



**İSTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY**  
**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MEDIA, CULTURE AND LITERATURE**

**Year 3 Issue 1 - June 2017**

# ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

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**Language**

English

**Publication Period**

Published twice a year  
June and December

ISSN: 2149-5475

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**Printed by**

**Baskı:** Armoninuans Matbaa

**Adres:** Yukarıduzulu, Bostancı  
Yolu Cad. Keyap Çarşısı B-1 Blk. N. 24,  
Ümraniye/İstanbul

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## **From The Editor**

*The International Journal of Media, Culture and Literature, published biannually by the School of Foreign Languages at Istanbul Aydın University, Istanbul, Turkey, is an international scholarly journal in English devoted in its entirety to media, culture and literature.*

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*As a biannual academic journal, IJMCL publishes articles on English language and linguistics, on English and American literature and culture from the Middle Ages to the present, on the new English literatures, as well as on general and comparative literary studies, including aspects of cultural and literary theory. IJMCL also aims to create a critical, discursive space for the promotion and exploration of media, culture and their relations with literature.*

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*The Journal is supported by an interdisciplinary editorial board from Turkey, Europe and Russia under the direction of Editor Dr. Muhammed Nacar. It is published biannually in hard copy as well as a downloadable e-format designed to be compatible with e-readers, PDF and smart-phone settings. This is designed to encourage full-range accessibility and bears a logical sympathy to the range of writings under discussion, many of which feature or are driven by online technologies.*

***Necmiye Karataş, Ph.D.***



# ***An Evaluation of The Role of Using Facebook On Language Learning Among EFL University Students***

***Mohammed Salih Ahmed AL-JAF<sup>1</sup>***

## **Abstract**

Nowadays, social networking sites are becoming popular throughout the world and have been quite popular among various age group users particularly the young users but small number of researches have been done, especially in Iraq, on how much these websites can contribute to language learning and teaching though they seem to offer plenty of opportunities. This study provides insight into EFL students' opinions and attitudes of participating in activities through Facebook for language learning. Therefore, the study aims at examining students' views about the online learning atmosphere after having an eight-week course using Facebook, and to find the role of Facebook in language learning. In addition, the study discusses the overall effects and possible uses for Facebook in the field of second language (L2) learning and teaching. Forty-six students at the English Department, School of Languages from University of Garmian in the academic year (2015-2016) participated as the sample in this study. They were third year University students in northern Iraq, who voluntarily joined a closed Facebook group. This study used a one-group pretest-posttest design to examine its hypotheses. A questionnaire form using a 5-point Likert scale was used for both tests with research tasks based on any tasks and lessons to improve English language skills. The results indicated that there is a significant difference between participants' attitudes before and after the course and it showed positive attitudes toward most activities for language learning following the completion of the study compared to prior opinions. In the pre-test, the majority of participants considered Facebook to be generally useful because through this network, they can communicate and share knowledge. After the online course, most students indicated that, Facebook has high possibilities for being used as

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an effective formal educational tool. Furthermore, the posttest revealed that students' positive attitudes toward the usefulness of social networks increased under the influence of research tasks and activities. Finally, this study confirmed that every participant considered Facebook to be highly effective and potential educational tool, especially for improving language knowledge and performance in various online activities.

**Keywords:** *Social Networking, Social Media, Facebook, Facebook Group, Computer Assisted Language Learning*

## **Özet**

Günümüzde, sosyal ağ siteleri dünya çapında popüler hale geliyor ve özellikle çeşitli yaş grubu kullanıcıları genç kullanıcıların arasında oldukça popüler olmuştur ama özellikle Irak'ta küçük sayıda araştırmalar yapılmıştır. Her ne kadar çok sayıda fırsat sunmak gibi görünüyorsa da bu web siteleri dil öğrenme ve öğretmekte katkıda bulunabilir. Bu çalışma, dil öğrenimi için facebook üzerinden EFL öğrenci görüş ve faaliyetlerine fikir verir. Bu nedenle, Facebook'u kullanarak sekiz haftalık kurs yaptıktan sonra çevrimiçi öğrenme atmosferi hakkında öğrencilerin görüşlerini incelemeyi ve dil öğreniminde Facebook'un rolünü bulmayı amaçlayan bir çalışmadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, ikinci dil öğrenme ve öğretme alanında Facebook için genel etkiler ve olası kullanımları tartışır. Garmian Üniversitesi Diller Okulu İngilizce bölümünden 46 öğrenci 2015-2016 akademik yılı içerisinde bu çalışmaya örneklem olarak katıldı. Kuzey Irak'ta üniversite üçüncü sınıf öğrencileri gönüllü olarak boyunca kapalı bir facebook grubuna katıldılar. çalışma, hipotezleri incelemek için bir grup öntest-sontest deseni uygulanmıştır. 5 puanlık Likert ölçeği kullanılarak anket formu İngilizce dil becerilerini geliştirmek için herhangi bir görev ve dersler dayalı araştırma görevleri ile iki test için kullanılmıştı. Sonuçlar, ders öncesi ve ders sonrası katılımcıların tutumları arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğunu belirtti ve önceki görüşlere göre çalışmanın tamamlanmasının ardından dil öğrenimi için faaliyetlere ilişkin olumlu tutum gösterdi. Ön testte, katılımcıların çokluğu nedeniyle ağ üzerinden yararlı olması için Facebook kabul edildi. Böylece iletişim ve bilgi paylaşımı yapabilirler. Online kurs sonrası, öğrencilerin çoğu Facebook'u etkin bir eğitim aracı olarak kullanmak üzere yüksek olanaklara sahip olduklarını gördüler. Ayrıca, sontest sosyal ağların kullanılabilirliği karşı öğrencilerin olumlu tutum araştırma görevleri ve faaliyetleri etkisinde artış

olduğunu ortaya koydu. Son olarak bu çalışmada, her katılımcı Facebook'un son derece etkili ve potansiyel bir eğitim aracı olduğunu, özellikle çeşitli online aktivitelerin dil bilgisini ve performansı arttırmak için olduğunu doğruladı.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Ağ, Sosyal Medya, Facebook, Facebook grubu, Bilgisayar Destekli Dil Öğrenimi

## **Introduction**

This study attempts to show the roles of using social networking sites on language learning. In other words, it focuses on online learning strategy beside the traditional learning strategy which is classroom to encourage the students to learn English language in Northern Iraq. This Study involved 46 third year students at the English Department, School of language, Faculty of Education at University of Garmian as EFL learners in order to examine the effects of Facebook on the students' language learning. It was primarily used a quantitative method to explore the attitudes and opinions of Kurdish University students' use of Facebook in an educational background. The materials consisted of tools intended to elicit quantitative data, involving the research questionnaire form for the pretest and posttest and the tasks on English language that could be done through the Facebook group (FbG) with participants. Basically, the study utilizes a one-group pretest-posttest design to examine its hypotheses. A single group involves for conducting pretest and after taking the course, the same group involves for conducting posttest. As Gay, Mills, Airasian (2006) stated that the success of the treatment is indicated by comparing the results of the pretest and the posttest. Besides, the researcher tries to add some other members as guest speakers to investigate the significant of questionnaire statements by letting them to join the created group for the study purpose to have interaction with the study participants. The participants of the study are asked not to leave the group in order to have a proper result after the treatment.

As it is obvious that nowadays Facebook is a SNS which is widely used amongst people of different classes and ages, and students are a part of these Facebook users. Due to wide utilization of Facebook, this research attempts to show students' attitudes toward the use of Facebook and activities that could be done through Facebook. On the other words, the researcher tries to find out the opinions and perceptions of University students toward the

use of SNSs on language learning in order to give proper setting to the first and second research questions and the hypothetical background supporting the study.

1. What are the University students' opinions of using Facebook in an educational field?
2. What are the University students' opinions towards the activities for language learning through Facebook?

### **Literature Review:**

#### **Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Web 2.0**

A social networking site is the name of the last Web 2.0. It is an online site which provides users with a space to build virtual communities, share their interests and activities with the other users and explore the interests of the other users (Song & Kidd, 2010; De Ramirez, 2010). As indicated by Cook, et al. (2008), Web 2.0 tool is an arrangement the services and practices of internet that offer utilizers an incredible chance to take an interest in different groups of knowledge structure and learning distribution. Thus, social networking sites are said to have moved the Web from an impersonal library of static text-based pages into an interactive multimedia social media network being used by all (Peters, 2009). With a period alteration from Web 1.0, Web 2.0 advancements present a probability for utilizer participation in what creates the Internet. These Web 2.0 tools permit utilizers to transfer and to be more required in SNS communication groups which are special in relation to Web 1.0 that was progressively a matter of downloading. These websites redefine the way in which digital generation communicates and shares information because most of the face- to- face interactions are replaced by digital communities (Lytras, Damiani, & de Pablos, 2009).

#### **Facebook: A Social Networking Community**

Facebook was built up in 2004 and has become exponentially to develop not just the most well-known SNS on the globe (Mazman and Usuel, 2010), but additionally the most conspicuous informal communication apparatus of the previous decade for students' internet learning (Omar, Embi, and Yunus, 2012).

As indicated by Facebook, there are more than one billion users around

the world (Facebook, 2012) and very nearly 80% of those Facebook users are not from Canada and the United States (Facebook, 2012). Among the rankings by nation, Iraq is the area where the study happens, the number of users of Facebook in the world amounted to 629,622,400, Users and Iraq is a rate of 0.10% of this Number, that's mean, 625 780 users (Seksek, 2011).

### **The Use of Facebook as a Medium for Language Learning**

Facebook is a standout amongst the most well-known social networking websites which permit utiliziers to post data, talk with each other, and also cooperate inside the organization (Stelter, 2008). At the point once students utilize Facebook such as an instrument for their scholarship by investing energy scanning profiles, get-together with new individuals, and investigating connections utilizing English language, they have more noteworthy chances to cooperate with an extensive figure of individuals throughout the world and study the goal language in the meantime (Educause, 2006). Students can build new information after they collaborate with the other individuals on Facebook.

However, due to the quick development of innovation and web, social networking sites can be utilized to address this specialty in Language learning and educating in Northern Iraq. Because of the huge popularity of social networking websites which is extremely common among students from any foundation, this study decided to utilize the social networking sites i.e. Facebook and attempted to achieve value of social networks in Language learning.

The literature review of Facebook has demonstrated that there are numerous approaches to utilize Facebook as an informal network site and for the purpose of education in general. Despite the fact that it appears that Facebook has purposes which develop language learning, just a few studies have paid attention on this pedagogical issue in Iraq. However, there is a gap between using Facebook and Learning English as a foreign language for Kurdish students. To separate the investigation of current study from the other studies, the researcher tried to shed light on an issue that has a good deal of Facebook's role in education and to an extent its role has been neglected as there has not been enough research or study about it in the northern Iraq. This research tries to show the Facebook role in Education

and Language Learning, as its role has been mentioned and appreciated sufficiently in researches. Therefore, it is examining ways to use Facebook as Language Learning tool among Kurdish EFL University Students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Setting and Participants**

The study was carried out at University of Garmian in Northern Iraq and continued for Eight Weeks. The Closed FbG was created at (10 May 2016), named (The Facebook Role on Improving English Language) and the activities on the group were started from (12 May 2016) and continued until (12 July 2016). There were 52 third year students from English Department. 46 of them were participated; only 6 of them did not respond the pretest questionnaire form. The sample contained of (29) females and (17) males. Their ages were between (19) and (39), with an average of (21, 96) years. They were all Kurdish native speakers.

**Table 1:** The Statistics of Min, Max, mean and standard deviation of Age

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	46	19	39	21.96	3.627
Valid N	46				

### **Materials**

#### **Facebook Group (FbG)**

In this research, the researcher used Facebook activities to provide students with an alternative to support them to be better in language learning. The researcher created a closed-group on Facebook and posted activities as daily basis. The students used the FbG wall on which they could converse their ideas and share any informative and interesting photos, videos and links to useful websites concerning English Language. At the end of the study, the researcher used the same FbG to obtain the posttest results.

#### **Research Questionnaire Design**

Primarily, a quantitative technique methodology was utilized in this study to examine the university students' opinions of using Facebook in an educational background and their attitudes toward the language activities from Social networking sites i.e. Facebook. Section one contained five

personal questions that asked for students' gender, age, and utilization of Facebook generally, containing to what extent they have been utilizing it and how often, on average, they opened it and their participation at any similar educational FbG before the course answering by yes or no. Section Two consisted of 13 statements. It inspected the participants' opinions and perceptions of using Facebook for universal instructive purposes. While Section three consisted of 10 statements. It focused on the participants' views of the capability of Facebook's group role for conducting specific activities for language learning. All statements in Section three asked students to evaluate the effectiveness of using Facebook's group function to provide a variety of activities for learning language, covering all four skill sets in addition to other related tasks (See Appendix). Response choices for both second and third sections were scored from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) on a Likert scale. Data scored as 3 were considered *neutral* by the researcher. Initially, the researcher chose a 5-point scale to encourage more reliable and varying opinions and to limit responses from being too neutral. Then, for ease of presentation, the results from the questionnaire were collapsed into a five-point scale. For example, data scored from the Disagree side of the Likert Scale, 1 to 2, were merged and labeled as *Strongly Disagree* and *Disagree*, although data scored from the Agree side of the Likert Scale, 4 to 5, were merged and labeled as *Agree* and *Strongly agree*. Data scored as 3 were labeled as *Neutral*.

### **Research Task Design**

The teaching through Facebook with the group followed a method. Every week, from Sunday to Thursday, a Lesson, a Task were posted on FbG each day excluding Saturday and Friday based on any tasks and lessons to improve English language skills. Students were given tasks on Grammar, Vocabulary, listening and pronunciation, writing on specific topics, and word arrangements... etc. These tasks were called "Exercises" on Grammar and English Tenses, relating other tasks were called "Tasks" on Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Auxiliary verbs... etc. In addition, before posting the tasks, support posts were posted on the unchanged topics to enlighten students' understanding and increase their engagement with the topics; these posts were called "Lessons" and numbered them.

Besides, a video was posted to support the lesson and the task each and every day, as some instructors feel that viewing a video is entertaining

rather than educating and learning. The videos mostly took from the two YouTube web Channels. First, Learn English with EnglishClass101.com's "English in Three Minutes" series and the second took from the <http://www.engvid.com/>'s "Learn English with Valen" series.

Students were also motivated to interact in the group freely. In addition, student used to post status, videos, useful links, pictures, comments or news freely which maintain the practical life interaction on the FbG wall. The students were given full independence; the topics were free and did not identify what topic to post. The researcher did not score their posts and their participation because he considered that Facebook is a comfortable learning channel where students could direct their ideas more freely than in the traditional classroom.

### **Procedure, Data analysis and Data Collection**

In this study, some basic procedures have been applied. The researcher acquired a permission from the English Department at University of Garmian to permit him to work with third year students during the period of his study and use them as Participants. It involved 46 students as EFL learners in order to inspect the effect of Facebook on the students' language learning. The researcher took an approval from his supervisor and the University to conduct the study, he organized a Questionnaire form for both pretest and posttest, he contacted with the jury members to check validity and reliability of the questionnaire items. The study used two types of tests in order to choose a good sample for the study and to collect its data. The tests were taken by the participants: pretest, and posttest, the same questionnaire was used as the testing tool for both tests.

The researcher determined a day for conducting pre-test at (10 May 2016) and all the third grade students were there to take the test excluding 6 of them. The researcher directed the questionnaire to all participants at the university class. The pretest was carried out at the beginning of the course to find out the students' opinions toward using Facebook in the field of education and their opinions toward the activities on Facebook based on language learning.

They were requested to answer the questionnaire statements outside of

class or inside with the goal that they can take as much time as is needed answering every question fairly and proficiently. Also, Students were educated that all questionnaire responses are anonymous. For Section Three, students were requested to respond in view of primary reaction whether each and every activity could be effective or helpful if led through Facebook, as a few students might have had slight or no experience with the activities at this point of the study.

After joining the students to the FbG, the researcher directed some moral rules on the FbG wall so as to avoid problems and obtain the students to participate in the project successfully. He posted an announcement and welcomed everybody to the group. Then, he asked participants to cooperate in the project, explained them the purposes of creating the group so as to understand the project comprehensively. Yet, he explained and assured them that their involvement was voluntary but they could not remove when they had taken pretest because the study involved activities for eight weeks and as soon as after the course period, they have taken posttest. In addition, he promised them that their identities would be kept private.

The Instructor started posting activities on the FbG wall as the place which is chosen for the study. Then, the students were asked to join the group and started its work on (12 May 2016). The FbG gave the participants with a chance to be educated for eight weeks in a computer-generated classroom by utilizing different media substance, for example, sounds, recordings, pictures, notices and different materials accessible on the Internet.

At the end of the eight -week course, the same questionnaire was used to find the posttest results. The purpose of the posttest was to discover to what degree the students' opinions toward using Facebook and the activities on Facebook based on language learning improved after using FbG as a way to share resources and interact with the members and instructors. The statements of both second and third sections of the questionnaire form were posted online from the Facebook group and the researcher asked the participated students to answer the Posttest items in two days so as they could have enough time answering each question honestly and proficiently, by commenting on the Posttest post, then the researcher collected all the data and typed their answers on the Post-test form by himself.

After conducting the pretest and posttest, the researcher evaluated the results by using SPSS Version 20 to observe the differences between the results of both tests and to investigate the significant of these differences. Then scoring data was analyzed using ANOVA and T-test.

## **Results**

Based on the two research questions proposed in chapter one, the results were obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the online course:

The University students' opinions of using Facebook in an educational field.

The University students' opinions towards the activities for language learning through Facebook

**Table 2:** Opinions of using Facebook for pre-test and Post-test

S.	Severity For pre-test			Severity For post-test		
	Mean	S.D	t-test	Mean	S.D	t-test
			26.95	4.19	.45	62.80
6.	3.80	1.03	26.95	4.19	.45	62.80
7.	3.65	1.01	24.38	4.30	.62	46.49
8.	3.73	1.08	23.39	3.84	.96	27.03
9.	2.91	1.02	19.20	3.06	.92	22.38
10.	3.86	1.06	24.60	4.28	.50	57.89
11.	3.84	.94	27.70	4.19	.45	62.80
12.	3.41	1.02	22.61	3.52	.86	27.69
13.	3.43	1.16	19.64	3.60	.82	29.50
14.	3.71	.83	30.21	3.93	.71	37.48
15.	3.26	.82	26.70	3.56	.91	26.55
16.	3.34	1.13	19.92	3.63	1.16	21.19
17.	3.36	1.10	20.72	3.67	.81	30.46
18.	3.78	1.15	22.25	4.02	.74	36.61
Total	3.54	1.02		3.83	0.76	

Concerning the students' Opinions of using Facebook at the pre-test, as it is shown in Table 2, the higher frequency of the participants' opinions of using Facebook in educational background before the course period on English language learning from the FbG was the statement 10, the mean was (3.86) which greater than the mean of other factors. As a result, make posts, upload pictures and videos is an important factor to help students to using Facebook as tool for language learning. However, the least frequency of the participants' opinion of using FbG in educational field in pretest was statement 9 because the mean of this statement was less than other factors. In regard to severity, the highest severe item was statement 10 ( $M= 3.86$ ,  $SD= \pm 1.06$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ) and the least severe item was statement 9 ( $M= 2.91$ ,  $SD= \pm 1.02$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ), the mean of this item was less than the general mean (3.0) which means that this item did not affect students opinion about using Facebook as a tool for learning language comparing to other factors. Finally, the overall mean and standard deviation of all items in pretest were (3.54,  $\pm 1.02$ ) respectively. But the results of participants' opinions of using Facebook at the post-test have been changed after taking a course. The higher frequency of participants' opinion of using Facebook was statement 7, the mean of this statement was (4.30) which greater than the mean of the other factors. As a result, "Facebook is a good program" is an important factor to help students to use FbG as a tool for learning English language. However, the least frequency of participants' opinion of using Facebook was statement 9 because the mean of this item is less than the mean of the other factors. In regard to severity, the highest severe item was the statement 7 ( $M= 4.30$ ,  $SD= \pm 0.62$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ) and the least severe item was statement 9 ( $M= 3.06$ ,  $SD= \pm 0.92$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ). Finally, the overall mean and standard deviation of all items in posttest were (3.83,  $\pm 0.76$ ) respectively which were increased comparing to the total mean score in pre-test.

**Table 3:** Opinions of Activities on Facebook for pre-test and post-test

S.	Severity For pre-test			Severity For post-test		
	Mean	S.D	t-test	Mean	S.D	t-test
			23.46	4.02	.77	35.22
19.	3.47	1.00	26.95	4.19	.45	62.80
20.	3.52	1.04	22.77 35.36	4.08	.78	
21.	3.50	.86	27.51	3.63	.82	29.50
22.	3.34	.76	29.62	3.91	.66	40.16
23.	3.36	1.10	20.72	3.39	.97	23.54
24.	3.10	.97	21.70	3.02	.99	20.49
25.	3.19	1.18	18.28	3.36	1.08	21.11
26.	3.34	.99	22.85	3.78	.98	25.99
27.	3.30	.96	28.34	3.69	.83	29.84
28.	3.58	.85	28.34	4.36	.64	45.95
Total	3.54	1.02		3.72	0.85	

Concerning the students' Opinions of Activities on Facebook at the pre-test, as it is clear in table 3, the higher frequency of participants' opinion regarding English language learning before the course period was the statement 28, the mean of this item was (3.58) which greater than the mean of other factors. As a result, having discussions with English speakers on Facebook was an important factor to help students to develop their language skills. In regard to severity, the highest severe item was the statement 28 (M= 3.58, SD= ±.85, p-value <0.001) and the least severe item was the statement 24 (M= 3.10, SD= ±.97, p-value <0.001). Finally, the overall mean and standard deviation of all items in pretest were (3.37, ±.97) respectively. On the other hand the results of participants' opinions of Activities on Facebook at the post-test have been changed after taking a course regarding language learning from the FbG. The higher frequency of participants' opinion of activities on FbG in posttest was the statement 28, the mean of it was (4.36) which greater than the mean of other factors.

As a result, “having discussions with English speakers on Facebook” was an important factor to help students develop their language skills. Consequently, the mean of the statement 28 increased from 3.58 in pretest to 4.36 in posttest, the results between both tests show that this statement was the most favorable item from the students’ point of view because this item has the highest frequency in both tests regarding activities through Facebook. However, the least frequency of participants’ opinion of activities on FbG regarding English language learning in posttest was statement 24 because the mean of this item was less than the mean of other factors. Consequently, the mean of the statement 24 decreased from 3.10 in pretest to 3.02 in posttest, the results between pretest and posttest show that this statement was the most unwanted item from the students’ point of view because this item has the lowest frequency in both tests regarding activities through Facebook. In regard to severity, the highest severe item is the statement 28 (M= 4.36, SD= ±0.64, p-value <0.001) and the least severe item is the statement 24 (M= 3.02, SD= ±0.99, p-value <0.001). Finally, the overall mean and standard deviation of all items in posttest were (3.72, ±0.85) respectively which were increased comparing of the total mean score in pre-test.

**Table 4:** The effect of Facebook Group on Participants

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	T-test	Sig.
Pre-Test	3.47	0.39	0.0577	-.46254	.000
Post- Test	3.78	0.31	0.0471		
P* <0.05		P** <0.01			P*** <0.001

As shown in the table 4 that there were statistically significant difference between the mean of pre-test and post-test, the mean of pre-test (before using FbG as a course for learning English language) is (3.47), and the mean of post-test (after using FbG as a course for learning English language) became (3.78) and also p-value was less than the common alpha 0.05 which means that the use of FbG has an impact on participants’ opinion after conducting the course because the result of p-value were less than 0.05 and the mean of post-test were vividly increased.

## **Discussion**

With regard to the first research question, (*The University students' opinions of using Facebook in an educational field*) the present study indicates that participants belief towards the use of Facebook in education were overall positive in the case of the data in pretest. However, in some cases in the quantitative data in posttest, participant opinions of Facebook actually increased over the duration of the study.

It can be seen in the table 2 that the frequency of participants' opinions of using Facebook in pretest in statement 6, the mean was (3.80) while the mean increased to (4.19) in the posttest, which means that the students found Facebook as an easy tool to log in after having the course. Student responses to Statement 11, the mean was 3.84 while the mean increased to 4.17 in the posttest. It means that the item affected participants' opinions of Facebook's usefulness in contacting classmates after the completion of the course. Regarding the Statement 12, the mean was 3.41 while the mean increased in the posttest to 3.52, which means that the item affected students' opinions of Facebook's usefulness in contacting teacher and instructors after the course. It was also similar to the researcher's expectations.

Another increase in perceptions from the pre-test to posttest within the second section regarding opinions of using Facebook was seen in Statement 13, the mean was 3.43 while the mean increased to 3.60 in the posttest. University students frequently have long drives and different duties inside and outside of the classroom and in this manner acknowledge having the capacity to access class materials and information whenever the timing is ideal. Such member responses were reliable with past researches (Maloney, 2007; Bosch, 2009; Ophus and Abbitt, 2009; Madge, Meek, Wellens, and Hooley, 2009; Akbari, Eghtesad & Simons, 2012; Karimi and Khodabandelou, 2013) where members' opinions were principally positive in respect for utilizing Facebook to access to materials identified with their studies and enhancing learning results.

Regarding the second research question, (*the University students' opinions towards the activities for language learning through Facebook*) the results suggested that members' attitudes toward maximum number of questionnaire items identifying with particular activities and exercises

through Facebook mostly positive both before and after completing the study. There are numerous activities and exercises or tasks that show clear changes in students' attitudes, both positively and negatively in the quantitative data that are applicable and merit discourse in more detail.

Attitudes toward Statement 19, the mean was 3.47 while the mean increased in the posttest to 4.02, this means that the students' attitudes toward discussing topics with classmates increased after the course period, which was similar various different studies (Arendt, Matic, and Zhu, 2012; Omar, Embi, and Yunus, 2012; Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi, 2012) where students delighted in communicating on Facebook instead of a traditional classroom setting. It could be incidental that higher positive attitudes in the posttest were depended on experiences discussing socially with companions on Facebook and that discussing topics in a scholarly setting met the participants' expectations. It is significant to indicate that this follows dissimilar results by DeSchryver, Mishra, Koehler, and Francis (2009) and Wang et al. (2012), who reported that members felt discussions, were unusual and they didn't care for having them.

As a result of the data analysis, females were participated more than males and also the age of most participations were less than 22 years. In pre-test, participants' perceptions showed that people used Facebook as a group for learning English language because it is easy to make posts, upload videos but when participants joined on FbG, their opinions have been changed to be Facebook is a good program compared to other programs, like Skype, twitter or Gmail. Moreover, the result of activities on Facebook showed that Facebook is a good place to have discussions with "guest speakers" like international students before and after the course on FbG, they had the same responses but their responses were extremely increased. Additionally, there were statistically significant relationship between university students and FbG because the p-value of t-test was less than the 0.05. As a result, University students were affected by FbG as a tool for learning English language.

## **Conclusion**

This research designed to find the results came about by utilizing Facebook Group as a part of educating an EFL correspondence course to Kurdish

University students at Garmian University in Iraq. In accordance with social constructivist hypothesis, the essential advantages of Facebook as an effective learning device incorporate affordance of chances for students to cooperate and share information (Bosch, 2009; Maloney, 2007; McCarthy, 2012) and its capacity to promote, better cooperative learning opportunities through correspondence and social communication in the objective language (Wang & Vasquez, 2012).

The findings of the study demonstrated that the members made very remarkable involvements sharing, discussing, and dealing with each other in English, progressively. The reason was accepted to be because they were helped to join the group activities, lessons and exercises, and the English expressions and sentences to use at the interim through cooperative learning. Additional to that, the findings uncovered that through accommodating learning they made more progressive, notice on language fluency and grammatical correctness. Similarly, utilizing FbG together with learning process in different sorts of classes should inspire achievement in learning and teaching English course in other foreign language setting.

The study concludes that instructors and educators should adjust to the changes in innovation and consider how the progressions influence the learning and teaching process. Online networking as the new pattern in today's general public can be possibly utilized for educating and learning purposes. The role of instructors as a facilitator is vital to guarantee that the utilization of online networking is like-minded with the earlier set purpose. Activities and lessons through a FbG can be embraced to enhance students' language skills as well as to help students convey what needs be better, connect and interact with their friends, classmates and instructors in a meaningful manner, assemble a decent relationship among them, and gain from each other. The conclusion is supported by some other researchers who cooperatively gather that when exercises and activities through Facebook are engaging and students can cooperate and think about their own particular learning, then inspiration, self-confidence, and attitudes will enhance (Mazer et al, 2007; Kabilan et al., 2010; Shih, 2011; Yunus & Salehi, 2012). With this respect, the future study may concentrate on examining the factor that impacts the students' collaboration in learning in FbG, how they initiate, help and assess the errands.

**Appendix: (Facebook Questionnaire for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year University Students)**

**Section One.** Personal Information

Please complete the following questions.

1. Your sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_, Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have been using Facebook for:
  - A. 0-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ , B. 3-5 years \_\_\_\_\_ , C. 6-8 years \_\_\_\_\_
4. How often, on average, do you access Facebook per day?
  - A. 1-3 x a day \_\_\_\_\_ , B. 4-6 x a day \_\_\_\_\_, C. 7 or more x a day \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you ever participated at any educational Facebook group before this course?
 

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Section Two.** Opinions of using Facebook

*This set of statements asks you to show your opinions of using Facebook. Please select the answer that best reproduces your perspective for each item. Answer each item as honestly as possible utilizing the following rating scale.*

Number	1	2	3	4	5
Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	I found it easy to log in to Facebook.				1 2 3 4 5
7	Facebook is a good program Compared to other programs, like Skype, twitter or Gmail.				1 2 3 4 5
8	Facebook can be used both socially and for educational purposes.				1 2 3 4 5
9	Facebook is safe to use both socially and for educational purposes.				1 2 3 4 5
10	It is easy to make posts, upload pictures and videos on Facebook.				1 2 3 4 5

11	Facebook is a good place to keep in contact with other students from class.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Facebook is a good place to contact my teacher outside of class.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Facebook is a good place to check class notes or homework assignments posted by the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Facebook is a good place to ask for help about homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Facebook is a good place to check for school related updates and notices.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Facebook is a good place to notice my partner's English errors and learn from them.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Facebook is a good place to notice my errors in my English when I use it than when I speak out loud.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Facebook is a good place for practicing English.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section Three.** Opinions of Activities on Facebook

*This set of statements asks you to show your opinion on activities that could be done through Facebook. Please select the answer that best reproduces your perspective for each item. Answer each item as honestly as possible utilizing the following rating scale.*

Number	1	2	3	4	5			
Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
19	Facebook is a good place to discuss different topics with classmates.			1	2	3	4	5
20	Facebook is a good place to post writing assignments like short stories or essays.			1	2	3	4	5

21	Facebook is a good place to access links to resources provided by the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Facebook is a good place to post and respond to surveys.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Facebook is a good place to read articles and take notes to prepare for next Lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Facebook is a good place to listen to audio files and take notes to prepare for next Lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Facebook is a good place to review or edit classmates' writing assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Facebook is a good place to watch YouTube videos and discuss comprehension questions with classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Facebook is a good place to make video posts as assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Facebook is a good place to have discussions with "guest speakers" like international students.	1	2	3	4	5

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### **Web Sites**

<http://www.engvid.com/>

Learn English with EnglishClass101.com

<http://www.slideshare.net/hamzoz/statistics-user-of-facebook-in-iraq>



## ***The “Autobiography of Spiritual Enlightenment”***

***Mauro De MATTEIS***

This is not going to be an orthodox, conventional autobiography. It is not an autobiography at all, just fragments of a life reflected in a thousand of mirrors. (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 237)

### **Abstract**

Indian spiritual autobiographies pivot on the idea of spiritual enlightenment: by transcending the ego, the self puts an end to the cycle of reincarnation. On the one hand these works reflect an individual experience, and on the other hand they mirror the society and culture that forms its background. In this paper I examine two “enlightened” autobiographies, Paramhansa Yogananda’s *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946) and Osho Rajneesh’s *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood* (1984), from the viewpoints of ideational content and rhetoric, in order to show the difference between Yogananda’s sacred outlook, which G.K. Shandya interprets from a post-colonial vantage point, and Osho’s secular spiritual perspective, which has a cross-cultural character and includes key aspects of the Western worldview. In the field of spiritual life writing no less than in general, the movement from the cultural moment of 1946 to 1984 reflects the modernization of the Indian tradition and consists in a change of emphasis from hierarchy to individualism.

Though little known to the average reader, Rajneesh’s autobiography is noteworthy as it represents an original reinterpretation of spiritual enlightenment from the viewpoint of Western individualism. Conversely, *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1945) is a staple of Indian spirituality, and privileges cultural continuity and tradition. Apart from their artistic merit, the interest of these books lies a) in the paradox that they are purportedly written by self-realized and hence “egoless” authors, and b) in the fact

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that they belong to a period in which the process of decolonization came to fruition, and India took a stance with regard to the scientific and individualistic outlook that constitutes “secular modernity.” As for method, my framework draws on *Modernization of the Indian Tradition*, in which Yogendra Singh analyses social change along the lines of a culturological conception. In this perspective, what matters is not only *reality per se*, but also the subjective *representation of ideas* of reality. The focus is on how Indian minds have adapted to the revelation of Western culture: *Autobiography of a Yogi* and *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood* are important examples of adaptive reaction because they represent the viewpoints of pivotal figures of the Indian tradition: the gurus. Accordingly, I interpret Osho’s work and Yogananda’s work, respectively, in the light of what Singh calls “Modernization” and “Indian Renaissance.”

**Keywords:** *Osho Rajneesh, Spiritual enlightenment, Indian Renaissance*

### **The “Autobiography of Spiritual Enlightenment”**

When we examine the autobiographies of my authors, we notice a contradiction: Osho’s account is more humanly convincing than Yogananda’s, and hence nearer to what today we recognize as life writing. *Autobiography of a Yogi*, by comparison, is more stereotyped. Yet, while Yogananda insists on the actuality of what he writes (however outlandish it may be), Rajneesh, who is far more plausible, undermines any notion of his own veracity by declaring that a self-realized person *cannot have an autobiography*, because his ego has disappeared. The past cannot exist for a self-realized narrator who lives moment-by-moment, like a little child: that is why Osho considered Yogananda’s autobiography a fairy tale and a hoax. Paramhansa’s position is didascalical and unproblematic, and rests on the pre-modern bedrock of memory: “‘I remember’ gives the strongest sort of belief support available to what is being said” – writes James Olmes in his seminal essay on autobiography and memory (Olmes 1998, 298). Conversely, in Rajneesh’s life writing we don’t have the conception that recollections are “things” to be found in the mind, but the insistence on the *experience* of remembering; we are not confronted with an author made omniscient by esoteric knowledge, but with a narrative participatory performance and a happening; we are not mystified by an “enlightened” autobiography, but challenged by the paradox of an autobiography *of* (not only *about*) self-realization. In *Autobiography of a Yogi*

the main tropes are physical immortality, and the ancientness of the scriptures – symbols of a past that refuses to go, and that takes ontological precedence over the present. In *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood*, youth is sacred, not old age: the past is subsumed by the present, and the narrative acts as much as a vision than as a story.

In fact, the paradoxes I have mentioned have many implications. Silence is one of the metaphors that have represented spiritual enlightenment down the ages. A man who becomes totally silent, maintains Osho, loses all boundaries, all definitions. If he were to write an autobiography, it would be the story of the whole existence, and it would have no beginning and no end. Moreover, an unenlightened author may *want* to say the truth about himself, but he *would not be able to*, because he would lack the awareness to do that; while an enlightened writer would have an experiential understanding of his being, but not the desire to make use of it. The Eastern tradition makes clear that a person is self-realized when he is no longer identified with his memories and desires – a fact that in principle abolishes both the motivation and the substance of an autobiography. Traditionally, in India, even an ordinary pious man (not to mention a saint) would refrain from drawing attention to his person: it would be considered *ashistata*, bad manners. Yet Rajneesh is not afraid to be considered an egoist and authors a life writing that centers on his own unrestrained and exceptional individuality, while Yoganada does all he can to erase himself, show his humbleness, and fulfill a reader's expectations about sainthood.

By looking at what motivates these contradictions, we understand why today Yogananda looks dated to a modern (and particularly a Western) reader, while Osho has what is needed to appeal to the public he addresses. Osho is far from being the speaking or writing subject of an autobiography in the traditional sense. What we read in his pages is as much about the implications of being a self-realized author as it is about the meaning self-realization acquires when it takes place in a modern context. Two aspects are worth noting: 1) the protagonist fulfills his potential by challenging society and becoming a true individual; and 2) self-realization deconstructs<sup>1</sup> the author as a fixed and stable entity. The former aspect is

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<sup>1</sup>“Deconstruction” is the translation and reinterpretation of *Destruction*, a concept from Heidegger's *Being and Time* that Derrida applied to textual reading. Heidegger's term referred to the exploration of the categories that tradition has imposed on a word, and the history behind them.

familiar in the European *Bildungsroman*, but appears innovative in the Indian autobiographical context of the 1970s and ‘80s. The latter points to an affinity between Osho’s standpoint and the modernist dilemma about selfhood. In fact, from James Olmes’ *Memory and Narrative* we learn that the self-centered works that Modernism has produced (Samuel Beckett’s are a prime example) are premised on the idea that the ego is an illusion which memory can no longer keep together and uphold: “Not I!” cries out one of Beckett’s narrative alter-egos. In Modernism the notion of selfhood is in question, and contemporary Western self-centered narrative shows a subject that has lost the ontological stability it used to enjoy when it was grounded in a sacred worldview. Three quotes from *Memory and Narrative* will help clarify this point and its connection with the argument I am advancing.

1) On one occasion, the Modernist novelist and essayist Christa Wolf is reported to have said about one of her novels: “The book is autobiographical, but I do not feel any identity with my character” (Olmes 1998, 259). Rajneesh intimates exactly the same thing with similar words in his autobiography, although he is not pointing to estrangement or alienation, but to the fact that to be self-realized means to lose definition and character. An enlightened person’s memory may keep functioning as far as practical matters are concerned, and yet may no longer necessarily provide a sense of continuity between past and present.

2) On another occasion, Wolf affirms that “What is past is not dead, is not even past. We cut ourselves off from it; we pretend to be strangers” (Olmes 1998, 257). In Osho’s autobiography of self-realization only the present *really* exists, and the past endures merely as a part that belongs to it: it exists *as* mind. An unenlightened albeit exceptionally gifted writer like Wolf will feel that the past is not past because she is identified with her mind: *any* identification, however painful, is better than the vertiginous freedom entailed by living totally in the present, without memories or expectations.

3) In “The Position of the Narrator in the Contemporary Novel” (one of the critical essays that make up Theodor W. Adorno’s *Notes on Literature*), the author writes: “In fact the contemporary novels that count, those in

which *an unleashed subjectivity turns into his opposite* through its own momentum, are negative epics. They are testimonials to a state of affairs in which *the individual liquidates himself*, a state of affairs which converges with the pre-industrial situation that once seemed to guarantee a world replete with meaning” (Olmes 1998, 281, italics added).

In Rajneesh’s life writing we find plenty of evidence of “unleashed subjectivity”: “Wrong or right,” he declares, “I have never asked anybody whether I am right or wrong. Wrong or right, if I want to do it I want to do it and I will make it right. If it is wrong then I will make it right, but I have never allowed anyone to interfere with me. That has given me whatsoever I have – nothing much of this world, no bank balance, but what really matters: the taste of love, of truth, of eternity... In short, of oneself” (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 78). This statement speaks volumes: it comes hardly as a surprise that Osho’s critics have labeled his attitude “pathological narcissism.” The end result of so drastic a self-affirmation, though, is not solipsism, and a sense of psychological disintegration and despair – which Adorno identifies as the negative epics of contemporary narrative. Meditation makes all the difference. Unleashed subjectivity turns into its opposite in the person of the blissful self-realized narrator, who proclaims he has become a non-ego because he has stopped identifying with his body and his mind. Western secularism and Eastern spirituality merge in Osho to suggest a different conclusion to the negative socio-cultural trends adumbrated by Modernism, while the pre-industrial world replete with meaning that Adorno mentions belongs to the past, and constitutes the traditional background of Yogananda’s autobiography.

To be sure, Rajneesh’s autobiographical stance does resonate with a feeling of existential emptiness: on becoming awake and aware, an enlightened person finds that he has nothing to say or to write about himself: it was all a dream. Crucially, though, in the perspective of self-realization, when the lie of the ego is exposed also despair vanishes, and gives way to a longing to love and to share. For Gautama Buddha compassion is the ultimate flowering of spiritual enlightenment, and motivates the last desire that keeps a realized person from leaving the body: to do *all he can* to help others. This desire, in Osho, has both an autobiographical and a political impact: on the one hand it becomes “enlightened” self-

narrative; and on the other hand it turns into an all-out militant attitude that resembles the existential revolt of Camus’ *The Rebel*, and is at odds with Yogananda’s well-wishing and ideologically tame social reformism. Yogananda’s attunement with a pre-modern Christian outlook is evident in his discourse on miracles. In a cross-cultural perspective, his naive assuredness in tackling the task of writing an “enlightened” autobiography mirrors St. Augustine’s trust in the correspondence between the inner world of memory and the outer world of the cosmos and of society that surrounds the subject: both are God’s creation. Both remembrance and language (the two wings of autobiography) can be absolutely trusted, and the author finds inspiration and guidance in the Scriptures: individual and collective memories are essentially one and the same. Given that spiritual autobiographies are defined by their rhetorical intention (to persuade and lead to salvation in the West; to show the path to self realization, and win disciples for a guru in the East), today Rajneesh’s strategy looks more effective than Yogananda’s as it addresses individuals and is in tune with the changes in collective awareness that are brought about by modernization. Yogananda is not aware of any psychological complexity, so he does not consider the implications of being a self-realized writer – but we learn much from what Osho has to say on this matter:

No biography can penetrate to the depths, particularly the psychological layers of a man. Especially if the man has come to the point where the mind is no longer relevant to the nothingness hidden in the center of an onion. You can peel it layer by layer, of course with tears in your eyes, but finally nothing is left, and that is the center of the onion; that is from where it had come in the first place. No biography can penetrate to the depths, particularly of a man who has known the no-mind also. I say “also” consideredly, because unless you know the mind, you cannot know the no-mind. This is going to be my small contribution to the world. (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 235)

The mind is made by memory, the Muse of autobiography. When one transcends the mind, memory remains only as a useful mechanism. While describing the nature of his autobiographical project, Rajneesh imparts to his disciples a lesson about watchful detachment – the path that leads to emotional freedom. For him existential recollection is a meditative

emotional catharsis that the guru performs as a teaching: how to relive consciously the pains (and joys) of the past, and in so doing, drop the burden of their emotional charge. “I want to unburden myself totally before I leave,” says Rajneesh, “so that I can leave just as I have come – with nothing, not even a memory” (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 192). The disciple is implicitly invited to do the same with his own life, and this process is compared to the peeling of an onion: in the end you are left with the nothingness that is your true nature, your original face. To get to no-mind and have a taste of no self, maintains Osho, you must first know your mind, and face the discomfort of this encounter. His work shows the implications of aiming at psychological depth in the context of a spiritual autobiography in which Eastern mystical insights, and Western psychological sophistication complement each other. You cannot be authentic if you don’t transcend the false identity you borrow from society and stop living in the past – the scriptures are not a help, but an obstacle. The task is not easy: individuality is risky; a fearless attitude is needed. That is why Osho often quoted Gurdjieff’s saying that man is born with no soul, and must create one through his own conscious efforts.

At the level of style, the link between past and present on the one hand, and the narrator and his audience on the other hand can be profitably examined in the light of the dichotomy between oral and written forms that our two authors exemplify. Yogananda’s prose is repetitive and formulaic, and fits in the rhetoric scheme of the *exemplum* validated by a preexisting tradition. His English draws on the prose of the Bible, his models are the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*, the images he uses are stereotyped, and the written form predominates in a highly organized text that leaves little space to authenticity. As it happens, the real protagonist of the book is not the young Mukunda, but the ancient Hindu scriptural tradition itself. Throughout the book, the context of religious erudition (a collective and sacred element that the author tries to present as “scientific”) prevails on the narrative text. The events Yogananda relates may have been triggered by real experiences, but are then represented in a very conventional way. The conflict between the wish to tell the truth and the desire to regulate it is uncritically resolved in favor of the latter, because veracity does not reside in the individual, but only in the collective and the archetypal. The author communicates with his public through the medium of his mind, firmly rooted in a sacred

and a-temporal perspective; his message is one of words, not of silences. Contrariwise, Rajneesh’s books are transcriptions of his lectures, and also in his life writing (in which crucially the present takes center stage by the side of the past) the flavor of orality can be distinctly felt. *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood* is the record of a series of *talks* given in 1984, which appears also in *Autobiography of a Spiritually Incorrect Mystic*, published in 2000 and edited by Sarito Carol Neiman under Osho’s supervision: the latter compilation adds to the former the account of Osho’s experience of enlightenment. The recollection of the past is intimately interwoven 1) with the author’s pronouncements about himself, truth, religion, culture, and society; 2) with a dialogic dimension, and a live interaction with the disciples who listen and ask questions; and 3) with hints to the factual circumstances of the lecture: “Nothing is in my hands except the arms of my chair,” says Osho, for instance, “and you can see how I am clinging on to them, feeling them to see if I am still in the body” (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 152).

Rajneesh does not tire of repeating that his real message is not carried by the meaning of his words, but by the moments of silence that happen between them. He emphasizes that he does not plan in advance and that he is spinning his tale in a deep let go: “Each moment opens up many ways. Whichever you choose you will repent” (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 302). The plot of his story is not linear, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, but goes round in circles. The very word *Glimpses* that we find in the title makes us aware of the flowing and unsystematic character of the reminiscence: a chance gathering of past moments, which come back into existence in front of a captive audience as if they were animated by an independent volition. Osho’s account of the origin of his narrative mastery reminds one of Yaşar Kemal’s apprenticeship as a novelist, when he started his career of narrator by telling the anecdotes of the Turkish brigand lore before rustic listeners:

I love stories, and all this started with my Nani. She was a lover of stories too. Not that she used to tell me stories, just the contrary; she used to provoke me to tell her stories, all kinds of stories and gossips. She listened so attentively that she made me into a storyteller [...] She is responsible: all credit or blame, whatsoever you call it, goes to her. I invented stories to

tell her just so she would not be disappointed, and I can promise you that I became a successful storyteller just for her sake. (Osho Rajneesh 1984, 168)

Unlike Yogananda's written word, which comes from the mind and is addressed to the mind, Osho's utterance comes from the heart and aims at creating a shared space of attention that love – not intellectual effort – keeps together: while you are thinking you cannot listen, your thoughts are a disturbance. Yogananda wants to impress and aims at persuading his readers with his display of erudition. Osho speaks like the child he once was, anxious to entertain his grandmother, and basks in the affection of his disciples – who learn the art of meditation by paying undivided attention to the sound of his voice. A quote from Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Language* helps explain the rhetorical reasons that cause Osho to prefer the oral to the written form:

Writing, which would seem to crystallize language, is precisely what alters it. It changes not the words but the spirit, substituting exactitude for expressiveness. *Feelings are expressed in speaking, ideas in writing.* In writing, one is forced to use all the words according to their conventional meaning. But in speaking, one varies the meanings by varying one's tone of voice, determining them as one pleases. Being less constrained to clarity, one can be more forceful. And it is not possible for a language that is written, to retain its vitality as long as one that is spoken. (J.-J. Rousseau 1966, 21-22, italics added)

Osho speaks, Yogananda writes. The former is interested in feelings, in real human beings, and in the message of the here-and-now that only silence conveys. The latter aims at expressing timeless ideas through codified authoritative words. Indeed, the difference between the two authors' oral and written autobiographies is the same we find between an alive and a dead language: the former is more vital because it is less self-referential, more in tune with its audience, and is made more effective by the charismatic presence of the speaker – that is why Rajneesh refused not only to write, but also to tape his talks without having a public before him. Yogananda's language is removed from contemporary usage, it bears the stamp of its sacred models, Sanskrit and Latin, and it is meant to create

awe and a distance from ordinary reality that only suspension of disbelief can bridge. Osho’s language is underpinned by an opposite rhetorical strategy: indeed, all Rajneesh’s lectures are peppered with jokes. Their purpose is clear: to stigmatize sanctimony and seriousness, to encourage a fresh and unconventional outlook on life, and to provoke laughter, which diverts vital energy from the mind to the body, and helps one to be more awake and relaxed.

Moreover, the works I examine have in common the structural characteristic that their narrative episodes are set against a philosophic or ideational background. What in *Telling Lives in India* Arnold and Blackburn call the “version of truth” of an author is part and parcel of that author’s autobiographical project: it complements it with a distinctive worldview and a persuasive intellectual dimension, and it reflects the general relationship between the “autobiography of self-realization” and erudition. Paramhansa is not an intellectual. His temperament is devotional and his knowledge is second hand, not a personal discovery: yet he considers it a primary source of spiritual and intellectual legitimation. In spite of his declarations to the contrary, the yogi’s stance towards the Hindu mythology and scriptures is inherently pre-modern and a-critical; and his appeal to experience and to science is merely instrumental to the preservation of his sacred outlook. Yogananda’s position is epitomized by the account he gives of his encounter at Karapatri with a young wandering sadhu, “noted for his intelligence,” “an enlightened soul.” First he extols the man’s virtues, and describes him as “a pundit unusually learned in the *Vedas*,” “a master of scriptures,” “a true representative of this land of giants.” Then he asks the sadhu about the source of his extraordinary knowledge: does it come from scriptural lore, or from inward experience? The answer is significantly noncommittal: “fifty-fifty” (Paramhansa Yogananda 2005, 388-89).

Any percentage of dogmatism is incompatible in principle with a true experiential approach – would argue Rajneesh – both in the inner and in the outer domain. Osho was a gifted academician, and published much more than Yogananda. Though his scholarship is an original synthesis of Eastern and Western knowledge, he subordinates it to his own experience of self-realization, and refuses to comply with any kind of consistency or logic. In spite of his modest origins, by his own efforts and merit he gained

access to the post-independence Indian Westernized intellectual élite, but he always went against the grain of academic correctness. Seriousness, according to Rajneesh, is a disease of the ego. A serious mind is bound to be consistent and knowledgeable, but a coherent person will never be free, because he will feel obliged to conform to his own past actions and ideas. Indeed, in *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood* the author claims that logic belongs to the textbooks while contradictions are the very fabric of life. Gautama Buddha (to make just a few examples) is extolled on one occasion for his compassion, and in another is condemned as “chauvinistic” because he hesitated before beginning to initiate women into discipleship. Krishna is praised for his enlightenment, musicality, and joy, but also blamed as a militarist for talking Arjuna into waging war and committing murder: the episode is taken from the *Bhagavat Gita*, where it is meant to illustrate the law of *karma*, but Rajneesh presents it in a totally different light. In fact, Osho’s dislike for coherence goes beyond a declaration of principle, and extends by implication to all systematic knowledge. If we bear in mind that dogmatic and comprehensive intellectual systems have had their heyday in the Middle Ages, we can see how that aversion qualifies Rajneesh’s modern secular perspective as much as a mythic and scriptural inflection characterizes Yogananda’s sacred and encyclopaedic standpoint. Indeed, two aspects of the ideational framework of Osho’s autobiography are worth noting: 1) Rajneesh exhibits a primacy of rhetoric over logic, and 2) unlike Yogananda (who bows to the scriptures), he claims that the source of his knowledge is *entirely* experiential.

1) In Aram Veeseer’s *Edward Said: the Charisma of Criticism*, the author gives a description of Said’s polemic strategy as Menippean satire that applies also to Osho’s outlook. “Menippean satire,” writes Veeseer, “deals less with people than with mental attitudes [...] and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent” (Veeseer 2010, 64-65). Rajneesh, like Said, was a charismatic controversialist, a master in the art of exposing the contradictions of his opponent’s position without trying to present a coherent standpoint, which could be criticized on the same grounds of inconsistency. In his autobiography, he assumes an approach that is similar to Said’s, but professedly adopts it to achieve a spiritual end: to show that existence cannot be apprehended through reason, that the mind must be set aside, and that life is not a problem to solve, but a mystery one should

surrender to. Intellectual coherence is not only a blunt polemic tool, but also an existential blunder. 2) In *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood*, Rajneesh is quite outspoken about his interpretive approach. The interpretations he gives of the great masters of the past and the great intellectual figures of the present are guided by his intuitive understanding of reality, not by scientific objectivity. His readings are subjective and creative: a trait that reminds one of Emerson, but is far more controversial. Osho claims that the knowledge revealed by a self-realized guru is entirely experiential in the most radical sense: he can talk about Buddha because he *is* Buddha; he can talk about truth because he *is* truth – any academic claim to the contrary notwithstanding.

In short, the rhetoric and structure of Osho’s life writing differs from Yogananda’s inasmuch as 1) it has an oral flavour; 2) it carries modern existential implications; 3) it embraces contradictions; and 4) is structured on the Rousseauan assumption that feelings convey a deeper message than ideas. In spiritual terms, the heart is closer to our true identity than the mind: it is easier to reach the silence at the centre from the emotional layer of our being. The communion between the guru and his audience begins with emotional empathy and comes to fruition with meditative silence, while the mind is entertained with intellectual arguments that in the end prove to be futile. Moreover, a) the unsystematic and ideological character of Osho’s life narrative shows a modern awareness of the nature and the limitations of memory and language that is alien to *Autobiography of a Yogi*; and b) Beckett’s declaration “there is no I” reflects the most fundamental insight of Eastern spirituality, and can be found both in Yogananda and in Osho. However, while in the former author it is an abstract declaration of traditional wisdom addressed to a distant reader, in the latter it is a live experience that the master shares with his audience.

### **The Secular, the Sacred, and the Modernization of the Indian Tradition**

A clarification of my taking on the contrast between a secular and sacred perspective is in order because in *Some Spiritual Autobiographies in English* G.K. Sandhya gives a different interpretation of Yogananda: in the context of post-colonial discourse, *Autobiography of a Yogi* is a secular and political work. Indeed, it is *political* because it can be read as a nationalist text: by showing the consonance between Kriya Yoga and the Theory of

Relativity, it proves the modern relevance of the Hindu worldview and counters Western cultural hegemony. It is *secular* because it allegedly “demystifies” miracles. Ostensibly, Yogananda’s “law of miracles” debunks the mechanistic view of the universe peculiar to pre-Einsteinian physics, which is seen as an ideological prop of Western hegemony: the consciousness of a yogi embraces the whole universe, which is made of light, so “his mass is infinite,” and he acquires supernatural powers. Conversely, I postulate that 1) Yogananda’s discourse is *sacred* inasmuch as it is functional to a society that I call *traditional* since it is holistic and hierarchic, and it has scriptural religion as its cultural/ideological foundation, and 2) Rajneesh’s spiritual perspective is *secular* because it is *individualistic*, and does not rely on the authority principle. Therefore, according to this definition of modernity, it is *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood*, and not Yogananda’s *Autobiography*, which can be read as *political* in the modern sense of the word. Accordingly, I refer to the definitions that Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Charles Taylor give of “secularism” and “the sacred” respectively in *Nations and Nationalism*, *Imagined Communities*, and *A Secular Age*, and I hold that these ideas may be generalized in a cross-cultural perspective. Most importantly, Taylor’s *A Secular Age* outlines the process by which a society comes to be seen as a collection of individuals, and is no longer considered as an organic entity. An archaic world is characterized by the concept of *embedment*: the boundaries between human beings, the society they live in, the cosmos, and the gods are non-existent. In the Axial Age (from the eighth to the third century B.C.E.) we have a first and partial *disembedment* – a minority phenomenon that concerns the intellectual and religious élites, and does not influence common people and society at large.

The outlook that obtained in Europe in the Middle Ages can be still understood through the notion of *enchantment*: people believed in miracles, in forces and in supernatural beings. They thought (like Yogananda) that the supernatural could manifest itself in magic objects, in places, and in persons. Religious ritual and belief did not primarily concern the individual, but were a factor of social cohesion. In Taylor’s words, in time the *porous self* of the enchanted outlook gives way to a *buffered self*: the modern individual. While the pre-modern world is organized around the concepts that social hierarchy is sacrosanct because God wills it, and corresponds

to a spiritual hierarchy in the cosmos, the new outlook is shaped by the notion that God is not a personal entity. Indeed, one of Taylor’s central assertions is that the understanding of God goes through different stages: from the idea of a supreme being with powers of agency and personality we arrive at Feuerbach’s assertion that the potentialities we have attributed to God are really human potentialities – a statement that Osho emphatically agrees with. For Charles Taylor the cultural revolution of the 1960s is the last stage of the process of secularization in the West. Moral and spiritual individualism begins then to be complemented by “expressive individualism,” which centers on the widespread conviction “that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one’s own” (Taylor 2007, 475). *A Secular Age* helps delineate the angle of my paper on two counts: a) it defines interpretive terms like embedment, enchantment, and the new moral order; and b) it gives an explanation of the sacred outlook and of the concepts of secularism and individualism that can be transposed to the Indian context of my authors. In fact, in *Modernization of the Indian Tradition* Yogendra Singh writes that holism and hierarchy are structural traits that Medieval Europe and pre-modern India have in common. With its abundance of miracles, amulets and saints, *Autobiography of a Yogi* shows evidence of embedment and enchantment, and is set against the naïve background of taken-for-granted belief, which Taylor considers a distinctive trait of the traditional worldview. Indeed, while Yogananda discredits criticism toward his “enchanted” sort of spirituality by portraying the skeptics in an unfavorable light, the belief in a personal God is one of the Rajneesh’s prime polemic targets, and in *Glimpses of a Modern Childhood* the protagonist comes through as a model of expressive individualism.

As it happens, Yogendra Singh’s *Modernization of the Indian Tradition* is a work of pivotal importance that was published in 1973, at midpoint between the appearance of *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946) and *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood* (1984), and is well suited to serve as a guide to that cultural and historical period. In Singh’s account, the Indian Renaissance and Westernization are cultural trends that exemplify respectively a resistant and an accepting encounter of Hinduism with foreign models. The Renaissance includes Dayanda Saraswati (1824-1883), Vivekananda (1863-1902), and Gandhi (1869-1848), and focuses on maintaining the

traditional values by *marginal* adaptations to Western culture. Yogananda (who held the Mahatma in great esteem) can be included in it. Westernization includes Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) and Nehru (1889-1964), and aims at the institution of a new Great Tradition of Modernization comparable to the Hindu Great Tradition. Rajneesh (who in his autobiography makes no mystery of preferring Nehru to Gandhi) can be ascribed to the modernizers' fold on account of his political, spiritual, and philosophical views.

In brief, "modernization" is the process by which a traditional culture based on a sacred outlook becomes secular, *i.e.*, more centered on the individual. Under the impact of a foreign power, the main attributes of Hinduism integrate with, or give way to, a parallel set of attributes of the Western post-Enlightenment civilization. There is a shift from hierarchy to equality, from holism to individualism, from continuity to historicity, and from transcendence to rationalism and secularism. Interestingly, Singh writes from the vantage point of a diachronic and trans-cultural perspective: by looking at medieval Europe we can understand traditional India, and the way modernization took place in the former foreshadows a *similar* development in the latter. On the one hand modernization shares in some common characteristics in different ages and everywhere in the world, and on the other hand it is affected by the idiosyncratic historical circumstances in which it comes to pass: these two aspects, however, are not mutually exclusive as it is implied by the post-colonial school of thought. "Modern society," we read in Singh's essay, "has evolved from that of the Middle Ages, which at first sight certainly appears to be a society of the traditional type, more like the Indian than like the modern. The conception of the *universitas* ... is certainly akin to the Hindu conception of *dharma* and the hierarchical interdependence of the several social statuses" (Singh 1973: 3). Likewise, the *Glossary of Hinduism Terms* defines *dharma* as "the order that makes life and universe possible, and includes duties, rights, laws, conduct, virtues and right way of living," while the related meaning of the Latin word *universitas* is "the whole," "the total," "the universe," and "the world."

In the West the feudal hierarchic system collapsed under the impact of the Reformation, the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, but in India before the arrival of the English nothing of the

kind paved the way for modernization. The flaws of the caste system began to be addressed only at the time of the Western-inspired social reform movements, but when Yogananda and Rajneesh composed their life writings, caste was still very much alive. Today (as we learn from Jamshed Ansari) it has adapted to the new political situation, and has undergone profound changes: in this renewed form, it remains a major factor of social cohesion (Ansari 2014). In the past, however, Western culture was as holistic and hierarchic as any other traditional culture: “The medieval political life,” writes Singh, “depended on the link between hereditary and spiritual rank in society, control over land as the principal economic resource, and the exercise of public authority. The group and estate-based rights were similar to caste-based rights as acknowledged by the Hindu tradition” (Sing 1973, 114).

As far as hierarchy and the caste system are concerned, Louis Dumont’s *Homo Hierarchicus* is a useful complement to Singh’s work. Dumont’s work problematizes the individualist point of view, and throws useful light on my argument inasmuch as Yogananda and Rajneesh were in different ways influenced by Western thought, and wrote their autobiographies mostly to address foreign readers and prospective disciples. The author explains that the cardinal principles that the West has embraced as from the Age of Reason are equality and liberty, which are both underpinned by the modern idea of individuality. Egalitarianism, however, is an ideology; it does not state an actuality: “*qua* political and moral ideal is a declaration of faith beyond dispute,” but “*qua* adequate expression of social life is a naïve judgment” (Dumont 1970, 4). In defense of hierarchy, the author warns that caste is a fact of life, and it should be accepted as such. Indian civilization is a form of the universal, because subordination and conformity are intrinsic to human nature; and individual consciousness originates in social training. *Homo Hierarchicus* claims (against Osho) that self-sufficient individuality is a myth, that an individualistic society has never existed, and that man is best conceived as “a more or less autonomous point of emergence of a particular collective humanity” (Dumont 1970, 5). The “emergence” of the individual from society is partial and fragile, and doesn’t have deep roots: nowadays no less than in the past it depends on contingent external circumstances. In fact, in the West the modern individual has come into existence as the bearer of political rights, *i.e.*, as the normative subject of

representative institutions. In the sub-continent a similar process began when the British introduced the modern rule of law, it came in part to fruition in 1949, when the new Constitution created the premises for a comprehensive change of Indian society, and it continues to this day. Democracy and universalism, though, break what Dumont calls “the social chain of hierarchized interdependence” and “traditional particularism,” which give man embedment: a sense of rootedness, stability and meaning. Political freedom makes one both more responsible and more vulnerable: “Democracy throws man back upon himself alone” (Dumont 1970, 18). That is why modern individualism has no place in *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and about thirty years later is still a matter of defiance on the part of the protagonist of *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood*, who admits to being a dropout from his society, and takes pride in his aloneness.

As it happens, the most pointed political novels of the last century show that the gregarious instinct has such deep psychological roots that true individuals are still hard to find *anywhere* in the world. George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (which was published in 1948, shortly before Yoganada’s death and Rajneesh’s spiritual enlightenment) brings home that conformity is to blame no less than external coercion for all kinds of authoritarian governments. In fact the dystopian world that the author describes is a modern-day Western society based on caste, in which personhood is a scandal and dangerous anomaly. If Modernism foreshadows the deconstruction of the individual, for Dumont the very concept of an independent individuality is misleading. This, however, does not mean that political and existential freedom is illusion, nor does it imply that Yogananda’s sacred discourse is the only answer to the existential crisis of the West that we can find in Indian spirituality. Indeed, Singh affirms that Hinduism is not monolithic, and offers alternative schemes of thought: it *concentrates* on the ritual theme, but it is not *exhausted* by it. Among the collectivistic institutions of the Indian tradition, a very important one is renunciation, which has a distinctive individualistic orientation: “The traditional Indian social system did recognize the legitimacy of social and cultural innovation through the institutionalized role of the renouncer or *sannyasin*, who was liberated from the norms of social hierarchy or caste through spiritual transcendence, and also authorized to re-interpret the meaning of tradition and thereby change it” (Singh 1973, 21).

## Conclusion

In this paper, which is based on "Sacred Discourse and Secular Spiritual Perspective in the Life Narratives of Paramhasa Yogananda and Acharya Rajneesh," I have argued that Yogananda's work gives voice to a hierarchical outlook rooted in the Hindu scriptures: in an age of global change, it advocates a return to the past. Conversely, Osho's autobiography holds that meditation joined with the unconditional affirmation of one's individuality is the spiritual path that best answers to the new circumstances brought about by modernity, and shows affinity with the views of Modernism and contemporary political theory. Indeed, Yogananda tries to balance himself between the *experience* of meditation on the one hand, and *faith* in the scriptures on the other hand, which is dogmatic and grounded in a collectivity-oriented outlook. Rajneesh brings to fruition a potentially revolutionary seed that lies at the core of Hinduism, by declaring the primacy of *personal* spiritual experience as a transcendent foundation to the self: "To be an individual," says Osho, "is to be liberated, is to be enlightened" (Osho Rajneesh 2000, 179). In fact, what in *Autobiography of a Yogi* is affirmed as the doctrinal knowledge that "all is one" (non-duality), in *Glimpses of a Golden Childhood* is lived as an immediate and empowering *existential* realization: since all is God, when you trust yourself you trust God.

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# ***The Disappearance of Black Identity in Nella Larsen's Passing***

***Birdost Mohammed KARIM***

## **Abstract**

The practice of racism has always left negative impacts on the colored and black people in white societies leading them either to self-loathe or detesting the white culture. This study is an attempt to explore the melting of Irene's and Clare's black identities in Nella Larsen's *Passing* and how they deconstruct them. They experience the awful impacts of rejection in the white society as black women; therefore, they fail to achieve what they aspire in the dominant culture. Both are terribly in need of white recognition in the white society, which does not recognize them unless they obtain the standards set up by the white dominant culture. Irene cannot find security and pleasure in the black community; therefore she feels comfortable and insists on living in New York, furthermore Clare concludes that she cannot escape her arduous life as a black servant who is expected to work hard. As a result she disguises herself as a white woman. Striving to embrace the white culture, they consider "passing for white" and refusing their black heritage. The dominant culture causes the black characters of both novels to suffer and struggle to identify themselves. The black community in the novel is in a terrible situation, and the black characters are expected to act and work in favor of the interests of the white society, which looks at the black characters as secondary people. I argue that Irene and Clare lose their identities as black women in the novel and take on white identity, although Clare does not feel comfortable in the white society.

***Keywords:*** *Nella Larsen, "Passing", Racial Disappearance*

## **1. The Study Background**

Colour line played a pivotal role in determining racial identity in the beginning of the twentieth century, when society was concerned with biology rather than social history and culture. This idea was put forward during the Harlem Renaissance movement, which was a blossoming

Frican-American cultural movement in 1920s. Accordingly, a person's appearance, for example skin colour, would determine their racial identity. The Supreme Court stated in its verdict in 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* that someone holding one-eighth Negro heritage would be officially categorized as Negro. The verdict was hinged on "a commitment to the biology of race" (Benn Michaels, 130). The essentialist judgment which shrank race to only a drop of blood meaninglessly enlarged this drop to specify the chief "essential" border between races, particularly between Whites and Blacks. To express it simply, depending on the Supreme Court verdict, the all-white judges made the colour line essential as the races were measured innately dissimilar from one another. According to N. Chabani Manganyi, the body occupies an essential position in being since he presumes that people make approaches to life via their superficial being. In this respect, he claims, "[t]he body is a movement inwards and outwards" (6). To put it in different words, the body plays an essential role in human beings' lives, selecting their life styles.

In the white society, prosperity belongs to the white people, and the blacks are left with no room for development neither for enjoyment; for that reason, the blacks attempt to embrace the white world. Leading life with objects, one depicts black identity as wishing to become white (Manganyi, 31). Existing in a world split between black and white individuals preserves the desire. Consequently, black individuals internalizing white principles possibly imitate whites through having aspirations for material belongings, while what is different for them lies in the fact that they are principally deprived of the financial means of making such ambitions come true. Black individuals judge themselves in accordance with the things they own. This act demonstrates Manganyi's fascination in the examination of "false consciousness", a state whereby black individuals take on a white identity and therefore become estranged from the self as well as their own group. The absorption of white society renders a fake identity to the black person, who is compelled to replace their African society with a white culture (Manganyi, 35). Additionally, the replacement is asymmetrical because it fails to produce what it pledges. While embracing the white society, the black individual is duped by the culture which imposes a lower status upon them.

Barbara Burlison Mooney investigates the thought that the African-Americans' post-Civil War, which broke out from 1861 to 1865, and pre-Civil Rights movement obliged them to abide by a white prevailing society's outlook. Mooney argues that the African-Americans were under pressure to do their best to be neat and tidy so that the white culture could offer them preference. The nasty reality is that a lot of white individuals have thought and maintain to think that black people to some extent hold deficiency in living in a clean way, metaphorically or literally (48). The African-Americans took on a strategy of accurate cleanness so as to oppose this terrible misperception. Mooney claims that "orderly, enlightened, domestic environment" helps the African American deserve recognition and freedom in American social cultures' "churches, and politics" (Mooney, 49). Accordingly, the black people should attempt to prove that it is only misunderstanding by sticking to neatness. Following that strategy, the black people probably approach a sort of fair treatment.

Considerably, however, Mooney proposes that apart from the principal society, the people from the African-American communities put pressure on African-Americans, for instance Mooney makes reference to W. E. B. Du Bois' endeavour to inspire the architectural improvement of his race through two depictions, before and after what the wealthy and highly regarded black individuals' dwelling might and has to be like. Mooney claims that Du Bois contradicts the picture of a dilapidated hut entitled "The Old Cabin with a picture of the mansion of J. W. Sanford in Memphis, Tennessee" (57). The point is possibly apparent that prosperity may be reached through the acceptance of the architectural iconography of the white society.

It is not only completely black people who are deemed as black identity holders but also biracial ones are considered so. When it comes to biracial people, they have always been considered as black identity holders. Likewise, Davis explains that biracial individuals have been presumed to take up a black identity. This supposition was grounded at the time of slavery when raping black female slaves was widespread; moreover their biracial children increased the affluence of the slave's parent or master (qtd. in Rockquemore and Brunnsma, 337). The mere identity 'choice' for biracial individuals was the singular black identity. This social norm was

so intensely rooted that it was not even imagined as a choice, and no one would have thought of another racial identity (Rockquemore and Brunσμα, 337). Likewise, Maria Root labels the singular black 'choice' as biracial, someone's approval of the identity which society decides upon (qtd. in Rockquemore and Brunσμα, 337). Despite the fact that the closeness rate of their skin colour to blackness is possibly equal to its closeness to whiteness, there is no choice for the biracial people but black identity.

The concept of passing is fundamentally associated with identity politics and examines identity ontology. According to Gayle Wald, several reviewers assert that passing deconstructs identity whereas others state that it underlines the simultaneous unsteadiness as well as instrumentality of identity types (52). Their readings are undoubtedly established on their description of identity itself. The practice of passing leads the passer's original identity to decline and makes them appear in another identity which is not constructed in accordance with their racial background.

Traditional understandings of racial passing, which is dependent upon the modernist concept of unchanging and stable identity, emphasize that passing is to fake one's genuine identity. According to Samira Kawash, the interpretations explain that passing has things to do just with appearance and that the authentic identities underlying the misleading appearance stay intact (126). Likewise, Carl Van Thompson points out that passers endeavour to render their blackness unseen through mimicking "white mannerisms" constantly (15-16). In accordance with his views, those "impostors," putting on "the mask of whiteness," are "self-exiled within whiteness", furthermore they assent to an "unstable identity" (16). He adds that passing eventually leads to self-obliteration (18). Likewise, Jacquelyn McLendon proposes that the act of passing is possibly deemed as a type of "pretense or disguise" leading to identity disappearance and submission. Passing provides the passer with impermanence, anxiety and loss of place within a cultural and racial society (96-98). Accordingly, the passer loses his or her original identity and the self.

This traditional interpretation of passing depends on the modernist notion of identity or as Walter Benn Michaels labels it, "identity essentialism". Benn Michaels puts forward that cultural pluralists stick to identity

superiority since in accordance with them, “instead of who we are being constituted by what we do, what we do is justified by who we are” (140). Modernism, which is in theory reliant on cultural pluralism, turns identity into “an object of *cathexis*” and into something which may be found or lost, protected or given up by “*deriving* one’s beliefs and practices *from* one’s cultural identity instead of *equating* one’s beliefs and practices *with* one’s cultural identity” (Benn Michaels, 141). The advocates of cultural pluralism assume inconsistency between the passer’s authentic racial identity as well as their new supposed one. Therefore, Kathleen Pfeiffer believes that a lot of passing stories stress “the experience of disconnect” between a character’s internal identity, usually black, as well as his or her external one, apparently white (3). Doing so, a great number of black authors unavoidably associate themselves with Harlem essentialism, propelled by the devotion to the cultural modernist pluralist concept of identity.

Thadious M. Davis claims that in *Passing*, Larsen, who backs an individual identity rather than the “general objective of the New Negro Renaissance,” which is “the forging of racial identity”, disassociates herself with the principles of the Renaissance by her handling of the notion of identity as well as passing (242). Both Harlem Renaissance essentialism and white racial essentialism align a personal identity with the entire race or culture. However, this interpretation is deficient in considering personal identity features. Passing produces individuation because it presents the individual with an opportunity to identify himself or herself independently and refutes the imposed and inborn features. Pfeiffer maintains that the passer is able to blatantly sense “the urgings of self-reliant individualism” to dispose of a historically identified identity and to gain “a freer and fuller expression of selfhood” (6). Yet, passing for white is an effort caused by racial degradation of the blacks in the United States society. It is the outcome of some sort of an inferiority complex.

## **2. The Loss of the Self in *Passing***

The 1920s in the United States was an era identified by extensive apprehension as well as argument over exceeding racial restrictions, what is called “color line” between black and white people, intensified by the Great Migration, according to which hundreds of thousands of black

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individuals moved from the rural south to northern and midwestern cities. The people's practice of exceeding the color line and endeavouring to claim recognition in another racial group dissimilar from their own one was identified as passing. Nella Larsen published her work in 1929 and reflected on the issue through her characters, Irene and Clare.

The disappearance of the self and attempting to look as someone else is a transparent issue in the novel. I argue that both Irene's and Clare's selves get lost, and they make attempts to escape from their natural existence as African-Americans. They no longer remain within the frame of blackness. Correspondingly, Sullivan claims that the word "passing" undoubtedly touches on the colour line crossing which was formerly very common in American stories of "race"; however, in Larsen's work the word colloquially has the meaning of death as well. Accordingly, the novel's title alludes to the subject's fading in the story, or the likelihood of aphorisis, which is labeled as the loss of the subject behind the signifier in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* by Jacques Lacan. For Irene Westover and Clare, the two protagonists of the novel, the destroying signifier is nigger, a word coming to express their fight with the conflict of American racism as well as absorption (Sullivan, 1998, p. 373).

In *Passing*, the white culture affects Irene's and Clare's desires in a way that it obliges them to construct their desires in accordance with the ones of white society; therefore, they make efforts to act and behave like two other women who are not themselves. According to Sullivan, Irene and Clare are "tyrannized by the Other's desire"; furthermore, despite the fact that sexuality and gender complicate their connection, "the dynamics of white racism and the demands of assimilation" determine the two women's lives. Eventually, their lives are identified in the word Negro by "White racism"; moreover, that description decides upon the restrictions of their lives (1998, p. 374). What Sullivan tries to say is that the two female characters' wishes and aspirations are not their own but rather the production of the dominant white culture.

I assume that the key problem in the two characters' lives is their being acknowledged by the white society. They are terribly in need of recognition because they always feel rejected in the dominant culture. There is a clear

connection between recognition and the Other's inscrutable desire, since as Jacques Lacan claims, "man's desire is the desire of the Other" (1978, p. 38). Accordingly, one's desires should not go out of the Other's circle of desires in order to be recognized. In *Passing*, Irene charges Clare, who is "exquisite, golden, fragrant, flaunting", of a "deliberate courting of attention" (Larsen, 1929, p. 135), whereas she herself takes an excessive amount of time putting on clothes throughout the text. Both do so for the purpose of being recognized. In conversations, the "subject" has to find out the wish of the "Other" (Sullivan, 1998, 375). Similarly, Ellie Ragland-Sullivan claims that the "subject" implicitly asks the "Other", "What am I to/of you?" (1986, p. 48). According to Sullivan's and Ragland-Sullivan's ideas, the subject should learn the desires of the "Other" and longs to know the viewpoint of the "Other"; thus, Irene as the subject aspires to realize how Clare as the "Other" looks at her.

Whiteness and affluence are the preconditions for someone to be recognized in the bourgeois environment of *Passing*. Irene crosses the racial line by taking on white values, including white principles of beauty whereas Clare does so by superficially embracing a white identity void of white values (Sullivan, 1998, p. 374). Depending on that analysis, Irene abandons the black values and background while Clare only takes advantage of white identity and does not dispose of black values. I believe that Irene intends to be close to Clare so that she can bridge Irene and white culture. Correspondingly, Thadious M. Davis considers Irene's "attraction to Clare" as an "aesthetic attraction to whiteness," a "logical extension of her black bourgeoisie life- style and ideology" (1994, p. 326). Though Clare proclaims that Irene is her connection to blackness, Irene brings about her longing for whiteness through Clare. Having her "ivory face under that bright hair" (Larsen, 1929, p. 46) as well as her marriage to a white investor, Clare turns to be Irene's vicarious link to the white culture.

The story is told in the third person narrative, and in describing the narrative voice of the novel, Jacquelyn McLendon touches on the issue of "the disguised 'I'". Despite the fact that the narrator is the third person, the story is "personal" since it is entirely Irene's; furthermore, it could simply be narrated in the first person. The "disguised I," places emphasis on Irene's repression and strengthens the theme of "passing" as disguise in *Passing*

(1991, p. 159). McLendon's understanding of the "disguised I" leads to another anxiety of the novel, the problematic I. The first person would not be apt for Irene's narrative since the "I" as an empowered, integrated subject status avoided Irene (Sullivan 1998, p. 377). Accordingly, the "I" would not belong to Irene herself and be different from her as a passer.

Irene often identifies herself in accordance with the desire of the Other; therefore, an unmediated depiction of her voice would be incompatible with her indispensable lack. Wish is an indication of lack; thus, Irene's aspiration for security throughout *Passing* brings the instability of the "I" to light (Sullivan 1998, p. 377). She associates her faintness with a "need for immediate safety" (Larsen, 1929, p. 12) and finds out "that, to her, security was the most important and desired thing in life .... She wanted only to be tranquil" (Larsen, 1929, p. 200). Irene undergoes "the menace of impermanence" (Larsen, 1929, p. 188), which she ascribes to Brian's wish to move to Brazil and to Clare's disruption of her household. Her sense of permanence, her understanding of herself like a constant, integrated I, is constantly in hazard; furthermore, she is afflicted by a tense anxiety of destruction, even in Chicago prior to Clare's rejoining her. This tension is indicative of denoting the unavailability of fragmenting the subject.

Based on the argument that Irene undergoes a problematic "I", she hunts for an idealized figure to reflect herself as she does not remain black and must see herself in a different identity. In "The Mirror Stage," Lacan throws light on the idealized image function in subjectivity. The notion is that subsequent to seeing their image in the mirror, the baby describes themselves as "I," as subject at first. This reflection of the mirror is unified, masterful and, consequently, signifies "the mental permanence of the I" for the subject (1977, p. 2). Lacan adds that the supposition of the idealized image constantly involves incorrect acceptance since the reflection is not the self (1977, p. 6). At the beginning of *Passing*, Irene takes on Clare as her idealized image as Claudia Tate considers that Clare's regular connection with Irene renders Irene envious of Clare's unusual beauty. Tate adds that Irene is factually infatuated with Clare's beauty (1980, p. 142-44). However, the misrecognition eloquently becomes apparent after the mirror event.

Lacan's "Mirror Stage" in *Passing* evidently takes place when Irene declines to reply Clare's letters; consequently, Clare appears uninvited in Irene's room. Subsequent to asking Zulena to allow Clare, Irene "at the mirror ... dusted a little powder on her nose and brushed out her hair" (Larsen, 1929, p. 114). When she comes back from rest room hurriedly, she practises the rejection she means to give Clare:

But that was as far as she got in her rehearsal. For Clare had come softly into the room without knocking, and before Irene could greet her, had dropped a kiss on her dark curls. Looking at the woman before her, Irene Redfield had a sudden inexplicable onrush of affectionate feeling. Reaching out, she grasped Clare's two hands in her own and cried with something like awe in her voice: "Dear God! But aren't you lovely, Clare!" (Larsen, 1929, p. 115) In case the mirror were not absolutely there in the scene and in case there were no elision of identities, the "kiss," the "inexplicable onrush of affectionate feeling," as well as Irene's mention of "awe" may all be interpreted entirely as symbols of an erotic desire between the two individuals (Sullivan, 1998, p. 378). However, I contend that the presence of the mirror dampens that sexuality-based interpretation. While Irene stares at the mirror, Clare goes into the room; furthermore, the presence of the mirror creates ambiguity in Irene's seeing the woman in front of her in the mirror. The vagueness lies in the fact that it is not known whether the woman is Clare or Irene herself. Additionally, Irene's response to Clare's going in restates the Lacanian infant's "jubilant assumption" of their image in the mirror (Lacan, 1977, p. 2) because similar to the mirror-stage infant, Irene shows that she is interested in the image and cries out with ecstasy. Her "awed" shout, "Dear God! But aren't you lovely, Clare!" implies that in Clare she observes an image which is in superiority as compared to the one she apprehensively accounts for prior to Clare's entrance; thus, the image is apter to signify the "mental permanence of the I" (Lacan, 1977, p. 2). As if to emphasize the identification between the two women, Clare even takes a seat in Irene's "favourite chair" (Larsen, 1929, p. 115). According to Helena Michie, the scene proves the fluctuation between Irene's "desire for Clare and identification with her" (1992, p. 151). Consequently, Irene notices in Clare an "image of her futile searching" for permanence (Larsen, 1929, p. 129). As the story develops more, she finds it difficult to separate "individuals from the race, herself from Clare Kendry" (Larsen, 1929, p. 185).

When Irene reaches the fact that she is lacking of the competence to “master” Clare, the identification between the two individuals turns to be more challenging. Sullivan argues that Irene renounces the attractive, “idealized white image” as she commences to doubt that Clare makes attempts to seduce Brian and that both plan to be disloyal to her (1998, 378). As soon as this doubt becomes apparent, Irene experiences a momentary disappearance of existence, “The face in the mirror vanished from her sight, blotted out by this thing which had so suddenly flashed across her groping mind” (Larsen, 1929, p. 163). As the image ultimately re-emerges in the mirror, it is “her dark white face” which is not merely white anymore and which she sees not with delight but with “a kind of ridiculing contempt” (Larsen, 1929, p. 164). I claim that later while Irene and Clare get together in front of the mirror for the last time, Irene goes through panic and blame over her sin of omission; she has it in mind but is unable to inform Clare that Bellew possibly deduces Clare’s ethnic identity because he already sees Irene with Felise Freeland having brown skin, “Irene passed a hand over her eyes to shut out the accusing face in the glass before her. With one corner of her mind she wondered how long she had looked like that, drawn and haggard and ...yes, frightened” (Larsen, 1929, p. 196). Irene more and more loses her aptitude to control either herself or Clare; therefore, she undergoes a shrink of the “loveliness” in the mirror; moreover, the image is not masterful anymore but one of powerlessness as well as fright (Sullivan, 1998, p. 378-79).

When Bellew meets Irene and Felise Freeland, a big problem arises in Clare’s life. I believe that it is not merely Clare who mirrors Irene but Irene mirrors Clare as well; therefore, the mirroring is reciprocal. After Bellew receives Felise to be Irene’s reflection, he also identifies Clare reflected in Felise’s face:

*But the smile faded at once. Surprise, incredulity, and-was it understanding?-passed over his features. He had, Irene knew, become conscious of Felise, golden, with curly black Negro hair, whose arm was still linked in her own. She was sure, now, of the understanding in his face, as he looked at her again and then back at Felise. And displeasure. (Larsen, 1929, p. 182-83)*

The above-mentioned lines unveil that Bellew finds out Clare's African American identity. Greeting Irene with a smile denotes that he envisions Irene as a mirror of his white spouse; however, the smile expressively "fades" when he transfers his look from Irene to Felise, whose skin and hair label her as African American and disclose all what Irene and Clare already apprehensively hide from him.

Irene attempts to act out her own interests, "[i]nstantly, at the first glance of recognition, her face had become a mask.... she gave him the cool appraising stare which she reserved for mashers" (Larsen, 1929, p. 183). While noticing Bellew's "displeasure," Irene puts on the "mask" that signifies a form of self-concealment, and additionally her cool gaze indicates the manipulation of herself as the object of the Other's wish. Bearing resemblance to the Lacanian child, who yearns to become the object of her parents' wish and accordingly contemplates the tantalizing likelihood, "Can he lose me?" (Lacan, 1978, p. 214-15), Irene alters the stare direction and uses the prospect of her own loss or fading to manipulate Bellew's wish. Revealing Clare's black identity creates hardship for Irene and brings her away a big step from the white society. Tate says that the sole time Irene is alert that race even remotely leaves impact on her life occurs when the looming disclosure of Clare's racial identity is intimidating and hastens the disturbance of Irene's domestic safety (1980, p. 143). Irene starts to turn ambivalent about her African legacy; furthermore, that ambivalence is linked to Clare. Clare becomes perilous for her; thus, she must rescue her objective, white identity, by detaching himself from her. Clare's identity exposure equals to the fact that she is also a Negro. The burden of her race makes Irene commence to crave "for the first time in her life, that she had not been born a Negro" (Larsen, 1929, p. 181). She fails to hold that burden and has no adequate competence to put up with blackness. Endangering her life leads her to reject herself as a Negro and wish that she were born a white child. Tate portrays Irene as "on the verge of total mental disintegration" (1980, p. 143), and at first she links her breakdown to her idealized image, Clare.

I argue that Irene makes two attempts to destruct Clare, and both attempts stem from racist behaviours done towards black people and escaping from blackness as Clare is not in a white identity anymore. The first destruction

involves Irene's damage of Clare's letters at two dissimilar times in the story. Notably, both letters refresh for Irene the remembrance of John Bellew's racist attack while Clare is present there. Clare's first letter, sent to thank Irene for attending the tea party in Chicago, just rings a bell of the degradation of listening without a sound to Bellew's racist invective for Irene, as a result she tore the offending letter into tiny ragged squares that fluttered down and made a small heap in her black crepe de Chine lap. The destruction completed, she gathered them up, rose, and moved to the train's end. Standing there, she dropped them over railing and watched them scatter, on tracks, on cinders, on forlorn grass, in rills of dirty water. (Larsen, 1929, p. 83)

Tearing the letter metaphorically connotes Irene's effort to stay away from Clare as "Nig." She splits it into "tiny ragged squares," and disperses the pieces in a gesture of removal, which Sullivan deems to be a forced fading of "Clare's asserted presence", bringing with it Bellew's abhorrence of "niggers" (1998, p. 380). Subsequently, Irene believes that if Clare appears personally, she "had only to turn away her eyes, to refuse her recognition" (Larsen, 1929, p. 84). Without thinking, she reproduces the white racist's deeds, desiring Clare's loss through a rejection to recognize. The second letter, Irene gets in New York, also brings the terrible remembrance, "bringing with them a clear, sharp remembrance, in which even now, after two years, humiliation, resentment, and rage were mingled" (Larsen, 1929, p. 9). She tears it, "tearing the letter across" and throws "it into the scrap-basket" (Larsen, 1929, p. 109), expressing both her fury at Clare as well as the breakdown she feels with the recollection of Bellew's loathing. The remembrance of racial discrimination she has received before is due to Clare; therefore, Irene tears the letter in order to dispose of Clare. Irene does not want a Clare as a Negro to link her to blackness and to be a high wall between the white society and her, but she wants a Clare as a purely white woman building a bridge between the white world and her.

The destruction of the two letters occurs prior to merging Clare and Irene in the mirror. However, after Irene finds her corporal being in Clare in the mirror, she obliterates that image subsequent to commencing to suspect Brian and Clare as well as Clare's identity revelation. Thus, Irene expresses another destruction of Clare, crashing a white teacup. As she

becomes furious at noticing Brian apparently courting Clare at another tea party, Irene either drops or flings the teacup to the ground with “a slight crash. On the floor at her feet lay the shattered cup” (Larsen, 1929, p. 171). I claim that the broken teacup scene uncovers Irene’s own collapse or loss of control; however, to conceal her perplexity, Irene explains to Hugh Wentworth that she has smashed the cup deliberately because it “was the ugliest thing that your ancestors, the Confederates ever owned” (Larsen, 1929, p. 173). The broken teacup helps Irene realize that it is necessary for her to break and dispose of it everlastingly. Evidently, the breaking of the teacup with its “white fragments” foretells Clare’s imminent death (Sullivan, 1998, p. 81). On the other hand, Brody believes that the cup, like Clare, is an ugly object calling to Irene’s mind her black heritage, which she fails to endure anymore. It also indicates “Clare’s own broken body” in the end of *Passing*. Irene thinks about a way to free her stable life from Clare Kendry (1992, p. 1062) as well as her “menace of impermanence” (Larsen, 1929, p. 187).

I believe that both Irene and Clare fail to leave their black heritage and embrace new racial identities everlastingly, and their attempts to do so lead them to their destruction in the end of the novel, Clare’s death and Irene’s loss of consciousness. Whether Clare herself jumps or Irene pushes her, Bellew’s announcement, “So you’re a nigger, a damned dirty nigger!” (Larsen, 1929, p. 208), initiates Clare’s fading from the window. In the Lacanian version of disappearance of the subject, while making efforts to find out the wish of the “Other” with the question, “[h]e is saying this to me, but what does he want?”, the subject gets lost behind the “signifier” in conversation with the “Other”, (Lacan, 1978, p. 214). Accordingly, Clare’s death from the window is the other’s desire. Similarly, Frantz Fanon also reckons that for black subjects in conversation with the “white Other”, the reply has to be this, “Turn white or disappear” (1991, p. xxi). Clare cannot turn white eternally and must disappear out of her blackness. Bellew’s speech, “damned dirty nigger”, denotes his wish for Clare’s exclusion; therefore, Clare, who is belittled in Bellew’s mind for associating with Negroes, has to perish although Irene precipitates the death announcing, “One moment Clare had been there, a vital glowing thing, like a flame in red and gold. The next she was gone. There was a gasp of horror, and above it a sound not quite human, like a beast in agony. “Nig! My God!

Nig!'" (Larsen, 1929, p. 209). The most noticeable reading, which has been given the widest approval, is that Irene in a moment of ephemeral madness pushes Clare out of the window (Tate, 1980, p. 145). There is no clear evidence for Tate's interpretation; therefore, suicide can be another interpretation. Tate also believes that Clare examines the pieces of her life; furthermore, she disappears, leaving behind a hurting state, which she fails to change. She is completely in a state of solitude; therefore, committing suicide is the ultimate getaway from the degradation awaiting her (1980, p. 145-146). In both cases, Irene's pushing her and Clare's suicide, Clare dies out of racial issues. Clare, like Irene, undergoes a problematic subjectivity resulting in her fading, or the disappearance of the subject behind the signifier. Her loss proves the fatal connection Lacan puts forward between signification and subjectivity because the word "Nig", similar to the Lacanian signifier, "manifests itself ... in the murder of the thing" (Lacan, 1977, p. 104). Accordingly, Lacan's term, signifier, is equal to Clare's blackness.

Clare's death stems from being black, and she loses her life as a black person. Brody claims that Clare's collapse as an upper-class white" spouse would be a wanted "fall back into her past life as lower-class black Clare Kendry" (1992, p. 1061). She dies as a black woman, and Irene says, "Clare Kendry had remained almost what she had always been" (Larsen, 1929, p. 133), a lower-class Black individual. However, Irene entirely crosses her racial line to the white side as her support to John Bellew reveals "No, no! 'I'm quite certain that he didn't [push Clare]" (Larsen, 1929, p. 216). She defends Bellew as if she belongs to the white society. I claim that Clare embraces her death happily because as the narrator says she "seemed unaware of any danger ... There was even a faint smile on her full, red lips and in her shining eyes" (Larsen, 1929, p. 209). Clare's final vision demonstrates that she goes towards death consciously and "perhaps proudly as a Black woman"; furthermore, Clare never has the fear of being realized, but it is Irene who holds that fear. (Brody, 1992, p. 1663-64). I reckon that Irene's desire to destroy Clare through letters and the teacup is an attempt to shatter herself. Irene is ruined when Clare undergoes corporal collapse because she is unable to "separate....herself from Clare Kendry" (Larsen, 1929, p. 185). Clare's fall to her loss leads Irene to go through nausea as she envisions that Clare may stay alive. The nausea

stems not only from “fear, but also from “the idea of the glorious body mutilated” (Larsen, 1929, p. 213). “The glorious body” does not entirely belong to Clare; however, it is a “shared, idealized image of self”; therefore, its deformity signifies both women’s breakdown (Sullivan, 1998, p. 382). While Irene attempts to free Bellew from blame, her unsteady subjectivity breaks as she says, ““No, no! ‘I’m quite certain that he didn’t. I was there, too. As close as he was. She just fell, before anybody could stop her. I-’ ” (Larsen, 1929, p. 216). Considerably, the subject, Irene, is dismantled by the utterance of the “I”, as the storyteller claims, “Her quaking knees gave way under her” (Larsen, 1929, p. 216). She moaned and sank down, moaned again. Through the great heaviness that submerged and drowned her she was dimly conscious of strong arms lifting her up. Then everything was dark” (Larsen, 1929, p. 216). Saying her final and most problematic word, “‘I-’“, Irene loses her consciousness. Her passing out, the “darkness” that swallows up I, is another example of aphanisis in *Passing*, which is the reflection of Clare’s brutal death. Her last word is “I”, and she fails to complete her last sentence. This vividly unveils that Irene does not belong to herself as a subject and cannot have her own voice because she is someone else.

### 3. Conclusion

Both Irene and Clare live in the white society where black people are not recognized and even rejected. Black characters in the novel are dealt with unfairly and have unequal opportunities to develop, besides racist behaviour of the white culture lets them down. Therefore they make attempts to escape from their realities as black women. Living in white society, Irene and Clare lose themselves and embrace the white identity. They go through the problem of white recognition, thus their objectives are to receive it. To gain white recognition, Irene and Clare melt their black identities in the white culture or they are obliged to disappear. Irene does not pass for white as transparently as Clare does because she is afraid of being found out, however she believes in the idea and takes on the white values. But Clare passes for white evidently and completely abandons her black heritage although she cannot find comfort in the white culture. Irene would pass for white everlastingly if she were sure that her authentic identity would not be exposed at all. The cruelty of the whites compels Clare to escape from her identity and embrace a white one. Irene and Clare

become the mirror of one another, and Irene employs Clare to reach her to the white world, therefore as soon as Clare's authentic identity is in danger of exposure, Irene renounces her as her idealized image as she wants Clare as the holder of a white identity. Another point is that Clare cannot prolong her passing for white eternally and dies subsequent to the disclosure of her black identity, thus she loses the self. Irene loses her consciousness when Clare dies, therefore this lends support to the interpretation that both are one person in one body.

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# ***The Power of Language in Huckleberry Finn***

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## **Abstract**

*Huckleberry Finn* is a very controversial novel, and has made some disagreements between the readers. Most of the issues are concerned with the way Jim is portrayed. The novel deals with the issue of racism as an ideology and a cultural phenomenon. Jim is a character who is inferior, passive and dehumanized through many ways, like the way he uses the language and the way he behaves. The language is used to represent the black Jim as a subject of the racist ideologies of his time. The message that the writer tells us is that although he is a white he fights for the right of the slaves and the persecuted class of the society. Twain creates characters that are imprisoned by their social milieu. Huck, Jim, and the society as a whole are entrapped within the confines of the existing slave system and the other entrapments of culture, most notably language. *Huckleberry Finn* is dialectic in that Twain uses the language against itself. The controversial nature of Twain's subject necessitates the reader's full awareness of Twain's use of irony, language, and point of view in *Huckleberry Finn*.

***Keywords:*** *Huckleberry Finn, Nigger, Language, Jim*

## **The Power of Language in *Huckleberry Finn***

Mark Twain's innovative use of language in *Huckleberry Finn* is one of the most attractive agents in the novel, and a paradise for critics to talk about. Early observers argue against the moral laxity in the language. But more visionary critics seem to feel comfortable with Twain's folkloric style to address the language in his work. One very clear example on *Huckleberry Finn*, besides his use of irony, is the use of language. Whether intentionally or not, Twain makes a very important point on remarking the dialects used by a tool to make his characters look realistic. One of the tricks and resources of the culture that works as a mirror of society and can cause some kind of harm to it. Language creates a social fiction that connects our senses to reality. Twain successfully reveals the badness of slavery, black

and white, by the use of his language, and he expands an anti-racist theme in the novel. An examination about the use of language by Twain shows that in reality *Huckleberry Finn* is a dialectic. Twain employs language in a way that stands against itself. Nonetheless, a very significant aspect of the Mark Twain's novel is the language of the novel. The language is full of the dialectic expressions. That makes the novel interesting to all of the dialect owners. Each one feels that their language is represented in the novel. Like many other cases Huck represents Twain. Huck's Dialect is the same as Twain's one. Twain refers to this in the notes. To be known Twain does this intentionally, and the aim is to have a sense of novelty and newness for those how don't know the English dialects, on the other hand it is a feeling of recognition for those who don't know the expressions of the other dialects. There are many instances for dialectic variability's. For example it says: "that ain't no matter," another Example is when he says: "it warn't no time to be sentimentering,"

Another example is the difference between Jim's dialect and Huck's. Jim's dialect is a very strong and strange dialect. His dialect is the dialect of the southern part of America that black people used. At that time it was known as the slave's dialect. Additionally, it was so odd to find an author who uses the language of the slaves, because the slaves were degraded to the extent that it was a shame to a writer to use their dialect. I think that Twain does so to show the readers and the society that the blacks and the other vernacular languages should be presented.

In 1840, blacks had no access at all to any kind of education, to learn to read and to write. They were deprived from their mother tongue and were not allowed to communicate with a new language nor different language. Jim's notion of "self" is controlled and limited by the same society in which he lives. "It seems axiomatic to us that the social milieu helps one to define his self-concept, and the self- concept that evolves affects the manner in which one person communicates with another" (Hall & Freedle, 1975, p. 129) . I believe that Twain gives his ideas of abolitionism and antislavery through the hero, which is Jim. Jim is the tangible hero of the novel. He is brave and full of courage. He puts himself in danger in order to be free. Huck gets to know that Jim is very philanthropist and humane. Jim shows his passion and love for the others. He is friendly and willing to

help the characters in the novel. Although it was difficult to show the good sides of the southern part of the country and the slaves, but Mark Twain intentionally, shows the reader that the slaves should not be degraded and they are full of love and friendliness.

I think there are many examples in which the slaves are shown as humane characters. For example Jim says: "De man ain't asleep -- he's dead. You hold still-- I'll go en see." He went, and bent down and looked, and says: "It's a dead man. Yes, indeedy; naked, too. He's ben shot in de back. I reck'n he's ben dead two er three days. Come in, Huck, but doan' look at his face -- it's too gashly." In the example it is obvious that Jim is humane, because he does not want Huck look at the corpse of a dead person, he thinks that it is sad to see a dead man, so he does not want Huck to hurt himself by looking at the face of the dead. Moreover Jim does not allow Huck to talk about the dead man, because he is afraid of the images he saw. This is evidence which shows that the slaves are not cruel, but they are philanthropists.

It was obvious that blacks are different from their white counterparts in physical features and cultural. Unfairly, whites made their own decision that differences make the blacks inferior and not the other way around. Jim naturally accepted the color of his skin was a sign of slavery, and these standards are displayed in the language that he must speak. Jim's interpretation of Huck's destiny in the hairball is an accurate example of his feelings towards his blackness. The idea that shows two angels governing around Jim, one which is white and the other is black. The white one leads him to the right path, in contrast to the black Angel, taking him to the wrong way (Clemens, 1977, p. 20). Jim has successfully adopted the Euro-American norms of evil and good which are symbolized by his marking the black angel as inferior and the white angel as superior. Jim was illiterate so whatever he picks up from the white culture turning him practically in a ghost. He was sure of not possessing any good of his own. Because of Jim's situation of bondage and the color of his skin, he sees himself as inferior to all whites, poor or rich, old or young. Using nineteenth century propriety, he referred to Huck as Lord upon their first encounter on Jackson Island:

- 'Why, how long have you been on the island, Jim?'

-I come heah de night arter you 's killed.

-...? 'And ain't you had nothing but that kind or rubbage to eat?'

-'No, sah- nuffin else.'

He indicates to his higher-ranking, Huck Finn, as "sah" and sometimes as "boss" and presumes his enslave situation. In Jim's reluctant confession to Huck about why he ran away from Miss Watson, he accepts the fact of his mistreatment but cannot go through being sold "down the river", He speaks of his servitude and possible sale as his only fate.

Well, you see, it 'uz dis way. Ole Missus-dat's Miss Watson-she pecks on me all de time, en treats me pooty, rough, but she awluz said she wouldn' sell me down to Orleans. But I noticed dey wuz a nigger trader roun' de place considerable, lately, en I begin to git oneasy...

An important historical footnote here is needed. When he says "she always said she wouldn't sell me down to Orleans", he is referring to the fact that some of the largest plantations and cruelest slave owners were located on the Mississippi River, and the closer you got to New Orleans, the crueler the treatment of the slaves. It was a very common threat toward slaves at the time to threaten them if they misbehaved with being "sold down the river" and every slave of the day knew well what that meant.

Jim must speak of himself in the white language, as an object rather than a person; because they are on the island floating in the water of the Mississippi, and they can leave the society's commands and dictates temporarily. However, as long as their friendship eventually grows, Jim is immerse in believe that he is equal to a white young boy. Donald Gibson in *Mark Twain's, Jim in the Classroom* supports this position, and continues to recommend that the child-adult roles are opposite. The experts of the novel consider that the acquaintance between Huck and Jim is basically weak and humiliating. He (Jim) could only represent the character of leader; defender and supporter... all other grown-ups in Huck's environment represent power. In fact, both characters appear to be less than an adult, instead of showing their masculinity (Gibson, 1972, p. 137). Huck's reactions are different towards every other grown-up in the novel. In Huck's world, all the adults represent authority except from Jim. There is a social understanding in the relationship between white and black concerning authority which is

carried onto the raft and continues, Huck declares his attitude towards Jim and says that he would prefer to go to hell rather than turn Jim in. 'All right then, I'll go to hell – and I tore it up.' (Twain 225) The moral climax of this novel is the quotation above, because Huck decides on something which is forbidden or unusual to all the people at that time in their thoughts towards the black. Huck neglects the way of thinking and behavior in the society towards slaves especially towards Jim. Huck ignores the society's unkind and hypocritical beliefs in order to give Jim a chance to avoid slavery and come together again with his family by saying 'going to hell'. Huck makes a very courageous decision by choosing his moral compass over the society's judgments.

I consider that Huck shows himself as a good and ideal character when he steals the money. He does not steal it for himself; he does so to give it to the right owners. He takes it from the artists. The problem lies when he loses the money, because he is agonizingly afraid of being known as a Steeler. Huck says it, "They took and shoved the bag through a rip in the straw tick that was under the featherbed" (177). He then goes to the room, "had it out of there before they was halfway down-stairs" (177). The main function of Huck as a white person is to defend the rights of the blacks. At that time it was a rule to send the slaves to their owners wherever they are. The southerners had accepted that, but Huck stands against that. So, Huck and Jim go down to the river in order to get rid of the society which represses the poor and powerless slaves.

Gibson has to deal with that event on the raft, the general norms of the interaction between black and white in regard to authority is kept in good condition. Due to his different color and his birth circumstance, Jim is restricted to use his language. He understands very well his position in society and participates by virtue of his limitations as a person and his lack of knowledge of a conventional language to communicate. It was obvious that Jim was enslaved but not only by the laws that fixed but by the spoken language of people as well. The center of slavery is inherent in his label as "Nigger". In *Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke* Ralph Ellison indicates that Twain was smart enough to stand close to see and talk about the white statement that black should not be treated as a man. So Huck and Jim's relationship kind of friendship was incomprehensible in the eyes

of the American society of that time. Huck was less than a young white man. And Jim was a young black male, but not considered as a man either. So more or less they could be equal in mental behavior, but still Jim's refers to Huck as master, giving him a superior category (Ellison, 1964, p. 50-51). Huck was a great friend of Jim, and he was always with him in every situations. Jim was grateful that he has a friend like Huck and he sees him as the only "white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim" (16.16), and Jim was good to him too, when they found a dead body in the cabin Jim did not allow Huck to look at it because it was his father. He kept him from seeing the dead body on the ground and let him to sleep through his watch. Jim was always a wake and could not sleep even for a moment because he wanted to observe accurately ("he often done that" (23), says Huck); and when he found out that Huck is still alive, he was so delighted and started dancing a jig practically. "It's too good for true, honey, it's too good for true," he says: "Lemme look at you chile, lemme feel o' you" (15.19). Here Jim is extremely pleased and happy by seeing Huck again, and it was his nicest moment. Huck decides to play a little trick on him that none of these things ever happened and he wanted to show them as a dream in Jim's life. Jim was surprised, but later on when he found that none of these are true but tricking, he was genuinely hurt. Huck may have to be educated into friendship with Jim, but Jim seems to come by it naturally. Just imagine his sweet way of talking: "honey," "chile," "same ole Huck"—it is not quite clear why Jim is interested in Huck's friendship but it is a strong relationship between them.

The black skin of Jim is the cause that the society rejects to give him the freedom he deserves as a human, particularly in the South but in the North as well. At a particular point, Huck sees the Jim's difficult situation "Once I said to myself it would be a thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, as long as he'd got to be a slave". The opinion that niggers had "got" to be slaves spread through the south. The connotation of the use of the word "nigger" was very effective as a tool of language in the novel. "Nigger" was and has been an offensive word in the vocabulary to refer people of black skin. And still *Huckleberry Finn* causes polemic and prejudices to black people that pretends to ban the novel to exits in schools or libraries. Many black writers like John Wallace, believe that the word 'nigger' upsets and annoys black people. There is a mark of

disgrace and shame on the skin of blacks to identify them as nigger and to know that they are the same as their ancestors.

The sentimental influence that the mark of disgrace has on the individual is detrimental, and its sign is something that is everlasting. According to John Wallace, this is a very idiosyncrasy feeling promoted by afro American people themselves. Only they still believe that the connotation of such a word convey to a negative meaning of slavery and degradation. On the other hand, the word nigger is mostly considered as an active rather than a passive entity, and it evokes bad connotations given by the whites to blacks. An example of this effect could be noticed in another novel by Mark Twain. I think the social norms have influenced Jim. He uses the N-word to refer to the blacks. Huck asks, "S'pose a man was to come to you and say Polly-voo-franzy--what would you think?" Jim does not get what he means and replies, "I wouldn't think nuff'n; I'd take en bust him over de head. Dat is, if he warn't white. I wouldn't 'low no nigger to call me dat" (Twain, Anthology 314). This quote reveals Jim has accepted the idea that blacks are not equal to the whites. They are inferior to whites. He tells that he is able to fight if the one who fights him is not white. It means that Jim has surrendered to the social norms of that time. The people of that time thought of the back as if they were lacking the human qualities. Twain conveys that one of the causes of dehumanizing the blacks is themselves, because like Jim they were thought of themselves as a degraded race. But the New South version shows: "I wouldn't 'low no slave to call me dat" (310) Jim devaluates his black friends by calling them using the "N-word". Additionally, the word "nigger" does not represent a real person, but rather a spirit of a cruel joke in which nobody wants to become the target. After realizing he was born black, Tom begins acting a certain way, when he encountered a friend; he felt that his tendency for life in some strange ways had faded away. His arm loosened instead of stretching his hand for a shake. What made him to have such a kind of habit, only because he was black (a nigger ), his blackness made him to feel ashamed. He thought that what fails him on the way of his life is the "nigger" in him (his blackness). The precious thing to Rowena, only his heart knew was his secret god which made him to feel confused for his black skin and feel terrified while sitting or mingling with white people. Blackness and calling him "nigger" made him not to be seen from there or here. He felt that whatever he does

may be under doubt and questions in all appearances, his attitudes, walks and gestures. And Tom behaved such an odd and unusual way that people observed it, even people trying to watch him when he was walking on his way. He currently surrounded from all directions and stared at by people. That's why he ran away to the top of hills and stayed in isolation. He said to himself that calamity of Ham was on him (Twain, 1964, p. 75). He was worry about his meals, and it was shameful for him to eat and sit on the white people's table. He always felt of fear, especially when Judge Driscoll said, "what's going on with you? You always look as a stupid nigger," he felt like secret murderers when the accuser says, "Thou art the man!" Tom said he was not well, and left the table.

The impact that the word, "nigger," has on black people is more profound that one would expect. Unfortunately for the nineteenth century and even the twentieth century the word comes along with a strong bad connotation that make readers understand the implications that conveyed the use of that word. However Twain's use the word is to reveal frightening realities for both whites and blacks. He exposes that every single people in society is imprisoned by the word. Nineteenth century whites used it for displaying the domineering manners over blacks and to dehumanize them, and it was a part from black person's name (ex. Nigger Jim). They obviously referred to them as property (ex. Miss Watson's Nigger) to convince them that the enslavement of slaves is just a proper thing to do. The repeated use of the word in the novel drills home the enormity of the race problem and the fact that whites were trying to create a negative story about blacks being less than human into law. But black people in America found nothing but white hard whipping and blood and bad treatment, without speaking even the same language of the whites, not being protected by representative of law, except by their masters, only to claim their ownership. Black people were a perfect target of all kind of mistreating by a blind American society who had no mercy to treat them as a human being. And, indeed the use of the word "nigger" implied so many things to think about it. But at that time it was "normal". David L. Smith, in *Huck, Jim, and American Racial Discourse*, points out that the concept of "nigger" was a word created by the whites to refer to the black people, to have the right to make them feel inferior in all possible ways. And the purpose of it to justify by all means the abuse and exploit of the blacks, denominated them in such a

way because of the color of their skin (Smith, 1984, p. 5).

Susan K. Gillman believes that social fictions are nothing but realities of society (Gillman and Patten, 1985, p. 455). The influence of these novels should not be undervalued. In *Language and Identity in the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Brook Thomas expresses the connection between the social fictions and language like that: speaking and writing is always considered as second hand. Through fiction man can play many roles that in society he could not be accepting them but this way the roles of a man in society could be so powerful in fiction more than in real life. Then writing fiction is a perfect tool for a writer to complain of his society (Thomas, 1982, p. 9).

The word “nigger” had negative influence on blacks and it made them feel boring and strongly broken their spirits. Some critics considered it as the best explanation of Twain on the race, Roxana, in her book make it true in her mouth about the relative priceless of black’s life. Besides, she tries to change the identity of her son from black to white because he is nothing but thieve, murder and a dangerous liar. She believes that her son’s faults are justified since there is a portion of black blood on him. There are different explanations about the appearance of the word nigger, Oxford dictionary marked it in 1786, but it is sure that it is older than this, according to the Morris dictionary of word and phrases origins. The word occurs at early 1700 in Samuel Sewall’s Diary although it was spelled with a single “g”. “Nigger” is interpreted differently of Negro which belongs to the Latin Niger for black. There are other sources that rather claim the word “nigger” is restricted to contexts of deliberate and contemptuous ethnic abuse (Burchfield, 1986, p. 1200). It was common of Twain’s uses of the word in other novels, like in *Tramps Abroad* (1880). “He laid into his work like a nigger”, here connotations implied working hard. There is an insistence or relating the meaning of the word with the life of an animal, evilness, death, anything less than a human. The ‘N’ word in the period of the novel was considered as a racial terminology, but it was an accepted reference and was common at that time. The word used disrespectfully and unpleasantly. But the emotional load of the ‘N’ word now is different and undeniable truth. It has negative meaning and attacks people through arrogance, ignorance, and hatred. Readers can easily feel the evilness of

the word and its offensive word because it hurts people and shows vivid images of racism in American society. When you read the novel you find it unpleasant to hear the 'N' word in the novel, that's how powerful the word has become in its emotional connotations. I believe that Huck differentiates himself with Jim in some ways. He calls him a "nigger" this is a word of which Huck seems to not know anything about it. But he tries to make up some meanings to it, when he hears it. He understands that it is about the unconscionable times that are due to the niggers. Also he knows that they are making bad things and are able to hurt humans. It was according to the old saying, "Give a nigger an inch and he'll take an ell," also, Huck says: "Here was this nigger which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children—children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever done me no harm." So, they tell Huck he is not able to be like a man until he is able to communicate with the nigger. It is worthy of being mentioned that the river is used symbolically. The movement of the river resembles Huck's change from a person who has inherited racism from the family and surrounding environment to the one who is clear of racism.

Mark Twain was not a racist, but he was local color writer intent upon capturing both the romance and the realism of his part of the country. The romance of the Mississippi River and the beauty and freedom of life on a raft is an integral part of the novel, and Twain's use of vernacular style and his attention to specific detail contribute to its realism. In writing in the dialect and the diction of his characters, Twain made them real. Mark Twain was definitely not racist. He wrote books such as "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" in order to show people the evilness of slavery and how emotionally and physically it affected people. Therefore, he was angered by slavery and racism and wanted to put an end to it. Besides, he was strongly against slavery. That's why many of the slaves in his stories were set free or runaways. He is writing from a certain point of view.

The power and weaknesses of language and the constant calling of black people by Niggers was an obstacle in front of them to ask for freedom in America, and more particularly in the southern rivers towns. The word was a part of their life and because of this, they were deprived from participating all occasions, and whites took away their rights to vote for

what they really wanted. Blacks were the victims of whites and the society, they were treated badly, and according to the white's opinion, blacks were created to be slaved for them. That means, a black will never be free. The misunderstanding of blacks continued until the twentieth century in America and in the world. Twain hints out in *Huckleberry Finn* that, any kinds of incorrect activity and bad behavior in society is a shame for blacks. Jim was accused and blamed, because of Huck's supposed murder while Huck himself and the readers were certain that Jim is not guilty. The woman from the town river reports: ...before night they (townspeople) changed around and judged it was done by a runaway nigger named Jim... the nigger run off the very night Huck Finn was killed. So there's a reward out for him... (p. 49). Huck and Jim run away from the town, and people think that Huck was killed by Jim. They do not know anything about that; they just know he is killed. People believed that Jim is behind his death because he left the same night. The judge allocated enough money to find a killer, and a price is placed on Jim's head with a good reward of 300\$. "So there's a reward out for him-three hundred dollars."(Twain, p.53). The people also believe that Huck's dad is behind his death because he receives money from Judge Thatcher so as to find Huck. But he takes the money and gets drunk and then leaves the town.

According to the society, because Jim is black so he must be the guilty one. So Huck and Jim had to move from town to town because Jim was known as guilty in society. And because he is nigger, Huck was obliged to lie to two men on the small boat who look so strange in order to protect Jim's life. On the other hand, whoever asked about Jim whether he is white or black, Huck was hesitant to tell the truth and unwillingly lied: "I didn't response on time, that's why I couldn't hear the words he was supposed to say. I attempted to catch his words twice. And no more, I wasn't the brave man as I was before , I realized that I was weak, that's because I stopped trying to listen , just I heard says: He's white" (p.75). The black skin of Jim and Huck implicated everything in life for them, because, they were not free to do anything they want. The language was unpleasant situation and offensive for Huck while he hated it.

At first, Huck was not able to see the delusions of the society which he lives in, because of the restrictions that affected on his language. But the

wrong conception that society has shaped on Jim is considered as one of the noticeable conflict that faces Huck in society. There was a strong relationship between Huck and Jim especially on the river, Huck "...sees, without realizing it, that nigger is a misnomer, an empty signifier, an alibi." (Schmitz, 1986, p. 63). Huck learns quickly that Jim is not like society's portrait of a nigger. In *Three problems of Fictional Form: First Personal Narrator in David Copperfield and Huck Finn*, J. Hillis Miller suggests: "Huck's real choice in the book is not between the true speech of the raft and the false speech of the shore, but between speech and silence" (Miller, 1986, p. 27). Huck and Jim are close friends and are close to almost everything in society, and when Huck at the initial moments opened his mouth and wanted to speak, he was under the strong pressure to use a kind of language that is difficult and was out of his interesting but he has no choice. The best way to deal with it is silence because he could escape from using that language, and civilization controls the use of the language where Huck is trapped (Miller , 1986, p. 27).

Despite the fact that, the issue of race becomes totally clear to the reader by the way of portraying ironic circumstances and the language, Huck does not familiar with the black cause and the fighter for it. He always reproaches himself because he thinks that the standards of the society are not a part from him, and he is constantly astonished of his declarations about niggers. He speaks for good of Jim in chapter fourteen: "well, he was right; he was most always right; he had an uncommon level head for a nigger" (p. 64). Another wonderful example that Huck praise Jim's kindness, Huck respectfully express his regret to Jim: "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger but I done it, and I warn't every sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't make him feel that way" (p. 72).

Huck was astonished when he found that Jim has feelings and easily affected by funny tale, that was amazing for him because he thinks that he is not aware of his surroundings but after he felt that, he realizes that Jim is not nigger anymore but a kind person and do care about humans and people around him, in contrast to that, Pap Finn shows himself as a nigger more than Jim, but their color was different and that made Pap to feel free from the sign of blacks. Twain with a heavy sarcasm points out to

Pap's extremely white skin and to Colonel Grangerford's white suit. Jim equals the entire group of white people that Huck has met and Huck fully comprehends this truth. Indeed, the novel was known as bildungsroman. Huck is innocent and not guilty but he learns very much. However, he is able to feel and see the inequalities of his society, he and Jim are normal citizens and are not able to do great things for themselves. They are obliged to use the norms of their society in which they tighten with misunderstandings and prejudgments. Twain's talent was the use of the language to present a sad picture of man's ineludible constraints of society transmitted by the language.

Although Twain conforms to the nineteenth century American racial discourse in his use of the Southern vernacular, his overall depiction of Jim as a character is completely opposite to the nineteenth century stereotype of blacks. The fact that Twain portrays go against with the imposing of the language. Indirectly, Huck felt that his early ideas toward Jim are wrong and he tries to understand him. He figures out some favorable attributes that Jim has as property in chapter thirty one: "But in some way I looked quite angry with him, but my anger wasn't serious toward him. I noticed him Stopping my watch when it alarmed, so I could keep on sleeping; and notice him how happy he was when I come back out of the mist, and when I go to him again in the morass, however there was some quarrels with him, but in that moments, calling me darling and touch me and how well-behaved he was. Finally, the watch alarmed, and I saved him by telling the guys that we had the disease of smallpox out of the country, and he became very thankful, and said Jim was the greatest friend I ever had in the world." (p.169)

Due to the racial restrictions of the community, Jim is inferior to whites and subjugated. Despite the fact that Jim is the influential man to Huck that he ever had in his life. Jim is good for him and do care about him in a high level of respect in a way that he means everything to him, and his love for him is rare, he considered Huck as the first person in his whole life. The society was against them and they look different in people's perception, but their relationship made them feel happy and do care about each other. Roy Harvey in his book, named *Yours Truly, Huck Finn* contends: "Still, (Huck and Jim's relationship) is an appropriately primitive, even precivilized

relationship; for Huck sees Jim not as a man with the responsibilities of a man but as one essentially like himself. This is his fundamental limitation, and yet the source of his strength” (Pearce, 1985, p. 317). The relationship of Jim to Huck in chapter nine is in a high level and is protective. In the floating house, they find a body, at this moment Jim tells Huck to stop looking the body because it is truly horrible sight, then he hides the dead body. Because of these actions we can say that Jim is protecting Huck’s innocence and childlike view of the world. Jim does not like Huck to see the cruel place the world can be which is ironic because Huck has already got experience in it. On the other hand, Huck’s relationship towards Jim in chapter ten is very friendly. Huck plays a prank on him like he would like to be one of his other friends assuming it okay. He sees no harm in his joke and has not quite yet established respect for Jim’s authority.

Blacks were treated differently in the society but in spite all the distinctive, inside themselves they see no difference, Twain shows Jim as a good black character that has strong feelings of love for his own family. Early morning before the sunrise, Huck wakes up to testify Jim’s grieving and groaning concerning his family: “... He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick; because he hadn’t ever been away from home before in his life; and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks do for there’n... He was mighty good nigger, Jim was” (p. 125). Jim is introduced as having moral sense and feeling of doubt toward his daughter, as someone that has no conscience for her because she was deaf and heard nothing and he does not know it. She was sick and because of that, she lost the sense of hearing, unwillingly, Jim slaps her and is haunted by it.

“... oh Huck, I bust out a-cryin’ en grab her up in my arms, en say, oh, de po’ little thing; de Lord God Amighty forgive po’ ole Jim koze he never gwyne to forgive hisself as long as he live; oh, she was plumb deaf en dumb, Huck ... en I’d ben a’treat’n her so” (p. 126) Here Jim is telling the story to Huck about his deaf daughter. In the early morning, Huck woke up and saw Jim crying and put his head between his knees, and he explained how he screamed and slapped his deaf daughter just because she did not listen to him. Jim was not happy and felt terrible after that. This quote shows that even Jim is slave and seen as inferior, but just like everyone

else he has his own family and has sympathy for them. He always feels guilty for what he did and wishes he could do something to fix it and to compensate his mistake.

Jim is very eager to his family and he always tried to save money to bring out his family from slavery, it was a disaster for him to be a slave and see his family live in a very bad situation. After he almost reached Cairo, started to think about them immediately and he thought that freedom is in his hands, with a great gladness and delightfully admits to Huck: He (Jim) was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free state he would go to saving up money and never spent a single cent, and when he got enough how would buy his wife... and then they would both work to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Abolitionist to go and steal them (p. 74). This statement is ironic because the way that slavery is run, slave owners tend to buy or trade their slaves, as if they are just property. With Jim stating that he would buy his wife and children, he is getting pulled into the system of slavery and in portraying himself as a becoming a slave owner, although buying their freedom; he is still treating them like property. He knows no other way to get his wife and kids besides to buy them, because purchasing an African American is the only way Jim knows how to. He does not think about how buying or even stealing slaves from a man he does not know is just like how he became a slave in the first place, begins stolen from his homeland. He sees no wrong in stealing these people, because he knows it is, morally, the right thing to do, while everyone else (whites) would view this as something that should not be done. At the time buying a slave's freedom is against everything they had ever known. Jim just wants to be able to free these people from the burdens of slavery but to do so by buying them is putting them down - practically saying that they are not good enough to get their freedom on their own, which is what Abolitionists tried so hard to accomplish.

It looks difficult for Jim to buy whole freedom for his family and he was extremely anxious about it. Huck had some moral problems in the society because of his participation against many crimes and it was a big problem for him if Jim truly successful in getting freedom for his own family. In addition to this, the norms and codes of society surrounded Huck and he is always in conflict with his moral and his heart. Obviously, the depiction of

Jim by Twain is in opposition with widespread myths about unsympathetic and the brutality of black people. Although, the novel is criticized by some critics because they feel that the ending is against black people and indicates their inhumanity. Jim becomes a victim of unsympathetic and barbarity that Huck and Tom imposed upon him, he is targeted to a ridiculous and suffering slave. However, Twain was successful in displaying the negative ideas toward blacks in the novel. Due to the fact that, even Huck can feel and see humanity in Jim, and it was a clear racial discrimination that committed on blacks. On the other hand, the last chapters focus on the brutality that imposed on blacks and it is another theme of anti-racist in the novel. Although, this does not mean that Huck is ethically blind. Levi-Strauss in his book named *Structural Anthropology* contends "... the observer cannot modify the phenomenon merely by becoming conscience of it." (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 57). No one, especially a displaced person, could hope to change these deeply rooted problems of race. Twain did not challenge the racial issue in an easy way. The methods of the novel have a great influence and affected the reader's morality.

David Sewell in his book entitled *We Ain't All Trying to Talk Alike: Varieties of Language in Huckleberry Finn* talks about the restrictions of the language and the methods that can effect on language changing: The way of Huck's talking take us back to the language, like social traditions we had, and Huck's speech developed only through the relation between the dialect he spoke and the permanent principles that tied up old ideas, old accents and grammarless expressions together. Huck experienced continuous development and change of the chronological moment (Sewell, 1985, p. 215). The repetition of the word nigger in the novel is not only the needless repetition nor is the mirrored of nineteenth century, but it used to accuse the entire society. Additionally, David L. Smith indicates that Twain uses nigger to refer to slaves as a synonym (Smith, 1984, p. 5).

The concept of slavery is called taboo as something that is unspeakable by Harriet Beecher Stowe and some other famous abolitionists. While some authors used the word nigger in their writings such as; Cable, Page, Stowe but it does not conclude the same meaning or influence. Twain portrays the nature of the south and the language in *Huckleberry Finn*. And if nigger belongs to slavery, it can be noticed along the novel, besides; it repeated

more than one hundred and fifty times. The word represents a high shout in order to get others attention about slavery. The repetition of the word nigger becomes the beat of the heart and becomes taboo of the guilty society. Robert Bridgman in the *Colloquial Style* in America expresses some interesting observations about the repetition in vernacular language: any word used sufficient frequency as to become generally familiar gains access to the vernacular insofar as the vernacular is defined as a nation's common fund of language (Bridgman, 1966, p. 17). This repetition makes influence on the reader at best. Bridgman adds: The extent at which such a kind of relations is formed may frequently be less than what we would consider. Though in point of fact, the relations may be created in the result of their functions, other than the point is that all of these different repetitions and relations are to create the harmony of structure in conversational style (Bridgman, 1966, p. 38).

Slavery had controlled the thoughts of the nineteenth century and made a difficult contradiction between whites and blacks. Attempts to deny the problem of race only bring resentment into the situation. The problems were created by the depressions of the south, which continued after the publication of *Huckleberry Finn* and the Reconstruction. The inadvertently didactic nature of the text indicates a faith in man's ability to alter these discrepancies since indeed man is collectively responsible for them. The purpose of repetition of the word nigger by Twain is to get attention for the deeply-seated problems of racial discrimination that is essential in the language. Twain's plan by repeating this shameful term in *Huckleberry Finn*, together with other racist agreements or misnomers that he criticizes is to sabotage them. This term is used in the conversation between Tom's Aunt Sally and Huck about a steamboat incident. Huck wants to concoct an accident about the steamboat in order to clarify his late reaching to the Phelps Farm:

'It warn't the grounding – that didn't keep us back but a little. We blowed out a cylinder head.'

'Good gracious; anybody hurt?'

'No'm. killed a nigger.'

'Well, it's luck; because sometimes people do get hurt.' (p. 175)

It can be inferred from the conversation above, a nigger is not a person but a racist punch line of the time. Huck's bad expression about the

dead nigger was just to soften Tom's aunt. It means that he is an active individual in the society. Huck is like the other members of the society and he wants to fit with the current system. In *Huck, Jim, and American Racial discourse*, Smith comments on this and says without seeing Aunt Sally, Huck falsely created a novel story to an unknown person, a story which surely was a self-beneficial, where the properly predict that the leading minds of compassionates for humanity going to be brilliant. Huck's impolite statement was to manipulate Aunt Sally's character but not his own (Smith, 1984, p. 5).

The accident was examined in detail by all kind of critics, and some of them agree the way Huck expresses himself in that conversation was a natural way of being of anyone in society. But it was to be taking into account that the only purpose of Huck for being at the Phelps farm was to rescue Jim. In order to change the direction of the Sally's investigation, Huck thought that the best way to remove this force is lying about it. He reveals the brutality of Aunt Sally who is a symbol for current situation of the society. Huck wants to pretend himself as a good exemplar of old boy. Twain stands against the execution of blacks without trial and it happened many times that an innocent man punished to death penalty. There was no law to protect blacks. Twain strongly writes in this article: "Ah, well. Too bad, to be sure. A little blunder in the administration of justice by Southern mob-low; but nothing to speak of. Only a nigger killed by mistake – that is all" (Foner, 1958, p. 218).

The conversation that happened between Huck and Aunt Sally is Twain's experience to condemn racism. The caustic phrase "only a nigger" expresses the nineteenth century ideas toward black people, and the critics of Twain were noticeable and obvious. Spoken language that is used every day is the reflection of the society; Twain exposes the reliability and spontaneity of the common language in the nineteenth century. In contrast to their genteel matches, they are still receivers of conventional language; the common people struggled with the instability they went through. On the other hand, these common people unknowingly follow the social conventional rules they do not ever comprehend. Twain reveals the dictates of the society norms to use language and people were obliged to speak with it, they had no freedom to speak their own language. Therefore,

racism was deep-rooted in people's conversation. J. Hillis Miller analysis the false statements of Huck's language: He uses a vulgar dialect, taken in indigenous American rhythms, vocabulary, and syntax. His speech grows out of the way of life of people in a place. The Mississippi Valley society is not then a good example of speaking with the true, using literary language to express injustice and cruelties seen on slave, in Twain's view of Protestant Christianity (Miller , 1986, p. 28).

Huck and Jim were emblematic characters in the novel that expresses a New America. Neither Huck nor Jim could experiment freedom individually on the Mississippi. So they desperately are in search to a new territory not too much damaged by society prejudices. But they find themselves trapped and stopped in their attempt to be free human beings. An idea expressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson's "self-Reliance" it's impossible to reach according to the numerous suppression than man faces in the story of *Huckleberry Finn*. Ralph Waldo Emerson and, more recently Jacques Lacan, make interesting affirmations of the importance of the language whose purpose is to establish a legal connection ruling all humans and gives at the same time every man a sense of individualism as seal of a society. Since language has the power within itself to impose a distinction between one man to another and it is still be able to express the evilness spirit any time ever.

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# ***An Investigation on the Influence of Temperament on L2 Achievement of Adult Turkish Learners of English***

***Damilola Joycelyn OJO***

## **Abstract**

Temperament has attracted a lot of attention over the years and may be linked to the success or failure in the performance of an L2. The interest brings up the motivation to investigate Learners' variation, while some are better and some are poor in L2 performance (Ellis, 2008). There have been claims that temperament of a learner determines the failure or success in language learning and use (Pennebaker & King, 1999).

This study investigates the influence of temperament of Turkish EFL Learners in L2 achievement, temperament is a major aspect of humans and there have been different argument and to where it originate from either from genes or the environment. Behavioral science is of the view that genes affect temperament than the environment. 'Heredity has a greater influence on one's personality and behavior than either one's upbringing or the most crushing social pressure' (Lang, 1987, p.58-66).

***Keywords:*** *Turkish EFL Learners, Behavioral science, Personality and behavior*

## **Introduction**

Temperament has attracted a lot of attention over the years and may be linked to the success or failure in the performance of an L2. The interest brings up the motivation to investigate Learners' variation, while some are better and some are poor in L2 performance (Ellis, 2008). There have been claims that temperament of a learner determines the failure or success in language learning and use (Pennebaker & King, 1999).

This study investigates the influence of temperament of Turkish EFL Learners in L2 achievement, temperament is a major aspect of humans

and there have been different arguments and to where it originates from either from genes or the environment. Behavioral science is of the view that genes affect temperament than the environment. ‘Heredity has a greater influence on one’s personality and behavior than either one’s upbringing or the most crushing social pressure’ (Lang, 1987, p.58-66).

As seen in Collins English Dictionary, “temperament, is a Latin word which means ‘to mix’”. It can be traced from the ancient times of Socrates, Plato, Hippocrates and Galen to David Keirse and the likes. The focus however will be on Galen who classifies temperament into four types: Sanguine, Melancholy, Choleric and Phlegmatic as seen in Kagan (1998). According to Galen, it is those features which set one individual apart from another individual, in a person, there is a mixture of different temperament types with only one dominant.

Each one has their own unique features which include strengths and weaknesses. People are categorized into the temperament which mostly fits the particular features they might have. The table below briefly gives some description of the characteristics of each temperament.

**Table 1.1:** *Galen’s temperament type.*

Sanguine	Choleric	Melancholy	Phlegmatic
cheerful	optimistic	melancholy	calm
friendly	active	sensitive	dependable
talkative	confident	analytical	efficient
lively	strong-willed	perfectionist	Easy-going
restless	Quick to anger	moody	passive
Self-centered	aggressive	unsociable	stubborn
undependable	inconsiderate	rigid	lazy

Source: [www.psychoheresy-aware.org/e-book/4temp-ebk.pdf](http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/e-book/4temp-ebk.pdf)

There is however, a mixture of two or more temperament in a person with one dominant, means that a person may have the characteristics of a phlegmatic for example and choleric or more but there is only one obvious major temperament which is dominant.

According to Nyongesa (2004) personality is of two categories, extrovert and introvert. The extroverts have the features of sanguine and choleric while the introverts have the features of melancholic and phlegmatic. He goes further to talk about the flaws and strengths of the extroverts and introverts.

The sanguine has flaws such as been emotionally unstable, egocentric, undisciplined, exaggerates and unreliable while the strengths are been friendly, passionate, social, honest and responsive. For choleric, the flaws they have have been blunt, cold, mean, sarcastic and easily angered while their strengths have been autonomous, visionary, decisive, forcefully willed. On the other hand for the introverts, the Phlegmatic has strengths as such calmness, dependable, humorous and reliable, while the flaws have been passive, worrier, easily frightened and a procrastinator. The melancholic person has flaws such as moody, pessimistic, revengeful, self-centered and unsocial while the strengths include gifted, analytical power, industrious, aesthetic and self-disciplined.

**Table 1.2:** Temperament grouped

Stable			
Temperament	Features	Temperament	Features
Sanguine	Leadership, Carefree, Lively, easygoing,  Responsible, Outgoing, Sociable.	Phlegmatic	Calm, Even-tempered  Reliable, Controlled,  Peaceful, Thoughtful,  Careful, Passive
Choleric	Active, Optimistic,  Impulsive, Changeable, Excitable  Aggressive, Restless	Melancholic	Active, Optimistic,  Impulsive, Changeable, Excitable  Aggressive, Restless

Unstable

Source: (Nodoushan, 2011, p.39)

### **Past findings discussions**

This current study was conducted to examine the influence of temperament on the acquisition of L2 in Turkish EFL speakers, the English language proficiency level is examined in relation to the temperament a person has to try to know if a certain personality/temperament may perform better than others with a different personality.

Past studies that failed to find any direct relationship between personality traits and second language learning were carried out by Ehrman and Oxford, Carrell and Anderson (1994) and also by Tuen Mun in Hong Kong. However, according to Berry (2007, p. 23), ‘extreme extroverts and extreme introverts perform differently on an oral test depending on the degree of extroversion present in the individual’.

Bush (1982), Dewaele and Furnham (1999), are of the belief that extroverts have more skills and perform better than introverts in oral skills because of the features they have. In a research done by the latter, the extroverts were seen to be much more successful on the verbal aspect than the introverts even though the differences was not so obvious as regards accuracy. A study conducted by Bush (1982) could not confirm any connection in extroverts performing better than introverts in L2 acquisition. Van, (2005, p.96), is of the belief that introverts are better language learners because of their ability for ‘extra mental concentration and can focus more on a task at hand’ according to Eysenck (1947), the ability that introverts have ‘makes them the prime candidate for successful learning’.

Ellis (1994) argues that there is no particular basis to determine the personality variables that will be negatively or positively connected to that aspects of L2. Some findings confirming this were conducted by Bush. He tested his hypothesis in Japan. According to the test, extroverts would perform higher than introverts but the result of his study could not confirm this, instead it showed a negative correlation between extroversion and pronunciation. The result of a study of Gill (2004) also confirms that “extroversion has no priming effects” (37).

In written English however, introverts are seen as better performer, but because of the varied measuring devices used, there may be other factors

which are responsible for this and not just temperament, an example may be the absence of proper context or instrument.

### **Methodology**

Spearman is used because of its suitability for Likert scale system of surveying (ordering method: 12345 for various degrees of conviction). Numbers were used to show differences in individual responses, not weight or scale as observed in appendix 1. Pearson is however suitable for scaly and numerical data. So when integers are used to present responses to data, it is better to establish relationship between variable with spearman.

ANOVA is a technique used to determine whether there is any significant differences or not among variables with more than two groups (between the temperament types and test scores for various types of the test done). There must be more than two groups and each group must have replicates: questionnaires eliciting the same response from different individual with different response which showed differences in their scores and grades even among the same type of temperament. Once significance was found, we went further to determine which temperament was different.

Standard deviation determines spread of data (not tendency): determines whether the data is skewed or not, if there is outlier or not, whether the pole is very far from mean (average value).

### **Participants**

For the study 100 people were selected randomly from four language course centers in Istanbul- Turkey, their English language proficiency was not taken note of at this point. Their gender and age were also not taken into consideration, the selection however include, adults of working class, and teenagers.

### **Instruments**

Two major instruments were used. The first one was the personality/temperament questionnaires used to assess the temperament of the subjects. It has forty questions which must be answered according to the degree of how it describes them. It has two sections. The first is measured from a scale of one to five while the second section requires objective responses

as to their awareness of temperament.

The second instrument is an English Language proficiency test which tries to measure their English language performances. It has four parts including writing, speaking, reading and listening, they were interviewed for the oral aspects, one after the other.

### **Procedure**

After the consents of the participants were approved, the first personality test questionnaire was given them in paper format. They were instructed as to how to fill it. Then it was taken from them on completion. The second questionnaire was then administered to them and on the listening part of it, they were called one after the other to be interviewed and were scored instantly on the oral part.

After all the questionnaires were gathered, the paper format of their responses on the personality test was inputted online to get the temperament each belonged to from the internet.

### **Results and Discussion**

The participants were classified into four temperaments type based on the percentage score gotten from the personality test conducted and calculated online. The Sanguine included 29 participants [n = 29], Phlegmatic included 39 participants [n = 39], Choleric included 19 participants [n = 19], and melancholic included 13 participants [n = 19].

**Table 2.3:** Distribution of Respondents by Temperament Types

Frequency	Valid Percent	
Sanguine	29	29.0
Phlegmatic	39	39.0
Choleric	19	19.0
Melancholic	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

The findings, indicate more sanguine and phlegmatic temperament representation than the choleric and melancholic temperament, however, there are more introverts [n = 52] than extroverts [n = 48] present in this study.

From this result, the four temperaments are not evenly distributed among the Turkish EFL learners and this variation as investigated before has the tendency to influence the final result gotten.

The table below shows the performance of L2 across the temperament line using Spearman Correlation Analysis, the influence of temperament types on the level of language skills in L2 performance is obvious.

**Table 2.4:** Correlation analysis showing the relationship between respondents' temperament and L2 performance

				L2 performance			
	Reading	Writing	Word Recognition	Word structure	Listening and speaking	pooled	
Temperament Spearman's Correlation	.396**	.036	.056	.117	-.001	.100	.174***
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.719	.579	.247	.993	.324	.083
N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Significant at 0.01 and \*\*\* at 0.1.

In the skills of reading, writing, word recognition, word production, listening and speaking, there is a positive correlation of .396, .036, .056, .117 and .174 respectively, while, the skills of word structure is negatively correlated with -.001. It also reveal the significant relationship of temperament types of the Turkish learners of EFL in reading statistically proven with the correlation coefficient of +0.396 at  $P > 0.01$  which means about 40% relationship existed between temperament type and ability to read English.

This implies that the type of dominant temperament of EFL Turkish learner influences their performance in reading. Also, the correlation coefficient for the overall performance in the table that was polled was significant

at  $P < 0.01$  and positive and this implies about 17% relationship between temperament type and English Language performance among the Turkish EFL learners.

Pooled L2 option Mean Std. D.	Sanguine		Phlegmatic		Choleric		Melancholic		
	Mean	Std. D.	Mean	Std. D.	Mean	Std. D.	Mean	Std. D.	
Reading	4.76	3.66	7.75	2.06	9.36	0.81	7.15	2.66	
	7.11	3.09	26.999*						
Writing	0.72	0.92	2.59	2.31	2.05	1.84	0.61	0.96	
	1.69	1.95	8.142*						
Word recog.	7.17	4.09	8.64	2.79	8.16	2.85	7.69	4.38	
	8.00	3.45	1.055						
Word prod.	3.28	1.69	4.41	1.19	4.31	1.11	3.61	2.10	
	3.96	1.54	3.904*						
Word structure	2.48	1.33	3.02	1.55	3.53	0.51	1.92	1.89	
	2.82	1.47	4.238*						
Listen & Speak	2.28	1.6	3.05	2.29	3.42	2.84	2.77	4.32	
	2.86	2.58	0.870						
combined (60)	20.79	10.12	30.9	7.83	31.26	6.4	23.46	10.62	
	27.07	9.8	9.734						

NB. Significant at  $P < 0.01$ . 10 marks is the maximum mean value obtainable.

The extent of variation in temperament and the effect(s) on L2 acquisition by Turkish EFL speakers were considered using the mean scores, standard deviations and ANOVA analysis. The result showed that EFL Turkish speakers with the choleric-dominated temperament had the best performance ( $9.36 \pm 0.81$ ) in the reading of English language followed by the phlegmatic ( $7.75 \pm 2.06$ ), and melancholic ( $7.15 \pm 2.66$ ) and then the sanguine-dominated temperaments with ( $4.76 \pm 3.66$ ), weighted mean scores and standard deviations.

The F-value (26.999) from reading obtained with ANOVA was significant at  $P < 0.01$  which reveals temperament difference and shows a significant

difference in the reading performance among the Turkish EFL learners as regards temperament. However, writing skill was generally poor among the EFL Turkish speakers. The result showed that the phlegmatic individuals did much better than the others. In order of performance, phlegmatic-dominant respondents scored  $2.59 \pm 2.31$ , followed by the choleric respondents ( $2.005 \pm 1.84$ ), then the sanguine ( $0.72 \pm 0.92$ ), and the melancholic ( $0.61 \pm 0.96$ ). F test (8.142) at  $P < 0.01$  showed significant difference among the performances which implies that differences in the temperament types caused differences in L2 writing performance among the EFL Turkish speakers.

In terms of word recognition, phlegmatic learners took the lead. According to the table above, phlegmatic respondents had mean score of  $8.64 \pm 2.79$ , followed by  $8.16 \pm 2.85$  for the choleric, then,  $7.69 \pm 4.38$  for the melancholic while  $7.17 \pm 4.09$  was scored by the sanguine personalities. However, the F-test (1.055) was not significant at  $P > 0.1$  which implied that performance of the individual EFL Turkish speaker is no different based on the temperament type.

Another important L2 EFL performance type considered was word production among the respondents. The result showed that overall performance was less than five ( $3.54 \pm 1.54$ ). In collective term, the phlegmatic respondents had the best performance with  $4.41 \pm 1.19$  followed by the choleric ( $4.31 \pm 1.11$ ), after which we had the melancholic ( $3.61 \pm 2.10$ ) while the sanguine had the least performance in word production.

To determine if these temperaments have significant difference to word production performance, F-value was 3.904 and significant at  $P < 0.01$ . Thus, we can say that there is a significant difference in word production performances across the temperament line.

Similarly for word structure, the highest mean score was below 4.00 out of 5.00 points adduced to word structure. Nevertheless, individual of the choleric type put up a very good performance with mean score and standard deviations of  $3.53 \pm 0.51$  followed by the phlegmatic individuals ( $3.02 \pm 1.55$ ), then the sanguine ( $2.48 \pm 1.33$ ) while the melancholic respondents performed the least ( $1.92 \pm 1.89$ ). This performance was shown to be

significantly different from one temperament type to another ( $F=4.238$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

In the same manner, listening and speaking skills were examined for performance differentials among L2 EFL Turkish Speakers. The result showed mixed performances within and across the temperament line. Table 4.4 indicated that respondents with dominant temperament of the choleric origin showed the best sign of good performance ( $3.42\pm 2.84$ ) followed by the phlegmatic ( $3.05\pm 2.29$ ), then the melancholic ( $2.77\pm 4.32$ ), while the sanguine gave the least performance ( $2.28\pm 1.60$ ). The result was however not significantly different from one another across the temperament line ( $F=0.870$ ,  $P>0.1$ ).

The performance for all the acquired L2 EFL was examined and as documented in Table 4.4, it was found out that choleric individuals gave the overall best performance ( $31.26\pm 6.4$ ). This was followed by the Phlegmatic ( $30.9\pm 7.83$ ), then the Melancholic ( $27.07\pm 9.8$ ), while the sanguine put up the least overall performance ( $20.79\pm 10.12$ ).

The standard deviations were very high which is suggestive of different performance level with each temperament type. This result implies that temperament type clearly caused significant differences ( $F=9.734$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) among the L2 performances of EFL Turkish speakers but this difference is not absolutely associated with the temperament type only.

## **Conclusion**

While temperament has some relevance to performance in some aspects of English language skills, in some other aspects, the influence cannot be observed. This may mean that even though temperament may influence some aspects of L2 acquisition, it does not influence other aspects, other reasons may be accountable for this which may be beyond temperament itself. However, further studies are recommended to check this.

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**APPENDIX 1w**

	Describes me				
	Does not describe me				
melancholy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
aggressive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
calm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
worrier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
quick to anger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
peaceful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
bouncy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
paranoid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
workaholic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
can be lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
moody	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
hardcore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
hides anger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
affectionate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
insecure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strong-willed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
passive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
lively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Disagree	Neutral		Agree	
I have difficulty starting tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like poetry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do things I later regret.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need a push to get started.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to get up and leave everything behind some days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to act confident, but it does not come naturally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have to psych myself up before I am brave enough to make a phone call.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't make the best choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm a full time daydreamer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not nearly as in control as I seem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that my life lacks direction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I love to daydream.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel attacked by others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not quite sure what I want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that I'm unable to deal with things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My whole body shivers sometimes when I listen to good music.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wait for others to lead the way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My ideas are often ignored.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My life isn't really headed anywhere right now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think hypnosis is fake.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You have completed the personality test. Just a few more questions before your results.

Do you already think you know what your temperament is?

- Yes
- No (then skip these questions)

How confident are you that this is your type?

- Not very confident
- Confident
- Very confident

Approximately how many hours in your life have you spent learning or thinking about the four temperaments?

- 0-1 hours
- 2-5 hours
- 6-20 hours
- 21 or more hours

Were your answers accurate and can they be used in our research?

- Yes.  No.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Colds: A Reading and Writing Comprehension Exercise**

*Adapted from [www.elcivics.com/worksheets/cold-healthcare](http://www.elcivics.com/worksheets/cold-healthcare)*

Pedro has a cold. His nose is stuffed up, he coughs a lot, and he has a sore throat. He felt fine last night, but now he is very sick. Pedro wants to go home and rest, but he can't. He is an accountant and payroll is due today. He needs to print and sign payroll checks so the employees get paid on time. Pedro's boss went on a business trip to Springfield, Illinois. He won't be back until next week. Before he left, he asked Pedro to take care of the office. There are twenty office workers, and they are all very busy. Hopefully, they won't catch Pedro's cold. If the employees catch colds, they might take several days off work.

#### **B. True or False**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Pedro is sick.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ All twenty office workers are busy.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Pedro's boss is on vacation.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ An accountant needs to be good at math.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Employees get payroll checks.

#### **C. Yes or No – Share your opinion.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Pedro should stay at work.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Pedro should go home immediately and eat chicken soup.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The employees should avoid touching their nose, eyes, and mouth.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Pedro should cover his mouth when he coughs.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ It's okay if the employees get paid late.

#### **D. Writing – What do you do when you have a cold?**

---

**Word Recognition Vocabulary Exercise**

**Family Photos**

live	pictur	ar	husba	wa	annivers	mov	wa	dinn	peop
s	es	e	nd	s	ary	ie	it	er	le

**Directions: Complete the story with the vocabulary words in the box.**

Rosario and Karen are at work. Karen has pictures of her family on her desk. Rosario wants to know who are in the (1) \_\_\_\_\_. “Hi Karen, how (2) \_\_\_\_\_ you today?” says Rosario. “I’m fine,” answers Karen, “how (3) \_\_\_\_\_ your weekend?” she asks. “It was okay. We didn’t do anything special. I cleaned the house on Saturday, and Benny and the kids went to see a (4) \_\_\_\_\_. We ordered pizza and chicken wings for (5) \_\_\_\_\_, so I didn’t have to cook,” says Rosario. “That’s good. You had a relaxing weekend,” says Karen. “Hey, who are the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ in the photos?” says Rosario. “This is a picture of my daughter and my mother. My mom came out to visit us last summer. She (7) \_\_\_\_\_ in Montana. And this is a picture of my husband and me when we got married. The last picture is of our dog, Ralph,” says Karen. “I’ve never met your (8) \_\_\_\_\_. How long have you been married?” says Rosario. “We’ve been married for twenty-four years. Our (9) \_\_\_\_\_ is in June,” says Karen. “Our daughter is eighteen years old. What about you? Are you married?” she asks. “No, I’ve been dating my boyfriend for two years. We talked about marriage, but we decided to (10) \_\_\_\_\_,” says Rosario.

**Word Production Vocabulary Exercise**

- The meeting is \_\_\_\_\_ for 7pm tonight.  
A. Scheduled B. covered C. argued D. alighted
- She was so \_\_\_\_\_ with the gift.  
A. transfixed B. augmented C. Delighted D. described
- The policeman asked her to \_\_\_\_\_ the thief.  
A. Describe B. narrate C. prescribe D. tell
- You should exercise \_\_\_\_\_ regularly.  
A. most B. More C. never D. best

5. I have to meet your parent for the \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. setting B. workings C. alternative D. Arrangement

### **Word Structure Exercise**

*Adapted from [www.ingleseemilano.it/pdf/esl-exam-b1](http://www.ingleseemilano.it/pdf/esl-exam-b1)*

1. I'm not sure this is the size. Can I try \_\_\_\_\_ to see if it fits?  
A. on it B. it up C. It on D. out it
2. The brochures \_\_\_\_\_ by a printer.  
A. is produced B. Are produced C. are producing D. has been produced
3. He began driving six hours ago. He \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. has driven since six hours B. has been driven for six hours C. Has been driving for six hours D. is driving for six hours
4. The soldiers \_\_\_\_\_ out the officer's orders  
A. put B. Carried C. got D. took
5. Although he had little money, he offered to pay for her lunch. In spite \_\_\_\_\_ little money, he offered to pay for her lunch.  
A. of have B. to have C. he had D. Of having

### **Listening and Speaking Parts**

Imagine a celebrity coming to your country to interview random people and you were selected and asked the following questions.

**Question 1:** What do you do in your free time?

**Question 2:** Tell me about your family.

**Question 3:** Where do you see yourself in five years?

**Question 4:** Describe your favorite television show?

# ***The Representations of Domesticity, Motherhood and Violence in Toni Morrison's Beloved***

***Diyar Esa MOHAMMED***

## **Abstract**

At a time when women around the world were staging a fight against gender discrimination and calling for equal rights with men in their various societies, black American women also tried to make their voices heard. As history holds it, unlike other women especially in the west, their story is different because it was shaped by slavery, which made them not only inferior to men but to women of other races. Coupled with the roles of housekeeping and motherhood assigned to women, thus sidelining them from decision making issues in the society, the African American woman also had to deal with the belittlement, violence and segregation from the white society during and after slavery. In this regard, Tony Morrison like a host of other black writers, took it upon themselves to tell the stories that were often ignored or could not be perfectly told by men or white writers. Though Morrison's *Beloved* is set during slavery. In *Beloved*, Morrison depicts the adverse side of motherhood that many writers of the time failed to consider. By attempting to exercise her motherly role in a period of extreme suffering, Sethe loses her identity and in the process also suppresses that of Denver her daughter. This is occasioned by the maternal ties that link Sethe to her children that preclude her individuation and spoil her self-development. Sethe sacrifices her being. Indeed, we see throughout the novel that all her efforts are directed at atoning for her losses as a daughter and re-establish herself as a good black mother based on the society's conceptualizations. My Article investigates how Toni Morrison portray the issue of domesticity, motherhood and violence in their novels *Beloved* and *The Color Purple*, during and after the days of slavery. The thesis also will provide the possibilities that lead to the characters emancipation.

***Keywords:*** *Motherhood, Domesticity, Racism, Black Feminism, African-American Literature, Violence, Slavery*

## **Introduction**

Motherhood is a universally acknowledged theme. Scholars recognize it to be a mother-offspring relationship that involves a strong bond of attachment between two or more human beings. In the contemporary society, men have produced the majority of the world's literature. Some of the literature created by these authors include central issues affecting women and children. In reality, only women themselves can truly be aware of their emotional and social situations although some male writers may appear sympathetic to female issues. We learn from the works of some prominent Victorian writers like Charles Dickens and Charlotte Bronte that women were mainly restricted to household activities which characterized them as docile, delicate and passive beings as Bloom (2009) puts it. Though all women, the case of the African American woman was different because it was shaped by slavery. As slaves, they were 'secondary beings' to the white women they served. Sofia in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* for instance, describes the mayor's wife as "backward" because she doesn't know how to drive. However she has to be a servant because she is black. As such, the characterization of African American females has been presented in regards to their parental responsibilities, a responsibility that has been imposed on women as the sole source of their identity.

While Morrison observes and acknowledges motherhood as a significant experience for women, the author also does not limit women's role in the community expressly on motherhood nor motherhood to biological maternity. Indeed, Morrison observed mothers solely as human beings that have diverse characteristics and as people that could discern between motherhood and individuality, especially when favorable conditions are present. She presents the women with an added character that if given normal condition will be very helpful to the society, not just as mothers. Baby Suggs preaches to the women in her community trying to help them to recover from their past and love themselves. Denver has the ability to rally the community when *Beloved* overpowers her mom. Ella on the one hand is presented as a strong woman who organizes underground passages for run-away slaves to freedom. Hence, Morrison in *Beloved* is not only trying to glorify the often ignored part of women's lives in motherhood but trying to add something to the black women which makes them useful to the society.

Culture and history have mythologized and typecast African American maternity because it serves as a way of dealing with a dilemma that the community is unable to solve. The mythologized images present mothers as matriarchal beings in the society that are strong, caring and altruistic creatures whose identities are completely inseparable from their nurturing capacities (Bloom, 2009, p. 12). However, Morrison subvert these misrepresentations of black women by presenting female characters that are independent, aggressive and determined. In her narrative, Morrison addresses the common prejudices adopted by slave masters. Among these prejudices includes the malevolence of slave owners towards black slaves. Therefore, her representation of motherhood is in divergence with already existing conceptions that are predisposed to romanticizing motherhood. She questions the entire social construct of motherhood, which rejects to perceive a woman's identity and individuality (Bloom, 2009, p. 104). Black women were only seen from one angle which is conceiving, bringing forth children and nurturing them. They were only seen from the perspective of mother and child and wife, ignoring their individuality and the contributions they could give to mankind beyond motherhood. Paul D for years sees Sethe as the mother of her children and a potential wife and doesn't look beyond. When he arrives 124 notwithstanding Sethe's struggles, he still wants her to bear his child which Sethe rejects.

### **Motherhood in Toni Morrison's *Beloved***

The pressure that African American women encounter in the novel results in humiliation and a loss of autonomy. Ultimately, the task of being a good mother is disrupted by the humiliation of slavery, the rape, the rejection and the loss. As Morrison makes it evident in *beloved*, slavery, more than any historical event had the capacity to influence black motherhood. In the novel, mothers exhibit both wild and good characteristics; however, the pressures of slavery reveals the brutal reality of existing during this era. Morrison writes of Sethe that: "Anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. And though she and others lived through and got over it, she could never let it happen to her own. The best things she was, was her children. Whites might dirty *her* all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing -- the part of her that was clean." (Morrison, 1991, p. 251). This tells

the story of a woman who is bent on protecting her kids from the hell of slavery. This leads to Sethe taking her own daughter's life to 'keep her safe'. To understand black motherhood during this period, it is pertinent to comprehend the dire conditions that were brought about by slavery. Black females were charged with the responsibility of taking care of domestic concerns such as household matters and raising children. The community reduced the mother to a state of nothingness where her freedom to escape was simply non-existent. The woman became subject to the tradition of family and motherhood which entirely controlled the life of a woman.

In Morrison's *Beloved*, black women throw away colored children born as a result of rape. These mothers reassess and formulate a new definition of motherhood that is devoid of established patterns of mothering. Thus, black parents successfully resist the oppression and reject the labels given to them by their owners. The relationship between mothers and their offspring is not perfect, but it is flowered in unconditional love that the women sometimes express in provocative ways (Bloom, 2009, p. 168). Morrison's *Beloved* is filled with scenarios where mothers are tested continually in their responsibility as providers and nurturers, as well as in the way society questions their actions and judgments. For instance, Sethe has to undergo suffering that ultimately affects her job of motherhood. She has to experience terrible events as is evident in the following extract from the text: "After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it. I told Mrs. Garner on em. She had that lump and couldn't speak, but her eyes rolled out tears. The boys found out I told on em". (Morrison, 1991, pg. 16-17). Not only does Sethe lose her child's milk she also suffers the consequences of reporting her new masters to Mrs Garner whose brother now manages the farms and the slaves. Though she is pregnant, she is raped and tortured because according to the code under slavery, she had to stay silent because she had not right. Reporting to Mrs Garner calls for more pain from schoolteacher.

Sethe's strength and resilience is evident when she survives a brutal beating while pregnant. The horrors of slavery are quite clear to her, which causes her to develop a resolve to escape to an environment where her children do not have to suffer. While Sethe receives the beating, the definite lack

of a male presence to protect her is disheartening. According to Christian Barbara (1997) the duty of nurturing children lay exclusively with the mother, because of societal expectations, as well as the absence of male presence in the community. During this period, the men in the community were often involved in the fields and were rarely able to communicate or aid their women. Slave owners pressured women to procreate to increase the numbers of slaves in the commune. To worsen the situation, mothers left their children for long hours to handle the needs of their owner's children. It is quite understandable how Sethe desperately wanted to remove her children from the terrible conditions of slavery. Sethe recalls the story of her mother who was lynched by white men for being standing up to them. She tells us that her mother despised her master's children which she had to look after. Also Halle watches as Sethe is violated and did nothing to save her. This could be because he felt powerless as a slave and knew the consequences if he did, though this later made him run mad. This shows how vulnerable black women were with nobody to look up to.

In most circumstances, black women entered into motherhood with tormented spirits and broken hearts that crushed opinion of the self. "The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there -- you who never was there -- if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over -- over and done with -- it's going to always be there waiting for you." (Morrison, 1991, pg. 36). Sethe not only had to endure the difficulties around her, but she also had to raise her daughters in the knowledge that they too would one day face the same injustices as she and her mother had. Although Sethe displays a high level of courage and strength, slavery immobilizes her. African American parents were held responsible for being decision makers, providers, and matriarchs of the family. Nonetheless, the power that seems apparent was non-existence because it reduced and became limited by the bonds of sexism, racial prejudice, and poverty. Sethe is forced to steal food from the restaurant she works in to provide for her family. Without the father of her children or any male provider, she is determined to see her children grow. She even sacrifices all for Beloved who grows fat while Sethe grows thin and sick.

Morrison reveals the complexity of motherhood, which sometimes forced women to commit heinous acts as a means of survival. Although Sethe attempted to provide for her family regularly, she decided to kill her child as a way of freeing her from the world of slavery. Although her evil act was paved with good intentions, the community that had so often dejected her eventually ostracized her because of her decision to end her child's life. From the reader's point of view, it is easy to make judgments about Sethe. Indeed, the act of killing one's child is immoral and unacceptable. However, Sethe's love for her children is undisputed. She says: "My love was too thick. What he know about it?...I have felt what it felt like and nobody walking or stretched out is going to make you feel it too. Not you, not none of mine, and when I tell you mine, I also mean I'm yours. I wouldn't draw breath without my children" (Morrison, 1991, pg.203). The emphasis that she will not breathe shows the motherly connection she has with her kids. However, as the saying goes: "if you love something so much, let it go", so does she decide to kill her child to save her from slavery. To Sethe, her action is like saving herself because as she says "when I tell you mine, I also mean I'm yours". So her children is her and she is her children. Looking at the murder from the mother's perspective, one can say that Sethe endured the humiliation of being ostracized and cast out by her community as a way of saving her child from future embarrassment. It can be said that Sethe acted in the best interest of her child. Sure, the decision was awful and outside convention, but Morrison makes it clear that motherhood is multifaceted and intricate.

A narrow view of the concept of motherhood, especially during this period was futile. One cannot begin to understand it simply by observing and making judgments. It is pertinent for one to observe the situation and the circumstance under which Sethe made the choice to kill her baby. Moreover, an African American mother that behaves outside the norms of society is questioned and efficiently labeled by her community. Even though Sethe had the power to spare or kill her child, in the real sense, what many see as power is powerlessness in her circumstance. The power relations existing between mother and child are evidence of the struggles of living in a patriarchal community. Although Sethe cares for her children to the best of her ability, her frustration and bitterness reflect in her role as a mother, which was defined by a sexist, patriarchal community. The norms

established by men make her feel trapped both in her domestic responsibility and as a mother and as a woman. Because she remains trapped, her ability to control events in her life expose her levels of powerlessness. According to Porter (2005), the women's children worsen the state of helplessness among black mothers. Women seem ready to place their lives in danger for their children. They have no subjectivity, which causes them to adjust the way they raise their children. In such a case, the women are not only slaves of the white man, but to motherhood as well, which is evident when beloved re-appears to Sethe as a ghost. Even though she killed the baby herself, she allows the ghost that is clearly an apparition to control her life, even in death. Beloved's appearance creates the opportunity for Beloved to Kill Sethe in the same way that Sethe killed Beloved. On the contrary, where it would seem that black mothers have power over their offspring, it is clear that children have the upper hand. Beloved in her monologue says "I am Beloved, and she is mine" (Morrison, 1991, pg. 210). She, referring to Sethe her mother which Morrison describes as now behaving like a child and beloved as the mother. The monologue expresses the lack of flexibility in the relationship between mother and child in this society.

### **Domesticity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved***

In *Beloved*, the homestead carries memories of many violent acts. Interestingly, the spirit of Beloved's ghost highlights the activities-domestic activities- that take place in a historic southern home. The horrors created by slavery have the immense power to affect domesticity for years. Morrison attempts to expose the dread that was characteristic of this period by highlighting the external and internal forces that affect major characters in the novel. Morrison represents the concept of domesticity as fluid and as a pointer to the private worlds of the characters and as an appraisal of their acceptance in their communities. The type of domesticity revealed in the novel also has deep roots in the struggle against the effects of slavery, as well as the fight against domestic labor in regards to the residences of white slave owners. As a theme, Morrison uses domesticity as a means to expose larger social, cultural issues instead of focusing on traditional activities associated with domesticity such as activities in the natural home and kitchen. Morrison says that "Denver hated the stories her mother told that did not concern herself, which is why Amy was all she ever asked about. The rest was a gleaming, powerful world made more so by Denver's

absence from it. Not being in it, she hated it and wanted Beloved to hate it too, although there was no chance of that at all.” (Morrison, 1991, pg. 62). Here, Morrison shows a home divided by interest of what stories should be told in the house. Because of slavery all Sethe ever recounts are stories from Sweet Home which are horrifying. Beloved enjoys these stories and want to hear more because she wants know why her mother killed her while her sister who doesn't understand why these stories are told wants her to hate the story too. While these stories draw beloved closer to Sethe, they seem to push Denver further form her mom causing friction.

In *Beloved*, the author narrates and affirms the importance of community in passing on traumatic experiences that occur in a domestic household. Rather than having an internal situation that fosters growth in its characters, domesticity is viewed as a system, through which the horrors of slavery are perpetuated (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 102). Victims of slavery, particularly the central characters, Sethe and her mother pass on personal issues of turmoil on to their offspring. The survivors of the slave trade, rape, abuse and poverty very clearly struggle with the side effects of unhealed psychosomatic disorders. As Sethe's children grow up, they learn to model their parents as a way to create their identities. When they model their traumatized mother, the cycle is carried forward to their children and the next generation. In this regard, the home, and the domestic area becomes places in which the characters endure individual suffering, as well as a location where suffering is perpetuated (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 102). In reality, the paternal community during this period already instituted the rule of law; that a woman's place is in the home; even when the home confines and abuses (Spargo, 2002, p. 113). Many of the traumas, inherited or acquired, between both southern men and women, occur within the limits of the home. African American women especially had to endure their lack of power to protect their children from such as oppressive system. It is no wonder that Sethe eventually murders her child to prevent the traumatic cycle from occurring.

In Morrison's narrative, Sethe, after killing her youngest daughter and having her two sons leave the home, moves in with her daughter Denver, in the house that Beloved haunts. The situation is transformed however when Paul D, a freed slave from Sethe's plantation arrives and Beloved reveals

herself in an apparition of a teenager (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 136). Because she commits the horrendous act of murdering her child, Sethe's domestic situation is altered entirely. The community that she once identifies with labels her a social pariah. Besides, the same community also stops interacting with Denver for fear of being ostracized. In such a situation, it would be expected that a community that was living in slavery, having experienced the toll of the abuse and pain of slavery, would pool together and offer support to a family undergoing turmoil. Morrison says of Paul D that "She should have known that he would behave like everybody else in town once he knew." (Morrison, 1991, pg.204). Even the man who claims to love Sethe immediately abandons her the moment he hears about her murder. This only adds to the gloom which has been in the house since the death of Baby Suggs as Morrison says: "Those twenty-eight happy days were followed by eighteen years of disapproval and solitary life." (Morrison, 1991, pg.204). Twenty-eight days referring to the days Sethe arrived 124. However, the level of rejection that Sethe's family faces forces them to retreat into their home causing them to live in an enduring state of stasis in which the characters cannot escape. The domestic situation becomes a barrier that protects them from the judgment and rejection they receive from the community (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 101).

The constant struggle experienced in the domestic space becomes more apparent in Denver, especially as the narrative carries on. After Beloved returns from the dead, Sethe begins paying too much attention to the ghost, which leaves Denver alone and dejected. As such, Denver must find a way to overcome her phobia of rejection and instead of seeking refuge in a home that has gone haywire; she must leave her household to find comfort. Here, again, Morrison reveals domesticity as a struggle between private and public spheres. On one hand, domesticity shields the characters from communal judgment while on the other; it heightens the conflict within the characters (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 44, 173). Domesticity in this sense is not traditional; rather it is unbalanced, revealing the issue of a deranged, prescribed household (Spargo, 2002, p. 112). African American women frequently find the events of their lives extremely fractured that the inner turmoil they encounter becomes reflected in their domestic practice. Eventually, Denver learns to deal with her mother's past and leaves it behind symbolically and literally, and as she leaves her home, she

claims her individual spot in the community, free of association with her mother's actions (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 43). Denver defines her personal view of domesticity instead of allowing herself to remain stuck in a situation that hurts instead of nurturing her. She says: "All the time, I'm afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again. I don't know what it is, I don't know who it is, but maybe there is something else terrible enough to make her do it again. I need to know what that thing might be, but I don't want to. Whatever it is, it comes from outside this house, outside the yard, and it can come right on in the yard if it wants to. So I never leave this house and I watch over the yard, so it can't happen again and my mother won't have to kill me too." (Morrison, 1991, pg. 205). Morrison's point of view regarding the domestic space focuses on how African American women struggle to endure the traumas associated with slavery and the manner in which they live to tell the tale or perish in their struggles. Like Denver demonstrates in the text.

### **Violence in Toni Morrison's *Beloved***

Violence is an application of force that results in injury or abuse. It entails causing physical, sexual, mental, emotional and material damage on sufferers. In the African American community, violence is invariably actions of interracial victimization and oppression that manifest themselves in whipping, brutality, killing and branding. Violence against black women is an apparent concern for Toni Morrison. The roots of the violence experienced in the South are traceable to the unjustified treatment of black African Americans by their slave owners. In this sense, it would appear that black females bore the brunt of the suffering as they doubly had to endure not only torture as the men but also rape by the white slave masters. Additionally, black children struggle with abuse in their domestic households as well as from their community. Consequently, characters in Morrison's *Beloved* are forced to find ways to survive the violence that surrounds them to come out of their marginalized spheres. Sweet Home to Sethe is like a 'hell hole'. Cincinnati on the other hand signifies freedom from the brutality in Sweet Home and Sethe is determined to get out of this hell hole even with the danger that stands on her way. After she is raped by Schoolteacher's nephew, Sethe reports the incident to Mrs Garner whom she said "shades a tear", Schoolteacher brutally beats her up for violating

his authority. She also tells the story of her mother who was lynched after she was tortured. Morrison here is telling the story of the slave women who did not only have to suffer child bearing and nurturing but also undergo serious violence.

The theme of violence can best be understood through Sethe. The idea of violence and the brutal assaults that arise from slavery lead to a death of an absolute magnitude- the end of a person's humanity (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 203). After Mr. Graner's death, Mrs. Garner asks schoolteacher her brother to take over the management of Sweet Home plantation. The schoolteacher's oppressive nature makes living on the estate more unbearable, which causes the slaves to devise an escape plan. In one scene, the violence experienced by slaves in these plantations becomes evident. After anticipating the slave's escape, the schoolteacher together with his nephews capture and kill Sixo, while brutally punishing Paul D. before returning him to Sweet Home. To worsen the situation, the schoolteacher, and his cronies violates Sethe in the barn, and steals her baby's milk. The schoolteacher punishes Sethe later on through whipping, despite being aware of her pregnancy. In the novel, Schoolteacher represents the prime agent of the structure of white supremacists and the era of slavery. In many instances, Sethe mentions the violent act of taking her baby's milk. She states: "Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else—and the one time I did it was took from me—they held me down and took it". (p.236). The event primarily takes Sethe's humanity away from her and transforms her into an animal as she later kills here daughter to prove her word that nobody will take her children or her children's milk from her ever. The perversity of the institution of slavery is so dangerous that it manages to sever the bonds between parents and offspring. Morrison here shows that the consequence of slavery not only exerts physical pain on Sethe who represents the women at the time, but it also infringes her feelings towards her children.

When Sethe commits the most violent act of killing her child, it signifies a major twist in the character's disposition so much so that Sethe completely loses ties with her individuality or self and become devoid of her vitality. Based on the mistreatment she undergoes and tolerates at the hands of her slave owners, Sethe becomes undone, physically and spiritually to the point

of exhaustion, and at some point, madness. "...what he (schoolteacher) did broke three more Sweet Home men and punched the glittering iron out of Sethe's eyes, leaving two open wells that did not reflect firelight" (Morrison, 1991, p. 11). The act of killing Beloved is not understandable in the beginning, however, the conditions in which Sethe had to survive in and the brutality she experienced drove her to commit infanticide. Her fear of the violence becomes so bad that she would rather kill her child than subject her to live in the same terrible conditions. From an analytic perspective, it is not madness or exhaustion caused Sethe kill her infant, but the actuality of slavery (Holden-Kirwan 445). Besides dealing with the pain of killing her child, Sethe also struggles with inner turmoil from her past when she recalls her mother's hanging. Such violent events in history signify how routinely violence and death is passed on from generation to generation.

Inspired by the black feminist movement that began in the 1960s, Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* reflects the general illustrations of women of color. Morrison intends to expose the reader to the effects of institutionalized slavery on African Americans. Her point of view delves deeply into the issues that African American women encounter in this period. Her representations of motherhood, domesticity, and violence in *Beloved*, paint a perfect picture of repression and disillusionment. While Morrison understands and acknowledges motherhood as an extraordinary experience for women, she does not limit the women's role simply to motherhood. Her writings in this regard have transformed how readers analyze and understand stereotypical representations of black women. By narrating Sethe's story, Morrison focuses on the dehumanizing consequences of slavery, particularly on black motherhood. The effect of the violence and brutality is psychological exhaustion that drives the main character to the brink of a mental disorder. Consequently, slavery threatens the mental and spiritual world of the characters, causing a series of dreadful and terrible consequences.

The theme of violence is manifested throughout the novels, and the reader cannot find it easy to ignore. The recovery of the stolen milk signifies the sustenance of a child's needs. When Sethe's milk is stolen, she tends to feel like she cannot provide for her child which brings her even lower than

the fact that she was raped in the first place. Both novels, *Beloved* and *The Color Purple* seem to be hell bent on exposing the problems that the black women went through in the 18th and 19th centuries. Violence has not been used to demonize men. On the contrary, the violence is seen to manifest itself in both males and females alike. For example, Sethe is a mother who loves her child dearly, and she would go to any length to make sure she is okay. However, when schoolteacher becomes the master, the slaves attempt to escape whereby some of them die in the process. Sethe is stopped after she slices the throat of her daughter Beloved who bleeds out and dies. As much as she loved her child, she would rather have her dead than watch her become a slave. This act of violence is triggered by the brutality that was presented by slavery. Sethe remembered the cruel things did to her and knew that she would not let a child of hers go through the same treatment that was handed to her. She says that ‘I got a tree on my back and a haunt in my house, and nothing in between but this daughter I am holding in my arms’ (Morrison, 2004, p. 18). Additionally, the violent crime committed is followed up by the presence of the dead child as a ghost. Although this is a scary bit for the readers, the novel manages to capture the highlights such as when the ghost puts its prints on the cake that does not make the ghost seem too violent for digestion. The theme of motherhood also blossoms as the reader is made to share in the grief and the regret of a mother who has slain her own.

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# **ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MEDIA, CULTURE AND LITERATURE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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No Author Given	(A Handbook of Korea 241-47).	A Handbook of Korea. 4th ed. Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.
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