

## A Deconstructive Reading of Yasmina Reza's *Art*

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### ABSTRACT

This article is an investigation of Derrida's deconstructive strategies on Yasmina's Reza's *Art* in which concepts such as floating signifier, différance, paradoxes, and decentralization have been applied. Here the question of aesthetic values of modern abstract art is raised. Reza confronts us with a miscommunication as a shortcoming of the language and therefore a rift in a longstanding friendship. The play is about a white painting, but each character in the play observes the painting in a different color. It seems that the color acts as a sign which is caught up in a chain of signifiers that never rest on a definite signified. In addition, the painting which is the centre of the play is decentred and replaced by one of the characters of the play. At the end, it is demonstrated that the text of this play is indeterminate without giving us any definite meaning.

Keywords: Différance; floating signifiers; paradoxes; decentralization; miscommunication.

### INTRODUCTION

This article has been an attempt to examine Yasmina Reza's *Art* based on Derrida's deconstructive strategies such as of floating signifier, paradoxes, and decentralization. By applying these theories it has been proved that the text has no stable meaning and its ending is deferred, which is like a floating signifier always postponed. Moreover, there are some words in the play which change their place as they reach each character in the play and are thus constantly deferred. In addition, there are many contradictions in the play which make the text indeterminate and undecidable to interpret and this paves the way for the various interpretations one can have of the play.

The researcher has attempted to decenter the center of the play to open more interpretations of the play possible as each new center can open new perspective to the play, thus introducing the fact that a play can have as many centers as possible.

The play's story (*Art*) revolves around Serge's purchase of a modern painting for a huge sum of money. His friend Marc cannot believe that Serge, whom he has known and loved for 15 years, could possibly have spent out two hundred thousand francs on a white painting and he reacts by verbally attacking Serge. Yvan tries to placate both sides but ends up being himself the target of his two friends' criticisms. This simple plot sparks off a debate not just about contemporary art and its function and value in

modern society but also, and mainly, about the three characters' friendship. In fact, the disagreement about art is only one of the reasons for the tensions and conflicts experienced by this male relationship and "the plot itself is really an excuse to touch on universal themes: the fragility of human relationships, the failure of our aspirations in life, the conflict between being and perceiving, the value/ danger of sincerity, the loneliness inherent to human beings, the power of words" (Mateo, 2006, p. 176).

### Floating Color

The play, *Art*, begins with two friends conversing over a painting that Serge, one of the characters, has bought recently and it has cost him a lot. The painting seems to be white but practically speaking, everyone in the play seems to be obsessed with its color, observing it disparately. The color of the painting does not seem to be fixed as when it is handed to each character it seems to vary. The color of the painting is a sign, not standing on one certain signified. It is entangled in the chain of signifiers and forever floating and we as readers of the play are not sure which color it exactly is and who we should believe as every character is seeing the painting from different angles.

The word 'color' finds different interpretations by different characters of the play and as Fattal argues, "art can be all about words and reactions" to the words and not the painting itself (2004, p.14). It is

similar to the idea of Derrida that each signifier is trapped in the trap of *différance* forever floating. A sign is always moving on the chain of signifiers never reaching a definite signified and thus no absolute meaning can be given to a sign and it is there that the indeterminacy of meaning is created.

The play has three characters, Serge the owner of the painting and two of his friends Marc and Yvan, each viewing the color of the painting differently. To Marc, it is completely white with some white lines. White is the color he sees in the painting with grey lines going across it. This painting to Yvan is composed of various colors as he says, "**Yvan:** Various colors... There's yellow, there's grey, some slightly ochrish lines" (Reza, 1994, p. 32). It does not have one specific color like what Marc said. It is composed of various colors, yellow, grey, etc. To Serge, the owner of the painting it goes further than that, the painting finds different other colors as well.

"**Serge:** As far as I'm concerned, it's not white. When I say as far as I'm concerned, I mean objectively. Objectively speaking, it's not white. It has a white background, with a whole range of greys... There's even some red in it. You could say it's very pale. I wouldn't like it if it was white. Marc thinks it's white.... That's his limit... Marc thinks it's white because he's got hung up on the idea that it's white. Unlike Yvan. Yvan can see it isn't white. Marc can think what he likes, what do I care?" (Reza, 1994, p. 19)

Here, Serge sums up the ideas of his own with Marc, and Yvan's, each having diverse views about the color of the painting. As seen, to Serge the color is grey, red, pale, etc. It does not have one color, white, but it is established of diverse colors. Different characters show different views about the color which makes decision about the color of the painting difficult. It is weird that three persons have three different views about one single painting which makes the readers confused as what the right color of the painting is, but we cannot judge who is right as the text is the only evidence we have and it is filled with indeterminacy of truth.

Not only does each character have different views about the painting, but also the color of it changes like signifiers which are always changing place, never resting. For each character, it has a special color and when it goes to the other characters it changes as well. The color, like a signifier, is floating, constantly deferred, when reaching one specific character. As Knapp argues,

"Art "deeply" imbibed in the "flair of language" and the "method of burrowing into the inner core

of a word and theme, thereby drawing out their multiple meanings, revolves around a subject, which also seeks to discern motivations" (1999, p.112).

It shows how the words as being a part of language always escape the meaning but produce meanings. Here, the painting to Marc is white with grey lines; we hope it is the exact color but when it comes to Yvan it becomes other colors like yellow and again floating as one might ask what the connection between white and yellow is; and at the end when we are waiting to know what Serge as the owner of the painting and as the one who seems to know a lot about art, thinks about the color of the painting, it seems to find more various colors such as red, grey, pale, etc.

It gives us the impression that even the colors themselves are escaping from one another as it appears first white, then grey, next red, pale and so one. It is like finding the meaning of a word in a dictionary which always refers to other meanings and words. Likewise, no definite color can be given to the painting. Its color is like a hovering sign which does not stop at one specific color, always hanging and changing colors when it reaches a person. This floating signifier makes our attempt in determining a color for the painting impossible as it has already fallen into *différance* of meaning in which every sign is in a chain of signifiers never reaching a destination.

### Contradiction as an Indeterminate Factor

According to Derrida deconstruction as a theory does not exist as it is a demonstration that a text has already deconstructed itself. As the Yale deconstructionist J. Hillis Miller (1976) once put it in "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure", "Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself" (p. 341). It means that there is no need to apply a specific theory based on some certain rules to a text since a text when written or in the mind of an author has deconstructed itself as this very text is made up of language and language is not a certain and reliable device for communication. It has gaps inside itself without an author having any authority or control over it; the fault is on language.

Language never conveys what one says, and within the gaps it creates there are paradoxes and contradictions which disturb the meaning to be flawless. These contradictions actually promote various layers of meanings to come up so a text spontaneously contradicts itself. Likewise, in *Art*

whether intentionally or unintentionally the characters are contradicting what they say and do during the play which does not depict that they have lied and on which the author has no control as well, it might be said. It shows how much a text can be unreliable to convey a meaning and within a text there are a bunch of gaps hidden which spoil the presence and accuracy of meaning. Reza explained that the title "refers to the art of words, the art of keeping up human relationships, friendship" (Haro-Tecglen, 1998, p. 46), but "she also said she believes that words are utterly ineffectual since, rather than making relationships closer, they wreck them" (Mateo, 2006, p. 176).

The characters of the play, *Art*, in various parts are contradicting what they have stated or acted before. In one part of the play Marc and Serge are discussing over the painting Serge has bought. Marc speaks his mind and tells him what he thinks of the painting, calling it shit and that it is not so much valuable as Serge has paid hundred thousand francs for it. This makes Serge furious and argues with Marc that as to what criterion he calls it shit. "**Serge:** No. I'm not. By whose standards is it shit? If you call something shit, you need to have some criterion to judge it by." (Reza, 1994, p. 5) Serge here is speaking very reasonably, asking Marc for the reasons he has called the painting shit. But the same Serge when talking about Marc's wife turns out to be the most irrational person as he calls her "ugly, repellent and charmless" (Reza, 1994, p. 43) without any certain reasons. And when he is asked why she is repellent and charmless, he reasons that he hates her because of the way she waves her cigarette. Serge, a person who seems to be reasonable and who requires others to judge by reason, when it comes to him to give his reason of hating Marc's wife, brings the most irrational and unacceptable judgment as he has claimed. As Knap argues,

"Meanwhile, Serge, feeling attacked, takes umbrage. The vigorously intellectual tussle that ensues activates angry, hateful, loving emotions, thus accentuating the richness and the ambiguities of the personalities involved" (1999, p.112).

Even Yvan condemns him of his criterion for calling a person repellent,

**Yvan:** "You can't demolish someone because you don't like her method of waving away cigarette smoke! ...

**Serge:** Yes, you can" (ibid 44).

Serge here appears to be criticizing someone just for the way she smokes but, on the other hand, when his painting is called shit, he is talking of criterion for calling a work of art shit. He cancels out what he

previously said and therefore contradicts himself. He is an intellectual but the way he behaves is like a child who just wants to humiliate Marc.

In another instance, when Yvan meets Serge and sees the painting it seems to him nice as he does not call it shit, "**Serge:** You can't call this shit. **Yvan:** No"(Reza, 1994, p. 14). But at the end of the play he calls it shit,

**Serge:** "It is not white.

**Yvan:** A piece of white shit! ... That's what it is, a piece of white shit! ... Let's face it, mate...What you've bought is insane! ..." (ibid 54).

Moreover, he says that he does not like the painting and that he is not moved by it but in the middle of the play again when he is asked about his opinion on the painting he has another idea saying something completely in contrast to what he previously had said. **Yvan:** I didn't like the painting...but I didn't actually hate it" (1994, p. 17) ... **Marc:** "Were you moved by Serge's painting? **Yvan:** No" (ibid 19). This is when he argues that he does not like the painting and that he is not taken by the painting but further he denies what he has said before and says, "**Yvan:** Yes...I am quite...taken with it, yes...You're not, I gather" (Reza, 1994, p. 30).

As noticed, the characters are full of paradoxes in the play. In some parts the characters say something and do something and in other parts, they act and say something else. These contradictions and paradoxes in the text make the play more complicated to be understood. However, these contradictions in the text come from language which is an unreliable means of communication, since it cannot fully convey the meaning causing confusion and undecidability here for the texts and the readers reading the texts.

### Postponing Ending

One of the interesting things which add to the indeterminacy of the play is the open-endedness of the play. Each discussion that takes place between the characters is left unfinished. It is as if the play has no ending like signifier that does not have any ending and is postponed in the chain of signifiers. This never-ending of the play helps the process of generating meaning which has no stop. In each discussion characters do not reach a closure, it is rather left for the next discussion and interpretation.

First there is a debate between Serge and Marc over the painting in which Marc calls the painting shit and that Serge should not have paid this much money on it, that Serge does not agree and gets mad at him. This

conversation is left floating and the reader's attention is attracted toward the way Yvan will respond to it as Marc argues that he should discuss the matter with him, to tell him what Serge has done, "I must go and see Yvan, he's a friend of ours, I have to discuss this with Yvan"(Reza, 1994, p. 6). They have a talk over Serge's painting and that Yvan should talk to Serge and asks him why he has bought such an expensive painting completely white in color. Marc also argues that Serge has become kind of moody and does not laugh at all and the conversation ends with Yvan's remark that he will make him laugh: "He'll laugh, you just wait" (ibid 11). Again no result to the discussion is given and it is floating for the next person without reaching any conclusion. And in the next part when Serge and Yvan get together they seem to get along better than Marc and Serge and they laugh and Yvan tries to smooth the things over between them (Serge and Marc) which makes Serge furious again and asks Yvan, "Don't keep trying to smooth things over. Where d' you get this urge to be the great reconciler of the human race? Why don't you admit that Marc is atrophying? If he hasn't already atrophied" (Reza, 1994, p. 15). He tries to make reconciliation between them which makes thing worse and not only they do not laugh but also they do not reach any conclusion over their discussion and it does not end there about their relationship. What is the outcome of their discussion is not clear and we are left for the next part. Thus, as we see in the play no discussion or conversation ends completely but is left floating without any result. It is left for the reader to construct the meaning based on their own interpretation of the text, therefore, making various interpretations of the play possible.

Yasmina Reza's *Art* does not necessarily have any immediate discernible meaning. ... Freed from any obligation to carry the story forward, to present identifiable dramatic situations, speech develops in a textual space without constraints. It is not that the story is necessarily absent, but simply that it has become more discreet, and that it is up to the reader or spectator to construct it on the basis of the textual material supplied, whether that material is profuse or cryptic and elliptical (1994, p. 18-19).

The next part the conversation between Marc and Yvan does not either end with any clear ending but with questions, "Answer me this. You're getting married tomorrow and you and Catherine get this painting as a wedding present. Does it make you happy?... Does it make you happy? (Reza, 1994, p. 19). The discussion of this part ends here with question that can have many meanings. The same process is frequently repeated to the end of the play

when the characters seem to have found reconciliation. However, there are a lot left unanswered in the play as Yvan's relationship with his mother and the stepmothers. What does he do to reconcile them? What happens to the discussion between Marc and Serge over Marc's wife in which Serge insults her and calls her repellent and charmless. As Inas Messiha asserts, " a final gesture of good will reconciles the friends but leaves the issues unresolved" (n.d., p. 306).

Most of the discussions in the play are left without answer or ending. The ending of the play is depicted by what Marc states. It ends with a poem which is not clear what it is about. It can be about the white painting- the subject which has covered the whole play. It is said that the painting is white but some says that it is not white but there are some other colors in it as well. One interpretation can be that the last poem is what the painting might show which is a man skiing in the snow when the snow is falling and when the snow stops falling the man disappears in the landscape or it represents a man who moves across a space and disappears.... (Reza, 1994, p. 57). It can also be said that after they draw some pictures on the painting, the result is what is brought up in the poem. Nothing determinate can be said about the play as the play does not open its closure to us as it constantly makes us confused about what is going on in the play. Marc, the most straightforward of the three closes the play with a "cryptic verse", which ends:

My friend Serge, who's one of my oldest friends, has bought a painting. "It's a canvas about five feet by four. It represents a man who moves across a space then disappears" (Reza, 1994, p. 47).

"Marc's poem and the men themselves are, much like the painting, left open for interpretation" (Ryngaert, 2002, p.5). This demonstrates that the ending of the poem is also postponed and left for interpretations.

### **Decentralization of the Center**

Previously, it was held that the center is a place in which everything turns around it and it makes a balance among the structures of the text and therefore, a coherently unified, fixed system would emerge. Its task was to organize the whole system around a central place through which a text can be interpreted. Derrida in his well-known 1967 lecture argued,

The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure-one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure-but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *free play* of the structure.

No doubt that by orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the *free play* of its elements inside the total form. (Derrida, 1978, p. 88)

This is what was claimed about center before Derrida's notions. However, as Derrida shows up with his deconstructive theory, he subverts the center and believes that the center prevents the free play of meaning as it makes one unified whole and does not allow other parts of the text which each can function as a center feasible; therefore, simply, he believes that the center can be everywhere in a text and everywhere in a text can establish a center from which the text can be read. As Derrida says, "the center is not in the center" (Derrida, 1978, p.89). When a center is deconstructed, everywhere in a text can substitute the previous center and becomes a center which can make many centers possible, which results in the free play of meaning. Thus, we can produce a number of centers that each can be considered as a center from which a text can be interpreted differently. Each center can produce a different view to the text and this makes the process of signification possible.

The very text, the play, can be viewed from various centers and not just the present center which is turning around the white painting, which causes the relationship between the characters to get worse. The whole play is centered on the white painting including every discussion, argument, meeting, and dispute they have with one another. The relationship is all that takes place in the play as Messiha says, "This play is more about human relationships than art" (n.d., p.307). The relationship between Marc and Serge, who has been close friend for years, gets worse and they insult each other over the simplest issues and even Serge calls Marc's wife a repellent, ugly person.

Therefore, the central center of *Art* is the white painting upon which the foundation of the play has rested. But as it was mentioned, according to deconstructive theory no center can dominate a text. However, the researcher is going to look at the text from another angle in which new look towards the play would emerge.

Yvan as the marginalized character who does not seem to be related to center of the play, -white painting- by a meticulous reading can become the center of the play whose actions and talks move the play forward. It is him who causes the relationship between two friends get worse. From the beginning of the play when Yvan is at Serge's house, talking about the painting and they discuss about their friend, Marc, and his opinion about art, Yvan opens the issue which makes Serge more sensitive about Marc's behavior.

Yvan calls Marc moody and that his taste is classy and does not understand the modern art, "His taste is classical, he likes things classical, what do you expect . . ." ... You know Marc is moody, there's nothing new about that... It's true he's a bit gloomy at the moment"(Reza, 1994, p.15). This is the beginning of what happens to the relationship between Marc and Serge as the play is the play of relationships. Yvan's opinion about Marc causes Serge to blame Mar, "what I blame him for is his tone of voice, his complacency, his tactlessness. I blame him for his insensitivity" (Reza, 1994, p.15). And even when Yvan tries to smooth things over, it becomes worse as he has already, intentionally or unintentionally, said that he is moody and sardonic.

Moreover, when Yvan comes to report to Marc what happened between him and Serge, and that they laughed and they were very happy when together, Marc gets jealous as he sees they have enjoyed each other but when he was with Serge, Serge did not laugh," **Yvan:** It was Serge who laughed first. **Marc:** It was Serge who laughed first. . . He laughed first and you joined in" (ibid 16). This fact that he sees Serge now away from himself makes him jealous and this is what Yvan has reported. Moreover, when he is with Marc he says that he did not like the painting and that he was not moved by it but when he is with Serge he says something different, that he was moved by the painting and that he likes it as a modern art.

**Yvan:** I didn't like the painting...but I didn't actually hate it" (Reza, 1994, p.17) . . .

**Marc:** "Were you moved by Serge's painting?"

**Yvan:** No "(ibid 19).

This is when he argues that he does not like the painting and that he is not taken by the painting but when he is with Serge he says something else. It may appear that Yvan is the minor character and the whole play is centered around the struggle Marc and Serge has with one another over the painting but actually it is Yvan who triggers this struggle between them. As Richard Hornby in "Ireland Your Ireland" explains, "a third friend, Yvan, is enlisted by both to support their sides. Yvan's vacillating and equivocating make up of most of the play's brief action, which culminates in fisticuffs" (Hornby, 1998, p. 563). Yvan now becomes the center of the play and this adds to the indeterminacy of the play as well as who or what can be recognized as the center; nevertheless, as we see the center can be everything and everyone, it changes place; now it can be Yvan who with what he says and does moves the play forward. Even when they try to make reconciliation and as Serge says, "All right, listen, it's just a picture, we don't have to get bogged down with it, life's too short. . . (Reza, 1994, p. 20).

When the name of Yvan shows up everything gets ruined since Serge quotes a sentence from Yvan in which it says that Marc has lost his sense of humor by this Marc gets mad and again their relationship starts to become weakened. Marc tries to make peace with Serge and begin to apologize as he thinks that he has been wrong about what he has said about the painting and that he has been harsh at that moment. He argues that deep down the painting has some sense and there is something poetic about it and this is the moment he tries to apologize.

Therefore, as noticed, this is not the painting which causes dispute between two friends as they try to forget everything and as they both agree that the painting is a work of art. The dispute starts over the fact that Yvan has said that Marc has no sense of humor and that he has lost it. Everything is going well between them and they have no problem with the painting until Yvan talks about Marc that he has lost his sense of humor. It seems the white painting is the center of the arguments between them as Tom Bishop says, "The painting serves as a catalyst in the play for drawing out unresolved issues and deep-seated emotions within the characters concerning their relationships to each other as the escalating argument over the painting leads to a downward spiral that becomes personal" (Bishop, 2007, p.4). But here it is clear that it is Yvan who ruins their relationship and who is at the center of the argument they have. It seems that even the discussion over Yvan leads to their fight with one another even questioning whether they have things in common or not.

**Serge:** Have you any idea what you and I have in common? ...

**Marc:** That's a question that could take us down a very long road... (Reza, 1994, p. 36).

Here again we see that although Yvan is not present physically, his presence is felt. Therefore, as observed, the privilege given to the painting as the center of the play has been subverted and it has been replaced with Yvan which now becomes a center from whose influence on the play, the play can be deconstructed and reconstructed as it subverts the binary in which the white painting is the center. It is the painting around which the whole work is organized and now a new center is introduced which itself can be deconstructed too as within this new center many gaps and contradictions can be found.

In one part of the play when a fight has been started because of Yvan, and when he wants to calm them down, Serge asserts that,

**Yvan:** I don't understand what's going on. Can't we just calm down? There's no reason to insult each other, especially over a painting.

**Serge:** You realize all this "calm down" and behaving like the vicar is just adding fuel to the fire! Is this something new?" (Reza, 1994, p. 40).

This is for the first time that Serge warns Yvan that whenever he decides to smooth things over between Marc and Serge their relationship gets worse. His role is adding fuel to the fire and that he is somehow guilty in what is happening between two friends.

In another instance, when Serge is insulting Marc's wife calling her "ugly, repellent and charmless", just because of "her method of waving away cigarette smoke condemns her out of hand" (Reza, 1994, p. 43), Yvan just says, "You're exaggerating!" (ibid 43), which raises Serge's satisfaction that someone else actually agrees with him: "You notice he doesn't say I'm wrong, he says I'm exaggerating, but he doesn't say I'm wrong. Her method of waving away cigarette smoke reveals a cold, condescending and narrow-minded nature" (ibid).

This implication by Yvan that Marc's wife is narrow-minded and repellent unconsciously marks a serious point in the relationship between Marc and Serge. At the end of the play, again it is Yvan who is targeted as the main problem-maker and the one who has ruined their evening as he comes late and from that time on he has created the conflict between them,

**Marc:** You arrive three-quarters of an hour late, you don't apologize, you deluge us with your domestic woes. ...

**Serge:** And you inertia, your sheer neutral spectator's inertia has lured Marc and me into the worst excesses. ...

**Marc:** You've been piping up with this finicky, subservient voice of reason ever since you arrived, it's intolerable. (Reza, 1994, p. 51)

Now Marc and Serge bombard Yvan with accusations that he is guilty of whatever has been going wrong between them. He is the one who arrives late talking about his domestic woes which does not let them to concentrate on their problem that can be solved. And his silence also adds to the fuel of their conflict. Serge believes that it is Yvan whose reticence puts them into the worst conflict. He becomes guilty of the charges which have ruined the friendship between Marc and Serge. He becomes the center of their attention that it is him who adds fuel to the fire when they have been discussing issues and wanted to reconcile with one another but his presence, his talking, and his reticence exacerbate their little problem, thus to be magnified, leading to their serious conflict.

As noticed, the white painting that was the center on which the whole foundation of the play is based has been subverted, given its place to Yvan's influence on the relationship between two friends. There are times when they want to make peace with one another and they confess that the painting is not what has held their relationship back as this is the minor problem they can have and it can be easily solved but when the presence of Yvan is felt, their friendship seems to get worse as he intentionally or unintentionally interferes in their discussion which intensifies their conflict. Therefore, he becomes the center of their problem as the play is the play about relationships. However, this very center can be easily subverted as it is located in language which is full of paradoxes and contradictions. For example, this very center can be deconstructed as Yvan who is guilty for worsening the friendship between them has been trying several times to reconcile them but they themselves rejected him as a minor character. Or as he is not present sometimes they start fighting.

Another center which can be viewed as the center of the play can be Marc's love toward Serge, and the fact that Marc does not want a painting to take his place and it is now when the argument begins as he believes his value is more than the money Serge has paid for the painting. He has bought a painting without consulting him, which infuriates Marc, as Bishop (2007) asserts,

"Marc has served as a mentor to Serge and feels betrayed and hurt by the fact that Serge has shown some independence and forward thinking about art without Marc's mentorship" (p.10).

Therefore, many centers can be established for the play, that each open different layers of meaning. therefore, the reader can look and read the text from different perspectives as Mateo (2006) says, " *Art* is endowed with the possibility of different readings and forms of enjoyment"(p.176).

## CONCLUSION

In contrast to the old view towards a work of art in which just one center was taken into consideration, in Derrida's view point the center is not in the center as it

can be any place in a work from which the work can be interpreted and this by itself can open many layers of signification as each center takes one perspective to the play and when there are many centers in the play, there are many interpretations as well. Thus, deconstruction helps dissemination of meaning possible. Having these many centers in itself makes the meaning undecidable as well.

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## Perceptual Dialectology: Northerners and Southerners' View of Different American Dialects

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### ABSTRACT

American English, also known as US English, is a set of dialects in the English language mostly used in the United States. It has considerable variations in terminology, phrasing and syntax. The differences are mostly on regional basis. The three major regional dialects are: Northern, Midland, and Southern. Generally, dialect varieties are acceptable in society; however, some of them are more stigmatized than others. The present study has been done to examine American English speakers' perceptions towards regional American varieties in terms of correctness, pleasantness, and difference from their own speech.

Keywords: Perceptual dialectology; dialects; American English

### INTRODUCTION

Teachers of English from countries where English is a second language might have encountered a dilemma of what English should be taught in their classrooms. With the growing World Englishes concept, curriculum everywhere is open to the teaching of different dialects and accents. American English shows significant variations in terms of terminology, phrasing and syntax other than the Standard English. The distinctiveness of different dialects in American English has been a topic of interest for at least 100 years and led to the creation of various dictionaries distinguishing the differences between the dialects. American English is rich of dialects, with numerous sub-varieties, such as Ebonics, Chicano, and AAE, which manifest their own fascinating uniqueness. Many of the dialects are the results of influences from other languages and cultures that have played – and/or continue to play – a significant role in the US history. This phenomenon tells us that the language is constantly developing, and that new words and constructs arise every day in Americans' use of English (Preston, 2003).

Traditionally, Standard American English is distinguished into three main regional dialects, each of which has several sub-dialects. The Northern (or New England) dialect is spoken in New England and New York State; one of its sub-dialects is the “New

Yorkese” of New York City. The Midland (or General American) dialect is heard along the coast from New Jersey to Delaware, with variants spoken in an area bound by the Upper Ohio Valley, West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and eastern Tennessee. The Southern dialect, with its varieties, is spoken from Delaware to South Carolina. From their respective focal points, these dialects have spread and mingled across the rest of the country (Clopper, Levi & Pisoni, 2005).

The present study has been done to examine the various dialects of American English. It was conducted in Athens, Ohio, and four dialects of different regions were studied on correctness, pleasantness and similarities. The four dialects are those heard in New York City, Ohio, Texas and Louisiana. According to Wolfram and Ward (2006), these taken four dialects significantly vary from each other and are differently perceived by listeners in terms of accentedness, steadiness, and professional attractiveness. The interest of the study was not only in determining the more general perceptual dialect areas but also in investigating native speaker perception towards the taken four regional dialects.

The first dialect examined is the “New Yorkese” from New York City (NYC) as part of Northern dialect. Unlike most other urban dialects, the NYC dialect stands by itself and bears little resemblance to the

other dialects in its region. It is also the most disliked and parodied of any American dialects. The second dialect is Ohio dialect from the Midwest. As the center of the linguistic norm, it is considered to be the official dialect of the people of the United States.

Next, the Texas dialect from Western United States has many words which originally came from Spanish, cowboy jargon, and even some from the languages of the Native Americans. Compared to the Eastern United States, the Western regions were settled too recently for very distinctive dialects to have time to develop, and that adds to their unique characteristics. Lastly, the Louisiana dialects which many people in southern Louisiana will speak in two or three of these dialects: Cajun French, Cajun English, Yat (resembles to NYC dialect), and Louisiana French Creole.

The chief purpose to study these dialects was to investigate American English speakers' perceptions about American dialects in terms of correctness, pleasantness, and difference from their own speech. Reduplicating Kuiper's (2005) study, the present study utilizes quantitative analysis of selected dialect features and a perceptual mapping task in order to determine whether perceptions match linguistic reality.

## PERCEPTUAL DIALECTOLOGY

The existence of different dialects of a language and how the regional patterns of dialect production are categorized have been documented through the history and development of regional dialectology. Preston (1989) introduced the concept of perceptual dialectology or folk dialectology as one of the approaches that helped provide a subjective viewpoint towards the understanding and interpreting differences among regional dialects. He combined a variety of studies on dialectology, which was also paving the way for many upcoming studies on the same field conducted by researchers of English and of different languages for the last two decades. Preston (1999) and Long and Preston (2002) provided additional contributions to the field with historical, regional, methodological and interpretive surveys conducted for the studies taken place not only in some English speaking countries (Canada, the United States), but also in several countries where other languages are spoken namely Japan, the Netherlands, Cuba, Hungary, Italy, Korea, and Mali.

The purpose of perceptual dialectology is to determine how people perceive the differences between their own dialects and other language varieties; or in other words, to find out about people's

'mental dialect maps'. The methods used in perceptual dialectology involve calling upon participants, having them intuitively draw lines on a (blank) map and/or label or rank different regional dialect areas according to a pre-designed scale (e.g., Likert scale).

Kuiper (2005) examined the perceptions of French speakers in the two regions: Ile de France (Paris) and Provence towards regional French dialects and explored the relation between those perceptions and linguistic security. Participants of the study were asked to use the Likert scales to rate regional French varieties according to three categories: correctness, pleasantness and difference from their own dialects. Woehrling and Boula de Mareuil (2006) in their study aimed at discovering how accents had an effect on the perceptual identification of French varieties and how they related to the age of the speakers.

In the field of perceptual dialectology, up to the time of this paper, the number of studies on English perceptual dialectology has apparently outnumbered the perceptual dialectology studies on other languages. Regarding the study of perceptual dialectology of English, Pearce (2009) presented a finding drawn from a questionnaire responded by approximately 1,600 participants in North East England. The study employed Preston's method which included providing names of a selected set of areas, asking participants to numerically rate the regional varieties in each area according to the similarities and differences, and asking for participants' comments and opinions on the dialects used in the rated areas.

As for perceptual dialectology on American English, following the steps of various preceding books, experiments and articles, some of the most recent studies can be named as follows: Preston (2000); Clopper and Pisoni (2003); Clopper, Levi, and Pisoni (2005); Bucholtz, Bermudez, Fung, Edwards, and Vargas (2008); Bucholtz, Bermudez, Fung, Edwards, Vargas (2007); and Blake, Erker, and Taylor (2009).

The general purpose of the majority of studies on American English perceptual dialectology including those listed above is to shed light on and/or provide a better and more profound understanding about how people from different regions in the United States perceive their own speech in comparison with the speech used by others. As Preston (2000) put it:

"The belief that some varieties of a language are not as good as others runs so deep that one might say it is the major preoccupation of Americans with their language. It is a belief nearly

universally attached to minorities, rural people, and the less well-educated people, and it extends even to well-educated speakers of some regional varieties. Evidence for this belief comes from what real people, not professional linguists, believe about language variety.” (p.1)

The studies, regardless of the states they concern, generally gear towards the objective of gaining a closer insight into the common belief that some varieties of American English are better than others, and the result we know of to date, as concluded by Preston (2000), is that among a number of varieties of American English, the dialects spoken in New York City and the South received the least preference from respondents.

However, as the result of globalization, the geographical as well as the mental mapping of regional dialects might experience changes and even become more challenging to classify. Therefore, continual research and reduplicative studies in the field are really in need.

## METHOD

To achieve the purpose of this research, the data were collected through questionnaires and perceptual mapping. The questionnaires were divided into three different sections; degree of difference, degree of correctness, and degree of pleasantness. As the study focused on four different American dialects, respondents were asked to rate dialects of Ohio, New York City, Louisiana, and Texas (See Appendix).

Each item on the survey was evaluated by using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. In determining the degree of difference of the four dialects, number 1 is for one they consider resembles their own dialects, and 5 is for the most incomprehensible dialect. In the second part of the survey, number 1 reflects the dialect that is not all correct, while number 5 is for the most correct dialect of American English. Similarly, in the third part of the survey, number 1 is used to describe dialect that is not at all pleasant, and 5 is for the most pleasant one to hear.

**Table 2.** Rank Order of Means for Northerners and Southerners Degree of Difference Ratings

	North			South		
	Dialect	Mean	Std. Deviation	Dialects	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Ohio	1.53	0.640	Ohio	2.33	0.816
2	New York City	2.40	0.737	Louisiana	3.33	0.816
3	Texas	3.00	0.756	Texas	3.5	1.517
4	Louisiana	3.33	0.900	New York City	3.83	0.983

After filling out the survey, the respondents were asked to give label or classify dialects in a blank map of America.

## The Respondents

The participants of the research were twenty-one Ohio University students ranging between the ages of 18 to 32. Fifteen respondents came from states that we categorized as part of the North, and six of them were from Southern areas. We divided the respondents into two different regions, North and South, as we wanted to compare how people from both regions perceive each other's dialects. There was a respondent who identified herself to be from California, a state in the Western part of the United States. After some careful considerations, we decided to put her among Southern respondents.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Degree of Difference

The first focus of the analysis is degree of difference by analyzing which dialects were perceived to be closely resembling the respondents' own dialects. The table below presents the quantitative data related to degree of difference drawn from the questionnaire.

The results show that the dialect spoken in Ohio was viewed as closest to their own dialects by both Northerners and Southerners, however, the mean values shows that the northerners rated Ohio as closer than the Southerners dido.

**Table 1.** The Northerner and Southerner Respondents

No	Northern respondents	Number	Southern respondents	Number
1	Ohio	11	Tennessee	1
2	Indiana	1	Oklahoma	1
3	New York City	1	California	1
4	New Hampshire	1	South Carolina	1
5	Pittsburg	1	Georgia	1
6			Kentucky	1
Total		15		6

The Northern and Southern dialect division can be seen in the order of dialects rated as the most different from their own dialects. The northerners put the two cities in the North as the closest, followed by the two cities in the South. The southerners, on the contrary, put New York, a city in the North as the most different, while Ohio, despite its being a city in the North, is considered to resemble their dialect the closest. It might be related to the general notion that Ohio English is the most standard and correct English in America. The data suggested that the southern respondents thought their dialects were closer to the standard Ohio English rather than the stigmatized dialects of Texas or Louisiana.

Another thing to notice is that the standard derivation of the southerners' rating on Louisiana was quite high. It was more than 1.5, which indicates that the southern survey-takers might have quite different opinions on this.

### Degree of Correctness

Next, the second focus of the analysis is degree of correctness. It attempted at identifying which dialects were perceived to be most correct according to the respondents. The table below illustrates the quantitative data related to degree of correctness drawn from the questionnaire.

**Table 3.** Rank Order of Means for Northerners and Southerners Degree of Correctness Ratings

	North		South		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
1 Ohio	3.80	1.146	Ohio	4.33	0.816
2 New York City	3.60	1.121	New York City	3.17	1.472
3 Texas	3.33	1.047	Texas	2.67	1.506
4 Louisiana	3.07	1.100	Louisiana	2.50	1.049

The result shows that both Northerners and Southerners rated Ohio very highly in terms of correctness. The mean of Ohio dialect from Northerners' perspective is 3.80, followed by New York, Texas, and Louisiana. Interestingly, the Southerner respondents also showed the same ranking order for the dialects; however, the mean for Ohio was higher, 4.33. Overall, the table concludes that compared to the Northerners, the Southerners rated Ohio dialect very high, but they rated other dialects lower.

This perspective seems to be closely related to the fact that Ohio is part of the Midwest area, in which its dialect has been used as the standard dialect in American media. This dialect turned out to be the

most favorable one because people heard it throughout television most of the time; therefore, they tend to think that it is the most correct or standard one. Louisiana dialect, on the other side, appears to be the most stigmatized regional one. Both groups of respondents rated it very low, 3.07 and 2.50. The dialects of Texas and Louisiana, which are those from the South, were at the bottom two. This was related to the stigma that had been received by the Southerners. One thing that surprised us was that the Southerners also rated their own dialects very low, even lower than Northerners. For example, when the Northerners gave Texas 3.33, the Southerners gave the same dialect only 2.67. The concept of linguistic insecurity may best explain this fact. Southerners are convinced that their dialects are not correct; the general view about their dialects has somehow shaped the way they perceived themselves.

### Degree of Pleasantness

Lastly, the study focuses on degree of pleasantness by analyzing which dialects were perceived to be most agreeable or most pleasant to hear by the respondents. The table below presents the quantitative data related to degree of pleasantness drawn from the questionnaire.

**Table 3.** Rank Order of Means for Northerners and Southerners Degree of Pleasantness Ratings

	North		South		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
1 Louisiana	3.73	0.799	Louisiana	3.33	1.033
2 Ohio	3.60	1.183	Ohio	2.83	1.169
3 Texas	3.33	1.113	Texas	2.83	1.169
4 New York City	3.13	1.356	New York City	2.00	0.894

The result of the survey shows that the Northerners considered that Louisiana dialect was the most pleasant dialect compared to the other three. The Northerner respondents gave 3.73 to Louisiana, and put it in the top of the ranking. The Southerners also thought that Louisiana dialect was the most pleasant dialect, followed by Ohio, Texas, and New York dialects. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the way the Northerners and the Southerners perceive the most pleasant dialect.

However, it is interesting to look at how a dialect that was rated the lowest in terms of correctness was considered to be the most pleasant. The same phenomenon was also reflected in the study conducted by Kuiper (2005), in which Parisian speakers believed they spoke pleasant and correct French while Provençal speakers were convinced that

the French they were speaking were less correct despite the most pleasant one. In our study, the Southerners might suffer from linguistic insecurity, as their dialects were not among the favorable ones; therefore, they tried to compensate their being less correct by rating their dialect high in terms of pleasantness. However, some unexpected findings showed that the Northerners also thought that Louisiana had more pleasant dialect than Ohio. Louisiana dialect might sound very different for them; that is why, they thought it sounded unique and nicer than their own dialects.

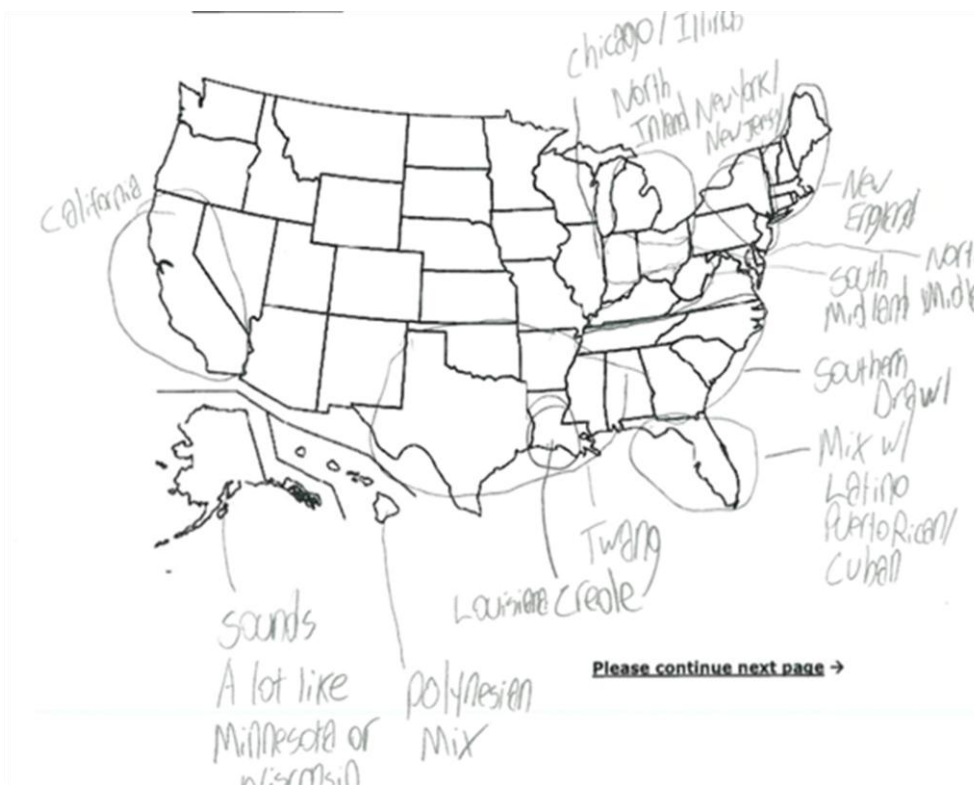
The result also shows that New York City was rated very low in terms of pleasantness. This is in line with common notion mentioning that New York City is the most parodied American dialect.

**PERCEPTUAL MAPPING**

In our study, we also asked the respondents to draw maps of dialects in a blank map of America that we presented to them. Figure 1 and 2 below represent different maps drawn by respondents from the North and the South. From the maps, we could conclude



**Figure 1.** Perceptual Map Drawn by a Northerner Respondent



**Figure 2.** Perceptual Map Drawn by a Southerner Respondent

that both respondents seemed to be familiar with dialect division of the states in the Eastern part of the map.

However, when it came to states in the middle part and Western part of the map, most of them felt unfamiliar and decided to leave the maps blank. This might be related to the fact that our respondents were people from the North and the South, and only one of them from the West. The Northerners and the Southerners were probably more familiar with the dialects around them, as they seemed to be more confident in labeling and classifying dialect varieties in the Eastern part of the map.

## CONCLUSION

One of the most interesting findings from the survey analysis is that Louisiana dialect was rated as the least correct one, yet both the Northerner and Southerner group considered it as the most pleasant dialect. Further, there might be different reasons concerning the Northerners and the Southerners' point of view. In degrees of difference, the Northerner group rated Louisiana to be the least similar, while the Southerner group rated it the second similar dialect. Our result is very much like Preston's (2000). It is safe to conclude that the Southerners generally are linguistically insecure; nevertheless, further interviews with the respondents need to be done to get more information. As to the way the Northerner group rated Louisiana, the only explanation that we can give is their preference of different or even exotic accents in terms of pleasantness. In terms of degree of difference, the Northerner group and the Southerner group rated differently; however, they rated similarly in degree of correctness and pleasantness. This reveals that both groups understood the differences between the northern and southern dialects, but there is no significant difference in their subjective perception of the dialects.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study only involved 21 respondents; thus, future research within the same scope can aim to more respondents. Another concern is related to the subject distribution. The number of Northerner respondents in our study was more than that of the Southerner respondents. There were fifteen respondents from the North and six respondents from the South. In the future, a more balanced number of respondents from both groups can support the objectivity and reliability of the study. Future researchers can also consider including all the fifty states in the US for a more comprehensive research, as well as using taped

interview method in order to provide more subjective view from the respondents.

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**APPENDIX.****The Questionnaire****The degree of difference questionnaire**

After each region, circle the number. Each number expresses:

1. If you think the English spoken in that region resembles your own
2. If you think the English spoken in that region slightly differs from your own
3. If there is a resemblance, but weaker
4. If the English in that region scarcely resembles the English you speak
5. If the English in that region is incomprehensible to you

1. New York	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ohio	1	2	3	4	5
3. Texas	1	2	3	4	5
4. Louisiana	1	2	3	4	5

**The degree of correctness questionnaire**

After each of the regions given below, circle the appropriate number (from 1 to 5) according to you, using the following scale:

1. They speak an English in that region that is not at all correct
5. They speak an English in that region that is completely correct.

1. New York	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ohio	1	2	3	4	5
3. Texas	1	2	3	4	5
4. Louisiana	1	2	3	4	5

**The degree of pleasantness questionnaire**

After each of the regions given below, circle the appropriate number (from 1 to 5) according to you, using the following scale:

1. They speak an English in that region that is not at all pleasant
5. They speak an English in that region that is completely pleasant.

1. New York	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ohio	1	2	3	4	5
3. Texas	1	2	3	4	5
4. Louisiana	1	2	3	4	5

**Please draw the map of American dialects as you perceive them.**



Adapted from Kuiper (2005).

# Halting a Wilful Degeneration into the Abyss: Rhapsodizing the Morass of Despair in Esiaba Irobi's *Inflorescence* and *Cotyledons*

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## ABSTRACT

An examination of Nigeria's nationhood in the themes of *Inflorescence* (1989) and *Cotyledons* (2009) reveals a dogged inscription of Esiaba Irobi's poems within the context of Nigeria's interweaving socio-political tragedies: the rapacious rape of her resources by the successive political class, the continuous violation of her humanistic ethos by the rampaging military institution, and the ignoble dispossession of her hopeless downtrodden masses. Irobi portrays a dialectical juxtaposition of the fragmented and haunted existentialism in Nigeria against the sanity and sanctity for human rights obtainable in the Western nations. The grounding of Nigeria's disillusionment further underscores Nigeria's stand on the brink of a political precipice. The paper aims to evaluate how Esiaba Irobi's *Inflorescence* and *Cotyledons* have implicitly challenged Nigeria's inability to live up to its expectations of fulfilling the present and future aspirations of its teeming population in the areas of human and infrastructural developments.

Keywords: Halting; wilful degeneration; abyss; rhapsodizing morass of despair; political precipice.

## INTRODUCTION

Esiaba Irobi's poems in *Inflorescence* (1989) and *Cotyledons* (2009) quintessentially focus on the appalling undermining of Nigeria's nationhood by the military in collaboration with the civilian political elite. The themes of both *Inflorescence* and *Cotyledons* are inward looking and they are essentially grounded in the transposition of the Nigerian political history into a farcical fantasy, crudely mediated by the military leadership's mediocrity. Irobi further illustrates in the anthologies, a haunting canvas of desolate Nigerian landscape, trapped in a forlorn trajectory of perennial systemic failures in its tortuous nationhood. This failure underpins the social and political statement on the precariousness of human existence in the postcolonial Nigeria. It is a political failure whose cataloguing in the anthologies is so daunting that it could be mistaken as a universal statement about the general failure of governance in the postcolonial black Africa.

But Nigeria's failure, like the failure of many other African nations has been examined by Edmond Mfaboum Mbiafu (2002) to be self-inflicted,

"the idea of a curse, featured as the poetics of failure, is illustrated in the irradiation and continual emergence of fatality that numbs

human beings and constitutes, in the end, an obstacle to progress. Whether an Hamitic curse or a curse of History, the belief in these myths conveyed to anesthetize black consciences has no place in an Africa that in order to rise up needs to get rid of these demons of its adulterated imaginary, which create so many impediments to action" (p.32).

Nevertheless, a comparative evaluation of governance in Africa reveals that while Southern African nations and Ghana have recorded a relative improvement in their economic and political indices, Nigeria with its abundance natural resources has remained an embarrassment to the Africa's pride. This embarrassment has been poignantly captured in the words of Gerhard Wendler (1988),

"the discovery of oil in Nigeria has presented a paradox. In spite of the huge income which Nigeria and the oil companies receive out of oil sales, Nigerians not only remain poor but are becoming poorer every day. The enormous wealth is distributed among the government, the oil companies and a handful of individuals" (p. v).

The authenticity of this failure, as reiterated in Irobi's poems is validated by the voices of the dispossessed

masses, the unemployed and the Nigerian exiles in the Western countries.

Most significantly, poverty emanating from Nigeria's systemic failure has continuously generated anger and resentment from Nigerians who have realised that Nigeria makes enormous wealth from its oil production which they could see but do not benefit from. In despair, various Nigerian communities have resulted into agitations, to protest this inequitable distribution of the common wealth. This agitation, is gradually degenerating into constant calls for the fragmentation of Nigeria along the ethnic lines. It is worth bearing that at the fore front of this campaign for the balkanization of Nigeria, are the ethnic militant groups like: the dreadful *Boko Haram al-Islam*, an Islamic militant sect which is assiduously campaigning for the inauguration of an Islamic republic in the Northern Nigeria. In the South-Western Nigeria, the *OPC-Oodua People's Congress*, a militant political organization, is demanding for the autonomy of the Yoruba country. In the South-Eastern Nigeria, the *MASSOB-Movement* for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra, a militant political organization is relentlessly agitating for the formation of the Igbo country. Similarly, the South-South militant organization, *MEND-Movement* for the emancipation of Niger Delta, is strongly demanding for the total control of its oil resources accrued in the *Ijaw* enclave of the Nigeria's South South. In the same vein, campaign for resource control is being championed by the *MOSOP-Movement* for the survival of the Ogoni people, a non-violent ethno-environmental organization established by the late writer and environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa to draw awareness to the environmental degradation of and for the development of the Ogoni land in the Nigeria's South South. Irobi appropriates in the anthologies the interaction of historical facts and memory to construct a wasteland of an increasingly fragmented and disjointed society, which is perfunctorily yoked together through the military might over the years. Nigeria history therefore provides a poetic resource for constructing the monumental destruction of its political heritage by the military and civilian leaders since it got independence from the United Kingdom in 1960.

The paper will strive to analyze how Irobi's excursion into the past decodes a Nigeria's present, which is strewn with failures and disappointments orchestrated by the military alongside the civilian political elite. This paper will further establish the portrayal of Nigeria as a land that is continually traumatized and mutilated and whose citizen's aspirations forever remain emasculated by its successive leaders.

## ARTICULATING NIGERIA'S DEPRIVATION IN NEW HISTORICISM

As suggested in Tyson (1999) that given its status as a critical mode which emphasizes 'the relationship between a text and the society' (p. 288) that produces it, the literary theory known as New Historicism has been chosen as the framework for this paper. It is a theory which interrogates the assumptions and attitudes governing how events are seen differently by the author and individual readers of a literary text. It relates a text to other texts produced at the same period in a given society; thus, literary and political connections can be drawn between the aesthetic elements embedded in the text, and the cultural realities that obtain in such a society (Tyson, 1999). Within the ambit of New Historicism, the subject matter and thematic concerns of the texts under focus will be analyzed with a view to drawing out these connections and discussing their significance within the analytical concerns of the paper. New Historicism is pre-occupied with the examination of literary texts from the perspective of their being embedded within the social and economic circumstances in which they are produced and consumed. For new historicists, these circumstances are not stable in themselves and are susceptible to being re-written and transformed; from this perspective, literary texts are part of a larger circulation of social energies, both products of and influences on a particular culture or ideology.

New Historicism proffers an eclectic approach to literary study. As such, it incorporates many aspects of other critical viewpoints, even if it does not agree with them in totality. For example, it obtains from New Criticism the approach of seeking the interconnectedness that underlies any work of art (Selden, 1989, p.192). It shares with Reader-Response theory the view that a work of literature can impart different meanings to different readers (Booker, 1996, p.137). From Postmodernism, New Historicism appropriates the critical doctrines of discontinuity, eclecticism, heterogeneity and decentred authority in narratives. It rejects Derrida's notions of the interface of language and text, but puts forward its own concept of the interconnection between culture and society. Like psychoanalysis, the theory explores the notion of power struggles and similarly advocates that power produces individual subjects. New Historicism shares with Marxism the notion that literature tells the story of the past. However, while Marxism advocates the complete liberation of the oppressed as a critical objective, New Historicism returns to the stories in the texts to find out how they affect society. These extensive borrowings from other

theories have given it a flexibility that enables it to adapt the analytical tools and perspectives of other theories to suit its own purposes.

As is typical of New Historicism, *Inflorescence* and *Cotyledons*' interpenetration of Nigerian political history is patently relative and generates a negotiation of meanings between competing groups rather than its imposition by a dominant group. Irobi in conformity with New Historicism, recognizes in his poetry that history is the history of the present which is always in the making, and radically opens to transformation and rewriting, rather than being monumental and closed. Just like New historicists, Irobi argues that any "knowledge" of the past is necessarily mediated by texts of different kinds. Hence, there can be no knowledge of the past without interpretation of the "facts" of history which need to be read just like any other text.

### INDICTING THE MILITARY FOR NIGERIA'S RUINATION

The destructive proclivity of the military in the ruination of postcolonial Nigeria constitutes a paramount literary leitmotif in the Irobi's poetry. This leitmotif is accentuated by the bleak depiction of contemporary Nigerian society as a metaphorical casualty of the military's destruction. This is exemplified by 'Sandhurst', a poem in *Inflorescence*:

Sandhurst,  
 Your beauty is the beauty  
 Of a beast...  
 Behind your gates of steel  
 The mind of a continent creaks and wheels  
 Like the blades of a windmill.

On your windswept lawn  
 Fringed with the bones of children  
 And the carcass of rabbits,

Your tigers graze, sniffing  
 The scent of blood, until each dawn,  
 Beyond these walls,

In camouflage lands,  
 The lust for blood bangs in the brains  
 Of these carnivores;

The spotted scavengers  
 Of the Sahel Savannah, in whose mad molars  
 You crack the thigh bones of power.  
 Sandhurst, your carnivores  
 Have paced the desert step by step, shovelling  
 Sand into the eyes of the future.

The future blinks. It rusts. It flickers

Like the eyelids of your lunatics. Yet, the  
 ginseng  
 On these trampled fields tremble with rage

Resisting the whirlwind's assault. (Irobi, 1989,  
 pp. 13-14)

The poem marks an attempt by Irobi to come to terms with the ruination of Nigeria's political and economic institutions by the military, whose incursion into the Nigeria's political space, has been marked by a debilitating civil war, corruption, brutality unemployment, ethnic loyalty and sectionalism. Sandhurst typifies a metaphor of disorderliness and subversion of democratic authority. This is affirmed in the negative actions of the Sandhurst-trained elite Nigerian soldiers, whose penchant for staging coups as signified has no limits. The Nigerian soldiers are described as tigers, carnivores and scavengers who continuously sniff at 'the scent of blood, until each dawn/beyond these walls/in camouflage lands/of the Sahel Savannah have often 'paced the desert step by step, shovelling/sand into the eyes of the future', thereby leaving the future blinking, rusting and flickering 'like the eyelids of the lunatics'. Irobi's inference to the subversive activities of the Nigerian soldiers serves as the underpinning motif for analyzing the roots of the devaluation and corruption of the political structures, which have hampered the growth of postcolonial Nigeria. This subversion is paralleled by the 'The Sahel Savannah', a poem in *Cotyledons*:

Naked like vulture's head, the brown landscape  
 Spreads out like the carcass of a desert trampled  
 By camels. Rusting with dust, tufts of elephant  
 grass  
 Pock-mark her groin. Nude like the truth,  
 This is the Sahel Savannah, the empire of  
 hyenas:  
 "We prowl, plural beasts with double backs  
 and  
 Growl like blood gurgling through a gutter  
 Tracing the contours left by water. We prowl,  
 Each step a gust of dust. Each howl an anthem  
 And a pledge. We are the beasts of Sandhurst  
 The spotted scavengers of the Sahel Savannah.  
 Look at our shoulders! Can't you see the tremors  
 Of power? Listen poet! We are carnivores.  
 We can put Abuja between our molars  
 And crack her like the thighbones of a Zebra.  
 Yes, your destiny is this squealing rabbit  
 Between our paws; this grisly bleeding thing  
 Without a tail. We prowl. Bakolori lies  
 On our right. Remember? Ha-ha-ha-ha how  
 The peasants were put in an Indian file  
 And machine-gunned like coup-plotters.

But the blood has dried. The dust has settled  
 And the millets are in bloom again...’’  
 No, compatriot, the dust has not fully settled  
 As you prowl, it whirls, after each step,  
 Into a sandstorm, churning and turning  
 Until it spirals into an inferno of pebbles  
 And stones and, compatriot, empties itself into  
 your  
 Eyes like a revolution!(Irobi, 2009, pp. 37-38)

The haunting Nigeria’s military brutality is inscribed within the bestial discourses of devaluation and dehumanization of the masses, and terror is so compellingly captured in the familiar images of killing, maiming and shooting. The brutal killings of Nigerians is often characterized by the excessive display of monstrosity by the Nigerian army. This decimation of Nigerians by the soldiers has been witnessed in the brutal killing of the masses in Ugep in 1977, in Bakolori in 1980; the killing and demolition of Odi by the army in 1999 and the killings by the army in Zaki-Biam, in October 2001 (Alubo, 2001, p.22).The poem moves beyond the metaphoric representations of the military as ‘carnivores’ and ‘hyenas’, who prowl and howl uncontrollably, to engage the gruesome killing and the destruction of the peasants at the Bakolori village, in order to dispossess them of their agrarian land: ‘Bakolori lies/ on our right. Remember? Ha-ha-ha-ha how/ the peasants were put in an Indian file/and machine-gunned like coup-plotters’.

However, the poet persona indicts the military, by holding them accountable for this heinous act when he reminds the military that the Bakolori killing will forever serve as a millstone to torment their conscience. The military do erroneously claims that the killing has been forgotten: ‘but the blood has dried’, ‘the dust has settled/and the millets are in bloom again’. But the poet persona quickly reminds the military of the repercussion of their dastardly act, which would elicit a counter reaction: ‘No, compatriot, the dust has not fully settled/as you prowl, it whirls, after each step,/Into a sandstorm, churning and turning/until it spirals into an inferno of pebbles/and stones and, compatriot, empties itself into your/eyes like a revolution!’. Nevertheless, to assuage the Bakolori massacre’s victims, providence caused Alhaji Shehu Kangiwa, a former civilian governor of Sokoto state, to fell off his horse and died during a polo game in November, 1981. Earlier on, Kangiwa had forcefully taken the Bakolori peasants’ land for the construction of water dam unabashedly, without any form of compensation. In an attempt to peacefully protest- the brazen seizure of their land by the peasants, they were gruesomely murdered on 28

April 1980 when Dangiwa ordered the police to shoot at them, and hundreds of the peasants were gunned down at a full sweep. The title of the poem is suggestive of political upheaval, and connotes a forceful historical dislocation of the Bakolori’s peasants by the repressive Nigerian military . The personalization of this historical and gratuitous killing of the Bakolori peasants in the postcolonial Nigeria, remarkably underscores the perennial and wanton killings of the innocent and harmless citizens by the military.

### JUXTAPOSING NIGERIA’S ROT WITH WESTERN WORLD’S GLITZ

Irobi’s poetic preoccupation with the articulation of the parlous state of Nigeria, intends to establish the facts responsible for such rot, and for the criticism of Nigeria’s leadership’s obsession with corruption. This preoccupation justifies the effectiveness of poetry as a vehicle for analyzing Nigeria’s glorious past in relation to its turbulent present. The poetics of Irobi’s *Cotyledons*, essentially examine the striking images of perennial power outage, political instability, corruption and exile, which constitute the poetics of juxtaposition of Nigeria’s dilemma with the Western economic prospects in *Cotyledons*. This juxtaposition starts with the comparison of the stability in electricity in London against constant power outage in Nigeria, this is exemplified by ‘*London*’:

Here is London. I love London.  
 God’s own kingdom.  
 There is light here, light enough  
 To see the fingers and the faces  
 Who switched off the light  
 In my own land.(Irobi, 2009, p. 8)

The poem demonstrates that poetry’s relationship to reality is often rendered symbolically, and this relationship is underscored by its presentation of a realistic examination of postcolonial Nigeria, engulfed in darkness, orchestrated by the constant fluctuation in electricity distribution. This is a striking contrast to the regular distribution of electricity in London, whose brightness is astoundingly appraised by the poet persona, as ‘light enough/to see the fingers and faces’. However, the poet persona’s employment of a remarkable rhetorical device in the poem, ‘Who switched off the light/in my own land’, implies that power outage in contemporary Nigeria is not a natural phenomenon, but a fall-out of the mismanagement of Nigeria’s vast economic resources, by the corrupt military and politicians, whose actions have in turn affected the constant electricity generation.

While Irobi declines to choose between approving and endorsing of wilful running into exile by the

Nigerian dissent voices, for fear of being persecuted at home by a repressive government, he did not hesitate to vehemently condemn the political fugitives' running away from justice, after looting the treasury. What Irobi does not hesitate to illustrate in 'Paris', is the Nigeria's pervading rot, caused by the thieving Nigerian politicians, and this is theatrically portrayed in 'Paris':

In the heat of a Parisian summer  
A man garbed in a chieftaincy robe  
Sits on a high stool, in a cafe, devouring  
hamburger.

“Senator! Senator! I greet him.  
“Do you know that your appetite for life  
Has devoured the destiny of my children?”

That at home, your wife is in prison,  
Your daughters in the streets, your motherland  
Pregnant, like yourself, with Kwashiorkor.

He stands up, snoring as he stands. And with the  
base voice  
Of a breathing corpse, he snores, “Young man,  
I am a fugitive.  
I came to Europe with an empty mind.”

If you see such a man, mark him well.  
He has stolen his country's oil wealth...  
(*Cotyledons*, p. 13)

Although Irobi's poetry is largely nuanced by the African postcolonial inanities, but its rhythm is grounded in the Nigeria's socio-political shenanigans with which it intersects. This intersection is theatrically underlined by the poem's portrayal of Nigeria as emblematic of a wasteland, that has been mercilessly and repeatedly raped by its rapacious leaders since its independence: 'Senator! Senator! I greet him/Do you know that your appetite for life/has devoured the destiny of my children?' However, the remorseless audacity of the thieving politician, increasingly fuels the constant threnody of despair in the poem: 'He stands up, snoring as he stands. And with the base voice/of a breathing corpse, he snores, "Young man, I am a fugitive/I came to Europe with an empty mind"'. Irobi remarkably notes that the debilitating unemployment suffered by Nigerian youths, the big craters on the road and malnutrition of the Nigerian children, are direct corollaries of corruption and prebendalism in postcolonial Nigeria: 'That at home, your wife is in prison/Your daughters in the streets, your motherland/pregnant, like yourself, with kwashiorkor'.

Nevertheless, Irobi's sharp retort to the politician's unabashed kleptomaniac mien, clearly seeks an

indictment on corrupt practices of the Nigerian politicians: 'If you see such a man, mark him well/He has stolen his country's oil wealth'. The poem clearly delineates the dilemma of a fugitive politician who is running away from justice shortly after a military coup in Nigeria. Amply captured in the poem is a fusion of clinical observation and historical perspicacity which Irobi dexterously evoked to articulate Nigeria's long experienced despoliation by her buccaneering politicians. The perspicacity embedded in the poem, resonates a pictorial analysis of the characteristics of a typical Nigerian politician with no moral scruples, who sees politics as a means of self-aggrandizement. It is interesting to note that Irobi's vivid historical sense has been tasked in the poem to caricature Nigerian politician's craze for materialism and to register a stinging denunciation of military coup which has disrupted Nigeria's democratic process and left its economy in ruins.

'Paris' demystification of corruption in the post-colonial Nigeria is strikingly paralleled by 'Rome' in Irobi's *Cotyledons*. The apparent attempt by the Nigerian political leaders to inscribe corruption into national culture raises a cursory concern in 'Rome'. Corruption desultorily covers Nigeria's political landscape in the poem, and is acknowledged as a dent in its aspiration to greater nationhood:

And I remember Maikontri, where Justice, the  
mule of rule  
Is blinking from the shit of wolves sitting on the  
Bench  
I remember my land: the woman with an issue  
of blood...

“Maikontri plunged headlong into life, stealing  
Killing, grabbing, plundering with open arms.  
Like branches of the very tree she vowed to  
uproot”.(Irobi, 2009, pp. 15-17)

Anguish in the poem comes from the unmistakable pictographic representation of the grim, reality of devaluation and retrogression of the postcolonial Nigeria into the abyss. The poem evaluates Nigeria, as been taken hostage by its corrupt leaders: 'Maikontri plunged headlong into life, stealing/killing, grabbing, plundering with open arms/like branches of the very tree she vowed to uproot'. This interrogation of the plundering of Nigeria followed to its end culminates in the bemoaning of the defective judicial system's inability to correct this malaise, 'And I remember Maikontri, where Justice, the mule of rule/Is blinking from the shit of wolves sitting on the bench/I remember my land: the woman with an issue of blood'. The poem is situated within the context of Nigeria's nationhood discourse in which

Irobi evokes the imagery of ambiguous dispensation of justice in contemporary Nigeria. There are two inferences to be drawn from the poem: that corruption has been institutionalized in Nigeria, which has undermined its development; its legal system has been so compromised by the elite to the extent that only the hapless masses bears its brunt while the elite is always let off its hook. We can see that, there is a striking innuendo to be drawn from these lines: that the ineffectiveness of the Nigerian Judicial system, is a product of prolonged military rule which amounted to a kind of aestheticized meddlesomeness, that eventually weakened the sacrosanct judicial procedures.

### AESTHETICIZING DECADENCE IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

Irobi's poetry reverberates a double-edged preoccupation between conducting an expose on the prevailing contemporary decadence- corruption and devaluation of social infrastructures-and a campaign for the restoration of sanity, by repudiating corruption, although he metaphorically depicts Nigeria as an uninhabitable waste land where life is brutish and short. Irobi's choice of subject matter in 'Mabera' laments the mismanagement of Nigeria's oil-wealth by a handful of its elite while the majority of her population wallows in abject poverty. This lamentation marks a critical recognition of the stratified economic underpinnings, which reflect in the juxtaposition of immense wealth and acute poverty in contemporary Nigeria, otherwise metaphorically depicted as 'Mabera' in the poem. Inferred in the poem is the overwhelming influence of corruption which can be seen in every facet of Nigeria's nationhood and its overall effect can be felt in her spiral retrogression into bankruptcy. Nevertheless, Irobi exercises a restraint not to characterize Nigeria as a completely failed state like Somalia in East Africa, but he circumspectly depicts the pervasive tottering of Nigeria to the abyss in 'Mabera':

When you set out for Mabera  
Ask that your path be rough  
Like Abuja: a harvest of rocks,  
And when a cruise of Limousines  
Crowns your vision with gust of dust,

Plod on, oblivious of the madding crowd  
Drifting westwards,  
Backwards, towards the edge of the pit  
You left behind.  
Lead your mind like a camera (Irobi, 1989, p.11)

Mabera metaphorically stands for Nigeria in the poem, and the incorporation of familiar names and

places like 'Abuja', Nigeria's capital city with its rocky topography, accentuates the depiction vividly. Nigeria nationhood's narrative is constructed against the background of ruggedness, and the daily experiences of her citizens who continually 'plod on' with undying hope that things might turnaround some day, indicates that they have always been situated within the context of palpable uncertainty. Hence, Nigeria's (Mabera) narrative generates in the poem a disturbing insight into the discourse of inequity in the distribution of wealth between the elite and the downtrodden masses. The inequity is substantially demonstrated in the poem when the elite is portrayed as 'cruising in limousines' while the masses are 'plodding on', on a rocky Abuja road. The reality of this inequity is profoundly underscored by the pitiable depiction of the struggling masses, who in the course of eking out a living off steep hillsides of Abuja are constantly harassed by a 'cruise of limousines' of the corrupt politicians, which throws-up 'gust of dust' that impairs their vision.

Subsequently, Mabera (Nigeria) is portrayed by Irobi as a semiotic space where the tension between poverty and affluence is constantly contested. Since Nigeria moved its capital city from Lagos in the South Western Nigeria to Abuja in the North central, the political power has been so concentrated in Abuja to the extent that who so ever is desirous of employment into the federal government departments has to make a repeated pilgrimage to the capital city. This Abuja's new status endows it with limitless affluence and wealth which only the daring could access. At the same time, Abuja in the poem is employed by Irobi to delineate a socially stratified Nigeria along the affluence and poverty lines. In the foregoing, Irobi suggests that the Politicians and bureaucrats occupy the class of affluence while the masses are trapped in the trajectory of poverty. In other words, Nigeria's (Mabera) narrative in the poem serves as a semiotic text of two different modes of discourse: poverty and affluence. This contestation between poverty and prosperity is exemplified by the tumultuous drifting of the masses 'westwards/backwards/towards the edge of the pit'.

In narrating the shifts in Nigeria's past and present, Irobi engages in his poetry, the discourse of social and political pressure which necessitates that an individual seeking a transformation in his fortune, would need to move out of Nigeria to the Western world. The dilemma of adaptation to a new life and differences in life lived within and across national borders by Nigerians, is essentially grounded in 'New York':

New York! New York!  
So Nice

They named you twice.  
 Beside a newspaper stand along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 I see a puzzle of men and women from  
 Maikontri.  
 Some, leafing through the Milestone Section of  
 Time Magazine  
 Others and their children, the Transition Section  
 of  
 Newsweek.  
 Compatriots, which devil's submarine fished  
 you  
 here?

“If there is any purpose in existence,  
 We will find it here.”  
 “Anywhere you find a peace of mind  
 Is home, sweet home”  
 “Every soul is a star soaring thru' space  
 At its own pace”  
 “When great souls meet even in an alien land  
 They create a brand new world  
 For their schizophrenic souls”...

Oh, Maikontri is a carnivore  
 That devours the swift gazelle  
 The striped zebra, the singing nightingale  
 Devours the beautiful and the splendid...(Irobi,  
 2009, pp. 24-25)

The poem negotiates a new dialogic of what constitutes a home, as ‘Anywhere you find a peace of mind/Is home, sweet home/Every soul is a star soaring thru; space/At its own pace/When great souls meet even in an alien land/They create a brand new world/For their schizophrenic souls’. The poem recalls Nigeria’s tragic political history between 1993 and 1998 when the military annulled the presidential election won by the charismatic politician Chief Moshood Abiola, but the election was annulled by the military who ruled instead by decree. However, during this period many politicians were hauled into jail and scores of Nigerian academics including Irobi ran into exile. For these Nigerians who were forced into exile by the military, wherever they have chosen to live outside Nigeria become their metaphorical homes.

The Creation of a home in exile has been explained in the words of Njeri Githire,(2005) as “the quest for a place in which the self feels at home, comfortable, and secure pervades postcolonial literature, criticism, and theory. Likewise, the themes of location/dislocation, belonging/marginalization, alienation and identity-central to the problematic of home-have been among the major topics of critical inquiry and creative expression in contemporary literature” (p. 74). The

poem’s (re)evaluation of happiness, succour and fulfilment as the essential variables of ‘home’ rather than the specific geographical sphere where an individual’s biological essence is inscribed, conforms to Githire’s submission. The notion of home in exile linearizes the temporal and spatial discourses of ‘home’, thus enabling the diasporic Nigerians to have a sense of fulfilment while living outside the Nigeria borders.

Irobi tellingly pursues further the bastardization of Nigeria by its successive political leaders, which drives many of its promising youths into exile, in the Western world. Despite Nigeria’s return to the democratic governance in 1999, no corresponding attention has been given to its youth empowerment programme and government seems to be in a quandary about how to create jobs that could accommodate lots of them. Under this circumstance, taking to crime and drug trafficking seem to be the way out for some youths, while the search for greener pastures in America and European countries remains a succour for the courageous few. Irobi’s poetry accusatorily places the drifting of youths from Nigeria to Western world not on transnational exegesis but on the urgent need to run away from Nigeria’s degradation. But upon getting to America and Europe, the Nigerian exiles are soon confronted with a barrage of social complexities like racism and cultural differences inherent in the social systems of these countries. To this end, agony of the trauma of exile has been vividly explicated by Dolores de Manuel (1997), when she argues that “the manifold burdens and wounds of exile, whether the departure from the homeland is voluntary or not, result not only from the separation from home, but also from the unfamiliarity and otherness imposed by life in the new land, with its alien codes” (p. 39). This exilic trauma is painfully captured in ‘Frankfurt’:

Standing still holds a thousand terrors.  
 You are surrounded in a foreign country  
 By the harsh consonant of a strange  
 Language you cannot understand...

Mother, mother, I have tried to reach you by  
 phone  
 Since your ears are deaf to poetry.  
 How else can I communicate these experiences  
 Except by telephone. But your line is dead!

“NET is burning! NET is burning!  
 Fire! Fire!” (Irobi, 1989, p. 29)

The poem juxtaposes the dilemma experienced by a Nigerian immigrant, whose existentialism is situated between the need to embrace the challenges of his new abode, ‘you are surrounded’ ‘by the harsh

consonant of a strange language you can not understand', or a return to his country where infrastructures are in constant state of dilapidation, and the telephone lines are always dead. This dilapidation is ramified in the persona's reference to the fire incident that took place at the National Telephone Exchange's building some years ago: 'Net is burning! Net is burning! /Fire! Fire! This dearth of infrastructure in contemporary Nigeria only complicates and obscures any thought of the persona's return to Nigeria. Hence, he resolves to rather live abroad rather than Nigeria, and live life meaningfully: 'I leave to live, I exit to exist/I am the exile'.

## CONCLUSION

Inscribed in Esiaba Irobi's *Inflorescence* and *Cotyledons* is the historical realities of Nigeria's retrogression, orchestrated by the bad leadership of both the military and civilian since its independence. By adopting a New Historicism approach to the evaluation of Nigeria's past in relation to its present, Irobi has poetically diagnosed Nigeria's perennial problem of systemic failure to be emanating from the dearth of a crop of visionary political leaders. By this diagnosis, Irobi has significantly unmasked corruption to be the bane of Nigeria's inability to take its rightful place among the developing countries of the world. Corruption has in turn hastened the devaluation of basic infrastructures, which has led to many of its youths going on exile to the developed Western countries where they could realize their social and economic aspirations. Irobi through this quintessential diagnosis helped extricate the nation's political misfortune from historical myth and inscribe it within the context of socio-political history.

In juxtaposing Nigeria's misfortune with the Western world's fortune, the anthologies essentially foreground Nigeria's dialogic not as an object of reflection, but as a subject of self-reflection.

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## Genre and Register of Antagonist's Language in Media: An Appraisal Study of Indonesian Newspapers

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### ABSTRACT

This research explores how the language of the antagonists is unfolded in print Indonesian media. The analysis is focused on the exploitation of types of texts (genres) and the register. These are explored through the lexis, transitivity, appraisal systems, and text structure. The data were news, editorials, and letters to editors, collected from *Kompas*, *Jawa Pos*, *Solopos*, and *Suara Merdeka* from May to October 2012. Further selected using criterion-based sampling techniques, the data resulted in eight texts to analyze. In addition to the linguistic analysis, interviews were conducted with the stakeholders of the social issues. The results show that antagonists used the three types of macro genres to express their ideologies in the newspapers. At the level of register, the antagonists develop their attitudes through their feeling (affect), as well as evaluation about other participants (judgment) or things (appreciation). They even amplify and align their attitude through graduation and engagement.

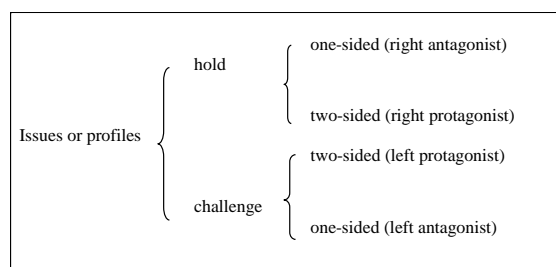
Keywords: Antagonist; genre; appraisal; transitivity; lexis system

### INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades Indonesia has experienced a very essential metamorphose from an authoritarian to a more democratic country. In the process of democratization, Indonesians have a variety of access to express their socio-political positions, whose contexts have produced freer discursive expressions. Such a freedom of speech has resulted in different patterns of socio-political discourses in the Indonesian mass media, such as news, editorials, and talk shows. In turn, these have produced different patterns of linguistically-constructed power relation in Indonesian society. The patterns of power relations can be seen in different registers and genres (Santosa, Priyanto, & Nuraenni, 2011), and Stoebler (2012) also indicated the importance of the varieties of language in understanding the relations of power among participants in a discourse.

Linguistic power relation can be classified based on two factors: the parties to hold or challenge the issues and the way the parties hold or challenge the issues (Martin, 1992). The parties who are in the position of holding the issues are called the 'right', while the parties who are in the position of challenging the issues are called the 'left'. Meanwhile, parties who hold and challenge the issues one-sidedly are called

the 'antagonists', while those who hold and challenge the issues two-sidedly or more are called 'protagonist' (Martin, 1992). In this way, there are four different types of power relations or ideologies: the right antagonist, the right protagonist, the left protagonist, and the left antagonist. This model of dynamic ideologies is formulized in Figure 1.



**Figure1.** Types of power relation or ideologies (adapted from Martin, 1992)

It can be seen that both right and left antagonists play essential roles in developing the socio-political discourses. They are not necessarily the journalists nor the actors in the news, but they are any participants who are engaged in the social process. They take in both extreme positions in the power relation, and they challenge or hold the issues in a particular way. Santosa et al. (2011) implied that antagonists participated in most socio-political

discursive contexts. They also appeared in the news, editorials, and talk-shows. In many cases, they appeared in crowds' protests in both right and left parties. At this point, the types of language used by the antagonists to transact in linguistically-and-ideologically constructed social processes vary across the discourse semantics, lexico-grammar, and phonology or graphology due to their contexts of situation and contexts of culture.

The portrait of antagonist language is semiotically realized in particular genres and registers (Martin, 1992). Genre is mainly defined as staged-goal social processes. There are two types of genres, macro and micro (Santosa, 2010). Micro genres are derived from the super-ordinate culture; therefore, they are supposed to be generic (Santosa, Nababan & Wiratno, 2010). Meanwhile, macro genres are developed from sub-culture so that they are more specific in a context of situation. For example, the term news, editorials, talk shows and others, called genres in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) models (Hyon, 1996), are those belonging to macro genres. They usually occur in the mass media, but they are basically constructed from micro genres such as recount, description, explanation, and others. In reality, this social process or genre can only be seen in register.

Register is often simply defined as language variations based on 'use'. This concept of register is not limited to the choice of words, but also includes the choice of text structure and texture (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). In this concept, register can also be called as style or language style. Register is a concept of meaning, grounded from the simultaneous realization of three aspects of situations: field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to aspects of contexts of situations such as the happening, where, when, and how. It organizes experiences, their logics and environments. Tenor refers to aspects of context of situations such as participants, their social status and role relationship. It organizes social realities. Finally, mode refers to the channel and media in which the experience and social realities are wrapped in. It organizes semiotic realities. The three aspects work simultaneously to produce contextual configurations which limit the use of text structure and texture.

In general, text structure is a global structure, an organizational structure of a message in a discourse (Hasan in Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Traditionally, it is constructed from opening, body and closing. In fact, it is a unity resulted from the realization of three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) that simultaneously realize the social goals of a social

process (Martin, 1992). Stages or rhetorical parts of the texts are groups of clauses that are linked and connected through the logic of discourse and grammar that govern the clauses (Mann & Thomson, 1988; Power, 2000) or connected through conjunctive relation (CR) (Martin & Rose, 2003; Santosa, 2010). In this way, text structure is a realization of generic structure or schematic structure in linguistic level which may bear obligatory and optional elements (Martin, 1992; Hasan in Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Along with text structure, texture realizes the social goal of the text. In general, texture provides a unique nature of language under a particular context of situation. It describes how ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings are realized in discourse semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology or graphology.

This research explores both discourse semantics and lexicogrammar systems that are realized in appraisal, transitivity and lexis systems that contribute to the nature of the genres. More specifically, this research aims at identifying the types of genres that are used by the antagonist in Indonesian media. Besides, it also describes the register of antagonist and finds the explanation why the antagonists transact in the way they do in Indonesian media.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The source of data of this research are news, editorials, and letters to editors in newspapers in Indonesia. They were collected from nationally and locally distributed newspapers published from May to October 2012. The national newspapers include *Kompas* and *JawaPos*. A number of data were also collected from online news website, *detik.com*. Two local newspapers distributed in Central Java, *Suara Merdeka* dan *Solopos* were also taken as the source of data. The sources were selected using criterion-based sampling technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 2003). The criteria are as follows:

- (a) The texts were published on the columns of news, editorials, letters-to-editors, and opinions as the representation of macro genres.
- (b) The texts contain one or more micro genres: recount, explanation, exposition, or discussion.
- (c) The texts express the parties' attitude (affect, judgment, and appreciation), both at the discourse semantic and lexicogrammar levels.

Additional information was also collected through semi-structured interview with sources who held the stakes involved in the social processes. They were the newspapers editors, scientists, prominent government officers, and non-government figures.

Within Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective, content analysis was conducted to identify the genres and registers of the texts. Then, the data were cross-checked with the information taken from the interviews. The procedure of analysis follows the interactive model of qualitative content analysis (Spradely, 1980, 2006; Devitt, Bawarshi, & Reiff, 2003), involving four steps: domain, taxonomic, componential, and finding cultural values analyses. Domain analysis selects linguistic units which belongs to data. Taxonomic analysis classifies which data belong to which categories: appraisal, transitivity, and text structure. Componential analysis displays the categories into matrixes that they are managably interpreted into patterns of cultures. Finding cultural values analysis seeks the theoretical explanation of the patterns (Spradely, 1980, 2006). In this part, the results of the interview was explored to support or argue the proposition being constructed.

## FINDINGS

The following findings and discussion are organized to answer the research questions about types of genres and register exploited used by antagonists (journalists or other participants in the texts) and the reasons why they use that kind of language. Detailed description and explanation are as follows.

### Types of Genres Exploited by the Antagonists

Basically, the antagonists exploit almost all types of macro genres, which are produced within sub-cultures called 'discourse community' or professional institutions (Swales, 1990; Bhatia 1997), in news, editorials, letters to editors, opinion, and others. These macro genres were developed from mixed micro genres, which represent genre complexing of recount, description, explanation, exposition, or/and discussion (Santosa, 2007; Santosa et al., 2011). At this point, the macro genre would also vary its stages (Martin, 1992; Hyland, 2004; Lacey, 2000), which affected its discourse semantics, lexicogrammar and graphology or phonology. Thus, every macro genre would be realized in a different language. In this way, genre may resemble a text type (Moessner, 2001).

The first text type exploited by the antagonists is news, despite the common practice that news is generally developed in recounts, constructed through stages, rhetorical structures (Stuart-Smith, 2007), or rhetorical organizations (Ramsay, 2000) that contain chronological events (Bell, 2007; Santosa, 2007). Different from exposition and discussion, the text structure of recount does not reflect any kinds of ideology (Santosa, 2003; Martin 1992).

News must follow the 'codes of journalism ethics' that they must be objective and only disseminate facts and not opinions (Atmadi, 1985; Gamble & Gamble, 1989; Santosa, 2007). Journalists are not supposed to express their own opinion towards the events. These days, however, news have shifted like other genres (Chen, 2008; Duszak, 1998). This is because the journalists may expose their interests. Thus, instead of realizing their evaluation through news genre, they expose their antagonism through events that are realized in projected clauses, groups, and lexes systems. The text structure of news (orientation, event 1, event 2, and event 3) cannot position readers into evaluating what happens in the text (see Appendix A). However, the journalists' or the participants' evaluation in the text can be seen through the registers of the text.

Meanwhile, macro genres such as letters to editor or opinion column express their antagonist ideology through exposition micro genre. In this type of genre, the writer can reflect their antagonism through one-sided arguments (see Appendices B and C).

In Appendix B, for example, the writer started his idea with a background taken from the fact that corruption was then opened boldly through televisions. This background led to his projection of his opinion through the thesis in the second paragraph, telling that he would be pleased if corruption was filmed through soap operas. He continued with an argument to support his thesis by telling that the film should be packaged interestingly and the film should not only be an entertainment but also brought some values that corruption was immoral. From the thesis and arguments, the writer successfully realized his antagonist ideology in support of eliminating corruption in Indonesia through exposition micro genre.

Appendix C shows another example of exposition genre. It is the text of another letter-to-the-editor, published in *Solopos*, 27 March 2012. In this text, the writer expressed his opinion to criticize a Sukoharjo Regent's policy for not providing an art gallery in the region.

The thesis, which is normally written at the beginning, was now written in the middle of the text, "*Sekelompok seniman dan pecinta seni di Sukoharjo berharap ada tempat ekspresi seni yang representatif di Ibu Kota Sukoharjo.*" [A group of artists and art lovers in Sukoharjo wished that there were a representative place where they could express arts in Sukoharjo]. Then, the writer continued with the description of the art gallery in the second paragraph.



'dicintai' (loved by) in clause 12c. The affect in clause 1 is realized in verbal behavior process, whereas clause 2 is expressed in the carrier attribute and clause 3 is in a mental process.

The journalist also included Dahlan's fierce reaction to the company through thirteen negative appreciations. The following are the examples:

1. *Ini ada yang salah* (5a)  
     Thing Epithet  
     [There must be something wrong]
2. *Semua memiliki kantor yang bagus* (6b)  
     Thing Epithet  
     [All have good offices]
3. *"Gedung kantornya tinggi-tinggi.* (7a)  
     Carrier process/attribute  
     [They have sky-crappers]
4. *ruang pertemuannya juga bagus-bagus.* (7b)  
     Carrier process/attribute  
     [the meeting rooms are also nice]
5. *tapi kenapa pabriknya jelek?"* (7c)  
     Carrier process/attribute  
     [but why is the factory bad?"]

All these thirteen appreciations in the data belong to 'negative reaction: quality'. Basically, they are the representation of Dahlan's criticism to the company under his own responsibilities. The use of positive reaction quality such as in 6b, 7a, and 7b are ironies. The other two positive appreciations in the text, in clause 12b and 12c (see Appendix D), are the consequences of his suggestion or the purposes of his enactment to supervise the factory. All appreciations are realized in thing-epithet and carrier-attribute.

In addition, this attitude is amplified by the use of graduation force-raise with attitudinal lexes and intensifiers in 15 attitudes and 1 focus sharpening. For example:

1. *Dahlan Iskan ternyata pernah juga mengamuk di pabrik gula.* (1)  
     [Dahlan Iskan turned out to have also been mad at a sugar company.]
2. *Pasalnya, Dahlan mengaku kecewa perusahaan plat merah punya banyak pabrik.* (2)  
     [The reason is Dahlan regretted that red-platted company has a lot of sugar factories.]
3. *Bahkan, saking tidak terawatnya,...* (11a)  
     [Even, due to negligence, ...]
4. *...supaya bisa berjalan dengan baik ...* (12b)  
     [...in order to run well...]

In clauses 1 and 2, the journalist applied attitudinal lexes. The words 'mengamuk (mad), and kecewa (regret) in this context indicate attitudinal lexes with raised attitudes. On the other hand, 'saking tidak

terawatnya' (so unmaintained), in clause 11a, and 'berjalan dengan baik (in order to run well)' in clause 12b indicate the attitudes with intensifiers 'saking'(so) and "dengan baik" (well). With this system of force graduation in the text, the journalist emphasizes Dahlan's anger towards the mismanagement in the sugar factories.

In the text, the journalist also applies mostly heterogloss clauses or clauses with multi-voicing: projections, modality, and concession. In this way, he tries to save his position not to be subjective in writing news. The use of heterogloss represents that the writer tries to be more objective by applying multi-voiced clauses. For example:

1. *Tak hanya di pintu tol, Menteri Badan Usaha Milik Negara (BUMN) Dahlan Iskan ternyata pernah juga mengamuk di pabrik gula.* (2)  
     [Not only in a toll-road gate, The Minister of State-owned Enterprises, Dahlan Iskan, turned to have also been mad in sugar companies.]
2. *Pasalnya, Dahlan mengaku kecewa perusahaan plat merah punya banyak pabrik tapi Indonesia masih impor gula.* (3ab)  
     [The reason is Dahlan confessed that he regretted that red-platted enterprises have many sugar factories but Indonesia still imports sugar.]
3. *"Ini ada yang salah," katanya kepada detik Finance, Rabu. (28/3/2012)* (5ab)  
     ["There is something wrong, "he told detik Finance, Wednesday]
4. *Seharusnya, yang diperbaiki dan diperbarui oleh para BUMN perkebunan itu adalah pabrik mereka, bukan kantornya.* (9)  
     [Things that **should** be renovated and renewed by the Platation State-Owned-Companies are their factories, not their offices.]

Clause 2 is a single voicing because the journalist expresses the incident without referring to other voices. This can be understood since the clause is a part of re-orientation. But, Clauses 3ab, 5ab, and 9 are multi voicing or heterogloss. The use of 'tapi' (but), 'katanya' (he told), 'Seharusnya' (should) express multi voicing or heterogloss, applying successively concession, projection, and modality. In the text, 25 of the 27 clauses exploit the heterogloss, and this is the way the journalist maintained more objective news. Table 1 shows the analysis of eight different texts of news expressing their attitudes, graduations, and engagements.

In relation to the whole analysis of appraisal in news, Table 1 indicates the same pattern of attitude in the whole antagonist language in the eight texts. Texts 4,

6, and 8 apply positive and negative attitudes (affect, judgement, and appreciation) very significantly, in more than 50% of the whole clauses. Other texts exploit more than three quarters of the total number of clauses to express their attitudes through clauses, groups, and lexis. For example, in Text 1, of the total number of 27 clauses, 26 clauses, or more than 96%, contain attitudes. In Texts 2, 3 and 6, around 80% clauses are exploited to express attitudes.

In the eight texts, all affects are realized in attribute, behavioral and mental process, and epithet. Meanwhile, the judgements are expressed in epithet, attribute, qualifier, and behavioral process, and appreciations are in epithet, attribute and qualifier.

**Table 1.** Attitude in News

Texts	Attitude						Number of clauses
	Affect		Judgement		Appreciation		
	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	
1	-	-	3	4	10	9	27
2	-	1	-	6	5	4	20
3	-	-	-	2	3	4	12
4	3	1	5	6	5	3	33
5	1	-	3	4	-	6	32
6	-	1	-	4	2	13	26
7	-	3	1	-	4	7	25
8	-	3	-	7	6	-	32
∑	4	9	12	33	35	46	207

**Table 2.** Analysis of graduation and engagement

Text	Graduation		Engagement		Number of clauses
	Force	Focus	Mono	Hetero	
1	25	1	14	12	27
2	15	1	3	13	20
3	8	1	4	5	12
4	14	9	4	19	33
5	8	6	1	13	32
6	14	6	6	14	26
7	14	1	4	11	25
8	14	2	5	11	32
∑	112	27	37	98	207

Most attitudes in the news are realized in raise-force or sharpening focus graduations. This indicates that antagonist language is realized in amplified attitude. This is, therefore, journalists may have their own interest and amplification in unfolding their attitudes. On the other hand, they also try to use more than single voicing in clauses their texts, except in Text 1. In this way, their attitude is still backed-up with heterogloss clauses, exploiting projections, modalities, and concession. Therefore, their texts will still sound objective.

### Register in Editorials and Letters-to-Editor

Interestingly, antagonist language in editorial and letter-to-editor exploit almost the same register as

those in news. Despite the differences in the use of genres, editorials and letters-to-editor apply the same appraisal systems as those in news. For example, they exploit the same attitude, graduation, and engagement to support their antagonism. Through a letter-to editor (see Appendix B), for example, the writer explores the intensive and appropriate use of genre and register so that it performs an effective letter-to-editor. The following examples highlight the antagonism of the journalists and participants in the texts.

In this text, Romi Sudhita expresses his attitudes in seven of eleven clauses. He begins his title with cinism that is full of attitudes: *Kapan Korupsi Disinetronkan?* [When is corruption filmed as soap operas?]. Firstly, he introduces an attitudinal lexis 'korupsi' (corruption) to express moral hazzards that exist in Indonesia. Secondly, he also combines a rare collocation in behavioral process between 'korupsi' and 'disinetronkan' (filmed as soap operas). This collocation 'Korupsi Disinetronkan' results in a synical nuance in Indonesian context. He continues his seven clauses with attitudes. For example:

1. *Sekarang ini kasus korupsi dibuka blak-blakan.*  
Phenomenon Process  
[Now, corruption cases are publicly opened.]
2. *Baik tua maupun muda, laki-perempuan, kaya miskin, semuanya dapat menyaksikan bagaimana terdakwa, tersangka dan saksi-saksi "bergaya" di depan majelis hakim.*  
Behavior Process Phenomenon  
[Old and young, men and women, rich and poor people, all can watch how the accused, suspected, and witnesses 'act' in front of the courts.]
3. *Kalau saja ada pihak produser atau sutradara yang berinisiatif membuat sinetron bertema korupsi, tentu banyak kalangan yang menyambut-nya.*  
Behavior Process Phenomenon  
[If only there was a producer or director who wanted to make a soap opera with corruption themes, of course, many people would support them.]
4. *Saya sendiri paling dulu membuka mata di depan layar kaca TV.*  
Behavior Process  
[I will be the first to watch it on TV.]
5. *Jangan lupa ceritanya dikemas menarik; jadi tontonan sekaligus tuntunan.*  
Carrier Process attribute  
[Don't forget that the story should be interesting; so it becomes a show with a moral value.]
6. (a) *Keserakahan dan ketidakbermoralan pelaku*  
Phenomenon

*pelaku korupsi divisualisasikan secara kreatif*

Process

(b) *sehingga benar-benar merasa dimiskinkan,*

(Carrier) Process

*setidaknya secara moral.*

Attribute

[The corruptors' greed and immorality should be creatively visualized so they will feel impoverished, at least morally]

The seven clauses containing attitudes can be classified into four affects, and four appreciations. The affect can be seen in clauses 2, 3, 4, and 6b. In clause 2, the writer satires ... *saksi-saksi 'bergaya'* (witnesses 'act'), by using realis affect, unhappiness: antipathy. In clause 3, the writer expresses his compliment to the producer or director through realis affect: admiration, satisfaction in surge of behavior in '*tentu banyak kalangan yang menyambutnya*' (of course, many people support them') in behavioral process. In clause 4, the writer expresses his desire through the writer's feeling by using unrealis affect: desire: surge of behavior in mental process '*paling dulu membuka mata*' ('I will first open my eyes'). Finally, clause 6b is an expression of unhappiness: misery in front of the court, due to their cases being visualized, they become impoverished.

Finally, clauses 1, 5, and 6a indicate the appreciation of the writer. In clause 1, the writer appreciates what the media has mentioned that corruption is barely opened. In this clause, the writer expresses his appreciation through a reaction: quality in behavioral process. In clause 5, the writer reminds the producer to work-out the stories interesting and worthwhile through valuation in attributive relational process. In clause 6a, the corruptors' greed and immorality are negatively evaluated through negative reaction: quality appreciation in behavioral process.

In the case of graduation, the writer mostly realizes his attitudes in raise force and focus graduations to show his strong cinism to corruption. For example, referring to the seven examples, the writer amplifies his attitudes through force in intensifiers and attitudinal. The intensifiers can be seen in '*dibuka blak-blakan*' (barely opened) in clause 1, '*paling dulu*' (first) in clause 4, '*divisualisasikan secara kreatif*' (visualized creatively) in clause 6a, and '*dimiskinkan secara moral*' (morally impoverished) in clause 6b. Meanwhile, attitudinal lexes can be seen in '*terdakwa, tersangka dan saksi-saksi 'bergaya'*' (the accused, suspect, and witnesses 'act') in clause 2, '*menyambut*' (support) in clause 3, '*menarik ... tuntunan*' (interesting ... moral value) in clause 5. The focus graduation can only be seen in clause 6b '*setidaknya secara moral*' (at least morally).

While the writer mostly realizes his attitudes in a single voicing, meaning that he expresses his attitudes more subjectively, he also introduces his double voicing in clause 2 through modality '*dapat*' (can), concession in clause 3 '*Kalau saja*' (If). Besides, he also projects his double voicing through a mental projection '*Jangan lupa*' (Don't forget) in clause 5. More description of attitudes, graduation and engagements in editorial and letter-to-editor in Indonesia media can be seen in the Table 3.

Similar to news, editorial and letters to editors have more or less similar features of appraisal systems. Generally, the texts make use of more than 50% of the clauses to express their attitudes. Even, texts 6 and 7 exploit almost 95% their system of appraisal to develop the writers' attitude towards the cases. Mostly, the attitude is expressed negatively towards the cases, showing that they belong to left antagonist. Only text 4 tends to express the attitude rather equally that make it belong to protagonist rather than antagonist.

In the case of graduation and engagement, the editorial and letters to editor texts exploit more raise and sharpening graduation to amplify their evaluation towards the happenings and participants. In addition, more monogloss than heterogloss clauses are also exploited to their subjective attitudes. Table 4 below indicates this proposition.

**Table 3.** Attitudes in Editorial and Letters to Editor

Text	Attitude						Number of Clauses
	Affect		Judgement		Appreciation		
	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	
1	-	4	-	3	1	4	24
2	-	3	-	7	6	-	32
3	1	-	-	2	-	4	11
4	2	4	4	6	2	10	36
5	1	-	-	-	1	4	9
6	-	-	5	8	3	16	41
7	-	-	6	8	1	17	37

**Table 4.** Graduation and Engagement

Text	Graduation		Engagement		Number of clauses
	Force	Focus	Mono	Hetero	
1	11	1	4	8	24
2	14	2	3	13	32
3	7	-	6	1	11
4	26	2	24	4	36
5	5	1	6	-	9
6	32	4	25	11	41
7	32	5	31	6	37

More force: raise graduation (more than 90%) is explored than focus: sharpening (less than 10%). Even text 3 exploits force: raise graduation in the whole

evaluation. On the other hand, in the case of engagement, most texts explore monogloss than heterogloss clauses. Even, text 5 applies all monoglosses in their 6 clauses of evaluation. However, in texts 1, 2, and 11, heterogloss clauses are more explored, involving the use of projection, concession, and modality. Therefore their texts resemble news type of texts.

## DISCUSSION

In this final part of the article, the findings are discussed in the connection of their context of culture in Indonesia. The discussion is also compared and contrasted with Santosa's two consecutive studies (2010, 2011). The comparison will be very important since the researchers will have the holistic and comprehensive data and findings that the discussion will result in the holistic picture of antagonist language in Indonesian media. Besides, the discussion is also structured in a way as to answer the research question proposed in this research.

In general, there are three types of macro genres in Indonesian media that are exploited to express antagonist ideology: news, letters to editors, editorials. News usually exploits recount, letters to editor explores exposition, whereas editorials exhibit discussion micro genres (Santosa, 2010; Santosa et al., 2010). Usually, the protagonists apply discussion genres, since the genres logically give accesses to explore an issue from pros-and-cons or different sides of arguments (Santosa et al., 2011). On the other hand, the antagonists prefer exposition genres, since these genres provide the stagings that are accessible to challenge or to hold a status quo from one-sided arguments (Martin, 1992).

As mentioned in the finding, however, the antagonists exploit all types of macro and micro genres to express their challenges or holds of a status quo. They use news, letters to editors, editorials as well as recount and exposition.

Journalists compose their opinion in news consisting of orientation followed with some consecutive events. The events may represent the journalists' narration of the events or they may also refer to participants' speech events in the forms of projections (see also Santosa, 2007).

Some problem arises when projected clauses in the text contain explanations. As shown in Appendix E, for example, all events are constructed in projections with explanation in the projected clauses. Then, the news text can also be interpreted as exposition, with thesis and one-sided arguments. The question is then

whether news has already evolved from a recount to an 'exposition like' genre, at least in the news representing the data in this study (Ihlstrom, 2004). If this is the case, then, no matter what genres they use, the antagonists have the access to hold or challenge the status quo.

In the level of register, antagonists have accesses at all levels of language. They can express their challenges and holds to status quo in the level of discourse semantics and the lexico-grammar. As can be seen in the findings, at the level of discourse semantics, antagonists explore most appraisal system of language. They develop their attitudes through their feeling (affect), as well as evaluation to other participants (judgment) or things (appreciation). Even, they can amplify their attitude through force and focus that their attitude is raised and sharpened. Besides, they also maintain their subjectivity or objectivity of their attitude in the engagement system.

To realize all these types of attitude, the antagonists exploit all possible semiotic resources of lexico-grammar. They exploit transitivity systems that fit to this appraisal systems such as: attributive and relational process, mental and behavioral processes. In groups and lexis systems, the antagonists apply epithets which contain attitudinal lexes to support their evaluation.

The major political shift from authoritarian to democracy seems to be the reason of all choices of semiotic systems by the antagonists. The euphoria to seek 'freedom of speech' has dragged Indonesian people in a 'socio-political-ethic-free zone' that they seem to like to do and to say what they want. Their choice of language realizes all of these situations. One-sided point of view that people, bureaucrats, and politicians use to challenge and hold status quo in society provokes the use of antagonist language. Outside news, editorials, and letter-to-editors, the choices of the semiotic systems seem to be fiercer.

On the other hand, readers still try to control to the euphoric use of language. They send letters to control this excessive use of language. Besides, they also find 'the excessive language' to be politically and socially 'impolite' (Interview with three experts in politic communication, 2011). Even, the government and the press council also try to control such a practice through communication laws and codes of ethics for journalists (Atmadi, 1985).

## CONCLUSION

So far this study has deliberately demonstrated how antagonist ideology is represented in different macro

genres. While the text structure of news prevents journalists from expressing his antagonism, such an antagonism can be explored through the transitivity, nominal groups, and lexis systems. On the other hand, the text structures of other macro genres, like letters to editors or editorials, can directly facilitate people to realize their antagonism, since these genres exploit expositions that fit the ideologies to hold or to challenge the status quo. In some cases, news can also be exploited to show opinions. Journalists use the news lead as the thesis, and interpret the events (either narrating or quoting events) as one-sided arguments to support the thesis. That is to say, although news is commonly presented in a recount, there is also a sense of exposition. Regardless the macro genres used, however, the registers play a similarly important role in realizing the antagonists' evaluation of an issue.

The appraisal system with raised and sharpening graduation with more dominant single voicing in letter to editors shows the euphoric use of language in Indonesian situation, in which the people are still seeking for the agreed form of democracy.

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## Appendix A. Sample Analysis of Text Structure of a News Article

### “BPK: PNS Negara Lain Saja Pakai Kelas Ekonomi, Masa Kita Eksekutif?”

[BPK: Civil servants in other countries use economy class, why do we use the executive?]

#### Orientation

**Jakarta** - Pejabat negara dan Pegawai Negeri Sipil (PNS) kerap dimanja oleh fasilitas yang diberikan pemerintah ketika melakukan perjalanan dinas. Hal ini ternyata cukup memalukan, pasalnya instansi negara lain-pun tidak menghiraukan fasilitas yang diberikan karena memang tujuannya 'plesiran' mereka jelas.

[Government officials and civil servants (PNS) are frequently spoiled by the government's facilities when they have official trips. This is embarrassing since departments in other countries do not have such facilities. That's because the actual goal of the trips is for 'travelling'.]

#### Event 1

Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan (BPK) sebagai auditor negara yang bisa dibilang cukup disegani di kawasan ASEAN kerap kedatangan tamu dari negara-negara lain. Ternyata, berdasarkan pengalaman BPK, instansi tersebut menggunakan fasilitas dan transportasi seadanya.

"Misalkan ada kunjungan mereka atau kita yang undang, sebut saja untuk tiket pesawat kebanyakan juga pakai ekonomi kok," ungkap Wakil Ketua BPK, Hasan Bisri kepada *detikFinance* di Jakarta, Rabu (28/3/2012).

[The Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) as the state auditor is one of the respected institutions in ASEAN and it frequently has some guests from other countries. According to BPK, they were just given modest facilities and transportation costs.

"They just use economy class flights when they have a visit or when we invite them to come here," the vice chairman of BPK Hasan Bisri told *detikFinance* (03/28) in Jakarta.]

#### Event 2

Sementara pejabat di sini, menurut Hasan, memang tidak semuanya mewah tetapi justru ada tingkatannya. Seperti eselon I atau II yang masuk kelas eksekutif untuk pesawat terbang.

"Ada baiknya jika diseragamkan saja jadi ada penghematan. Mereka (instansi luar) saja mau masak kita enggak?," kata Dia.

Menurut Hasan, kunjungan pemerintah melalui pejabat negara ataupun PNS-nya ke luar negeri harus dikaji ulang. Karena, sambung Hasan banyak anggaran negara terkuras karena 'plesiran' ini.

"Kalau menurut saya mahal sekali itu perjalanan dinas ke luar negeri. Ini harus betul diketatin," tegas Hasan.

[On the contrary, Hasan said that the government officials here get luxurious facilities and amenities, although not all of them get the same luxury due to ranks. For example, Echelons I and II may get executive class flights.

"It would be better if all were equalized for budgeting savings, since people from other countries could accept it, why couldn't we?" Hasan added.

He suggested that official trips abroad done by government officials and PNS should be reexamined because it spent so much of governments' budgets. "Official trips abroad are very expensive and should be restricted," stressed Hasan.]

#### Event 3

Dikatakan Hasan, sebagai pejabat pemerintah entah itu setingkat eselon I atau II harus diperketat dalam artian apa urgensi mereka melakukan perjalanan dinas. Selain itu, diperlukan penghematan anggaran yang sebenarnya tidak perlu.

"Misal seminar-seminar soal apakah itu, kan kadang memang tidak perlu. Karena biayanya besar pakai hotel-hotel dan itu tidak terlalu urgent," tutup Hasan. (*dru/ang*)

[Hasan said for government officials either as Echelons I or II, the official trips should be restricted and should consider the importance of the trips. Besides, there is a need save the budgets.

"For example, some seminars which are not really important and are not needed should be reexamined. Usually, they stay at expensive hotels and those are not really urgent," Hasan closed the conversation.]

**Appendix B.** Sample Analysis of Text Structure in a Letter-to-Editor 1

**“Kapan Korupsi Disinetronkan?”** [When is corruption filmed as a soap opera?]

**Background**

*SEKARANG ini kasus korupsi dibuka blak- blakan. Berkat kecanggihan media massa, terutama televisi, proses dan hasil persidangan tentang kasus korupsi dapat ditonton oleh segenap lapisan masyarakat. Baik tua maupun muda, laki- perempuan, kaya miskin, semuanya dapat menyaksikan bagaimana terdakwa, tersangka dan saksi- saksi “bergaya” di depan majelis hakim.*

[Currently corruption cases are publicly uncovered. People are able to watch the entire court process and the due to the sophisticated mass media, particularly television. They can see how the defendants, suspects, and witnesses “act” in front of the judges.]

**Thesis**

*Kalau saja ada pihak produser atau sutradara yang berinisiatif membuat sinetron bertema korupsi, tentu banyak kalangan yang menyambutnya. Saya sendiri dulu paling membuka mata di depan layar kaca TV.*

[If there are film producers or film directors initiating to make soap operas about the corruption, there will surely be many people welcoming the idea. I will be the first to watch it on TV.]

**Argument**

*Sekali lagi, seandainya itu merupakan gagasan yang benar- benar akan divisualisasikan dalam bentuk sinetron. Jangan lupa ceritanya dikemas menarik; jadi tontonan sekaligus tuntunan. Keserakahan dan ketidakbermoralan pelaku- pelaku korupsi divisualisasikan secara kreatif sehingga benar- benar merasa dimiskinkan, setidaknnya secara moral.*

[Again, if this idea will be realized as a film, the story should interesting. So, it can become good entertainment and useful education at the same time. The greediness and immoral behaviors of the corruptors can be visualized in such a way to show how poor they are morally.]

**Appendix C.** Sample Analysis of Text Structure in a Letter-to-Editor 2

**“Sukoharjo Tanpa Tempat Ekspresi Seni”** [Sukoharjo without art gallery]

**Argument**

*Para seniman dan pecinta seni di Sukoharjo tak punya tempat yang representatif untuk mengekspresikan karya mereka. Bupati Sukoharjo telah berganti setidaknya sembilan kali, tapi belum ada yang membangun tempat untuk ekspresi seni.*

[Artists and art lovers in Sukoharjo do not have a place to express their artwork. There have been nine regents of Sukoharjo so far, but none built a house for them.]

**Thesis**

*Sekelompok seniman dan pecinta seni di Sukoharjo berharap ada tempat ekspresi seni yang representatif di Ibu Kota Sukoharjo.*

*Tempat yang dibutuhkan cukup sederhana saja, atau memanfaatkan bangunan milik Pemkab yang tidak dimanfaatkan secara optimal. Penyediaan tempat perlu didukung pembebasan bagi ekspresi seni, tak perlu urusan perizinan yang ruwet.*

[A group of artists and art lovers in Sukoharjo wish that there were a representative place where they could express arts. The place can be built unpretentiously or it can make use of the regency's building, which is not optimally used. The provision of the house for art lovers need the support of free art expression and should not need a complicated licensing process.]

## Appendix D. Sample Analysis of Register in News

### “Dahlan Iskan Juga Pernah Ngamuk di Pabrik Gula”

[Dahlan Iskan Grows mad at a Sugar Factory]

#### Orientation

*Jakarta*—Tak hanya di pintu tol, Menteri Badan Usaha Milik Negara (BUMN) Dahlan Iskan ternyata pernah juga mengamuk di pabrik gula. Pasalnya, Dahlan mengaku kecewa perusahaan plat merah punya banyak pabrik tapi Indonesia masih impor gula.

[Jakarta—Not only in the toll gate, The Minister of State-Owned Companies Dahlan Iskan turned to have ever been mad at a sugar factory after he did the same action in the toll gate Semanggi to Slipi. The reason is that Dahlan regretted that the red-plated companies have many factories while, in fact, Indonesia still has to import sugar.]

#### Event

*"Saya waktu itu ngamuk karena pabrik gula BUMN itu ada 52, tapi kenapa Indonesia masih juga impor. Ini ada yang salah," katanya kepada detikFinance, Rabu (28/3/2012).*

*Apalagi, kata Dahlan, para BUMN perkebunan yang memiliki pabrik gula tersebut, yaitu PT Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN) I sampai XIV dan PT Rajawali Nusantara Indonesia (RNI), semua memiliki kantor yang bagus.*

*"Gedung kantornya tinggi-tinggi, ruang pertemuannya juga bagus-bagus, tapi kenapa pabriknya jelek?" kata Dahlan.*

*Hal ini, kata Dahlan, tidak bisa dibiarkan. Seharusnya, yang diperbaiki dan diperbarui oleh para BUMN perkebunan itu adalah pabrik mereka, bukan kantornya.*

*Apalagi, pabrik-pabrik milik BUMN perkebunan itu ada beberapa yang tidak layak pakai. Bahkan, saking tidak terawatnya, rakyat di sekitar pabrik jadi tidak mencintai perusahaan milik negara tersebut.*

*"Harus diperbaiki pabriknya supaya bisa berjalan dengan baik dan dicintai rakyat sekitar. Tidak boleh seperti ini," pungkas Dahlan. (ang/ang)*

[“At that time, I was mad because we actually have 52 state-owned sugar factories, but why does Indonesia still import sugar? There must be something wrong,” he said to detikFinance, on Wednesday (3/28/2012).

Moreover, he added that the State-owned plantation companies are the owner of the sugar mills, that is PT Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN) I to PTPN XIV and PT Rajawali Nusantara Indonesia (RNI). They have good office buildings. “They have tall office buildings, the meeting rooms are also good, but why are the factories in a very bad condition?” he questioned. This, he continued, cannot be ignored. What the state-owned plantations should renovate is their factories, not their offices. Moreover, the factories were not in good condition to operate. It’s so much neglected that the people surrounding do not love the company owned by the government.

The factories must be rebuilt to make their operation better and so that the people love them again. ”It can’t be like this,” closed Dahlan. (ang/ang)]

## Appendix E. Exposition-like News

**Rapor Merah SBY-Boediono Versi DPR**

[SBY-Boediyono's Report was red, according to DPR]

Thesis	{ Gelombang demonstrasi bermunculan di sejumlah kota besar. Pemerintahan SBY-Boediono kini genap berjalan 2 tahun. Namun, beberapa rapor merah masih terus membayangi kinerja keduanya. Bahkan, gelombang demonstrasi bermunculan di sejumlah kota besar di Indonesia seperti Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Surabaya, Semarang. Isu yang diusung hampir seragam: SBY Gagal.	Orientation
	{ Wakil Ketua DPR Pramono Anung menilai demonstrasi itu murni keresahan para mahasiswa. Jadi, bukan demonstrasi titipan partai yang tidak puas atas reshuffle kabinet kemarin.	Event 1
One-sided Argument	{ "Saya lebih melihat ini murni ke kinerja SBY-Boediono, karena dilakukan oleh teman-teman mahasiswa dan berlangsung sporadis. Para intelektual muda ini mengalami keresahan dan ketidakpuasan," kata Pramono di gedung DPR, Jakarta 20 Oktober 2011.	Event 2
	{ Menurutnya, demonstrasi yang berlangsung serentak di sejumlah kota di tanah air, memiliki isunya sama. Yakni, ketidakpuasan terhadap dua tahun jalannya pemerintahan. "Kalau kami lihat demonstrasi di Bandung, Jakarta, Medan, dan Surabaya, semuanya sepakat karena kekecewaan terhadap kinerja pemerintah," ungkapnya.	Event 3
One-sided Argument	{ Pramono menilai, dalam dua tahun pemerintahan SBY-Boediono, kasus korupsi masih saja mengalami peningkatan yang cukup signifikan. Dan itu juga terjadi pada semua lini termasuk di DPR sendiri.	Event 4
	{ "Jadi dalam tiga tahun ke depan fokus utama pemerintah adalah penegakkan hukum dan pemberantasan korupsi," tegas dia.	Event 5
	{ Mantan Sekjen PDIP itu menambahkan, dalam dua tahun ini sebenarnya secara makro ekonomi situasinya sudah cukup baik. "Tetapi relatif tidak termanfaatkan dengan baik, karena terlalu disibukkan dengan persoalan yang menyangkut pemberantasan korupsi yang tidak dilakukan dengan tegas. Baik oleh kekuasaan pemerintah, maupun oleh KPK," paparnya.	Event 6
One-sided Argument	{ Ia menegaskan, reshuffle yang dilakukan kemarin bukanlah upaya untuk meningkatkan kinerja pemerintah, melainkan menenangkan partai-partai pendukung atau koalisi. "Saya melihat reshuffle ini justru membuat keributan baru dalam lingkaran partai koalisi," katanya mengakhiri perbincangan	Event 6
Thesis	{ The government of SBY-Boediono has run for 2 years, but a number of red reports still shadow their performance. Democracy waves take place in some big cities, even in big cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Surabaya, and Semarang which raise the same issue, that is: SBY Fails.	Orientation
	{ Pramono Anung, the House of Representatives Deputy Speaker, assessed that the democracy was purely the form of university students' restlessness. So, it was not the "democracy order" of the parties that were not satisfied with the cabinet reshuffle.	Event 1
One-sided Argument	{ "I see that this is purely addressed to SBY-Boediono's performance because it is done by the students sporadically. These young people feel restless and disappointed," he said in DPR building, Jakarta (10/20/2011).	Event 2
	{ According to him, the demonstrations that were taking place in some cities in the country have the same issue, namely dissatisfaction toward the two year tracks of the government. "If we see the demonstrations happened in Bandung, Jakarta, Medan, and Surabaya, all are agreed that they are disappointed with the performance of the government", he said.	Event 3
One-sided Argument	{ Pramono assessed that within the two-year performance of the government of SBY-Boediono, the corruption cases are still experiencing significant improvement, and this also happens in all edges, including in the parliament itself.	Event 4
	{ "So in the next three years the main focus of the government will be on the law enforcement and the corruption eradication," he stated. That	Event 5

One-sided Argument } former Secretary General of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) added that in these two years the macroeconomic condition was actually quite good, but unfortunately it was relatively not utilized well, because the government was too busy with the issues of combating corruption which was not done decisively or explicitly, either by the government or by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). } Event 6

He affirmed that the reshuffle done yesterday was not an attempt to increase the government's performance, but an effort to calm supporting parties or coalitions. "I see this reshuffle will make a new commotion in the coalition party circles," he said to end the conversation

## Entrapment in Relationships in August Strindberg's *The Father* and Harold Pinter's *The Collection*

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The way out is via the door. Why is it that no one will use this method?  
 Confucius (quoted in Laing, 1961, p. xii)

### ABSTRACT

Modern drama is replete with different forms of entrapment in relationships and that is August Strindberg. Some authors have acknowledged their indebtedness to him and some have never mentioned it; Pinter is among the latter group. Though this paper does not investigate the influence of Strindberg on Pinter, studying these two plays, one can see the footsteps of Strindberg in Pinter's play. Employing Watzlawick and Laing's communication theory, this paper tries to investigate the shared concept of entrapment in relationships and the resemblance between these two playwrights.

Keywords: August Strindberg; Harold Pinter; communication theory; *The Father*; *The Collection*

### INTRODUCTION

August Strindberg's influence on modern drama is indisputable. Many critics have studied his influence on modern drama especially from a technical point of view. Strindberg introduced symbolist and expressionistic techniques that were influential for the later existentialist plays by Jean-Paul Sartre, the absurdist plays by Maeterlinck or Beckett, or the realist/absurdist plays by Pinter.

Esslin (1964) believes that in comparison to the absurdist playwrights, Pinter is looking for "a higher degree of realism in the theatre" (p. 206). Pinter scholars frequently have compared Pinter with Beckett but not that much work has been done on the influence of Strindberg on Pinter. Truly, Strindberg has influenced modern dramatists, some of them have acknowledged their indebtedness to Strindberg like Eugene O'Neill, and some, like Harold Pinter, have not. Roken (2009) argues that some dramatists "have drawn more from Strindberg than from any other playwright (like Eugene O'Neill and Lars Norén); those who have more or less unconsciously integrated something from his work or technique (like Harold Pinter); and those who have, in one way or another, tried to avoid Strindberg's influence (like Jean-Paul Sartre, Heiner Müller, and Tom Stoppard)" (p. 164).

Investigating Pinter's different works, we found that Pinter has never acknowledged his indebtedness to Strindberg, though he got influence from him consciously or unconsciously. Actually, Harold Bloom (2011), in his influential book called *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a way of life*, stipulates: "Influence anxiety, in literature, need not be an affect in the writer who arrives late in a tradition. It always is an anxiety achieved in a literary work, whether or not its author ever felt it. (p. 6) In his view, influence stalks us all as influenza and we can suffer an anguish of contamination whether we are partakers of influence or victims of influenza (p. 12). However in *Anatomy of Influence*, he discusses about Shakespeare's plays and considers Shakespeare as the source of influence for all poets and generally speaking for all people. Pinter has never acknowledged his debt to Strindberg but his plays are very much like Strindberg's family plays in which the characters are entrapped in their relationships. This paper tries to investigate this shared concept through the light of communication theory of Watzlawick and Laing.

Pinter, very much like Strindberg, delineates different forms of entrapment in relationships. Like Strindberg, he shows characters who are entrapped in their relationships and the more they try, the less they can

clarify the situation. In both Strindberg and Pinter's plays, the characters are nice when they are considered on their own but they change to devils when they are put in each other's company and they are truly unable to step out of the situation they are engulfed in. This very characteristic of Strindberg and later on Pinter's characters, entrapment in relationships, is one of the main issues anti-psychiatrists and communication theorists are focusing on and discussing about.

## METHOD

In communication theory of Watzlawick and Laing, people are studied in relation with other people and not in solitude. Communication theory posits a systematic view of interaction; it investigates how people get entrapped in their relationships and how they are unable to step out of it. So their definition of madness, for instance, is different from psychiatrists. For them, madness is created by the character imprisoned by the rules of his own interaction or his wrong perception of others in his relationships. For the communication theorists Schizophrenia, to give another example, is a social phenomenon. Laing (1967), the anti-psychiatrist, argues:

In using the term schizophrenia, I am not referring to any condition that I suppose to be mental rather than physical, or to an illness, like pneumonia, but to a label that some people pin on other people under certain *social* circumstances (italics mine, p.103).

This new perspective of madness tries to answer this question that how it is possible that the people who are so nice when considered on their own, can be such devils when they are in one another's company. How is it that these people are entrapped in their relationships and cannot step out of it? The patterns studied here to show *how* the characters in both Strindberg and Pinter's plays are entrapped are the instances of pathological interactions. Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson (1967), in *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, assert:

What we can *observe* in virtually all these cases of pathological communication is that they are vicious circles that cannot be broken unless and until communication itself becomes the subject of communication, in other words, until the communicants are able to metacommunicate. But to this they have to step *outside* the circle. (p. 96)

An example, given by Laing (2002), may clarify the situation better:

This is how many people describe their experience of being unable to leave 'home', or

the original other or nexus of persons in their life. They feel that their mother or family is smothering them. They are frightened and want to run away. But the more frightened they are, the more frightened and frightening their family becomes. They cling for security to what frightens them, like someone with a hand on a hot plate who presses his hand harder against it instead of drawing it away; or like someone, who begins to step on a bus just when it begins to move away and 'instinctively' clutches the bus, the nearest and most dangerous object, although the 'sensible' thing to do is to let go. (p. 130)

This is the case in both Strindberg and Pinter's plays. In their plays, the more the characters try to untie the knot, the more the noose tightens. The more the characters discuss their problems, the less they are able to solve them. The more they share their views with one another, the more they become isolated. In Strindberg's family plays, Luc Gilleman (2010) argues:

The more cohesive a family, the more isolated from the outside world, the more prone it is to produce aberrant behavior. In Strindberg's time it was called the folie à deux, or better still, the folie à plusieurs—a sort of group departure from reality. (p. 219)

Watzlawick—in a chapter of his book named: "Paradoxical Communication"—traces the roots of this kind of pathological interaction leading to people's inevitable engulfment. He comes to this conclusion that it can also be originated from paradoxical injunction or double bind. Watzlawick,

Bavelas and Jackson (1967) believe that "paradox not only can invade interaction and affect our behavior and our sanity, but also it challenges our belief in the consistency, and therefore, the ultimate soundness of our universe" (p. 187). In paradoxical injunction, whatever choice a man chooses is wrong, he has no other choice other than badness or madness. He clarifies this "untenable situation" by comparing this situation with the condition of a man caught on the sixth floor of the burning house, left only with the alternatives of dying either in the fire or of jumping out the window (p. 216).

## DISCUSSION

In Strindberg's *The Father*, the untenable situation happens to Captain who is not able to step out of the problem he is engulfed in. He is the victim, the bad or mad character of the play. Whatever he chooses to do is wrong and is the proof of his badness or madness.

The main conflict is raised by Captain himself and it is Laura who cultivates it deceitfully in a way that Captain is helplessly trapped and is labeled as crazy. Is Captain treacherously labeled mad, or he is truly mad? Krasner (2012) argues that Strindberg, like Chekhov and Ibsen, carries "the banner of realism to its ascendancy, probing the falsehoods of bourgeois hegemony and drawing away the circumambience of deceit that permeated the middle class's arrogant self-perception" (p. 16). The play starts with doubt about the child issue in relation to its father. What's going on at the beginning of the play affects Captain and puts the seeds of doubt in his mind which is aggravated by the game his wife plays against him. Concerning the relationship between Emma and Nojd, captain asks Nojd whether he would finally marry Emma. He also asks Nojd if he is truly the child's father. Nojd answers that he will marry her but he is not sure and can never be quite sure about the child's root. He says that the child who is in the way of coming can be his own child or Ludwig's.

Doubt has already buried in the dark and deep parts of Captain's mind and plays a main role in the play; though it is delineated in the shape of concern for Bertha's future and education. Fahlgren (2009) in "Strindberg and the Woman Question" considers the decision making for Bertha's future as the maneuver of power, "the fight over Bertha's future is therefore a fight about power, about the right to define the laws of society and control financial matters." (p. 26).

Captain wants to dominate his daughter and her future; very similarly it is what her mother, Laura wants to do. Nietzsche analogizes the relationship between the characters in *The Father* to war; in his letter to Strindberg he admits: "I have twice read your tragedy with great emotion, it surprised me beyond all measure to become acquainted with a work in which my own conception of love—in its means, war; ay its heart, the hatred unto death of the sexes has been given such magnificent expression" (qtd in Rokem, 2010, pp. 95-96).

The subject of the game of power between Captain and Laura is Bertha. Captain is standing on one side and other women of the house are standing on the other side, taking Laura's side. Captain is not satisfied with the people he lives with; he feels that he is not safe among them. Very much like Edgar in *The Dance of Death*, he thinks all people around him are his enemies: "it is like going into a cage full of tigers, and if I [Captain] did not hold red-hot irons under their noses they might tear me to pieces at any moment!" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 54). Pinter, very similarly, shows characters whose perspectives are the same.

In his family plays, Strindberg asks himself how it is that two characters who are nice when considered on their own can be such devils when they are put in each other's company. In *The Father*, Strindberg depicts a situation in which one person's position is rendered "untenable" by others. Watzlawick argues that in double bind situation or paradoxical injunction, no change can be generated from within. He believes that people can change the situation if they step outside the pattern, while it is not possible in the untenable situation in which the people are engaged. It is impossible for the characters to stop the game once it is under way. Such situation Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson (1967) label "games without end" (pp.232-33).

The first time Laura and Captain face with each other in the play, they immediately start the power game and quarrel about Bertha's future. Captain believes that it is surely the father's right to bring up his child how he really wants and grants no right for his wife. On the other hand—as she says—Laura wants to break the knot which cannot be untied. She purposefully asks about Nojd while she knows about him completely and it is just a trick to draw Captain to the point she has planned before. Captain asks her what her judgment of Nojd's case is; she says "My judgment is the laws judgment". This statement may suggest, very tacitly, that she betrays her plan to Captain; though Captain unknowingly responds: "It is not written in 'the judgment of the law' who the child's father is" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 59). Laura now hears what she really wants to hear. So, as she says, what she hears is surely "remarkable" to her (Strindberg, 1953, p. 59).

This is the beginning of the torturing game. By fostering emotional conflict in the other person—as Laing says in the chapter called "Driving the other Crazy"—Laura tries to drive Captain crazy, which is very much identical with Laing's formula. Captain is unable to step out of the paradoxical injunction he is engulfed in. Again, the pathological relationship between this couple leads to entrapment in their interaction. They neither quit the relationship, nor are indifferent to it. They more and more submerge in the relationship and make it worse. The more they try to seemingly make the situation better and clarify it, the more they are trapped in their interaction and it becomes more enigmatic to the audience, as well. Margret, the nurse, astonishingly asks Captain "but, my God, why should two people torment the life out of one another; two people who are otherwise so good and wish all others well" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 65).

For making decision about Bertha's future, using Captain's own sayings, Laura repeatedly reminds Captain that the mother is nearer to the child, since "it has been discovered that no one can tell for certain who is the father of a child". She tells him "you do not know whether you are Bertha's father . . . how can you tell that I have not been unfaithful to you?" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 70). These remarks nourishes the seeds of doubt in Captain's mind about his true position in relation to his child. Captain is very much obsessed with Laura's sayings about the child issue. On the other hand, Laura had previously talked with the Doctor about Captain's strange deeds in his job. As she had found, from the doctor, that an insane person loses his civil and family rights, she asks the doctor now to examine Captain of any suspicion of insanity. She tells the doctor that "he [Captain] talked in the wildest way about the most extraordinary things. Such fancies, for instance, as that he [Captain] is not the father of his child" and that he once "confessed, in his own letter to the doctor, that he feared for his reason" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 73).

Thus, Laura is trying to drive Captain crazy switching from one emotional wave-length to another while on the same topic. Once she says that he is Bertha's father and once again she says that he is not. Laura, who is the exact example of what Laing discusses in his book, creates a paradoxical situation for Captain which leads to Captain's inevitable madness. Laing quotes from Searles who believes that there are six modes of driving the other person crazy or as Laing confirms six modes of "schizogenesis". The common factor in all of these modes is people's pathological interaction with others, which activates various areas of one's personality which are in opposition to one another. "Switching from one emotional wave-length to another while on the same topic" is one way out of the six ways Searles proposes. In other words, as Laing argues, one can interact with others with two or more possible courses of action that are in contrast with one another. And this is one of the ways of driving somebody mad. (qtd in Laing, 1961, p. 132).

Laura's reaction to Captain's quarrel, for gaining power over her, fosters confusion for Captain. It is no longer easy for him to know 'who' he is, 'who' the other is and what is the situation they are 'in'. In this kind of seductive interactions, the more the characters try to solve the problem, the more serious it becomes. Confusion and befuddlement is the very characteristic of engulfment in the relationships from which characters are unable to step out. In Strindberg's relationship plays, the inverted reality in the seductive interactions leads to the untenable situation and the befuddlement not only of the characters but also of the audience.

Learning that Laura spreads reports about his mental condition everywhere and that she intercepts his letters which are vital for the progress of his job, Captain tries to stop her by offering her peace if she accepts a condition; that is to deliver him from his suspicions, so he will throw up the struggle. This time when Laura asks Captain what his suspicions are and when he tells her that they are about Bertha's origin, she assuredly declares that there is no doubt about this matter and Captain is surely Bertha's father. She tells Captain "you really can't expect me to take upon myself a sin that I have not committed" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 81). But Captain tells Laura that she has awakened these ceaseless suspicions in him and that he is in ambivalent situation. He has reasons and at the same time doesn't have reasons for his suspicions. He cannot take what Laura says for granted. Now he is in a condition that he hopes that his suspicions be true. Deception or more specifically, collusion has a big role in this play. Captain from the very beginning tries to authoritatively deceive Laura saying that he is in control of the game and she has no right in making decision for Bertha's future. Laura, on the other hand, resorts to contradictory sayings, a strategy which ultimately drives Captain crazy.

Laura accuses Captain of plotting against her to prove that she is guilty of infidelity, "so that you [Captain] can get rid of me and have absolute control over the child. But you [Captain] won't lure me into any such snare" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 81). Captain, on the other hand, tells her that he could not adopt another man's child if he were convinced of her guilt. In return, very surprisingly, Laura accuses him of lying: "you [Captain] lied just now when you said that you forgave me in advance" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 81). It is as if Laura tacitly accepts her guilt and again reinforces suspicions in Captain's mind. Captain, Laura, and also the audience are now very much befuddled and do not know how to untie the knot. Who is deceiving who? and why? The characters are truly entrapped in their relationships and cannot step out of it. At this part of the play, it seems that Laura herself gets confused and is engulfed in her own plot, trying to acquit herself of the scandal of infidelity.

Suddenly, hatred, accusation, suspicion, and fraud change to love and sweet remembrance of things past. Comparing Strindberg's works to music, critics call these frequent changes of characters' emotion, Syncopation. It represents Strindberg's ability to create quick and adroit changes when they are least expected. Both Captain and Laura confess that they both love each other; however Captain adds "when I was about to stretch out my hand and gather in its fruits, you suddenly cut off my arm" (Strindberg,

1953, p. 84). After all of these admirations and compliments, Captain frankly asks Laura if she hates him and she replies: "Yes, sometimes, when you are a man" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 85). The love and hate syncopations continue and love again changes to hatred and power struggle in which the weaker, as they say, should go "under in this struggle" and the stronger "will be in the right" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 85). When Laura's emotion changes to hatred again, she emphasizes that she will put Captain under control by the help of power of the law. Therefore, the torturing game begins again. Laura reveals her plot to Captain and tells him that she will show Captain's declaration of his insanity to the doctor. Captain gets angry so much that he throws a lighted lamp at Laura.

In spite of all Pastor's warnings to Laura, concerning Captain's love towards Laura and Bertha, Laura insists on her will to convince the doctor that Captain is not sane. Pastor tries to warn her of her doing, asking her: "Laura, tell me, are you blameless in all this?" but Laura very recklessly acquits herself saying "why should I be to blame because a man goes out of his mind?" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 88). Laura undermines the fact that it is she, who drives Captain mad with her contradictory sayings. The only thing she is thinking about is her triumph over Captain, to be the winner of the power game. Fahlgren (2009) argues:

Her primitive will triumphs over the male intellect when she succeeds in making the Captain believe that he is not Bertha's father. Strindberg even makes her say that her actions were unplanned and that she never considered the consequences for her husband. (p. 26)

It is Laura who should determine about Captain's punishment, whether he deserves imprisonment, fine or detention in an asylum, since, as the doctor says, the act of violence committed by Captain can be considered as an outbreak of anger or of monomaniac by Laura. It is up to Laura how she interprets it. Laura interprets it as an evidence of his madness. And all the people in the house, in addition to the doctor, are preparing themselves for trapping Captain in the strait-waistcoat and putting him in the asylum. Though, it is not an approved madness by the doctor, it is advantageous for almost all parties that he should immediately be treated as insane. Clark (1925) argues that "there is a certain relief when the Captain is taken away; we are sure he will be better off away from his wife—indeed it is rather disappointing that Laura is not sent to a sanitarium" (p. 38). Even Captain himself accepts that he is crazy; though he sarcastically asks Pastor a question which shows that he knows how he has driven to this point:

Pastor: Do you know, Adolf, that you are insane?

Captain: Yes; I know that well enough. . . . I am mad but how did I become so? (Strindberg, 1953, p. 93)

Near the end of the play, when Bertha sees that Laura's health is not important for her father, she warns him that he is not her father if he talks like that about her mother. What Bertha says, again provokes Captain's paradoxical feelings towards her, love and hatred, and makes him very much angry. Again, Bertha unknowingly puts Captain in double bind, in paradoxical situation, in an untenable situation Laura for the first time put him in. Bertha puts him in a situation which inevitably leads to his madness or badness. Breuer (1980) believes: "schizophrenia is a contradictory response to a contradictory situation" (p. 111). It is "a response to certain kinds of interaction, namely to so-called untenable situations" which is truly seen in Captain (Breuer, 1980, p. 108).

Captain's contradictory attitude emanates from Laura's contradictory attitude towards Captain's fatherhood. Captain loves Bertha and at the same time hates her. Captain very nervously talks to Bertha and repeatedly notes that she is his daughter and he has power to dominate her. What he says is in complete contradiction to his previous sayings when he rejected Bertha and did not accept her as his daughter. So, the paradoxical love-hate relationship is not only between Captain and Laura but also between Captain and Bertha. He justifies his violence towards Bertha as the sign of love since he believes that life is a hell and death a heaven and children belong to heaven. Like Edgar, in *The Dance of Death*, he is the victim of entrapment in double bind, of engulfment in untenable situation from which he is unable to escape.

It is not a fair game between Captain and Laura, since Laura is stronger and wiser and both know it from the very beginning of the game. At the end of the play, when Captain is bound in a strait-jacket and is taken to the asylum, Laura sympathizes with him. She gets kind towards him again and tries to assure him that he is truly Bertha's father: "And with regard to your suspicions about the child, they are quite without foundation" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 98). But it is the very problem of Captain; he is oscillating between truths without foundations. This very ambivalent situation can lead him to madness or badness. Whatever he does is wrong since there is no proof for rightness of what he chooses. He himself is aware of the situation he is entrapped in:

That is just what is so appalling! If at least there was any foundation for them, it would be something to take hold of, to cling to. Now there are only shadows that hide themselves in the bushes, and stick out their heads to grin; it is like fighting with the air, or firing blank cartridges at a sham fight. (Strindberg, 1953, p. 98)

If Captain accepts simply that he is Bertha's true father, what should he do with Laura's declaration that he is not? Since, nobody can prove it either scientifically or legally. If Laura is right, he will be bad. If he does not accept Bertha as his own true daughter, what should he do with Laura's notification that he is truly her father? If she is right, she will be mad. He chooses the second choice since Laura's insistence on the latter possibility may, from his point of view, be originated from her fear of scandal and consequently of losing control over Bertha. In the double bind situation or the untenable situation, Laing (1961) argues "the victim is caught in a cross-current of contradictory injunctions, or of attributions having the force of injunctions, in the midst of which he can do nothing right. There is no move he can make that will meet with unqualified confirmation by the other(s)" (p. 136). Entrapment of Strindberg's characters in their interactions is mostly because they cannot stay in ambiguity and on the other hand, neither can they transcend it nor be indifferent to it. As the very natural outcome of the pathological relationship between this couples who has paradoxical interaction, the more Captain tries to solve the problem and discovers the truth, the more he is befuddled and entrapped in the relationship and the tighter the noose will be.

In "The Collection", Pinter very much like Strindberg, depicts a character who is engulfed in a relationship from which there is no way out. The more James craves for the truth, the more he gets befuddled and entrapped in deceptions; and the more he thinks he knows, the more he gets distance from reality. He is the victim in the game whose main players are Stella (his wife), Bill and himself. Stella, very much like Laura, says contradictory sayings about her affair with Bill. Once she rejects, later on she moderates the story and reiterates it in another version. The same process repeats with Bill when James several times asks him to tell him the truth. What James gets from their sayings is totally in contrast with what they had said to him before. "One of the most initially puzzling aspects of 'The Collection' is the proliferation of different versions of 'the truth' which appears throughout the play", Morgan (1978) states (p. 165). Like Captain in *The Father*, James is entrapped in the game of contra-

dictions which he cannot transcend nor can be indifferent to. He thinks that if he sees Bill he will understand the truth but paradoxically the more he sees Bill, the less he knows.

The first time James visits Bill, he asks him about the love affair happened in Leeds when he was there for the dress collection, but Bill completely denies his going to Leeds. James continues explaining to him about the details of what had happened in the hotel. He even mentions the number of the rooms in which Bill and his wife were. James tells Bill that his wife, Stella, has told him the entire story about their affair. In return, Bill firmly refuses:

Bill: I was nowhere near Leeds last week, old chap. No where near your wife either, I'm quite sure of that. (Pinter, 1996, p. 119)

James is sure of what is claiming since his wife told him about her love affair with Bill. James refers to every detail of the event even what Bill had put on and the time exactly when he telephoned his wife that night. Bill now accepts that there was a love affair between him and her:

Bill: She must have known she was married, too. Why did she feel it necessary . . . to do that? (Pinter, 1996, p. 119)

James craves for the truth to hear it from Bill's mouth, but the more he struggles, the more he faces contradictions and gets distance from the truth. The next time he visits Bill, he gets angry and bits Bill to the ground. This time Bill pleads him not to hurt him so he will tell James the whole truth. Bill then adds that what his wife has told him is just pure fantasy and that she has made up all that. James cannot believe what he tells him and continues interrogating him. The more he asks, the less he understands. The more he tries to clarify the situation, the more he is entrapped in deceptions and gets befuddled. Bill once denies seeing his wife but now confesses that he kisses her and then when James reminds him that Bill was sitting next to her when he called his wife, Bill very surprisingly corrects him and says: "not sitting. Lying" (Pinter, 1996, p. 25).

Bill and Stella are manipulating a game in which James unknowingly plays the role of a victim. James thinks that he knows more than the others and is resolutely after discovering the truth. When Harry talks about the man who came the day before to see Bill, Bill even deceives Harry and pretends that he does not know James and has not ever talked to him. Stella also plays her role well and tells James that what she had told him about her affair is the only truth. But when James tells Stella that he wants to

visit Bill again, Stella suddenly changes her story and says that she just met him in Leeds and nothing else happened. This time, James confusingly warns Stella that Bill has entirely confirmed her previous story.

Dukore (1974) believes that the play's chief concerns consist "of the revelation of patterns of character and behavior. Put another way, what happens is more important than what happened" (p. 83). The more James meets Bill, the more complicated the issue becomes; though very unwisely James repeats: "I do understand, but only after meeting him" (Pinter, 1996, p. 31). James is entrapped in a 'double bind' and it will be difficult for a person to remain sane while he is exposed to such a situation. Laing (1961) believes that a person in this situation "cannot make a single move without evoking a threatened catastrophe" (p. 138). Laing and Lee, Luc Gilleman (2008) says, "developed a simple notation system to represent the process of reciprocal monitoring whereby each partner in an interaction anticipates the other's moves and the account for the dialogues' apparent disconnectedness" (p. 82). The winner in interpersonal perception, like the game of chess, is a player who is not only able to predict every possible move but also responds to an antagonist's responses to each of those moves.

So as an ascending series of logical levels, the superiority is for one who achieves the highest level of insight. Laing (2002) proposes this very concise formula of Spiral Interpersonal Perception: (p. 99)

A(B)            how A sees B  
 A(B(A))       how A sees B seeing A  
 A(B(A(B)))   how A sees B seeing A seeing B

So as Luc Gilleman (2008) says, this view of interaction results in a "vortex" or system of interlocking spiral perspectives" (p. 83). Of course, Pinter is not the only one who writes plays including games of mutual monitoring but it is Pinter who plots these games one or two steps further than "I know that you know." Bill warns James that reliance on other's reflections may not be useful for finding the truth by referring symbolically to mirrors.

Bill: They are deceptive.  
 James: Mirrors?  
 Bill: Very. (Pinter, 1996, p. 34)

But James, the victim of the game, does not believe in it. He takes others' reflections as the only truth. Entrapped in their games and deceptions he gets more and more confused. As the stage direction reads:

Bill stands by him [James] and looks. They look together, and then James goes to the left of the mirror, and looks again at Bill's reflection.  
 James: I don't think mirrors are deceptive. (Pinter, 1996, p. 34)

When Harry, Bill's friend, goes to Stella and warns him that her husband has been bothering Bill with some fantastic stories, she apologizes Harry without letting him know that it was she who has plotted this fantasy and has planted these seeds in his mind. Meanwhile, James who is in Bill's house and is very much befuddled of all these contradictions nervously offers Bill to start a game, a muck duel symbolizing a power game. In the middle of the game just when Bill is hurt by the knife James throws at him, Harry enters the room and informs James of his wife's confession which makes the situation much more complicated for James. James confronts different contradictory reflections and he does not know which one is correct. Morgan (1978) correctly says that the stronger one in this relationship is the one who can face minimal illusions and the weaker one is the character who nurtures illusions (p. 169).

James assures them that he accepts what Harry and Bill told him and that he does not talk about this issue with his wife any longer. He is now at the verge of accepting the new expression when Bill again restarts the game of deception and insists that he wants to tell him the truth now and confesses that he never went to her room: "just talked about what we would do . . . if we did get to her room . . . two hours . . . we never touched . . . we just talked about it" (Pinter, 1996, p. 45). He is actually trapped between two realities or perhaps fantasies, that of his wife and that of Bill. James is oscillating between these contradictions or as he sees, between these truths. At the very end of the play when he helplessly asks Stella: "That's the truth, isn't it?", as the stage direction reads, "she just looks at him, neither confirming nor denying. Her face is friendly, sympathetic" (Pinter, 1996, p. 45). "Like Ruth, Stella controls in part because she knows and others do not know", Dukore (1974) says (p. 83). "Now faced with Stella herself, rather than his own constructed image of her, James renders himself vulnerable to resistance", Bean (1994) believes (p. 62). James very much like Captain in Strindberg's *The Father*, entrapped in the relationship in which the more he tries to clarify the situation, the more he is engulfed in. Accordingly, there is no truth in Pinter's plays and what matters and is the source of entrapment is characters' own perspective of others which is the source of their knowledge.

The related algorithm of spiral interpersonal perspective clearly shows that James meta-perspective of what Bill thinks of him is not correct and it is Bill whose meta-meta-perspective is operating correctly:

J (B (J)) ≠ B (J)  
 But:  
 B (J (B (J))) = J (B (J))

Bill and Stella have the superior insight. They are the main players starting and manipulating the game. So they are at least one level ahead of James.

$$S(J(S(J))) = J(S(J))$$

Thus, it is James who heedlessly plays the power game and is unknowingly entrapped in the game-like relationship they have plotted against him.

## CONCLUSION

The role knowledge plays in the power game is inevitable. In Pinter's plays knowledge does not emanate from a specific truth the wiser one has access to, rather it originates from other's reflections and the winner is the one who is not the puppet in the hands of other players; a person who does not rely on others' reflections. Thus, the winner is a person who is at least one level ahead. In other words, the winner is the one whose insight is superior to others or as the algorithm of spiral interpersonal perspective demonstrates, his meta or meta-meta-perspective include other's perspectives or their meta-perspectives.

Luc Gilleman (2008) suggests, in Pinter's plays 'knowledge consists of a correct guessing and successful parrying of another's knowledge of one's own perceptions' (p. 89). So, the cause of entrapment of Pinter's characters can be traced in their own perception, their own perspectives of others, and their own interpretations. In his confusing games, the winner is the one whose perspective of the others' perspective is at least one level ahead. Pinter like Strindberg shows how characters are engulfed in their pathological interactions and how the noose tightens while the characters try to untie it. As it is investigated, entrapment in relationships is the shared characteristic in Strindberg and Pinter's plays, though a little bit difference originates from the cause of entrapment in their relationships. Paradoxical relationship in Strindberg's relationship plays is the cause of "inversion of reality" and consequently "double bind" or "paradoxical injunction" and finally entrapment in relationships, while in Pinter's plays the "spiral perspectives" or "reflections of reality" is the cause of "paradoxical injunction" and consequently the entrapment.

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## The Dehumanizing American Dream in David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*

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### ABSTRACT

The American Dream is a recurrent theme in American literature. In this response, this paper is an attempt to expose the destructive effects of the dream on the human spirit. It is also shown, through the analysis of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*, that despite the promise of the dream it contains many contradictions. Beneath the seeming simple surface of the play lies a deep current of meanings that reflect the calamities of modern American life, and in a broader sense, the modern world. This article indicates how capitalism inculcates ideologies in the mind of individuals in order to facilitate the exploiting process and unquestioning subordination. Ragged individualism, for instance, as the most prominent of these ideologies, disrupts all communal bonds and even exceeds to the disintegration of friendship and family life.

Keywords: American dream; ideology; capitalism; individualism; consumerism

### INTRODUCTION

The American Dream is as old as the very foundation of America when the innumerable immigrants, exhausted from the tyrannies and muffling limitations of the old world, thought of the new continent as the land of opportunities and redemption for their dreams. But from the very beginning, the ignorance, prejudice and greed inherited in human nature began to consume the seeds of the dream and turned it into a nightmare. Thus, one might claim that the dream has been corrupted since the outset despite the fact that there has always been a controversy over whether the dream was corrupted originally or whether it diverged from its true essence and became corrupted later.

Winner of three Obies, a New York Drama Critics Award, the Outer Critics Award for Distinguished Playwriting, a Joseph Jefferson Award, the Society of West End Theatres Award, the Pulitzer Prize for *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and numerous nominations for Academy Awards for screenwriting (*The Verdict* and *Wag the Dog*), David Mamet is a "seminal figure in contemporary American drama whose gift for acutesocial observation, depth of moral vision, and continuing productivity account for his broad critical respect" (Varun Begley 4). *Glengarry Glen Ross* is

Mamet's significant work, winning Pulitzer prize, in which the issue of struggle for life in the bossiness is evident. As Piette(2004) argued "*Glengarry Glen Ross* offers a portrait of a battle for survival, a Darwinian struggle in which the salesmen offer a dream of possibility. In a play about real estate there is, in fact, very little real in *Glengarry Glen Ross*"(p. 78), therefore, "the characters of *Glengarry Glen Ross* are deprived of any human warmth and compassion and are constantly steeped in an atmosphere of fear, greed, and ruthlessness: the higher the pressure, the lower the ethics"(p. 78). Moreover, as Brietzeke (2007) elaborates: Mamet in *Glengarry Glen Ross*"reduces the world of the [play] to a series of sales transactions in which the man who succeeds—and it is the man's world—is the one who can successfully close the deal and exert his will upon a victim . . . . How much money they make, what cars they drive, if they're married or not, where they live . . . and how many kids they have remains a mystery" (pp. 125-6). As Bigsby (2004) suggests: "In a utopian society such as America only the past and the future offer a true form. . . . In between is a provisional world in decline, reaching for a perfection beyond immediate reach, existing between impure nostalgia and importunate hope" (p. 20). Mamet's characters inhabit a world where in Harriott's words (1983): "There is a preoccupation with rootlessness—

felt both as discontinuity with the past and the failure of connection with the present—and with the fear of apocalypse” (p. 9). As King states: "Gradations of Criminality in the Plays of David Mamet" (2004) *Glengarry Glen Ross* depicts the essential role of the business ethic in shaping American values (p. 95). ... As a result the characters in *Glengarry Glen Ross* are caught in a moral dilemma, trapped between their desire to possess the land or gain from its sale and their longing for old value systems (p. 97). In fact, this illusion of the glorious past and a utopian future, compared to the devastating conditions of the present time, functions as a defense mechanism, employed to avoid the confrontation of the horrifying reality of their existence.

The objective of this article is to analyze David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* in the light of the American Dream. Therefore, the dehumanizing effects of the dream, how its principles are contradicted in the face of reality and what befalls those who take the dream too seriously and let themselves to be deluded by it will be demonstrated. The characters of the play are obsessed with their would-be life that they cannot see the reality of their miserable existence; likewise, they are enchanted by the American Dream to the extent that they cannot perceive how far they have diverged from reality. They have caught between their past and future that they cannot see their miserable present situation. In other words, the splendid dreams of the past are juxtaposed with the utopian future promised by the American Dream.

## METHODOLOGY

Since this paper is devoted to the analysis of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* in the light of the American Dream, a glance at the background of the dream might be helpful as a starting point. In fact, the American Dream is as old as the foundation of America itself. Ironically, the foundation of America was stimulated by the dream when many people from the old world crossed the ocean in search of better life and future in the fertile west while being tired of the muffling and exhausting conditions of Europe. Thus, America with its abundant opportunities was supposed to be the Promised Land. In the course of its evolution, from the possession of land, freedom and gold fever to the present time greed for wealth, the dream has failed time and again, despite these failures, the dream continues to survive stronger than before. The point is that as Tyson asserts: "The American Dream Blinds us to the enormities of its own failure, past and present: the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, the virtual

enslavement of indentured servants, the abuses suffered by immigrants populations, the widening economic gulf between America's rich and poor, the growing ranks of homeless and hungry, the enduring socioeconomic barriers against women and people of color, and the like" (p. 58).

We must bear in mind that the American Dream is an ideology that blinds us to the realities of our life. Here, in order to put more emphasis on the significance of this issue we rely on Hayes's (1998) statement that: "Reality suggests that today's American Dream has become the residue of media technology, that millions of us tune in for instructions on what to buy, wear, think about, and value—even what we should dream. Indeed, for now, we must take time to examine some current realities before we delve further into dreams" (p. 17). This means that the dream sustains itself in the mind of the individuals by the means of different Ideological State Apparatus including the media and advertisements. To be more precise, the media and advertising, as the tools in the service of the dream, help to promote ideologies like ragged individualism, consumerism and emulation. In its advocacy of individualism, for instance, the dream declares that competition is the best way towards success, yet it is not something progressive but destructive since not everyone is given the equal chance and the success of one means the failure of the rest. Therefore, in a society where competition, in its negative sense, is promoted as a value, it comes to follow the Darwinian rule of the survival of the fittest which implies that one's survival depends only on the annihilation of others. Thus, as Tyson (2006) expresses; "the American Dream is certainly good for capitalistic economics, but it sacrifices the well-being of the many individuals who don't achieve it" (p. 65). The American Dream commands that everyone has equal opportunity to get successful, but the truth is that once one volunteers to pursue the dream one enrolls in an endless competition that merely exhaust the competitors but fills the coffers of the bourgeoisie who conduct the process invisibly.

According to the promise of the American Dream, individualism seems to be total independence bestowed upon the individuals to move in every direction they aspire. Yet, the evidence proves that enslavement under the guise of individualism governs and regulates the actions of the individuals. This so-called individualism is, in fact, controlled through different means such as "Ideological State Apparatus" of which the American Dream is an example. So, Tyson (2006) considers: Rugged individualism [as] an oppressive ideology because it puts self-interest above the needs—and even above the survival—of

other people ... Rugged individualism also gives us the illusion that we make our own decisions without being significantly influenced by ideology of any sort when, in fact, we're all influenced by various ideologies all the time (p. 60). On the other hand, the individuals are allowed to act freely as long as they are subservient to the oppressive power that programs them. Consequently, as soon as they cross the line to turn against the system under which they operate, the alarm rings warning those in power that ideological tools have lost their efficiency; therefore, physical force have to be employed to extinguish the uprising. To put it another way, what is referred to as "Repressive State Apparatus" steps forward to restore the slavery of the subjects. In this respect, signs of this overwhelming force can be traced in *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

## DISCUSSION

### Individualism and Free Enterprise

*Glengarry Glen Ross* dramatizes four desperate salesmen who work with a real estate office in Chicago which is supervised by a cold manager, Williamson, who hands them out leads and sends them out to persuade gullible customers to buy worthless land in Florida. The play demonstrates how for these men all human relationships are narrowed down to business transactions and how their lack of morality drives them to commit robbery under the guise of free enterprise. Therefore, as Hayman (1994) represents:

Cleverly and disturbingly, Mamet plays with the idea that the difference between robbery and Chicago salesmanship is only a difference of degree. These hardboiled real-estate salesmen have no moral scruples; and what they are selling has no value—tracts of undeveloped land which cannot be developed. The only commodity that has value—for them—is the "lead," the contact with the potential buyer. Some leads are valueless, the value of the lead depending on the wealth and gullibility of the client. (p. 228)

However, despite their impoverished morality, from the beginning of the play we clearly perceive that the salesmen are under severe pressure more than any other time since half of them are at the verge of failure. This is because Mitch and Murray, the heads of the company, have declared a sales contest according to which the top seller wins a Cadillac, the runner-up wins a set of steak knives and the other two get fired. Nightingale (1994) describes the situation that the salesmen are stuck in: "It happens in and around a real estate office in Chicago, a jungle-

within-a-jungle where the only unalterable law is starkly Darwinism. Sell and survive; fail, and be fired" (p. 331).

The first act of the play consists of three scenes which all occur at a Chinese restaurant. The flamboyant atmosphere of the Chinese restaurant is significant since it ironically represents that the corrupt base of business hides under its delicate surface. The play, in words of Billington (1994), "subtly contrasts the borrowed comfort of the Chinese restaurant, where most of the real work is done, with the tackiness of the sales office which stares out onto a white brick wall" (p. 330). *Glengarry Glen Ross* begins with Shelly Levene, the oldest of the salesmen, trying to convince Williamson to give him premium leads. In fact, it might be odd for the readers, at their first confrontation with the words like lead and sit, to determine what these words actually refer to. Yet, Mamet gradually reveals in the course of the play "that a 'lead' is an appointment with a prospective client, that a 'sit' is the actual confrontation and that the 'board' is the office salesmen's graph charting the four salesmen's relative success" (p. 329). Moreover, it becomes clear that there are two sets of leads which include premium leads that are more likely to win and non-premium or ordinary leads that are almost worthless and most probably fail. As Levene's flattering and then threatening of Williamson come to no conclusion, he grabs at bribing him as a last resort which of course fails since he cannot afford it.

The second scene represents Moss and Aaronow discussing the unfairness of Mitch and Murray towards them after all their honest services for the company. In the following Moss suggests that they should break into the office, steal the leads and sell them to Jerry Graff who directs a rival company. Jon Tuttle explains that: Coveting the power and income of Mitch and Murray, who reap the profits of others' labor (and admiring the savvy of Jerry Graff, who went into business for himself), Moss casts himself in the role of executive and doles out the dirty work of breaking into the office to whoever is desperate enough to be his minion.

It proves that the salesmen not only swindle the gullible clients, but also they cheat on each other whenever they get a chance. Moss cunningly tries to persuade Aaronow to commit the break-in and when he does not give up to his temptation, Moss threatens that Aaronow would be an accomplice, willy-nilly, since he listened to the plot.

In the last scene Roma delivers a confusing monolog to a total stranger, named Lingk, sitting in the next

booth, in order to inveigle him into buying worthless land. Roma philosophizes about the freedom of the individual and creates the illusion that the individual must be a risk-taker. Then, he subtly connects the freedom of the individual, the capability of taking risks and security to buying land. In fact, the scene ending with Roma's uttering: "What is this? This is a piece of land. Listen to what I'm going to tell you now" (*Glengarry*, p. 29), clearly anticipates that Lingk will be duped into buying the worthless property. The verbal dexterity of Richard Roma is quite evident from the way he builds on Emersonian conviction in the power of the individual to achieve his goal which is selling worthless land. According to Brucher(2000):

The spiel is intended to coax and disorient Lingk, to never give him an easy place to intervene or redirect the conversation. It is also redolent of Emerson and the vocabulary of independence and promise . . . Roma's answering call to confidence and action seems to turn "Self-Reliance" against Lingk. "I trust myself", Roma boasts, clearly enjoining Lingk to trust him as a means for trusting himself. (p. 218)

Therefore, Roma subtly distorts the meaning of the individual that Emerson has in mind and equates taking risks with being independent. He pretends that he is totally indifferent to selling land, but implicitly points out that buying the land he offers is the first step to be independent. His statement, however, is inherently paradoxical since whereas he asks Lingk to believe in himself, Roma urges him to put his trust in him and let Roma decide for him.

The second act of the play shows the ransacked office the morning after the break-in. Baylen, a police detective, is present in the office to interrogate the staff. As Roma anxiously enters the office and asks about the stolen contracts, it becomes clear that he has closed the sale to Lingk in the previous act and is now worried about his documents. However, Williamson assures him that his contract has been filed and sent to downtown. Meanwhile, Levene enters the office jubilantly announcing that he has just closed a deal with the Nyborgs. Having been interrogated by the detective, Moss furiously humiliates Levene while Roma applauds his recent success. Then, Roma all of a sudden sees Lingk outside the office and immediately enlists Levene to improvise a show to distract Lingk from cancelling the contract. However, the improvisation fails because Williamson intervenes and assures Lingk that his check has been cashed. Therefore, Lingk escapes the trap and Roma furiously turns at Williamson and warns him that he

owes him a Cadillac. Supporting Roma, Levene inadvertently, through a lapse of tongue, reveals to Williamson that he is the one who ransacked the office. Moreover, the worse comes to the worst when Williamson viciously tells Levene that the deal with the Nyborgs is dead since they are nuts. As Levene leaves to be interrogated by the detective, Roma tells Williamson that he and Levene work together as a team and from that time on he keeps his commissions plus fifty percent of Levene's commissions. The play ends as Roma heads out to the restaurant to hook another gullible customer.

Mamet miraculously plays with words in *Glengarry Glen Ross* in order to create a language which is replete with business jargons that best serves his purpose to expose the brutality of an environment struck by corrupt business inclinations. The play indicates how business is elevated to the level of a sacred ritual under capitalism. When business transactions are all that matter, greed and avarice permeate the life of the salesmen and force them to be always closing through fabricating false stories and deceiving the purchasers of dreams in order to secure their top place on the board and win the Cadillac which is the prize to their survival. The salesmen in *Glengarry Glen Ross* put their faith in the American Dream and as they struggle to push each other away, through selling more pieces of worthless land, they sell themselves to the dream. Thus, in selling not only land, but also their souls, they become self-interested individuals who discard all moral scruples.

The way individuals behave under capitalism illustrates that, entangled in the highly competitive atmosphere which threatens their survival; they are left with no other choice except to privilege self-interest over the failure of others. These self-interested tendencies, according to King (2004), lead to "the fragmentation of modern communities, especially the urban worlds, and the sexism and racism that threatens a fragile social fabric" (p. 94). Thus, the rejection of moral scruples under the pretext that there is no bigger concern than the freedom of the individual not only results in the disruption of all communal bonds and moral behavior, but also ignites unquenched greed among social strata. In this response, King (2004) states that "Mamet the craftsman and philosopher, dares to name the 'crimes' of modern life, that actions have consequences and that while moral boundaries are easily transgressed, personal satisfaction remains evasive, and unpunished crimes lead to a wasteland, not a Utopia" (p. 94). Furthermore, it is very significant to note that although the system encourages the individuals to act independently, not all individuals enjoy the same

degree of freedom. Accordingly, King (2004) illustrates that “while the greedy proprietors of the corrupt real estate firm in *Glengarry Glen Ross* are free to accumulate wealth at the play’s end, protected from petty theft by the law that punishes desperate underlings for criminal behavior, they sit precariously on the top of a crumbling financial pyramid” (p. 94). This indicates that there are privileged individuals. To put it another way, some individuals seem to be more individual than the rest of society. It means that the capitalist system hypocritically announces that all individuals share the same degree of freedom and have the equal chance to get successful while in fact the holders of capital usually escape the law which is supposed to punish the law-breaker. Moreover, what exacerbates the situation is that ragged individualism destroys social morality and promotes a predatory culture in which morality is subordinate to the self-interestedness of each separate individual. Thus:

The failures of American society are most frequently attributed to images of capitalism run amok and the self-congratulatory language of support, which encourages situation ethics and relativistic morality. As long as there are no moral absolutes, no inviolate ten commandments of behavior, each character deludes himself or herself into believing that what is best for one individual is applicable to others. (King, p. 95)

Therefore, as it was explained, each individual defines morality the way that best serves his or her ends in the capitalist society. These ends are most frequently monetary interests which are promoted by capitalism that uproots all moral principles and replaces business ethics instead. Under such a system, in which there is not such a thing as fixed morality, each individual learns to adopt the kind of morality that is in accordance with his or her interests. As a result, it is not morality that checks the behavior of the individual, but greed and the dictates of business transactions that shape and define morality.

In *Glengarry Glen Ross* Mamet dramatizes the real-estate office and its desperate staff as a microcosm which truly stands for a universe peopled by individuals who suffer the predatory nature of the modern era and confront the emptiness of their existence. This predatory nature of life, caused by false competition, disrupts all moral codes and drives each individual to struggle unscrupulously for his or her survival. Therefore, enthralled by the corrupt business ethics, propaganda of the capitalist system which encourages unfettered competition, and of course the need to survive, the members of society are turned into amoral individuals who privilege their

private interests over all other considerations. As Roudane (2004) explains, “the myth of the American Dream clearly alters the salesmen in the play, in part because they subscribe to two principles inherent in the free enterprise system” (p. 335). To make it more clear, Roudane quotes Rosenfield who elucidates what these two principles are:

“Free Enterprise” and the “Free Market” are talismanic words for Americans. Traditionally, they are rationalized by two cardinal principles: that competition is the backbone of democratic capitalism, and that competition prospers best when business judgments are unfettered by government “interference.”(p. 335)

It is precisely because of their conviction in the fairness of unrestricted competition that the salesmen in *Glengarry Glen Ross* behave unscrupulously and justify it as free enterprise. However, despite of feeling a sense of power and freedom, bestowed on them by free enterprise, these characters are not immune from the destructive consequences of this unchecked freedom. Accordingly, although the salesmen of the play struggle hard to achieve success through whatever possible way, they are blind to the fact that self-interest and amoral practice finally bring about their own failure.

The language of *Glengarry Glen Ross* aids the playwright to expose the anxiety and obsession of the salesmen who are in pursuit of free competition as one of the pivots of the American Dream. In fact, Mamet has been often referred to as a playwright who writes realistically. However, the language of *Glengarry Glen Ross* is not strictly realistic more than it is poetic and has been polished to serve theatrical purposes. Hence, to refer to Roudane (2004), “*Glengarry Glen Ross*(1996) may appear flawed with its overused expletives, but when audiences understand Mamet’s aesthetic—that the language functions as a kind of street poetry, a deliberately embellished dialogue—then the acerbity of the language takes on *non-realistic* qualities” (p. 335). This language is employed to indicate the intense frustration of the salesmen who strive to survive in the harshly competitive world of capitalism. These salesmen, for instance, do not exactly imitate the way salesmen speak in the real world; instead, Mamet exaggerates the language and puts obscene words in the mouth of the characters in order to expose their anxiety and desperation, the perversity of the business world and how it corrupts human morality. It is also significant to add that the way each character uses the language in the play, to some extent, gives us vital information about his personality.

As we see in the play, Richard Roma is ahead of the real-estate salesmen in the sales contest. He is the most cunning character in the play and also the youngest of the salesmen. Roma's shrewdness and the dazzling way he talks set him apart from his colleagues. In fact, whereas other salesmen all the time boast of their past successes and being at the verge of failure, their survival only relies on future sales, Roma is at the prime of his career and his name is on the top of the board. Moreover, whereas Moss and Levene easily lose their control and nervously try to close a sale, Roma is quite self-confident and patiently cajoles the prospect customers into buying worthless tracts of land. For instance, unlike Moss who becomes frenetic when Levene passionately talks about his recent success, Roma is quite calm and even congratulates Levene since he does not consider him a serious rival. Roma even admits, although insincerely, that he is indebted to Levene and admires his sales skills after Williamson spoils the improvisation which they make up to discourage James Lingk from renege the contract. In addition, Roma humiliates Williamson because he does not know his job, while he appreciates Levene as a salesman. However, the following lines discloses the real intention of Roma and that he has been actually mesmerizing Levene to take advantage of him. Therefore, as the play comes near the conclusion, we realize that Roma's conviction in unfettered individualism inclines him to abuse both clients and colleagues alike in order to get successful.

Roma's cunning nature is evident from his first appearance in the end of act one when he subtly employs his selling tactics to force Lingk into buying the worthless property he offers. Consequently, had not Lingk's wife insisted on cancelling the deal, he would not have returned to the office to renege the contract and Roma would have wined the game. On the other hand, Roma quickly realizes that the deal he closed is at stake as he sees Lingk entering the office and immediately signs up Levene for an improvisation to make Lingk not cancel the contract and postpone it till the cancellation time, which is three business day, is over. Roma pretends that Levene works with the American Express and he is in a hurry to take him to the airport. He even pretends that he concerns Lingk's fears more than anything else and his friendship with him is something beyond business transactions when he utters:

*Forget the deal, Jimmy. Forget the deal . . . you know me. The deal's dead. Am I talking about the deal? That's over. Please. Let's talk about you. Come on. Come on. Come on, Jim. I want to tell you something. Your life is your own. You have a contract with your wife. You have*

*certain things you do jointly, you have a bond there . . . and there are other things. Those things are yours. You needn't feel ashamed, you needn't feel that you're being untrue . . . or that she would abandon you if she knew, this is your life. Yes. Now I want to talk to you because you're obviously upset and that concerns me. Now let's go. Right Now. (Glengarry Glen, Ross, 1996, p. 56-7)*

By this Roma tries to persuade Lingk that for him business is subordinate to friendship and that he is concerned to solve the problems Lingk has. In fact, as Roudane (2004) represents, "human compassion, argues Roma, overrules this particular business transaction. Of course, the audience recognizes by this point that *only* business considerations pervade Roma's entire argument. He reduces Lingk's marriage to business venture, a mere legal agreement" (p. 336). Therefore, from Roma's point of view, all human relationships, including friendship and family life, are contracts which are merely made with the purpose to invest one with profit. His belief in self-interestedness is implicitly expressed in his words when he urges Lingk to neglect the responsibilities he has as a member of the family. However, as he almost accomplishes to fool Lingk, Williamson interferes and inadvertently assures Lingk that his check has been cashed which makes him realize that Roma has lied to him and he escapes the trap he is about to fall in.

As Roma's chance with Lingk is over, he focuses on Levene as a new lead and in his absence asks Williamson fifty percent of Levene's commissions as his share when he says: "I GET HIS ACTION. My stuff is *mine*, whatever *he* gets, I'm taking half" (Glengarry Glen Ross, 1996, p.66). This indicates that Roma is more ruthless than other salesmen and maybe that is why he is more successful and is on the top of the board. He is not content with his share and he never misses the chance to snatch away what his colleagues earn. However, these salesmen fit each other, by and large, since they are committed to business ethics to the extent that they are free to move in whatever direction they desire and they easily legitimize the transgression of all moral codes. Thus, in words of Roudane (2004), "Roma feels ethically justified and therefore continues to lie and rationalize any word or deed under the guise of healthy competition, of earning his rightful place within the American Dream" (p. 336). In this sense Roma is very reminiscent of a character named Teach in Mamet's another play, *American Buffalo*, who justifies:

We're talking about money for chrissake, huh? We're talking about cards. Friendship is friendship, and a wonderful thing, and I am all for it. I have never said different, and you know me on this point. Okay. But let's just keep it *separate* huh, let's keep the two apart, and maybe we can deal with each other like some human beings. (*Glengarry*, 1996, p. 15)

Thus, for Teach it is only negotiating in business terms that makes one human. He also equates free enterprise with the freedom of the individual "To Embark on Any Fucking Course that he sees fit" (*Glengarry*, 1996, p.73). In fact, Roma also shows his dedication to what Teach conceives to be the true meaning of individualism when he advises Lingk:

When you *die* you're going to regret the things you don't do. You think you're *queer* . . . ? I'm going to tell you something: we're *all* queer. You think that you're a *thief*? So *what*? You get befuddled by a middle-class morality . . . ? Get *shut* of it. Shut it out. You cheated on your wife . . . ? You *did* it, *live* with it. You fuck little girls, so *be* it. There's an absolute morality? May *be*. And *then* what? If you *think* there is, then *be* that thing. Bad people go to hell? I don't *think* so. If you think that, act that way. A hell exists on earth? Yes. I won't live in it. That's me. (*Glengarry Glen Ross*, 1996,p.27)

As a result, Roma justifies that there's no scruples and people must not be ashamed of doing things that are considered to be immoral. In the following, he admits that "I do those things that seems correct to me *today*. I trust myself. And if security concerns me, I do that which *today* I think will make me *secure*" (1996, p. 28). Therefore, Roma adheres to the idea that there is no absolute morality and everyone is free to define morality based on his or her needs. Likewise, the other salesmen in *Glengarry Glen Ross* passionately stay loyal to Teach's conviction that there is a difference between friendship and business and if they are to get successful they should not mix up morality with business ethics.

### **Althusserian Ideology**

An ideology is a belief system and in the nowadays world we live, more than any other time, in the realm of infinite ideologies which most of them tend to drive us to think and see the world in a special way. Each ideology is, in fact, the product of a historio-cultural background which nourishes it. Moreover, all assumptions through which we see and understand the world are ideologies. Therefore, it is natural that people from different historical, cultural, geographical

and theological backgrounds hold very diverse ideologies. However, one must bear it in mind that there is a huge difference between personal ideologies which simply shape one's conception of the world, yet at the same time, do not impose themselves on others as the ideal way of thinking, and those repressive ideologies which pursue some exploitive ends, program the individuals to behave in a certain way and consequently dramatically influence the mass culture. It is actually the mechanics and the function of the later set of ideologies which Althusser is interested in and are compatible with the object of the present study. To be more specific, it is the dominant class that produces the repressive ideologies as a means of power to assist them in controlling the society and preserving their dominance. For this purpose, and if they are to be influential, ideologies disguise themselves as natural ways of seeing the world rather than exposing their true nature as the artifact of those who invent them to fortify their dominance.

When ideologies represent themselves as natural ways of seeing the world, they prevent us from comprehending the repressive situation we are in and the fact that we are exploited in order to benefit the dominant class. Althusser asserts that ideologies create an imaginary relationship to reality. By this, he means that ideologies misrepresent reality, but they do so in such a subtle way that people can not see the condition of their real existence. The imaginary relationship of reality creates an illusion that our place and relationships within a repressive system are completely logical. Therefore, for instance, in words of Ferretter (2006), "if I am in business" it seems natural to "think of my life as a kind of competition, in which I need to be more shrewd, intelligent and hardworking than all the others" (p. 77-8). In fact, ideologies, through misrepresenting the reality of our existence, work as a dam against the realization of the truth that may eventually lead us to revolt against our disastrous circumstance.

There are numerous and less suspected ways through which illusions relate themselves to reality. The American Dream, for instance, as an ideology convinces its subscribers that hard work and persistence are the clues to success and blinds them to the fact that their failure is a result of the inequitable circumstance under capitalism rather than their shiftlessness. The American Dream ascribes the slightest success to the promise of the dream while accuses one's failure as a natural consequence of laziness. In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the imaginary comprehension of their situation distracts the salesman to conceive the reality that it is not actually

Williamson who is against them, but those absent tycoons (Mitch and Murray) behind the scene who announce the sales contest and hire Williamson to exploit them. Furthermore, each salesman fantasizes himself to be the would-be winner of the Cadillac, but in reality, as Britzke (2007) states, “the expensive foreign luxury car represent[s] things and places out of reach and beyond the realm of the salesmen” (p. 120). Therefore, these salesmen, who aspire to win and fear to fail at the same time, hardly conceive the flaw of the highly competitive system that bestows success on one only at the expense of the failure of others.

According to Althusser there is a more complex undercurrent at work that does not allow the individuals' imaginary relationship to reality vanish and; therefore, preserves the reproduction of production relations. By the reproduction of production relations Althusser means all those relationships that construct the class society and divide the individuals into either the exploiter or the exploited. Althusser terms this phenomenon the Ideological State Apparatus according to which the imposed ideologies mask themselves as rational ways of thinking and; consequently, make the individuals satisfied to be exploited by the upper class. Althusser explains that there are two sets of apparatuses which function together to preserve the order of the state. These apparatuses consist of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) which include literature, the media, the educational system, religion and the family; and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) which include the police, the army and the courts. With reference to *Glengarry Glen Ross*, for instance, we can observe how the real-estate office, which promotes business ethics and competitive culture, stands for an ISA and references to detective Baylen and Attorney Gen represent the ubiquitous present of the RSA. Furthermore, the impotency of the salesman to overpass the ideologies they are dictated by the real-state office is quite evident in Moss and Aaronow's fear to break the rules when they both acknowledge that they are “just *speaking* about it. As an *idea*.” However, as we see Levene ends up in jail (symbolic RSA) as soon as he puts this idea into practice and dares to transgress the rules and ransack the office (symbolic ISA).

Consumerism is one of the noteworthy ideologies within the capitalist system which is promoted by different ISAs including the media, to name the most influential one. In fact, it is very crucial to note that capitalism is founded on consumerism and the American Dream is closely related to the ideology that advocates the consumption of goods as a sign of

social prestige. Thus, if the capitalist is to guarantee the permanence of the sales market, there is no better solution than to internalize the consumption ideology by the means of different ISAs. Advertising is, for instance, one of the means through which the capitalist system promotes consumerism ideology. This ideology in turn encourages the emulative culture which inculcates that one is respected better if one owns what the rest of society do not possess. Consequently, one must incessantly buy the newest products introduced into the market in order not to remain behind the rest of society. However, this buying process never comes to an end since in a society in which all members keep buying to emulate with each other no one looks more prestigious.

The consumerist culture drives the individuals to work more to earn more money. However, on the other hand, the individuals are encouraged to spend what they have earned on goods. Moreover, the emulative culture even forces the individuals to purchase goods, which they cannot afford at the moment, on credit. Thus, as Clarke(2010) concludes, “the outcome has been the steady rise in borrowing, both secured and unsecured, fuelled in recent years by a more aggressively competitive credit industry eager to corner yet more of the money you have not yet earned” (p. 60). Consequently, being entangled into constant debt, the individuals have to keep working even harder to pay back the money they have borrowed. Furthermore, the purchased goods either become old-fashioned or break down before long.

## CONCLUSION

The American Dream is an ideology among the infinite ideologies that dominate American everyday life. This ideology is an example of a well-constructed ideology since it has survived since the foundation of America and has not withered with the passage of time. It aims at the weak point of the human nature that is a dream of better life. Through highlighting the concept of the American Dream in Mamet's play, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, this article was an attempt to expose the ways ideologies connect themselves to our real existence and subvert reality in less suspected ways. These ideologies tend to offer themselves as reality and despite the fact that one can not escape the influence of ideologies entirely, it is on us to learn that there exists nothing as absolute to cling to and that every ideology is susceptible to doubt. Moreover, total subordination to the ideologies that impose themselves on us kills the spirit of creativity, hinders logical thinking and thereby leads to prejudice.

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## Aggression or Regression: A Comparative Study of Heroines in *The Mill on the Floss* and *Pride and Prejudice*

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### ABSTRACT

The basic formula in the English Victorian novel seems to be an individual standing against the world (of the Victorian society). George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1833) are two excellent examples of intellectual heroines standing against social expectations. This paper, as a comparative study, shows that in the former written by a romantic and modern novelist, the heroine drowns which signifies her self-renunciation and submission to the expectations of the society as well as her revenge of a body being shaped by Victorian ideologies. In the latter written by a conservative and realist writer, the heroine begins a process of education and transformation just to resolve her conflict in marriage. The paper concludes that in such novels the intellectual woman has to either submit to survive, or is wiped out which implies both the heroine's self-destruction of a Victorian body (aggression) or her drowning in the waters of ideology (regression).

Keywords: Maggie Tulliver, Elizabeth Bennet, ideology, Victorian society, renunciation

### INTRODUCTION

Not unrelated to the well-known Victorian ideology of the rational man's superiority over woman's emotional inferiority, was the conflict Victorian female characters of considerable mental capacity faced: those with a man's mind and a woman's might; a conflict definitely felt by such female novelists as Jane Austen (1775-1817) and George Eliot (1819-1880). Austen was self-divided: on the one hand she felt fascinated with feeling and imagination, and on the other she could not accept it as feminine. The conservative Jane Austen then decided to resolve the conflict (of her characters) and her own anxiety of the "desire for assertion in the world and retreat into the security of the home—speech and silence, independence and dependency" (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p. 162). Believing in the Hegelian view that history was progressive and towards betterment, Austen could find no better resolution than marriage in her realist novels where her female characters change just to become fit for their expected Victorian gender roles.

Accordingly, the Austen heroine needs morality which, in Correa's words, "consists in her [the heroine's] misfortunes and vicissitudes [...] brought

about as a consequence of social convention" (2000, p. 66). Anderson believes that, in Austen, "happiness or suffering depends on moral action, not accident" (1975, p. 372), and Tomlinson states that "however spirited and independent by nature the heroines of many nineteenth-century novels may be, their position in life forces them into a kind of idleness and subject" (1978, p. 115). From these statements it is well understood that Austen educates her heroines into social morality, experience and decorum so that they can meet the male society's demands and expectations. Remaining silent and observant of a male community where usually a male character takes the trouble of educating the heroine, seems "necessary for [...] submission" which "reinforces women's subordinate position in patriarchal culture" (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p. 154).

Despite the fact that Austen was a critique of her society—she had to publish her works anonymously—and a feminist writer, the criticism does not seem strong in her, and the feminism of the novels not explicit. Criticism in Austen's successor is a different story. Mary Ann (or Marian) Cross who published under the name of George Eliot, was a romantic novelist who would defend individualism in her novels. Comparing her with the realist Austen, Eliot

can be named a modern novelist and a more serious critique of the society. George Eliot's words in *Felix Holt* are noteworthy: "no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life" (as cited in Correa, 2000, p. 280). This implies that Eliot was well aware of the social world of Victorian expectations of gender roles, sexual codes and familial ties supporting the main ideologies that would leave the heroine with no chance, whatsoever, to remain an individual or survive at all. A more exact definition for society seems necessary before approaching the main stream of the discussion.

Ingham provides us with the following definitions: "as (rightfully) groups of patriarchal families" (1996, p. 19); a "competing and conflicting linguistic coding" (ibid.); "a necessary struggle for existence" (1996, p. 12) and finally "a machine and human beings as its parts" (ibid.). Correa's definition is similar: "the networks of gossiping neighbors" (2000, p. 279) and a network can be a stifling circle. From the society's perspective, marriage is fortune; a "complex engagement between the marrying couple and society—that is, it means not only "feelings" but "property" as well. In marrying, the individual marries society as well as his mate, and "property" provides the necessary articles of this other marriage" (Ghent, 1961, p. 102). This represents the ideological function of marriage in the Victorian novel however, marriage finds totally different forms in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). This study is an attempt to show how the basic nineteenth-century-novel formula of individual versus society works in the mentioned novels, and conclude that the heroine has to either submit to the societal expectations (if she wants to survive) or die. Maggie drowns, and Elizabeth marries Darcy—after a conventional power play—to resolve her conflict. Maggie's drowning is, of course, open to different layers of meaning and interpretation, for it is a more complex and ambiguous ending than Elizabeth's resolution in sexual appetite and a seemingly happy and prosperous marriage.

## DISCUSSION

*The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is known as George Eliot's most autobiographical novel. The novel is a sociological study of an ideological conflict between the heroine's feelings and the society's expectations. In the beginning part of the novel, the intellectual Maggie is introduced as the mistaken child of nature which is no surprise for the reader who sees the resistant, strong-willed Maggie of magnificent personality in a sordid society. Maggie possesses the

mind of a man and the might of a woman which distinguishes her from other characters and many of her relatives. It does not seem difficult for the reader to guess a tragic outcome for the heroine in such a biased and narrow-minded community as St Ogg. St Ogg, other than being biased and narrow-minded, is a materialistic society where Maggie the embodiment of "knowledge, imagination, feeling and morality" (Eagleton, 2005, p. 164) meets her tragic destiny. Maggie represents the "onward tendency of human things" (New, 1985, p. 195), and not being able to perform her angel-in-the-house role that is expected of her, becomes alienated from the human community. It is the society that drives her to the depths of water where she can experience silence.

Maggie desires to read books and, therefore, her love for Philip is intellectual. However, Maggie, for whom love is not different from martyrdom, turns Philip's offer down in an act of self-renunciation. Maggie's desires are either renounced by herself or repressed by the society:

he [Philip] was raising his hat to her [Maggie]; while his father, catching the movement by a side-glance, looked sharply around at them both. Maggie hurried away from the window and carried her work up-stairs; for Mr. Wakem sometimes came in and inspected the books, and Maggie felt that the meeting with Philip would be robbed of all pleasure in the presence of the two fathers. (*MF*, p. 241)

Maggie's conflict of cultivating a different self—either more aggressive to oppose male dominancy, or regressive to escape the dominance of patriarchal Victorian ideologies of the time—is shown in her dual attitude towards her head. Maggie "cuts off her luxuriant dark hair as a child, hoping that her cleverness will shine more clearly" (Dreidre, 1994, p. 604). This implies that she thinks about cultivating an aggressive self, and wishes to challenge the discursively-made duality of male intellectualism and female sensibility. The act of cutting her hair can also signify her frustration with her femininity and intelligence, or her subconscious cultivation of a regressive self that thinks about survival within the confines of a biased community. Accordingly, in the attic, where she keeps a fetish wooden doll, Maggie beats her doll against the wall to punish its head which shows how much she is frustrated with her own head/intelligence. Moreover, Maggie's hatred of being treated as an object—a wooden doll—and being identified with her wooden doll, do not seem difficult to be found in the novel where Maggie dislikes rule and regulation.

The struggle for self-discovery, and the desire for self-expression find the form of self-restraint in Maggie. Although she loves Stephen who is also a lover of freedom and a hater of artificial convention, she prefers to renounce her desire, and retain her fidelity to the male manifestation of the society—her father and the seemingly ever-present beloved brother Tom who, by treating her as an object, tries to control her. The familial tie in the form of Maggie's love for Tom, and Tom's affection for Maggie, win over her sexual attraction to Stephen the result of which is self-sacrifice. By refusing Stephen, Maggie "had made up her mind to suffer" (*MF*, p. 416), for she knows that Tom has power and can do something in the world. Maggie's confrontation with the paralyzed Philip Wakem, is a kind of self-confrontation and self-consciousness perhaps to create a different self; either more aggressive or regressive. Maggie sympathizes with Philip which is against Tom's wishes and creates a sense of guilt in her, and shows passionate feelings towards Stephen Guest. Both the guilt she feels inside and the haunting image of Tom make Maggie ignore the intellectual sympathy existing between her and Philip. Maggie feels the lack of physical passion between the two which she feels she can experience with Stephen. However, she renounces the passion and decides to reach self-realization and experience joy the climax of which comes in drowning. To put it more clearly, Maggie who prefers passion and spirituality to obligation and materialistic ethics, changes the passionate feeling to a battle of sexes and refuses to elope with Stephen implying both the desire to control a male figure and the entangling power of family tie as a net from which it is impossible to release herself.

In the power play, though Stephen and Lucy marry at last, Maggie even manages to put damage to Stephen's and Lucy's engagement. Maggie kills what she likes; she takes revenge for losing what she likes, and she has to forget both Philip and Stephen as long as she is caught within the nets of social milieu and family. Bissell defines Maggie's action that becomes "a symbolic denial of the validity of utilitarian ethics. If she had obeyed her natural desires and had married Stephen, she would not, it is true, have brought the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people" (1968, p. 165). Maggie is a unique character, for unable to break with the past, she transcends her community with her romantic view and faith in the power of renunciation.

Frustrated with her quest for a lost joy, Maggie seems helpless with the limitations the society imposes on her. Maggie cannot be changed to an unromantic figure, or a commodity, or a wooden doll. Much

reminiscent of Portia in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* who cannot show a man's mind and a woman's might, Maggie gathers her power by deciding to make a decision, to suffer, and to end herself (by drowning).

### Maggie's Drowning

Tom, who is really lesser than Maggie in intellect, feels that his masculinity gives him authority, superiority and dominance over Maggie which is why he frequently oppresses her. Maggie's brother is associated with the mill crushing Maggie (associated with water); he consoles her, criticizes her and desires to make her an apt figure for the society. Maggie then can be looked at as the water that erupts, flows and finally breaks Tom the mill. The brother and sister drown while holding each other:

The boat reappeared—but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted [...] The tomb bore the names of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, and below the names it was written—"In their death they were not divided."  
(*MF*, pp. 422-423)

It is very likely that from the very beginning Eliot had Maggie's drowning in mind. The event is, undoubtedly, an excellent manifestation of who Maggie is. Ironically enough Maggie who comes to Tom's rescue, causes her brother's death. This can signify Maggie's unconscious revenge of the discourse of familial ties as well as the superiority of the male members of the family. Eagleton believes that "the judgment of society is both endorsed and rejected, just as Tom is both embraced and wiped out" (2005, p. 177). Maggie's drowning can also be interpreted as her attempted suicide or Freudian death-wish when she decides to wipe herself out in the depths of the sea where she can be well out of reach of the Victorian ideologies of men's superiority and female submission. She, first, destroys Tom that represents such Victorian ideologies of male superiority and intellectuality versus female inferiority and emotionality, and then destroys her body—shaped by the dominant discourses of her time—to take revenge of a society that seeks the silence of its female figures.

The Freudian death-drive in Maggie is obvious in her words: "I am in love with moistness, and envy the white ducks that are dipping their heads into the water here among the withes, unmindful of the awkward appearance they make in the drier world above" (*MF*, p. 8). The first-person narrator definitely remembers a girl in love with moistness, watching the river: "A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide,

rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace” (*MF*, p. 7). Gilbert and Gubar believe that Eliot well understood that “such female fascination with decline is a means of obtaining power” (2000, p. 485). Maggie’s fascination with water and drowning empowers her to refuse to be contained and commodified by St Ogg. Maggie is intellectual enough to realize that “the only expression for an intelligent female self is renunciation of that self” (Dreidre, 1994, p. 607).

Maggie finds her liberation in drowning where she can defy ideology and take revenge by wiping out a body she feels is becoming filled or shaped with Victorian ideologies or social expectations of renunciation. According to Dreidre ideology is “a symptom of diseased culture and society” (1994, p. 598). Thus it does not seem wrong if water with its uncontrollable shaping force is taken as a signifier for ideology. A less ideological look at water would see it as “the sacrament which symbolically asserts man’s dependence on nature; the flood serves to remind man of this” (as cited in Levine, 1994, p. 500). Water is both beginning and end; it is both ideology and destroyer of ideology, for it is under water that Maggie remains untouched by ideology and history.

Maggie who appears as a Medusa-like figure submerged in the waters of feeling takes her sweet revenge by destroying a passionate girl being shaped by an impassionate society. This ending has been a major critical concern. For example, Stevenson (1966) refers to B. J. Paris’s “Towards a Reevaluation of G. Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1956) where the writer rejects ideological inconsistency of the last two books. Bissell believes that Maggie’s resolution “can bring no approval from the community and only a troubled peace to her own conscience” (1968, p. 165). Mary Jacobus believes that *The Mill on the Floss*’s ending implies “subversion of dominant discourse, a reaching beyond the analytic and realistic modes to ‘metaphors of unbounded desire’” (as cited in Dreidre, 1994, p. 605). The ambiguous drowning is, definitely, open to different layers of meaning: an expression of the heroine’s strength and an expression of the society’s that will not let the heroine express her intelligence.

### Resolution in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*

Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is a comic novel of social manners. As Anderson believes that “the luminosity of [the novel] resides in its central love” (1975, p. 368), central to the novel is the relationship between Elizabeth the heroine and Darcy. The characters of the novel are under the gaze of an

all-knowing, perceptive, ironic narrator, and live in a world that is both limited and exerts limitation. It seems easier to resist intrusions by the narrator in *The Mill on the Floss* rather than the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* who imposes things on the reader in the name of fixed truths. The world of the novel is also “rational and social” where “minds operate in certain social circumstances” (Ghent, 1961, p. 100).

The world of *Pride and Prejudice* is the world of an important conflict, i. e., the conflict between private and public; individual and society and, the last but not the least, love and property. The novel as a realist one is controlled by a central voice, and the language is so recycled that a resolution does not seem out of reach. The hierarchy of discourses is kept by the central voice while a dominant ideology is imposed upon the reader. This needs further clarification.

Mr. Bennet believes Elizabeth has “something more of quickness than her sisters” (*PP*, p. 5). Elizabeth is as sharp, bright, witty, and imaginative as Maggie. Elizabeth is attractive and outspoken; a complicated character who is a rebel against the society and its biased expectations. The same as Maggie, she declines her lover Darcy identified with society, patriarchy, aristocracy, and money. Elizabeth stays a rebel, an individual respecting her own feeling more than respecting what the society expects her to do—to marry a rich gentleman. According to Anderson, “the possibility of Elizabeth rejecting Darcy’s proposal is established by the end of the first volume” (1975, p. 368). Ideologically speaking, it is obvious that Elizabeth cannot stand against the society, and has to either submit or perish. It is interesting that the heroine enters the process of beginning to like and then love a rich man. As a realist novel, the novel creates room for the reconciliation of money and love. Darcy is introduced as an aristocrat who expects Elizabeth to love and expect him. Mrs. Bennet tells her daughter

‘I can think of nothing else! Ten thousand a year, and very likely more!

’Tis as good as a Lord! And a special license. You must and shall be married by a special license. But my dearest love, tell me what dish

Mr. Darcy is particularly fond of, that I may have it tomorrow. (*PP*, p. 316)

The intellectual Elizabeth finds herself in a battle with the aristocrat Darcy and a mother ideologically shaped. The Victorian society expects Elizabeth to be in want of a man who is rich. The second sentence of the novel is noteworthy:

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the

minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. (*PP*, p. 3)

This implies that a young man is seen and evaluated as not different from property which the society takes as a fixed piece of truth. To this ideology, the ideology of family tie—the Bennets, the Gardiners, Elizabeth and Darcy, Jane and Bingley, Lady Catherine and Collins—must also be added the result of which is the increasing interest and awareness (in each other). The process of Elizabeth's change begins.

Elizabeth must be shaped, educated, contained and transformed. Darcy, though less witty than Elizabeth as Tom was to Maggie, is the right person to educate her with the ways of the world. Elizabeth is not as heroic and tragic a character as Maggie was, and the turn in the novel shows a female figure in a power play unable to resist the shaping forces that make her realize that she does love, indeed, Darcy. Elizabeth, first a hater of Darcy, finds herself in love with him as a desirable figure which shows how powerful property and position are. As a hater of Darcy, Elizabeth knows herself to be superior, and remains proud and prejudiced. However, her meeting of the societal expectations begins the process of her maturation and development as a transformed lady who knows that as an individual and without a rich man, the chance of survival—experiencing happiness—would be too slim. The following lines that show Elizabeth's humiliation and submission, and how different Maggie's and Elizabeth's self-realization is, are insightful:

She grew absolutely ashamed of herself.—Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd. 'How despicably have I acted!' She cried.—'I, who have prided myself on my discernment!—I, who have valued myself on my abilities!

Who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blameable distrust.—How humiliating is this discovery!—Yet, how just a humiliation!—Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly.—pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. (*PP*, p. 177).

Submission appears in the ideological form of accepting Victorian female ignorance which paves

the way for the final transformation that is needed to make Elizabeth a suitable wife for Darcy. The society expects her to marry the well-to-do Darcy and offer a resolution to the romantic story of the unromantic conflict of individual and society. The complexity of marriage and inner conflicts is made simple by a drastic change that occurs within the characters that see themselves ignorant of many things. The happy resolution of marriage is not far away.

No doubt Elizabeth should be the creation of the conservative, realist Jane Austen. Her marriage resolves everything and puts everything in the proper place, while in Eliot the heroine continues the battle to either express herself or take revenge where there is no chance of expression. Maggie's quest of self-knowledge and realization, then, is totally different from Elizabeth's that ends in sexual appetite and, ironically enough, the self-realization of her ignorance and being far behind Darcy her only chance of survival. Again ironically, Darcy stops/holds Elizabeth while Maggie refuses to become silenced by marrying either Philip or Stephen. Neither Elizabeth nor Maggie can remain free from societal expectations, nor oppose them, therefore the former grows in becoming a social member, and gives up to the social milieu to guarantee economic survival, and the latter decides to grow in autonomy. Their destinies, though, are not different: the heroine as a rebellious individual does not exist anymore.

## CONCLUSION

Women have always felt the burden of their intellect upon their weak shoulders in patriarchal societies that welcome regressive, silent and marginal members. The Victorian novel shows, just too well, how the society as a complex mechanism puts everything in the proper place. The probable end for any ideological conflict is absolutely death/silence. Perhaps the alert reader is reminded of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) where Jude and Sue decide to seek refuge in the societal expectations which empty Sue of her vitality and kill Jude for his aggression and transgressions of Victorian discourses which shows that every individual/subject is an individual against the world. George Eliot's genius lies in the magnificent end she decided on for her novel:

Great God! There were floating masses in it, that might dash against her boat as she passed, and cause her to perish too soon. What were those masses?

For the first time Maggie's heart began to beat in an agony of dread. She sat helpless—dimly conscious that she was being floated along—more intensely conscious of the anticipated clash. However, the horror was transient: it

passed away before the on-coming warehouses of St Ogg's: she had passed the mouth of the Ripple, then: *now*, she must use all her skill and power to manage the boat and get it if possible out of the current. She could see now that the bridge was broken down: she could see the masts of a standard vessel far out over the watery field. But no boats were to be seen moving on the river—such as had been laid hands on were employed in the flooded streets.

With new resolution, Maggie seized her oar, and stood up again to paddle; but the now ebbing tide added to the swiftness of the river, and she was carried along beyond the bridge. (*MF*, p. 420)

The two heroines at last belong. What liberates Elizabeth is her realization that female submission is necessary for female survival. Maggie is liberated by taking revenge; Eliot had always wanted to take revenge of conventions, and like her character, Eliot wanted “not to reject the past and its beliefs [...] but to derive her binding authority from them” (New, 1985, p. 227). The deterministic overtones in Eliot's and Austen's novels reveal the fact that the chance of heroines standing against societal pressures seems too slim. Maggie's high level of consciousness determines a course different from Elizabeth's. This shows that Maggie's bond and close relationship with the male figures of the novel is not deep but sentimental, full of tension, temporary, and for existence within the confines of an assertive, materialistic, cramping community that determines the fate of this existence. The exploration of such relationships confirms the fact that Maggie and Elizabeth as intellectual heroines find themselves in desperate need of heightening their awareness and adopt either a regressive stance and destroy the cultivated self-consciousness, or adopt an aggressive one just to oppose public-consciousness.

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