened to him at first.

The first person point of view creates a gap between Riordan and Percy. What Riordan thinks may not be the same as what Percy thinks. It may happen due to the difference on their age. When Percy is apt to think about himself negatively, Riordan tries to say that actually Percy is not like what he thinks he is. Riordan wants to objectify Percy's opinion about himself. Riordan also has said that he is different from Percy: he said he would not be able to stand bravely and fight (Rick Riordan - 2009 National Book Festival).

**Rick Riordan's Intention**

Answering a question in an interview with Erin (2007, p. 1), "How did he get the idea for this series?" Riordan said that his son, Haley, who was studying Greek myths asked him to tell some bedtime stories about gods and heroes. When Riordan ran out of myths his son was disappointed and asked him to make up something new with the same characters. He made up Percy Jackson and his quest to recover Zeus' lighting bolt. When it was done his son asked him to write it out as a book. That is how *Percy Jackson* came into existence.

In an interview with Jennifer Robinson, Riordan said that as a parent he has two sons who are reluctant readers and now they have made amazing strides in the last few years. His older son, Haley who has a dyslexia/ADHD, "will now sit for hours when he involved with a book." Patrick, his second son, has a great time with him reading together and discovering new fantacies. (Robinson, 2009, p. 3).

It is what is called by Recoeur phsychological intention of the writer. Psychologically Riordan was motivated to invent something to encourage his son to read. Being himself a reluctant reader and finding out *Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien interesting to him, Riordan invented new mythologies for his son. But why Greek mythology?

In an on-line interview (An Interview with Rick), when being asked whether Riordan is worried about censorship, because *Percy Jackson* deals with magic and the Greek gods, Riordan (2009) said,

> In Western Civilization, we've always had an uneasy mix between Classical mythology and Judeo-Christian values. As a culture, we tend to believe in one God, but we also grow up steeped in these wonderful old stories about the Olympians. As long as we recognize them as stories that are part of our heritage and long-since stopped being any kind of serious religion, I don't see the harm in learning mythology. In fact, I think you have to know Greek myths to understand where our modern culture came from. It's part of being an educated member of society. […]. If censors want to challenge Percy Jackson on the grounds that it portrays the Greek gods as real, they'll have to censor a good portion of the English curriculum in every state. Greek mythology is studied extensively from grades 1-8, not to mention the Iliad and the Odyssey in the upper grades. English literature draws heavily on Greek mythology. (p. 4-5)

The quotatio reveals that Americans believe in one God, they have been grown up in a society embodied by values deriving from Judeo-Christianity, yet they have also been nurtured by Greek myths. This opens up a fact about American culture lived through by Amricans: a blend of old European culture, Greek-Roman culture, and Christianity. Their formal religion is Christianity, but their ideal heroes are not figures like Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ which is mild like lamb does not fit the ideal heroes. When in a time of low spirit and need of ideal heroes, like the aftermath of Vietnam War, they go not to Jesus Christ, instead to figures like Beowulf or Hercules who is able to defeat enemies single-handedly. *Rambo* is the best example.

The blend is also represented well by the American Great Seal which has two sides, the obverse side and the reverse side. The obverse side bears the image of an eagle bearing a shield having thirteen stripes representing the thirteen colonies on its breast, a scroll in its beak with a sentence '*E Pluribus Unum*' meaning 'out of many one', olive branch representing peace hold by its right talon, and a bundle of thirteen arrows hold by its left talon, representing war and the thirteen colonies. The reverse side bears the image of an unfinished pyramid representing strength with an ever seeing eye on top of it. Under and above the pyramid there are sentences "*novus ordo seclorum"* meaning "new order of the ages" and '*annuit coeptis*' meaning "he (God) has favored our undertakings" which, at the same time, explains the meaning of the ever seeing eye. (Patton, 2000; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington, DC, 13 July 2003, p. 6.).

The image of the 'All Seeing Eye' on the top of the pyramid has several versions associated with several

beliefs and originates in mythology. It can be traced back to Egyptian mythology and the Eye of Horus. Buddhist texts like the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* also refer to Buddha as the 'Eye of the World'. (Eye of Providence, 2013). The account explains the origin of the single eye in mythology, even though not Greek Mythology. That is why when President Roosevelt suggested the Great Seal be put on the one-dollar bill, as explained by Henry A. Wallace quoted by MacArthur (2013), he needed to ask James Farley (Postmaster General and a Roman Catholic) "if he thought the Catholics would have any objection to the 'All Seeing Eye' which he as a Mason looked on as a Masonic symbol of Deity. Farley said 'no, there would be no objection'." This is how the Great Seal of the United States has been put on the one-dollar bill.

So, Riordan's sentences in his answer to the question in the on-line interview, that "Greek mythology is studied extensively from grades 1-8, not to mention the Iliad and the Odyssey in the upper grades", that "English literature draws heavily on Greek mythology", and that "Percy Jackson is part of that tradition", open up the 'world' Americans have been living through.

That America's tradition stems in Greek tradition gives way to comparing USA with Rome, the continuation of Greece, in political and military might. Tsonchev says that "There are astonishing similarities between the rise of the American state and power and the upsurge of Roman Republic." (Tsonchev, 2013, p. 1).

**The Reception of the Readers**

The readers' reception can be classified into two: the readers' asethetic enjoyment when reading the novel and the way the novel opens up Greek mythology to them.

The aesthetic enjoyment comes from the language, the tone, and the plot. O'Sullivan (2013), in her review says that "the series is so popular" because "The writing is a crisp and easy to read." (p. 1). This review is what most readers think about the novels, that is, "easy to read". Krishna (2013, p. 1), for example, says, "They're great easy reads and are definitely good for when you want something light and enjoyable." This "easy to read" of the novel can be proved by the following quotation from the novel (Riordan, 2005).

> My name is Percy Jackson.
> I'm twelve years old. Until a *few* months ago, I was a boarding student at Yancy Academy, a private school for troubled kids in upstate New York.
> Am I a troubled kid?
> Yeah. You could say that.
> I could start at any point in my short miserable life to prove it, but things really started going bad last May, when our sixth-grade class took a field trip to Manhattan— twenty-eight mental case kids and two teachers on a yellow school bus, heading to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at ancient Greek and Roman stuff. (p. 3).

Most sentences in the quotation are simple sentences with ordinary vocabularies that make them light and "easy to read" by young readers, nonetheless adult readers.

Besides easy to read, light, and enjoyable, the tone of the novel also makes the readers like the novel, "The sardonic tone of the narrator's voice lends a refreshing air of realism to this riotously paced quest tale of heroism that questions the realities of our world, family, friendship and loyalty." (Kirkus Reviews in Powell's Books, 1994-2013, p. 2). The sardonic tone appreciated by the review is the effect of the narrator's first person point of view which is relaxed, causal, and trendy as described by Robichaud (2013), "There are so many things that I love this book that I don't know where to start. Firstly, I love how the author uses a relaxed, causal, trendy first-person narrative. It comes off as a terrific-personal journal that is almost believable. I also thoroughly enjoy the comedy embedded within the story…". The 'comedy embedded within the story' is the effect of the sardonic (i.e. ironic/sarcastic) tone of the novel. In a more general term we can say it is 'humorous' as said by Smith "Overall, the writing is excellent with a good degree of humor." (Smith, 2013, p. 3). One of the examples of the humor is when Percy gave the magical sneakers to Grover in Chapter 10.

> "Pretty soon we'd laced the sneakers over his fake feet, and the world's first flying goat boy was ready for launch.
> "Maia!" he shouted.
> He got off the ground okay, but then fell over sideways so his backpack dragged through the grass. The winged shoes kept bucking up and down like tiny broncos.
> "Practice," Chiron called after him. "You just need practice!"
> "Aaaaa!" Grover went flying sideways down the hill like a possessed lawn mower, heading toward the van." (Riordan, 2005, p. 158).

Another example can be found in the same Chapter 10 when Grover teased Percy with the idea that

Gabe's 'aura' is contagious and Percy was contaminated by the 'aura'.

> "Your mom married Gabe for you," Grover told me. "You call him 'Smelly,' but you've got no idea. The guy has this aura.... Yuck. I can smell him from here. I can smell traces of him on you, and you haven't been near him for a week."
> "Thanks," I said. "Where's the nearest shower?" (Riordan, 2005, p. 165).

Such kind of humorous event or dialogue is spread over the pages of the novel that makes it more enjoyable to read.

Other aesthetic enjoyment, along with the humorous allusion to Greek mythology, is the sequence of action which is 'rip-snorting', as said by a review in *Horn Book Magazine,* "Packed with humorous allusions to Greek mythology... along with rip-snorting action sequences, this book really shines." (Powell's Book, 1994-2013, p. 2). Taylor (2009, p. 1) describes it as follows: "Good pacing, decent characterization, interesting ideas, and a good overall balance to the novel." The pace of the actions which is described by Patricia in *School Library Journal* as "the breakneck pace keeps the action from being too predictable" seems to be the source of aesthetic enjoyment from the plot.

This aesthetic enjoyment fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation, that is, that to read a novel is to get enjoyment. Horace said that literature is *dulce et utile*, beautiful and useful. This becomes the reader's expectation when reading literary works.

Besides getting aesthetic enjoyment, the readers also feel like being trasported into the story of the novel. Dragonfly's review (2009) says "I think this book was really interesting and is a great way to get you into Greek Mythology! When you read it, it makes you feel like you are transported into the book!" This is also the effect of first narator point of view of the novel which is described by Robichaud in the quotation above as coming off "as a terrific-personal journal that is almost believable."

The next effect of the first narator point of view is making Greek mythology presented in the novel 'current'.

> As a child, I was fascinated by Greek mythology, so I loved that this book incorporated many of those themes. It's a wonderful way for children to learn about these myths in a fun way. As an adult, it really took me back. Riordan did a great job making the themes that run through the mythology current, and his way of incorporating the gods into the stories is both intriguing and amusing. (Krishna, 2013, p. 1).

Percy Jackson, the narator, is an American boy living todays. This makes his narration which seems like 'personal-journal' current. At the same time it opens up a fact that American readers have quietly and secretly accepted myths, in particular Greek methology, as a part of their culture. This fact is implicitly explained by Barner-Barry (2005 p. 206) "They shared certain basic principles that seemed fundamentally true, such as belief in a monotheistic deity that they called "God" and a reverence for Jesus. *What is being ignored is that religiously and culturally the United States is no longer that way*." (Italic by us). This means that *Percy Jackson* (and the other books in the same series) fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation, that Greek mythology is a part of their history of expectation.

This Greek mythology's seemingly current (real) makes it interesting to the readers, in particular young adult. Teens, as found out by Bright and Bright (2013) in their research, "look for books that provide a real-world link for them, that allow them to imagine ciscumstances that might be a bit beyond their own live, [...]. Even the very popular *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* series are rooted in the real world, but then take the readers into a series of imagined circumstances and places." (p. 11).

*Percy Jackson* is rooted in real world as *Harry Potter* and *Twilig*ht are; the made-believe Percy Jakson as the son of a real American woman and the placing of the adventure in American cities make the novel seems like to be rooted in real world. This also fulfils the expectation of American young adults.

## CONCLUSION

The Greek mythology presented in the novel is blended with American real life; the main character, Percy Jackson, is a son of Poseidon, the god of sea in Greek mythology, and Sally Jackson, an American woman. The setting, the Underworld and the Olympus in Greek mythology, is located, respectively, under American cities and on top of Empire State Building. Second, the intention of Riordan is that by means of the presentation of Greek mythology in the novel Riordan opens up American culture lived through by Americans, that American culture is a blend between Yudeo-Christianity and Greek mythology. Third, the reception of the readers is that the novel fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation of aesthetic enjoyment and of the fact that Americans accept Greek mythology as part of their culture.

The critics and reviews selected as the data for the reception of the readers are not classified according to cultural background. When classified based on cultural background, there may be differences among the critics and reviews due to different cultural background. In the Introduction, a paragraph form Calico Critic is quoted of saying that the critic is not able to accept the premises: monsters in the St. Louis Arch, the entrance to Olympus in New York and the entrance to the underworld in California. Whereas the analysis shows that many readers enjoy the humorous blend of the Greek mythology with American real life. To obtain a prudent finding on the reception of the readers, further research on the reception of the readers classified based on cultural background needs to be conducted.

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DOI: 10.9744/kata.16.2.87-92

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

# The Fall of Emily Grierson: A Jungian Analysis of *A Rose for Emily*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the tragic life of Faulkner's Emily Grierson, a life dominated by patriarchy and traditional Southern social values, which concludes with her living as a lonely recluse in her family's decaying aristocratic house for more than forty years until her death. The key of the tragedy is her father, who isolates Emily from the outside world and tortures her with traditional patriarchal rules and Southern family duty. Emily is expected to lead a life like other girls; however, under the burden of old-fashioned, patriarchal responsibilities, her inner world collapses. This study uses the Jungian concepts of archetypes, persona and shadow, anima and animus to interpret Emily's transitions and her fall. By examining the process through the lens of Jungian theories, the aspects that affect her fall in the patriarchal, aristocratic society, as well as the inherited social values, can be revealed and specified.

Keywords: Patriarchy, traditional Southern social values, Jungian analysis, archetypes

## INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner, the author of the short story *A Rose for Emily*, was born in the state of Mississippi. The state's history and culture inspired him and is reflected in several of his literary works, such as *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. He is a representative American writer and Nobel Prize laureate. Given that the revolution occurred in the late 18th century and the decline of the Southern economy in the late 1860s, by creating the character of Emily Grierson, a southern woman tortured by the traditional patriarchy of her environment and forbidden love, Faulkner expresses his pity and love for his birthplace, as well as a nostalgia for the past. Faulkner was born more than three decades after the end of slavery, which was abolished after the Civil War. On September 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which went into force in January 1863, abolishing slavery and freeing slaves in the North (Masur, 2012). The abolishment of slavery also disrupted the landowner-oriented economy. Being born in a wealthy family, Faulkner witnessed the continued decline of Southern aristocracies and the tragic position of black and white Americans, which inspired his series of works set in his invented locale of Yoknapatawpha County.

Most of Faulkner's novels and short stories deal with the vicissitudes of the society of the American South, the falling of aristocracies, and nostalgia for the Old South. Emily Grierson and the townspeople are traditional American Southerners clinging to the South earlier glory. They are resistant to change, and hence are stuck in the collective unconsciousness of the memorable glory of Southern aristocrats, the Old South that would never be back.

## THE SOUTH AND THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

Coined by Jung, collective unconscious is a term used in analytic psychology, representing part of the unconscious mind. Based on Jung (1968), the collective unconscious is the deepest layer of the psyche, beneath the personal unconscious and ego/consciousness. The collective unconscious is related to the *unus mundus*, an underlying unified psychophysical reality that everything emerges from and finally returns to, a realm of archetypal forms common to all human beings (Casement, 2001; Christopher & Solomon, 1999). Since the collective unconscious is associated with cultural and social factors and can be expressed through archetypal images as commonly accepted symbols, myths, or truths of any particular time or period, it can be used to interpret an individual's

initiation and socialization into the gender role expected of him or her in the development of identity (Christopher & Solomon, 1999). The collective unconscious can be formed immutably through immersion in certain cultures and social values; therefore the same collective unconscious is shared by all those human beings who share the same cultural and social values (Christopher & Solomon, 1999). In other words, the culturally bounded collective unconscious is shared by those with similar experiences, opinions, and values. As Robinson (2010) said, if a group of people live in the same culture, they may share similar experiences, behavior patterns, and social values. These experiences, behaviors, and social values are known as the collective cultural unconscious or cultural archetypes (see Figure 1).

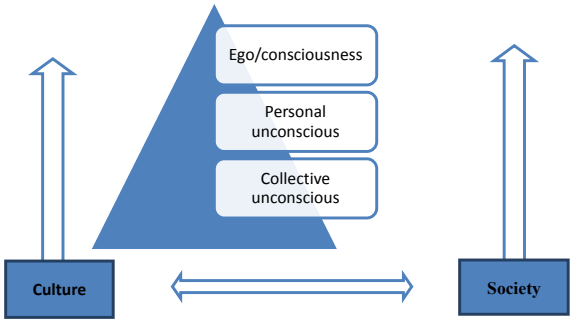


**Figure 1.** The relationship of collective unconscious, personal unconscious, and ego/consciousness under the influence of culture and society (adapted from Christopher and Solomon's (1999) model)

There are some perceived qualities in each collective cultural unconscious or cultural archetype which can be used to evaluate and assess a certain group of people with the same collective memory by what that society or community has experienced. The history of the antebellum South—the world of aristocratic honor, wealthy plantation owners and slavery—remained rooted in the collective memories of Southern communities long after the Civil War (Du, 2007). Therefore, in the story of "A Rose for Emily," when Emily Grierson, a symbol of the Old South, passes away, the whole town attends her funeral "through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument" (p. 29). As Du (2007) describes, she is the symbol of the past, and her death signifies the final separation from the past.

## ARCHETYPES, PERSONA/SHADOW, ANIMA/ANIMUS, AND EMILY GRIERSON

The contents of the collective unconscious are called archetypes. Jung (1968) defined archetypes as primordial patterns of behaviors which can be copied or emulated by all human beings. As Casement (2001) said, archetypes are an inherent part of the psyche, giving rise to patterned tendencies of thoughts and behaviors. The values and viewpoints of human beings are potentially influenced by archetypes that represent different time periods of identification and memory (Matthews, 2002). Based on Jung, archetypes are passive reflections of higher levels of being, be it the creator or the unconscious. However, they become active when they are applied to the phenolmenal, sensory, or conscious worlds, as a reflection of the spiritual world—that is, the *unus mundus*, as Jung (1968) called it. Through the interaction of archetypal images, there come archetypal paradigms of universal symbols, myths, and motifs, such as the shadow, the anima/animus, the great mother, et cetera (Jung, 1968; Matthews, 2002; Neumann, 1955).

*Persona* is a word derived from the Latin, originally referring to the theatrical masks worn by actors in ancient Greece and Rome their performances to signify their roles (Palmer, 2003). Jung defined the persona as the social face an individual presented to the world, allowing him or her to make a positive impression on others while concealing his or her true nature (Jung, 1971). The persona can be revealed in dreams in the disguise of a variety of forms. According to Jung (1989), all human beings wear masks, having certain personas through which to negotiate with the outer world for survival. It could be said that the persona is a human's publicly displayed appearance, linking that person with the social world (Zhu & Han, 2013). According to Palmer (2003), when individuals become dominated by the persona they hide behind, using a public image to flexibly adapt to the outer world, they may suffer from delusions or an inferiority complex, resulting in an inability to relate to others and to accept the complementary sides of themselves. They may find it difficult to remove the mask and live in reality (Jung, 1971). When wearing a mask becomes a habit, an individual may lose sight of his or her true self, thus causing an identity crisis.

In contrast to the persona, the shadow refers to the inferior traits, animalistic instincts, or the unconscious part of the personality that individuals do not want to reveal to others (Jung, 1938). It is always suppressed or controlled, but can be released under great stress. The less the shadow embodied in individuals' consciousness, the more dangerous the shadow is.

Opposed to the dangerous functions of the shadow archetype, Jung (1977) described the anima and the animus as two archetypes meditating between the ego and the inner life. Both refer to the domain of the unconscious transcending the personal psyche. As

Christopher and Solomon (1999) explain that anima is the feminine image in a man's psyche, while the animus is the masculine image in a woman's psyche. Every individual may have psychological features of the opposite sex, one being consciously expressed and one being hidden unconsciously, in order to maintain equilibrium and understanding between men and women (Zhu & Han, 2013). Men who only show their masculine features and hide their feminine ones become unconsciously fragile and sensitive, while women who only show their feminine features and repress their masculine traits become unconsciously strong and stubborn. Hence, it may be said that an individual with an imbalanced anima or animus might suffer mental disorder.

In "A Rose for Emily," Mr. Grierson, Emily's father and the support of the Grierson family, tries to live in the old aristocratic honor, although the family's circumstances have deteriorated since the Civil War. When her father is alive, he chases off every suitor that comes near her, denying Emily the choice of taking up the traditional role of wife and mother and isolating her from the townspeople. Without a mother image, Emily has to turn to her father's image for identity development, resulting in her animus becoming chaotic and ambivalent, torn between living up to her family's heritage of aristocratic honor and the desire to be a loving and beloved wife and mother. Her father expels all her suitors, because he thinks that "none of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such" (p. 32). Having been isolated from the outside world by her father, Emily is not able to fit into the life of the town, but retreats to her archaic aristocratic honor for survival and identification. Mr. Grierson's looming presence, a symbol of that honor, is everywhere in the house, in the "crayon portrait" on "a tarnished gilt easel before a fireplace" (p. 30).

It is in this circumstance tha Emily lives, so that the animus influences the kind of man Emily falls for. She is frustrated in every attempt at courtship until she meets Homer Barron, a man who pays attention to her but is ultimately unwilling to marry her. Homer must have shared the same features as her animus: "a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face"; boys would "follow in groups to hear him cuss the niggers"; he was a man who "would be in the center of group" (p. 33). The townspeople who witness this courtship, are divided in their opinion, as some are of the opinion that they "were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest", but others have the opinion that "a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer" (p. 33).

Although the townspeople pity Emily, Homer is an unlikely match for Emily as there is a big gap between them in term of their social class and origins. Emily family's was once wealthy and she still has family members in Alabama who would not approve of her marrying Homer. Therefore, the ladies and old people begin to gossip about him as well as Emily, saying that, "Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her" (p. 33) as if she needs to be saved from Homer.

## PATRIARCHAL AND NOBLE ARCHETYPES

The definition of patriarchy changes depending on the cultural context in which it is discussed; however, there is an agreement that patriarchy always functions through men exerting control over those (particularly women and younger people) around them (Johnson, 2005). In order to be able control others, men are supposed to be strong, rational, knowledgeable, invulnerable, independent, and unemotional. These masculine, patriarchal qualities are not expected in women, who are expected to be tender, fragile, emotional, voiceless, and submissive. "Control" becomes the means to bring order out of chaos, to protect men who are threatened by competition and who want to prove their manliness in order to gain respect. Consequently, the inevitable outcome of patriarchy is the oppression of women (Johnson, 2005). Women who demonstrate patriarchal characteristics are at best criticized and at worst severely punished by others in the patriarchal society. This concept underpinned the control persecution of women in the American South—they were forced to be submissive to men in the patriarchal system (Du, 2007). Moreover, in a patriarchal society, the father has the absolute right to decide on family affairs. Emily is the victim of her father's patriarchal and aristocratic dominance. Even after his death, she cannot escape his domination. The narrator describes Emily's relationship with her father in the following terms: "We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a straddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back flung front door" (p. 32). The horsewhip represents the dominant power of a patriarch over his daughter, fragile and small, retreating into the background. Emily is an object, controlled by her father, who carries a horsewhip. Because of Emily's upbringing in a patriarchal Southern community, her animus prompts her to emulate the most intense masculine characteristics. Even though born in a noble and well-esteemed family, Emily is nonetheless constrained by the pernicious moral codes of the patriarchy system in order to make peace with the system (Du, 2007). Her father's death, releases her from the patriarchal prison,

yet she cannot escape her father's patriarchal presence in the form of the image in "the parlour" (p. 30), "as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman's life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die" (p. 34).

Being an aristocratic woman, she is constantly aware of, and is reminded by the townspeople of her aristocratic heritage: a woman with "noblesse oblige" (p. 33), while at the same time, she is irritated by the burden of patriarchy and aristocracy. After her father's death, Emily cuts her hair short, "making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene" (p. 32). It was the fashion for women to keep their hair long and bound up close to the head until the early twentieth century, but for Emily, long hair symbolizes the patriarchal chain that has oppressed her all her life. Her short-cut hair signifies her determination to escape patriarchal oppression in a "sort of tragic and serene" way (p. 32). However, the burden of the scar and inherited burden caused by the patriarchy and her aristocratic heritage remained a negative influence on her animus. As a woman with "noblesse oblige" (p.33), she is destined to be watched, especially when she dates a Yankee. The townpeople whisper and gossip about the love affair, regarding it as a scandal.

As soon as the old people said "Poor Emily," the whispering began. "Do you suppose it's really so?" they said to one another. "Of course it is. What else could…" This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop of the matched team passed: "Poor Emily" (p. 33). Despite the decay of the Grierson family, the older townspeople feel that being from a higher social class, Emily should fulfill her duty befitting to her family's aristocratic status.

## EMILY'S DISTORTED IDENTITY

If an individual sticks to his/her publicly displayed appearance too much, the persona becomes "inflated" (Zhu & Han, 2013). When the townspeople criticize Emily and the Griersons, thinking that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such (p. 32). . . . she carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness (p. 33).

Despite the rumors and gossip and her duty to her family, Emily spares no expense in buying Homer the things that a man of her own class would have. She goes "to the jeweler's and ordered a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H.B. on each piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men's clothing, including a nightshirt" (p. 34). The articles she buys for Homer are of a man's private use, thus it signifies how she is determined to marry him. Emily experiences the feeling of being in love when they are together "on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy" (p. 34).

Being from a once wealthy family, in order to satisfy the townspeople's expectations, Emily worked very hard to put on the mask/persona to meet the social norms and standards formed by the community's patriarchal and aristocratic values. Besides the townspeople's continual attempt to remind her of her aristocratic heritage: a woman with "noblesse oblige" (p. 33), her cousins also come to talk her out of marrying Homer. Zhu and Han (2013) mention that in order to live up to what was traditionally expected of them, men often suppress their female aspect, and women their male characteristics. Hence, the persona may occupy and constrain the anima/animus. Also, the contradiction between persona and anima/animus may cause the anima/animus to overpower the persona, hence making the individual go to the other extreme.

When her father is alive, she is totally dominated by him; and he prevents her from marrying. After her father's death, she insists on marrying Homer to escape her destined patriarchal womanhood. She steps out, preparing to totally surrender to the invasion of northern industrialization, symbolizes by Homer. When she doscovers that Homer has no intention of marrying her, "because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks' Club—that he was not a marrying man" (p. 34), Emily is totally out of control and becomes insane.

She finally has a psychological breakdown. Afraid that she is going to lose Homer and have to retreat to traditional Southern values, she decides to poison him in order to control him. She cuts off connections with the outside world, sleeping next to his dead body and living lonely and desperately until her death forty years later. She tears off her persona/mask and lets herself be possessed by her inner masculine personality, breaking the balance between her ego and her inner life. As mentioned, women of her time were taught to be warm-hearted, submissive, and understanding. Supposedly, Emily was expected to take

advantage of feminine characteristics to manipulate Homer into marriage: she "will persuade him yet" (p. 34). Bold emotions such as ambition, irritation, and domination should definitely be avoided and controlled. Overly possessed by her animus, Emily's personality is transformed; she gives into the prominent masculine characteristics that supposedly belongs to the opposite sex. Her animus fails to mediate between her ego and her inner life. Emily loses the sense of her own value and charms, determining to abandon the norms of her family (here the ego), and attempting to build a bridge to the unconscious masculine aspect of her female psyche. Possessed by her animus, Emily goes to the extremes and becomes paranoid; her animus keeps telling her that she should be strong, independent, and resolute. Women are expected to be sweet and submissive; therefore, in order to live up to social expectations, they are used to putting on obedient and submissive personas. Overly possessed by the unconscious masculine aspect of her female psyche, Emily is ultimately the victim of the conflict between her persona and her animus. In the meantime, Emily's anima loses its ability to mediate between the ego and the inner life, and her personality is devoured. Unable to believe that what she has done to her beloved is all in vain and lost in rage, Emily decides to use her masculine qualities to brutally take revenge upon Homer. Emily says to the druggist, "I want some poison," with "cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eye sockets as you imagine a lighthouse keeper's face ought to look" (p. 33). She speaks resolutely to the druggist: "I want the best you have. I don't care what kind"; "I want arsenic" (p. 33). While the druggist is looking down at her, she looks "back at him," "stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up" (p. 33). She schemes to poison her beloved as she would a rat, in order to be with him forever.

The expectations of the patriarchal system and the townspeople require Emily to follow their laws and customs, to conform to the behavior patterns of the whole collective persona. She is trained to be a lady to fulfill the "noblesse oblige" (p. 33) of the Griersons. When she is betrayed by Homer, she loses her so-called "pure love," which is her only hope of living a fulfilled life after her father dies. Unfortunately, the pure love is turned into a contorted love, causing Emily's tragic change from a lady into a devil, killing Homer and keeping him with her for forty years until her death.

> Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair (p. 36)

## CONCLUSION

Although she is the last survivor of an aristocratic Southern family, being a woman, Emily cannot escape from the rigorous traditional principles of the patriarchy, but is regarded as a monument in memory of the social norms and standards formed by traditions and society—as the townspeople said, "alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" (p. 40). When Emily passes away, the whole town attend her funeral "through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument" (p. 29); she represents the past, the old patriarchal, aristocratic society that existed before the Civil War. Torn between the demands of patriarchal, aristocratic social values and what she really wants, Emily never has a chance to control her fate and her own life, finally falling victim to her own repressed desires.

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DOI: 10.9744/kata.16.2.93-100 ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS
http://kata.petra.ac.id

# Juxtaposition of Women, Culture, and Nature in Alice Walker's *Possessing The Secret Of Joy*

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper focuses on the tradition of women's circumsicion in the African tribe of Olinkan in Alice Walker's *Possesing the Secret of Joy*. The Olinkans are asked by the white settlers to stop women's mutilation, but Olinkan men continue this custom stealthily to ensure their patriarchial dominance. This novel is a complicated juxtaposition of two different types of oppression: one by White male colonizers over an African native land, and the other one by the native Olinkan men over native women. In this juxtaposition women and land are both victims exploited and manipulated by men, no matter Black or White. This novel is also seen as a fertile ground to analyze the dual domination of both nature and women by the Olinkan men and White colonizers who are both trying to impose their androcentric rules that are created to dominate women and land, respectively.

Keywords: Alice Walker, ecofeminism, patriarchy, female genital mutilation, colonization

## INTRODUCTION

Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* that Cogeanu (2011) introduces as "the most African of [Walker's] novels…with a painful and revolting subject matter…a text that comes closest to political activism" is an intricated narration in which women and land are depicted as passive sources subordinated to men for materialistic goals. However, it is also a revolutionary attack on the oppressive customs of White colonizers whose domination is fought back, through the novel, by Olinkan men who are themselves depriving women of their natural right over their body and forcing them to undergo genital mutilation. Ironically, although the novel is a colonial piece of writing not talking about land explicitly, the omnipresence of land is implied by the cultural imperialism and White missionaries' desire to replace the native culture with that of their own. It can be categorized as one of Walker's novels, however, that regardless of their geographical or socio-cultural context try to analyze "societies that suffer from cultural shifts and decline" (Lalbakhsh & Torkamaneh, 2015). It can also be considered a novel that demonstrates how a specific kind of "historical invasion" can end in "identity dilemma" that leaves "people with instable identity" (Mahmoodi, 2012).

The novel has been approached by many critics and scholars who have read and analyzed it from different points of views perhaps because, as Wankhade's (2015) observes, it is a novel that is concerned with "the quest and consciousness for Black identity, their individual relation with society on various dimensions of spiritual, social, physical, cultural, and the problems of forgiveness and reconciliation as well as racism and sexism". Teard (2011) introduces the novel as one of Walker's works that "demonstrates [that]…wholelness is achieved through reconciliation but also through creation". Dent (1992) calls it a novel "that at once appropriates and recontexualizes the restrictive neocolonial adage that gives Walker her title. Kuhne (1999) believes that by focusing on a "brutal ritual that was once largely unknown in the West" Walker has made the issue a "controversial issue" to be attended to by American culture and political system. Another critic, Moore (2000), has highlighted Jung's archetypal patterns of ego, the shadow, the anima/animus, and the Self in Walker's novel. Brum (2005) has tried to foreground the extent Tashi comes to be a tool in the hands of Walker for showing her anger and loathe toward the different forms of oppression that females suffer from. Gaard (2000), on the other hand, defines the novel as an exploration of "the meaning and relevance of traditional practices which harm women and yet are seen as cornerstone of cultural preservation", and Gourdine (2002) maintains that the novel "critiques the myths

of culture that sanction and sustain 'mutilation' and attempts to create for its women subjects a tradition that is liberating and conducive to build strong gendered selves".

However, taking an ecofeminist approach in this paper, we are concentrating on the concurrent relationship of women, culture, and nature to foreground both types of oppression–one over Olinka and another over Olinkan women–side by side, and to argue that Walker's depicted world in her novel is a world in which females and land are both considered victims to the oppression which is imosed on them by Olinkan men and White colonizers. Emerging in 1970s and 1980s as a body of feminist and environmental concerns, ecofeminism's innovation was critical thinking in relating the capitalist and patriarchal institutions' domination of nature to that of women.

## DISCUSSION

It can be argued that ecofeminism, in general, links environmental activities with those of feminism and the the idea of oppression that in any case is performed by men. What exasperates ecofeminists is the devaluation of both women and nature by men to extarct their hidden energy in their own favor and for more power and dominance. We cannot deny that the long history of domination, for different reasons, has created the afinity between women and nature in many ecofeminists' notion. "An ecofeminist," he maintains, "might claim that the analogy between 'woman' and 'nature' is inherent, or (increasingly) that it is historically contingent" (Buell, 2005). By definition, therefore, Ecofeminists try to stop the increasing trend of nature destruction in order to change the whole system of domination because ecofeminism holds that "the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature" (Gaard, 1993). To support Gaard's proposition, Ruether (1975) refers to the liberation of nature as the best practical way to terminate women's oppression, because she believes that the system of nature's domination is the same as that of women's, and must be overturned to stop any form of oppression in the world.

What makes ecofeminists sympathize with nature is the fact that a lot of cultures and civilizations have given feminine attributions to land and considered it as a feminine entity. In Greek mythology, for example, the goddess of fertility and childbirth is female. As Egan (2006) points it out, "The likening of human female fertility with the fertility of the Earth is, of course, a major poetic trope present in every culture and underlying the common metaphor of Mother Earth". Mythology, too, holds that human being is created from the offspring of the male god on the body of female earth. Talking about the femininity of earth Egan (2006) refers to Bate's idea of the Mother Earth that "Nature is calling to us in a voice like that of our primal mother. Likewise, in many cultures, the dominating god is male while the dominated land is female and this myth of creation has caused many ecofeminists to emphasize the link between female oppression and the oppression imposed on the land. The myth of creation, therefore, introduces the earth as a female body whose validity and values are established and determined if a male god approaches her. Such long established assumption justifies the patriarchal supposition that both nature and the female are there to be at the service of males. As Buell (2005) puts it, "nature having been androcentrically constructed as a domain for males, in contradistinction to female-coded domestic space, yet at the same time symbolically coded as female – [is] an arena of potential domination analogous to the female body".

The domination of female body and land has also come to be Walkers' *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. Here too the only way of male god's intimacy with the female earth is the intercourse which according to the Olinkan story is that of rape and force, not free will and satisfaction. As such, the female members of Olinka are dominated by male members, who deprive women of enjoying their full femininity by forcing them to undergo a nonhuman surgery that rips women off their entire feminine identity. This stands in parallel with the remark that "Subjugation of women and nature may be a loss of intimacy within themselves" (Allister, 2001).

### Culture and Nature in Colonialism and Ecofeminism

Power, subordination and oppression are seminal facets of colonialism since they are the colonizers' means for further exploitation of native lands and its inhabitants. Human's desire for owning extended areas of the untamed lands mobilized White colonizers into such off-the-beaten-path territories as Africa. Being full of gold mines and other precious stones besides the lush jungles replete with biodiversity turned Africa into a certain region for most of colonizers' ambition for the exploitation of nature. But exploiting nature under the pretext of civilization and culture has created a dichotomy in which culture/ nature became two opposite poles. In many of eco-

feminists' arguments the deliberate construction of binaries to define concepts in an androcentric society is the easiest way to dominate. As a result, civilization and culture have turned into the primary goals of the male colonizers arriving at newly discovered lands.

In many of the colonial stories the lush jungles of Africa are the symbols of evil and brutality while the White settlers are introduced as representatives of enlightenment and culture. The most noticeable example of the land of darkness and brutality is the dark forest of Amazon which is indicative of primitivism and brutality. In most of Europeans' first colonial stories the Amazon is "virtually" in "every part of non-European world, and provide images of insatiable sexuality and brutality" (Loomba, 2005). Along with White settlers' further permeation into the dark lands of Africa, however, the dichotomy of nature/culture became more noticeable. To establish the foundation of civilization and culture White settlers started preaching new ideologies and rejected any part of native people's life as uncivilized and primitive. They even used priests in the native lands to proselytize Christianity and started to change people's dress code for further assimilation with White culture.

Following this system of hegemony, the dichotomy of Self/Other was added to that of culture/nature. Interestingly, all these dichotomies and further ones have been created by the androcentric societies to facilitate any form of oppression. As Jordanova (1980) asserts, any kind of hierarchy and the dichotomies in which nature/culture and Self/Other are discussed are means for further imperialistic purposes alongside the women's suppression under the pretext of the "ideology of progress" which can also be regarded as "a struggle between the sexes, with men imposing their value systems on women inorder to facilitate social progress". In this sense both nature and women are reduced to resources by patriarchal system, while ecofeminists, using the "ecological science," renounce any kind of hierarchy and dichotomy in the nature since in their notion the whole cosmos is related and there is not any split between different parts of it. Indeed, they condemn the androcentric structure of society for creating and imposing dichotomies to such concepts as nature and women. As King (1983b) puts it "Ecological science tells us that there is not hierarchy in nature itself, but rather a hierarchy in human society".

Most of ecofeminists believe that any form of oppresssion is a way to duplicate any further oppression on women because any form of oppression is produced by male dominated tendency toward hierarchy. "[We in the ecofeminist movement] believe in the philosophy of nonviolence – that no person should be made into an 'other' to despise, dehumanize and exploit" (King, 1983a). In her opinion the process of objectification and turning nature and women into mere resources for imperialistic interests are the rudiments of their oppression; that is why she asserts "as women we have been an 'other' but we are refusing to be the 'other' any longer and we will not make anyone else into an 'other'. Sexism, racism, class divisions, homophobia and the rape of nature depend on this process of objectification". In this sense, objectification of nature for its materialistic and imperialistic aspects has facilitated its oppression by the male colonizers who have tried to tame and exploit nature under such pretexts as civilization and culture. The process of objectification of nature as an inevitable part of colonialist exploitation over virgin lands has created a model of oppression that appears in most of ecofeminists' arguments because it is believed that all systems of oppressions are interconnected and duplicated in the objectification and subordination of women. Therefore, the best way to eliminate any type of oppression is breaking any dichotomy that serves the capitalist patriarchal ideology.

**Nature/Culture Dichotomy in Olinka**

Olinka is an example of exploited African lands where White colonizers try to create a new system of dominance. Trying to exploit its natural resources for capitalistic interests, the White colonizers practice different types of hegemony over Olinka. To enhance this dominance they have created a hierarchy in which culture/nature, White/Black and Self/Other are well-established. Thus Olinka can be considered the land where both colonization of land by White Western colonizers and that of native women by their male-dominated tribe are concurrent.

Although, unlike other Walker's works, the exploittation of nature by White colonizers is not explicitly depicted in *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, its importance and presence can be felt in the culture/nature dichotomy. As Esposito (2010) puts it Walker provides a spiritual revisioning that embraces nature while questioning the masculine doctrines and religious institution. Like other colonized lands, Olinka is exploited for its mines, goals and its natural resources and in the name of enlightenment. In this dichotomy White culture is imposed while native people show resistance by not yielding to it and adhering to their own traditions. In fact the dichotomy of culture/nature is partly implied by showing people's resistance in not accepting the new culture. This reminds us of

Merchant (2006) clarifying "that material or ecological changes [may not] *cause* or *determine* ideological changes. Rather, they make some ideas prevalent at a given time seem more plausible than others". Ironically, Colonizers' first step to establish their dominance over Olinkans is to create the culture/ nature binary opposition based on which nature should be at the service of culture. This is why any sign of native culture and ideology is obliterated and replaced by newly preached White ideologies. Even Olinkan dress code is to be replaced by White settler's costumes. Under the pretext of civilization and culture colonizers extend their monopoly over both human and natural resources of Olinka. This is well in parallel with the idea that identifies "The weather forecaster who tells us what Mother Nature has in store for us this weekend and legal systems that treat a woman's sexuality as her husband's property … equally guilty of perpetuating a system repressive to both women and nature" (Merchant, 1980).

Infuriated by imperialism after the permeation of colonialism in their lands, Tashi expresses her feeling of how the Whites had exploited their native land and its virgin nature under the name of culture and civilization: "why don't they just steal our land, mine our gold, chop down our forests, pollute our rivers, enslave us to work on their farms, fuck us, devour our flesh and leave us alone?" (Walker, 1992). To nullify White colonizers' further exploitation of natural and human resources, the novel's native people try to keep their customs and culture alive. In this sense, they start to fight back by adhering to their traditional as a defense mechanism. By protecting their cultural heritage they endeavor to break the dichotomy that puts nature and culture in two opposite poles. For Olinkans the only way to extricate their land from colonization is by keeping such customs as scaring the face and Female Genital Mutilation alive; as a result, new culture will not find the opportunity to be established and no dichotomy is made to sacrifice nature in favor of culture. Adhering to the Olinkan tradition to resist colonization, Tashi puts emphasis on their duty to fight "the White oppressors without ceasing; without, even, the contemplation of ceasing; for they would surely still be around during our children's and our children's time…That we must take back our land" (Walker, 1992).

In the eyes of Tashi and her people colonizers are thieves and the cause that made them "stripped of everything but [their] black skins" (Walker, 1992). They want colonizers to leave their lands and let them alone. That is why Tashi puts emphasis on "struggle for our people" and calls Olivia and her family foreigners who should "ship [themselves] back home" one day . Like Tashi, Olinkans hate the way that Whites try to assimilate Blacks into Whites' lifestyle and religion, bringing them a "God someone else chose for you". Ironically, while during her childhood Tashi and her mother turn to Christianity, as an adult she finds herself committed to her native tribe's religion and rituals, therefore, rejects Christianity in favor of Olinka's religion. Even she stops wearing European clothes and sneers at the way Olivia, the missionary's daughter, has dressed through all these years in Olinka not "[wearing] the maelie row fan hairstyle that was traditional with Olinka women" (Walker 1992). Likewise is Tashi's scaring her face willingly to prove her commitment to her Olinkan roots; a practice about which Olivia says, "one of the things we thought we'd helped stop was the scarring or cutting of tribal marks on the faces of young women" (Walker 1992).

Thus, against missionaries' expectations, native Olinkans prefer to stick to their customs, though false and irritating, to force colonizers to leave their occupied lands; that is why Olivia comments on Tashi's scarred face as "a way the Olinkan can show they still have their own ways, said Olivia, even though the White man has taken everything else". For native people the Whites were the marauders who had ripped them off whatever they had and the only precious things they have and wish to preserve are their forefathers' customs. As a member of this tribe then Tashi feels herself in the state of betraying her tribe's survival in the face of White colonizers by not doing genital mutilation and scarring face. Therefore, aware of its excruciating pain she accepts to jeopardize her health and connubial life in favor of doing genital mutilation; hence Olivia's belief that "Tashi didn't want to do it, but to make her people feel better she's resigned" (Walker, 1992).

In spite of Olivia's assertion that nobody in Europe or America does what Olinkan do to themselves, implying the uncivilized nature of the Olinkan tradition, Tashi does not yield to the Olivia's idea preferring to be attached to her own tribal tradition that gives her more satisfaction and sense of achievement. To Olivia's surprise "Tashi was happy that the initiation ceremony isn't done in Europe or America ... that makes it even more valuable to her" . To justify her reason for accepting her tribal customs Tashi refers to the heredity that is hidden in customs and nobody can evade his or her responsibility to follow "the arrangements that come down to [her]". Indeed, Tashi rejects any endeavor from Whites' part to stop such custom as scaring the face. In fact she believes that in spite of missionaries' struggle to replace their culture with White culture, Olinkans adhere to their roots,

because despite "big campaign against what they called the scarring of our faces with the Olinka tribal markings" Olinkans feel "obviously proud of" markings that their ancestors had on their faces" that is why it gets very difficult for them "to hear the missionaries' objections, or to care about the missionaries themselves" (Walker, 1992). Neglecting tradition means losing their true identity and culture and letting colonizers to exploit their soul as well as their land.

**Female Genital Mutilation and Sexual Oppression**

Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* is an obvious example of a society in which the patriarchal ideologies are dominant, and tribe's women, from their early childhood, are demanded to follow the male defined customs and norms to preserve the tribe's sanity. Olinkan men are allowed to have three or more wives at the same time without any responsibility to satisfy women's emotional needs, while these women are forced to live with one man even if the husband is not suitable to live with. Such domination, however, is imposed systematically by a society whose ideology and worldview establishes women's suppression and submissiveness. Most of Olinkan women feel some sort of emotional emptiness in their connubial life and to fill this emotional gap, and to forget it at least for some time, they fill it with hard work; hence, Tashi's pronouncement that "only hard work … fills the emptiness" (Walker, 1992).

However, to be a real woman in Olinkan culture, genital mutilation must be done and a young girl is not accepted as a natural woman and worthy to get married unless she accepts to do it. Tashi's description of the status of an uncircumcised woman and her difficult life under ridicule and humiliation is telling. It is through her words which we come to a vivid picture of the unacceptability of one for having an "uncircumcised vagina," since "after all, none of them had vagina lips; none of them had a clitoris; they had no idea what these things looked like". In this way sexual dissatisfaction and suffering that are the outcome of mutilated deformed genitalia come to be an extra burden added to the emotional gap that Olinkan women are suffering from. It is this deformity that changes their intercourse to one painful and torturing experience accompanied by heavy bleeding. This is while Olinkan men believe that women's sexual organ is unclean before mutilation and that is why they force them to get rid of their womanhood while nobody insults their manhood and nobody dares to deprive them of their body under the excuse of being unclean or monstrous. As Adam says, "If every man in this court room had had his penis removed, what then? Would they understand better that condition is similar to that of all the women in the room?". Witnessing Tashi's mental disorders, Adam points to the pain all the women undergoing mutilation have been experiencing, reminding that "the women are suffering from an unnatural constriction of flesh their bodies have been whittled and refashioned into" .

Additionally is the fact that the omnipresent pain and suffering women tolerate deprives them of the opportunity to think about themselves as free humans equal to men in terms of sexual pleasure and other life enjoyments. While Smith (2014) believes that bodily scars of mutilation signify women's resistance to patriarchal control over their gender and sexual beings and identities Tashi's explanation about her ignorance to her own body before her trip to the United States is the proof of such claim of deprivation as she says that her body was just a big "mystery" to her. They were told that they need to cut their "unclean parts of their bodies out" and "Everyone knew that if a woman was not circumcised her unclean parts would grow so long they'd soon touch her thighs; she'd become masculine and arouse herself. No man could enter her because her own erection would be in his way" (Walker, 1992).

But the world of *Possessing the Secret of Joy* is not only a very dangerous world for women, it is also a dangerous world for the men who do not follow the tradition and show lenience in their treatment of their women. Torab is such a young husband who is thrown out of the village because he is believed to lose control of his wife, a very evil thing to do in that society because it threatens the fabric of the web of life – at least the web of life as the villagers knew it. While the young man dies "deserted, filthy in tatters," the girl's family is forced to move out of the village and the girl's body is "dragged from the river and left to rot, her body food for vultures and rodents" . Accordingly, Olinkan women are the target of the men's sheer brutality which is not only excruciating women but all the men who do something against the tribe's patriarchal norms and practice. Ironically, Tashi's interpretation of men's brutality against women is that it is their secret weapon to paralyze women and ruin their self-confidence leaving them submissive and subdued.

Therefore, Olinkan men have been preserving this custom for decades by keeping its nature secret and by prohibiting talking about either mutilation or its outcomes. As a result, Olinkan women have gradually changed into "perfect audience" that as Tashi puts it, is "mesmerized by our unconscious know-

ledge of what men, with the collaboration of our mothers, do to us". Thus, through the course of time, the older women change into the guardians of a custom that keeps the monopoly of the male elders alive and ongoing. M'Lissa is an example of such women who, as George (2001) puts it, "is a complex product of culture and individual history" serving as a guardian of male-defined customs and tradition. While she has been the victim of mutilation as a child and part of her body is lame due to its side effects, she has been practicing it on all the young girls of the tribe and is responsible for Dura's death and Tashi's mental disorders. In spite of her complicity in hurting and leading many young girls into death, M'Lissa is known and announced as a sacred national monument for her selfless struggles to keep tradition alive and she is even, after her murder by Tashi, turned into a saint whose life was devoted to humanity.

Furthermore, the society reacts to the revelation of Adam about the effect of the mutilations. Defending Tashi in the court, Adam points to the destructive effect of mutilation on her mental sanity. All the audience from Olinka get infuriated by hearing that their taboo is being discussed publicly and, even worse, by a stranger who is not from their tribe. They condemn Tashi for killing a saint and preserver of their tradition, and calling Adam a "disgraceful American" order him to "shut up" and not to put their "business…in the streets" because they firmly believe Mother Lissa has been a "monument…the Grand-mother of the race" (Walker, 1992). They cannot tolerate a stranger commenting on "accepted tradition of which they are a part that has gone on, as far as they know, forever".

**Women Oppression through Female Body and Female Stereotypes**

In the previous section we discussed aspects of female oppression in the novel in terms of sexual and emotional suffering they tolerate under a patriarchal system that tries to keep its ideology in place and ongoing no matter what happens to women as the victims of such oppressive system. In this section, however, we examine the female stereotypes created to keep women tame, submissive and inert and the manipulation of female body through the creation myth that has come down from one generation to another. Tashi remembers the story of female earth waiting for the male god to circumcise it:

> The earth is flat, but the north is at the top. It extends east and west with separate members like a fetus in the womb. It is a body, that is to say, a thing with members branching out from a central mass. This body, lying flat, faces upwards, in a line from north to south, is feminine (Walker, 1992)

The prevalent myth in Olinka narrating the way creation started and human beings spread over the earth holds that mother earth was a woman who fascinated a male god with a strong desire to sleep with her. As the myth holds it the sexual organ of the earth was like that of the god, so the god himself was forced to mutilate mother earth to create human beings. As Olinkan creation myth reveals it, "the creation itself [begins] with mutilation and rape…" (Walker, 1992); that is a way for men to keep women "enslaved by their own body". Ironically, prior to undergoing genital mutilation, Tashi is satisfied with her womanhood and enjoys a normal life with Adam, but after mutilation she notices that the feeling of emptiness grows in her soul due to the removal of a part of her identity. It is after mutilation that Tashi feels the anger toward her tribe's men for deceiving women and ruling over them. She starts to see herself as a woman who has been robbed of her true self, paying no attention any longer to the racial issues that had preoccupied her before being circumcised. From that point onward she feels that prior to the color issue of Black and White is Red, "the color of woman's blood.".

In such society an ideal woman is a tool who acts based on tradition to meet the demands of a male dominated society. Therefore, "a proper woman" is considered to "be cut and sewn to fit only her husband, whose pleasure depends on an opening it might take months, even years to enlarge". As such, the role of women in Olinka, as Olivia mentions it, is "to suffer, to die, and not know why". Tashi believes that under such patriarchal society it is not possible for women to feel and find their true self; that is, women cannot feel "that look of confidence. Of pride. Of peace … because self-possession will always be impossible [for them] to claim" (Walker, 1992). Thus women are not even the owner of their bodies and identity, since their body is a means for their servi-tude. Ascribing stereotypical roles to women in this society weakens their self-image and keeps them in a state of hollowness and inertness since they are raised to live with these stereotypical roles without having a space left for greater individual growth and powerful roles in their social and private life.

Interestingly, one of the characters tells Tashi about the female African ancestors, "Early African women, the mother of womankind" who were "notoriously free!" (Walker 1992). However, notwithstanding this fact, the Olinkan men adopt the White colonizers' strategy and create stories about feminine roles in

their society to keep them under their control. By keeping the tradition of storytelling among men they wish to keep the stereotypes of men and women alive and effectual. It is through such stories that the ideological basis of women's oppression and subjugation is laid. As Tashi remembers it, in their stories, men have always mentioned a woman as a Queen who has been given to them by god, himself, so that they can treat her as they like, "to feed her so well that she will stay plump…even her excrement will be plump (they laugh)" . This is ironic because they are understood and treated not as real queens but as the queen of "white ants" imprisoned in a dark whole, without any power to fly because the wings are plucked out to be inert and paralyzed and never to be able to leave her prison, "If left to herself Queen would fly…and then where would we be? But God is merciful. He clips her wings. She is inert". So, the story that Tashi heard is different from the reality that happens in the community,

Following the Olinkan myth, men force girls to undergo mutilation to be like the inert queen in future, but surprisingly they never take the responsibility of this cruelty toward women and know god responsible and willing for women impotency. They justify their acts by relying on the idea that god has "put the Queen's body there to make [their] offspring" (Walker 1992). Thus the only role for women is to be machines to produce children. Ironically, Men's argument is a haphazard mixture of myth and religion that they concoct to justify their ways in treating a woman; a god-given gift "whose body has been given to [them] to be [their] sustenance forever" (Walker, 1992).

The oppressive ideology of the male-defined Olinkan society leaves women psychologically affected and paralyzed to the extent that Tashi finds herself in a constant state of perplexity intensified by terrible dreams of a dark tower wherein she is captivated and not allowed to move. The same dream is repeated in Tashi's nightmares, yet Tashi does not dare to talk about her inner terror and it is only by the help of her psychologist and Pierre that the riddle of her nightmares is revealed, "This is your dark tower. You are the Queen who loses her wings. It is you lying in the dark with millions of worker termites" (Walker, 1992). In her conversation with M'Lissa she admits that Olinka is a society enslaved by men's tradition of female circumcision to keep them silent, yet she insists that the first thing to be liberated is women's lives from the domination of Olinkan male supremacy; a dream that as Tashi pronounces at the time of her execution can come true through 'resistance' that is the secret of possessing joy (Walker, 1992).

## CONCLUSION

*Possessing the Secret of Joy* is a revolutionary novel in which the patriarchal world of Olinka is delineated courageously and critically. As the findings of this study show white colonialism and Olinkan patriarchal domination are two facets of women's oppression and subjugation. Occupying Olinka as a native African colony White settlers create a new system of hegemony over Olinka to exploit its mines, rivers, jungles, and whatever natural resources that could be financially beneficial for them. To be able to enhance their monopoly over Olinka they establish a new system of oppression based on which the dichotomy of culture/nature is defined. Ruling Olinkan native lands in the name of civilization and enlightenment, White settlers reject any sign of native culture in Olinka and try a system of assimilation based on which the Olinkans should practice a new identity imposed by white settlers. Creating this hegemony helps White male system of natural resources exploittation easier and more convenient. Accordingly, both women and nature are suffering from the same system of oppression imposed by male-oriented social institutions for the sake of capitalistic and social benefits. As a result, we can argue that by foregrounding the mechanism of androcentric systems, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* comes to be a resonant outcry for both women and nature liberty since both have been exploited by male-defined social institutions for capitalistic and personal interests.

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DOI: 10.9744/kata.16.2.101-108

ISSN 1411-2639 (Print), ISSN 2302-6294 (Online)

OPEN ACCESS

http://kata.petra.ac.id

# Iran, America and Iranian American Community in Firoozeh Jazayeri Dumas' *Funny in Farsi*

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## ABSTRACT

Post 9/11 the United States of America concerns the reconstruction of already demonized identities of Arabs and Middle-eastern cultures. Postcolonial works reside in their rendering a tragic or serious image of Middle Easterners to bring the Western (American) audience into sympathizing with the Middle Eastern ethnicities. Could it be the case that a fundamentally humorous (not derogatory) depiction might contribute to easing such cultural tensions? Firoozeh Jazayeri Dumas' works stand out as critically acclaimed and successful works familiarizing the American audience with the more humane, likeable, sweet and funny aspects of the Iranians and Iranian culture, and the hardships of being an Iranian immigrant and becoming a hybrid individual. This article explores the already-hybridized self and psyche of Firoozeh as an Iranian American. She writes about her mother land and her residence country and comparing the way she has written about them can help readers understand how one can make peace between different parts of her identity.

Keywords: Postcolonial identity, demonization, hybridity, post 9/11

## INTRODUCTION

Some believe that good fiction writers must only concentrate on entertaining their readers, being a good Scheherazade eventually. On the other hand, there are others who consider a talented and skilled writer to be the one who can simultaneously tell a good story and accomplish his or her self-assigned social, political, cultural and historical duties. Firoozeh Jazayeri Dumas, because of her indisputable achievements, belongs to the second group. Her two books, *Laughing without an Accent* and *Funny in Farsi*, are best-sellers in both Iran and the United States. Her books appeal to a wide range of readers, regardless of their gender, political views and ethnic backgrounds, and she is eternalized in the pantheon of successful Iranian-American writers.

Firoozeh, both explicitly and implicitly, talks about her own obsession with being raised an Iranian immigrant and having a hybrid mindset. In her stories (which are essentially short article-like diaries), she talks about her life in Iran, her life in the United States and the transition which links these two periods of her life. Although Firoozeh Jazayeri Dumas is a famous hybrid writer but she is not a familiar name in academia and even among Iranian intelligentsia. There are a few reasons explaining her relative anonymity, but the most notable one is being a commercial writer. Firoozeh belongs to a group of commercial writers who write about serious issues which are anthropologically and pragmatically important. Her works do not possess some of the qualities of academically canonized literary works but they definitely share one defining aspect: historical importance.

Firoozeh Jazayeri Dumas and her works are important because of her descriptions of Iranian American community, her hybrid lifestyle, her hybrid mentality and her relationship with her community. In the multicultural millennium which we live in, not having a voice equals lack of existence in every existing aspect. In the political arena it is commonly believed that the United States is the most powerful nation because of its monopoly of arts. If one accepts this common belief, one can argue that finding and constructing a voice in different arts (especially literature) is equal to gaining power. In her works she discusses the undeniable importance of Iranian American community/minority in American society and the urgency of having a voice to express what they want.

Becoming a hybrid immigrant/individual in a multilingual and multicultural world is more or less inevitable, especially if an individual migrates to another

country (like Firoozeh and her family). Hybridity is a necessary mental process which must happen to immigrants and it is "considered to be a positive alternative to unhomeliness" (Tyson, 1999, p. 420). Unlike Unhomliness, the hybrid individual, though excruciatingly challenging, finds peace between her two selves or alter egos and learns to use the best of the both worlds (her two cultural backgrounds). Homi Bhabha is the famous post-colonial thinker and theorist who spent most of his academic career writing about hybridity, its effects and its side-effects on individuals. He believes in the resisting quality of hybridity which stands against the colonialists attempts to define the world the way they want, "Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through repetition of discriminatory identity effects (Bhabha, 2004, p. 159).

In a time in which many Iranian writers (especially female writers such as Marjan Satrapi and Nahid Rachlin) have published literally works denouncing their cultural backgrounds and heritages, Firoozeh Jazayeri Dumas becomes culturally relevant and significant. She, unlike her predecessors, does not see her surrounding world as black and white or right and wrong. She is a more rational and genuine person in her descriptions and one can see sincerity in her approvals or disapprovals of various American and Iranian cultural phenomena. She is an individual who has materialized *honesty is the best policy* in her writings, and therefore, her works can be seen as authentic cultural documents. The purpose of this article is to consider how she has portrayed her homeland and the country she currently lives in. In other words, how she has depicted the two countries/ two nations she has spent her life in.

**Iranian American Community**

Iranian Americans are mainly known to be comprised of a few different groups: descendents of Iranians who have lived in America, descendents of mixed marriages in which one of the parents is Iranian, Iranian immigrants who live in America and people who have the dual citizenship of both Iran and the United States (Hakimzadeh & Dickson, p. 1-2). Iranian Americans are famously and deservedly known for being highly educated and successful in business, sciences and arts. The US Census data shows that Iranians are among the most affluent minorities who are currently living in the United States and they earn one of the highest averages of income (Demographic and Statistics, www.paaia. org). These individuals and their remarkable achievements have affected the whole world and have given the Iranian American community much to be proud of, individuals like: Pierre Omidyar (the founder and the chairman of ebay website), Anousheh Ansari (the first Iranian and the first self-funded woman to fly to the international space station) and Shohreh Aghdashloo (the first Iranian actor to be nominated for an academy award-Oscar).

A considerable number of Iranian Americans prefer to be called Persians. This group refers to their homeland as Persia and consider the language they speak Persian (Firoozeh in her second book's preface talks about how many Iranians criticized her for not using 'Persian' instead of 'Farsi' in her first book's title). This persistence of a group of Iranians, in using Persian instead of Farsi, is because of a variety of reasons: first they do not want to be associated with Iran and its current government. They are, whether, political dissidents or ordinary people who fear discrimination and racial profiling. Second, some believe Iran to be their nationality and Persian to be their ethnicity; by putting emphasis on being Persian they consciously want to point to their racial difference and dissimilarity with the Arab invaders (the Muslim conquest) who toppled the Sassanid Empire. Third, some of them use Persian because they hold themselves to belong to the fifty one percent Persian ethnicity who are living in Iran (the other ethnicities are Kurds, Lors, Azeris, Baloochs and Arabs) (Bahmani, 2004, p. 1, Eduljee, p. 1-4). Besides the different groups of Iranian Americans who can speak Farsi, interestingly, there is a minority of Iranian Americans who can't even speak Farsi and as a result are called non-Persian Iranians. In a nutshell, like Davaran states, "the Medes and the Persian certainly identified themselves as Iranians and the Achaemenid kings often attested their Iranian identity in their inscriptions" (2010, p. 11).

Iranians' migration to the United States started before the 1979 Islamic revolution and was strongly precipitated by the revolution, ideological changes which occurred because of the new-born government and the Iran-Iraq war which was the 20th century's longest conventional war (after the second Sino-Japanese war). Sociologists and researchers in the field of migration studies have divided this United State-side migration into two waves: the first wave started from 1950's and ended before the 1979 revolution, and the second wave started from the 1979 revolution and continues to the present day. The first wave was mostly comprised of Iranian scholars and students who were sent by Shah's government in order to learn the new technologies and help propel the industrializing Iran (Firoozeh's father, Kazim Jazayeri, a winner of Fulbright scholarship, belongs to this group). The second wave was mostly comprised

of political refugees and exiles, asylum seekers, political dissidents, supporters of the previous regime and people who just wanted to emigrate without having any political reasons for doing so (Hakimzadeh & Dickson, www.migrationpolicy.org).

Based on the results of Census 2000, only 0.91 percent of the 31.1 million foreign born immigrants who are currently living in the United States are Iranians, which makes their achievements of different natures to gain paramount importance. The United States is home to the largest population of Iranians outside Iran (diaspora) and over half of this population lives in the state of California (Whittier and Newport beach, two cities in the state of California, where Firoozeh and her family have lived and the settings of most of her short stories). According to census 2000, 50.9 percent of Iranian immigrants have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28 percent national average. Based on this data, Iranians have the highest rate of higher academic degrees among ethnic minorities (more than one in four Iranian Americans have a master's degree or PhD).

In August 2008, a public opinion survey of Iranian Americans by public affairs alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) was published whose results are not only useful to know, but also will later help understand some themes of Firoozeh Dumas' stories. First, ethnic heritage is important to most of Iranian Americans in defining their identity, but at the same time they have succeeded in assimilating into American society. Second, two-fifths of Iranian Americans identify themselves as Muslims, two-fifths of Iranian Americans do not belong to any specific religion or practice any of them, and the rest are Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians. Third, the two important issues which concern Iranian Americans the most are facilitating greater understanding between people of the two nations and making sure that their image, their values, their accomplishments and their hybrid identities are correctly reflected in media (considering these issues, Firoozeh's accomplishments in portraying this community is completely in line with what they needed and asked for). Four, nearly half of the Iranian Americans who have participated in this survey have experienced discrimination or have known another member of this community who has been a victim of discrimination. The most common types of discriminations against Iranian Americans are airport security discrimination, social discrimination, employment discrimination, racial profiling and discrimination at the hands of immigration officials, and interestingly all these discriminations have been experienced by Firoozeh and her family members and have been reflected in her two memoires. (Opinion Survey of Iranian Americans 2008, www.paaia.org).

Another important survey of (PAAIA) which will directly help illustrate some themes of this study was published in 2009. Some of the important findings of this survey confirm the aforementioned 2008 survey's findings. First, the importance of ethnic heritage among Iranian Americans has not lost its place and Iranians keep having close emotional ties with their motherland. This strong emotional bondage stems from the fact that most Iranian Americans have family members and friends with whom they are regularly in touch. Second, Iranian Americans are in favor of political negotiations between the Iranian and the American government and peaceful changes, and they also detest any threat of war against their motherland (Opinion Survey of Iranian Americans 2009, www.paaia.org). This apprehension of war and hostility toward Iran is comprehensively reflected in one of Firoozeh's stories, *Encore, Unfortunately*.

*Encore, Unfortunately* is about how Firoozeh started searching for a copy of *Bomb Iran* for a one-woman show she hosted about growing up an Iranian in America. *Bomb Iran* was a song about how Iran and Iranians should have been bombed after the Iran hostage crisis which made it to the top hits of 1980 (Firoozeh addresses this song the soundtrack of her nightmares). In this story, she mentions how she found Vince, the singer, and how apologetic and sorry he was for what he sang, but in the last paragraph of the story, due to some unforeseen twists of fate, the soundtrack of her nightmares came back to life:

> *Bomb Iran* recently came back, thanks to john McCain, who sang part of it during one of his speeches. I called Vince (real name Andrew Franichevich) to see what he thought. He didn't return my call. Maybe he was too busy; he is after all, a very successful guy. Or maybe he is a bit horrified like I was that the song, like a disease that we think has been eradicated, was back. (Dumas, 2008, p. 86)

Hollywood, American cable channels and news channels are notorious for distorting the façade of Iranian American community and accommodating their viewers with nothing but fabricated lies, which obviously have political intentions. Until recently, Iranian and Iranian American actors and actresses were only found suitable to play the villains, Middle Eastern terrorists, helpless political refugees and backward Muslims. Maz Jobrani, a famous Iranian American stand-up comedian, in his *Axis of Evil* comedy tour show confesses that he was only invited

to auditions in order to play the evil and shouting Arab terrorist (Axis of Evil).

Nevertheless, persistence and perseverance of Iranian Americans in trying to alter, if not completely change, the way they have been portrayed have been partially successful in recent years, but this change of course has a long way until it reaches the favorable destiny. TV series and movies like *90210, Crash* and *Shahs of Sunset* (although this reality show has done more damage than good) have given a new portrayal of Iranian Americans in the media. It has been proven by experience and history of other minorities living in the United States (such as American Jews or Indian Americans) that if Iranian Americans want to survive and succeed as a community, they must sustain, protect and promulgate their cultural identity by using whatever means they have access to: books, TV shows, newspapers, movies, music etc.

Iranian Americans have proved to belong to model minorities (who are ethnic minorities with great contributions to their resident country) and this remarkable achievement must not only be reflected and shown to Americans, but it also must be celebrated. Firoozeh Dumas' memoires successfully accomplish both these objectives.

## NOTION of NATIONALITY in *Funny in Farsi* Iran

Firoozeh Dumas is originally from Abadan and, before moving to California, she spent her first seven years in Abadan. Some Iranian immigrant writers like Nahid Rachlin and Marjan Satrapi have described their homeland and hometown without having a sense of nostalgia. In other words, their descriptions are full of latent hatred toward anything related to their past. This is not the case in Firoozeh Dumas' stories. The first time she mentions her hometown, Abadan, is in chapter four of the book (*Save Me, Mickey*). This story is about how Jazayeri family and a few family friends visit Disneyland, since it is one of Kazim's favorite places in the United States. When Firoozeh is talking to the Mickey Mouse phone booth, her family and friends move away and forget to take her. Kazim's biggest fear was child kidnapping and he was deeply concerned about how dangerous America was. Firoozeh says, "Abadan was about as safe a place as one could hope for. We knew all the neighbors, everyone looked out for everyone else's kids, and there was basically no crime other than petty theft" (Dumas, 2008, p. 19).

Firoozeh does not have an idealistic and romantic depiction of Abadan and she does not glorify it as a utopia. She mentions the good aspects of living in Abadan and, when needed, talks about the hardships they experienced. In chapter 9, *of Mosquitoes and Men*, when her husband, Françoise, suggests they should spend their honeymoon in India, she objects by saying that she does not want to spend her romantic holiday in a hot place with mosquitoes, because she had her share of living in hot temperature and mosquitoes' bites, "as much as I loved living in Abadan, I hated the heat and mosquitoes, if everyone has a lifetime quota of bug bites, I reached mine by age six" (Dumas, 2008, p. 60).

Aside from Abadan, the first time Firoozeh talks about Iran is, again, in chapter 4, *Save Me, Mickey*. In this story she talks about the dangers of living in America and compares it with Iran, "in Iran, citizens do not have access to guns, so we do not have the types of crimes that so often lead to murders in America" (this first description of Iran is interesting regarding American government's stereotyping of Iranians as violent and belligerent people) (Dumas, 2008, p. 19). The next Iranian phenomenon she talks about is Iranian cuisine. Firoozeh numerously criticizes Americans for their fast foods, unhealthy ways of eating and not having family dinners. In *Swoosh-Swoosh*, while making the comparison, she gives detailed description of Iranian cooking and finishes her detailed descriptions and comparisons with, "… when the meal in finally ready, we all sat together and savored the sensuous experience of a delicious Persian meal. Upscale restaurants in America, calling themselves "innovative and gourmet," prepare food the way we used to. In Iran, it was simply how everybody ate" (Dumas, 2008, p. 25-26).

Iran petroleum industry is another recurrent motif in her stories. Kazim enthusiastically and proudly talks about it with Americans in order to demonstrate how modern and independent Iran has become. In *If I Were a Rich Man*, Firoozeh and her family face financial problems and in retrospect, she talks about how their life in Iran was comfortable and ideal, "in Abadan, we never had to think about money, not because we where rich, but because the national Iranian oil company took care of everything … for entertainment, everyone converged at the local clubhouse for bingo, swimming, movies and concerts. Except for food, it was all free of charge" (Dumas, 2008, p. 180). Aside from the company's effects on their lives, Firoozeh and her father show great interest talking about Iran and its oil resources. In *With a Little Help from my Friend*, Firoozeh writes about her family members' reaction to many stereotypes about Iran being a depraved and destitute Sahara, "intent to remedy the image of our homeland as backward, my

father took it upon himself to enlighten Americans whenever possible. Any unsuspecting American who asked my father a question received, as a bonus, a lecture on the successful history of the petroleum industry in Iran" (Dumas, 2008, p. 32).

In the same chapter, Kazim tries to rectify the false image of Iranian ethnic roots by explaining that "Iranians are indo-Europeans and not Arabs, but have two things in common with them: Islam and petroleum" (Dumas, 2008, p. 33). In *the Ham Amendment*, she spends a few pages informing western readers on how the British exploited Iran's oil and one can see how vehement her nationalistic feelings are, "with no teacher present to remind the participants of the universal concept of fairness, the British applied a different universal concept, greed. The agreement between British petroleum and the government of Iran was destined for disaster" (Dumas, 2008, p. 84). Later in this chapter, she continues giving a brief introduction about Dr. Muhammad Mossadegh and calls him the national hero. This chapter's brief but thorough history of Iranian oil industry and its exploitation by Western powers is very important. After ousting Dr. Mossadegh, she continues, "history partly repeated itself, and the foreign oil companies once again took over the operation and exploitation of the Iranian oil industry" (Dumas, 2008, p. 84).

It is worth mentioning that Kazim had the chance to meet Albert Einstein in person and when he asked him, "what he knows about Iran?" Einstein replied, "I know about your famous carpets and your beautiful cats" (Dumas, 2008, p. 94). Although Kazim and his family did not know anything about the value of Persian cats, but this topic was discussed again, years later, when an old kind neighbor asks them whether they had precious Persian cats in Iran.

Firoozeh's description of Iranian cities is not limited to Abadan and Ahwaz (where her family lived). She talks about vacation in Iran and how every year during the summer holidays started they spent a week in Mahmoodabad, a city on the Caspian shore. She describes the road and the land between Tehran and Caspian shore as, "one of the most beautiful stretches of land I have ever seen" (Dumas, 2008, p. 53). She goes on by describing the *beautiful sceneries, purple wildflowers and the cool climate*. The next few paragraphs are descriptions of Jazayeri family spending enjoyable time in Mahmoodabad. In another story, *Waterloo*, she makes another reference to the Caspian Sea, when despite being to different beautiful parts of world, "she has never forgotten the first gentle wave in the Caspian sea" (Dumas, 2008, p. 73).

**The Islamic revolution**

The Islamic Revolution of Iran or the 1979 Revolution irreversibly affected lives of Iranian who were living inside and outside Iran. The Islamic Revolution of 1979, the hostage Crisis of 1980 and their aftermaths are abundantly talked about in both Firoozeh Dumas' books. The first time she talks about the revolution and how it affected their lives as Iranian immigrants is in *With a Little Help from My Friend*, "I was lucky to have come to America years before the political upheaval in Iran, the Americans we encountered were kind and curious, unafraid to ask questions and willing to listen" (Dumas, 2008, p. 31). She explains how Americans did not know anything about Iran or even where it was located, so Jazayeri family had to *try hard to educate them on the subject*, "you go south at the Soviet Union and there we are … south of the beautiful Caspian sea, where the famous caviar comes from" (Dumas, 2008, p. 31).

According to Firoozeh, Americans were kind and friendly with Iranian immigrants, but the hostage Crisis of 1980 changed everything. Their family members who came to America after the hostage Crisis never met the same America which Firoozeh saw, when she first came to the United States: "they saw Americans who had bumper stickers on their cars that read "Iranians: go home" or "we play cowboys and Iranians"(Dumas, 2008, p. 36). The Americans rarely invited them to their houses. These Americans felt they knew all about Iran and its people, and they had no questions, just opinions. The social discriminations and common people's reactions were so unbearable for Jazayeri family that Nazireh, whenever she was asked about her nationality, introduced herself as *Russian or Turkish* (Dumas, 2008, p. 39).

According to Firoozeh, Americans were either *thrilled* or *horrified* when they heard she was from Iran. Sometime a few of them were scared of her because they thought she was *a female terrorist* and sometimes telling them she was from Iran *completely ended the conversation* (Dumas, 2008, p. 40). The process of demonizing Iran and portraying Iranians as enemies of the free world did not end after the revolution. Domke (2004, p. 39) talks about how George Bush and his addressing of Iran as a member of axis of evil, helped propel this discourse, "contrasts to 'American values', such as the phrase 'enemies of freedom', were thus counted as evil [countries like Iran], as was the term 'fear' which the president often placed in opposition to the U.S value of freedom".

In chapter 10, *the F-Word*, she describes how social injustices and discriminations continued even after

she was graduated from UC Berkley and when she started looking for a job. Firoozeh, in this story, recounts how the discriminations led to changing her name to Julie, and applying under her new name. When she was applying for work with Firoozeh as her name, *an identifiably ethnic name*, she was rejected all the times but when she added Julie to her resume, "call it a coincidence, but the job offers started coming in" (Dumas, 2008, p. 65).

The revolution affected Kazim the most. Overnight, constructing more refineries were stopped in Iran, his service was no longer needed, and consequently he was retired. In chapter 18, *I-raynians Need not Apply*, Kazim's hardships as an Iranian looking for job is fully described; When the Hostage Crisis happened, he was laid off from his work in an American company and started looking for a new job. His pension was cut-off since he must have returned to Iran to receive his money, and to worsen the situation, "nobody wanted to hire an Iranian" (Dumas, 2008, p. 117). The hardships, after the Hostage Crisis, that Jazayeri family went through had deep impacts on their lives and there are so many references to this phase of their lives:

> For 444 nights, we waited. With each passing day, palpable hatred grew among many Americans, hatred not just of the hostage takers but of all Iranians. The media didn't help. We opened our local paper one day to the screaming headline "Iranian robs grocery store." Iran has as many fruits and nuts as the next country, but it seemed as if every lowlife who happened to be Iranian was now getting his fifteen minutes of fame. Vendors started selling t-shirts and bumper stickers that said "Iranians go home" and "wanted: Iranians, for target practice." Crimes against Iranians increased … many Iranians suddenly became Turkish, Russian, or French. (Dumas, 2008, p. 117)

Firoozeh, as she continues describing how Iranians became targets of social discrimination and harassment, emphasizes on an irony of Iranian immigrants then-situation, "perhaps the greatest irony in the wave of Iranian-hating was that Iranians, as a group, are among the most educated and successful immigrants in this country. "Our work ethic and obsession with education make us almost ideal citizens" (Dumas, 2008, p. 117-118). Another ironical situation was that even Saudi Arabia Oil Company rejected Kazim because of being an Iranian, this happens while most Americans considered Iranians to be Arabs or coming from Saudi Arabia. After the hostage crisis, according to Firoozeh, Iranians became very *unpopular* and Americans thought all Iranians could instantly *get angry and take prisoners* (Dumas, 2008, p. 39).

Despite all the aforementioned troubles and struggles, Jazayeri's family stayed in the United States and benefited from the best of the both worlds (Iran and the United States). Even Kazim, who was around forty when he immigrated to the United States, is described by Firoozeh as someone who "remained an Iranian who loved his native country but who also believed in American ideals" (Dumas, 2008, p. 121). As Alejandro Portes states in *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*, "the immigrants and their children are themselves being transformed into the newest Americans" (Portes 1)

**America**

The United States and its influence on Jazayeri family, Firoozeh in particular, started before they even immigrated to the country. Before the revolution, Kazim was sent to Texas by the government to consult for an American company for two years. During his stay in Texas, Kazim was so infatuated with America and American culture that:

> My father often spoke about America with the eloquence and wonders one normally reserves for a first love. To him, America was a place where anyone, no matter how humble his background, could become an important person. It was a kind and orderly nation full of clean bathrooms, a land where traffic laws were obeyed and where whales jumped through hoops. (Dumas, 2008, p. 3)

America might have been Kazim's first love in a metaphorical sense, but it had a huge effect on finding Kazim's first love and wife, Nazireh. Since coming back from the United States, Kazim wanted to marry "a fair-skinned woman with straight, light-colored hair"; therefore, he brought a picture of an American woman to Iran and asked his sister to find someone with the same physical features (Dumas, 2008, p. 5).

In chapter 1, *Leffingwell Elementary School*, Firoozeh briefly introduces her family. In her introduction she talks about how his father and his older brother Farid, left Abadan to study in America because, "like most Iranian youths, he had always dreamed of attending college abroad" (Dumas, 2008, p. 3). The way Kazim felt about America and the stories he told his family members were very important in persuading them to move to America. In chapter 2, *Hot Dogs and Wild Geese*, Firoozeh talks about how his father's relentless story telling about America left them with "the distinct impression that America was his second home" (Dumas, 2008, p. 8).

Kazim stayed in Texas for a few years and after he was graduated, he went back to Iran. On his arrival to

Iran, he was, as Firoozeh describes him, full of "American optimism" (Dumas, 2008, p. 83). Kazim is seldom depicted as critical of anything related to America, except for the post-hostage-crisis period. He likes American landscapes, architecture, Disneyland, free markets, TV programs (he even participated in one), foods, voting system etc. Firoozeh does not share the romanticized vision of his father towards America. She tries to be an honest witness of her surroundings and, when needed, a brutal critic of America, American ideals and American culture.

When in Abadan, Kazim urged his wife to make *jell-o* and *ham* (his regular food in America) and as Firoozeh recalls, "eating his beloved jambon always put him in a good mood, which then led to stories of America and his exciting graduate years" (Dumas, 2008, p. 86). Kazim's ideal remembrance of his years in Texas resurfaces when he recalls his meeting with Albert Einstein and then states, "Anything is possible in America" (Dumas, 2008, p. 94).

Firoozeh, in *Save Me, Mickey,* talks about her families never-ending amazement with America, "because we were new to this country, we were impressed not just by big attractions but also by the little things like smiling employees, clean bathrooms, and clear signage" (Dumas, 2008, p. 17). Disneyland is where Kazim was most attracted to and he considered it to be a sign of Walt Disney's genius. In Disneyland everyone regardless of their age, could have fun and Kazim found it to be a proof of Americans' tendency to enjoy life, creativeness and patiently waiting in lines.

*You Can Call Me Al* is a story about Jazayeri family's trips to Las Vegas. Firoozeh considers Las Vegas to be his father's favorite place on earth because it was cheap. These trips gave Kazim the opportunity to talk a bit more about why he thinks America is great, "clean bathrooms, great restaurants and all-you-can-eat buffets" (Dumas, 2008, p. 51-53). Firoozeh considers these trips to be awful, since she compared them to how they used to spend their holidays in Mahmoodabad, Iran. *America, Land of the Free* is a story which describes American marketing and how Kazim and his brother Nematollah were fascinated by it. The title of this short story is a clever reference to the abundant free samples which are given to potential customers in American marketing. For Kazim, these things were considered a kind of loophole in the system, and as it is described in the story, Kazim and his brother spent the next few days, eating free of charge samples of various foods. Kazim even attended free marketing conferences (in order to use the free facilities available) and he sometimes lied about his birthday at Danny's restaurants, in order to get free food.

There are two important key points which must not be overlooked when looking for American elements in Firoozeh's works: 1. Her books are meant to be funny and hilarious, so whenever Kazim is encountering an American phenomenon or experience, the tone of the story changes into a more light-hearted one. 2. There are many Iranian phenomena or historical events which have been thoroughly explained by Firoozeh for the American audience. However, since her books were written with American readers in mind, she has done little explaining of American elements, historical events and phenomena (as they have been taken for granted).

## CONCLUSION

Firoozeh is a rare and successful example of Iranian immigrant and hybrid writes who has succeeded in becoming commercially successful and at the same time socio-politically influential. Through respecting one's cultural heritage, one can not only evade inferiority complexes and similar physiological conflicts, but one can also use it to gain success and inner peace. Stories *of Funny in Farsi* are historical documents showing how Iranian Diaspora in the united states have lived through thick and thin and how cultural identity has been a noble obsession of Iranian immigrants.

Finally, Firoozeh's strategy in her first book provides a viable narrative technique to sidestep the "Unhomliness" brought up by the experience of living as an immigrant in America. Reading *Funny in Farsi* and *Laughing without an Accent* can accommodate people who have been hunted by noble questions regarding their identities as immigrants, with proper, satisfactory and freeing answers. Firoozeh's memorable books will hopefully stand the arduous test of time, because they are essentially delicate stories of people who love their motherland and do whatever they can to save their grace and survive in a foreign land.

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