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Article 2 – short article

Developing a Model of Indian Women Library Association to Support Open Access Evironment in Academic Libraries in India

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Article 3 – regular article

A Reading of Philip Roth's *Everyman* as a Postmodern Parody

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Article 4 – regular article

Mitigating the Infodemic Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic: Roles of Nigerian Librarians

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Characters' Pilgrimage from the Canon to Fanfiction: A Gestalt Approach

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Article 6 – short article

Novels of Martin Amis: A Review of the Critical Reception

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Article 7 – regular article

Mapping Spaces, Identities and Ideologies in *The Parisian* (2019)

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Editor's Introduction

It is our great pleasure and my personal honour as the editor-in-chief to introduce Volume 10 Issue 1 of the *IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship*. This issue is a selection of papers received through open submissions directly to our journal.

This is already the fourth issue of the journal I have edited; once more with the precious help of our Co-Editor, Dr Rachel Franks (University of Newcastle/ University of Sydney, Australia), and our two Associate Editors, Dr Jeri Kroll (Flinders University, Australia) and Dr Murielle El Hajj Nahas (Lusail University, Qatar) whom I thank graciously for giving their time freely in the production of this issue.

Our team is growing fast. We are now 47 teachers and scholars from many countries, always eager to help, and willing to review the submissions we receive. Special thanks to the IAFOR Publications Office and its manager, Mr Nick Potts, as well as the IAFOR Journals Administrator, Ruth Mund, for their support and hard work.

We hope our journal, indexed in Scopus since December 2019, will become more international in time and we still welcome teachers and scholars from various regions of the world who wish to join us. Please join us on Academia.edu and help us promote our journal. https://independent.academia.edu/EditorLiteratureandLanguage?

Finally, we would like to thank all those authors who entrusted our journal with their research. Manuscripts, once passing initial screening, were peer-reviewed anonymously by at least four members of our team, resulting in seven being accepted for this issue (five regular articles and two short articles).

Please see the journal website for the latest information and to read past issues: https://iafor.org/journal/iafor-journal-of-literature-and-librarianship/. All issues are freely available to read online, and the journal is free of publication fees for authors.

With this wealth of thought-provoking manuscripts in this issue, I wish you a wonderful and educative journey through the pages that follow.

Best regards,

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Plastic (in) Paradise: Karen Tei Yamashita's
Through the Arc of the Rain Forest

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Abstract

This contribution examines the magic-realist metaphor of the Matacão in Karen Tei Yamashita's (1990) debut novel *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* as a trope that invites us to imagine, reflect on, and explore plastic's cross-cultural meanings, aesthetic experiences, and materialist implications. I contend that through the Matacão, Yamashita engenders a narrative about, as well as an aesthetic experience of, plastic that is inherently ambivalent and paradoxical. While it provides societies with material wealth and sensual pleasures, it poses at the same time a profound threat to life – human and nonhuman. The main part of the article is divided into two major sections: in the first part, I read Yamashita's story about the Matacão as historiographic metafiction that parodies the socio-cultural history of plastic and its utopian promises and failures. In the second part, I draw on Catherine Malabou's philosophical concept of plasticity to explore the Matacão's material agency, as well as the social mobility and economic connectivity of Yamashita's human protagonists in their plastic environments. The theoretical perspective of Malabou's concept of plasticity shifts the focus to the agentic forces of the waste material and allows us to read Yamashita's Matacão as both a site and material that, notwithstanding its devastating impacts, also holds potentialities for resilience and repair, and even the possibility for an, at least temporary, utopia.

Keywords: Catherine Malabou, Karen Tei Yamashita, material ecocriticism, plastic, plasticity, *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*

Introduction

In her debut novel, Yamashita (1990) narrates the boom-and-bust cycle of a new raw material in the southern region of the Amazon Basin in Brazil – the Matacão. The Matacão first surfaces as "an enormous impenetrable field of some unknown substance stretching millions of acres in all directions" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 16). While the mysterious matter soon begins destroying the livelihoods of local farmers and agricultural laborers, the mass media proclaims the mysterious substance as "one of the wonders of the world" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 17). Quickly, the Matacão turns into an attraction for people from around the globe and becomes a node of local and global economies and ecologies, where hopes for wealth, progress, and sacred powers multiply. The enigmatic, defamiliarizing image of the Matacão points to the wide "range of vision" and "genre" (Lee, 2018, p. 3) that characterizes Yamashita's writing. Indeed, scholars have repeatedly stressed the hybridity, intersectionality, and metamorphosis of her literary worlds, which defy any clear-cut thematic and generic categorizations and equally draw on ethnic, diasporic, postcolonial, and postmodern fiction, magical realism, dystopian literature, satire, science fiction, or speculative fiction (Thoma, 2010, pp. 6–7).

The novel's multicultural cast is caught up in the whirl of the human activities on and around the Matacão: there is the local peasant, Mané Pena, who becomes famous for his healing powers with and knowledge of bird feathers; the young fisherman, Chico Paco, from the northeast of Brazil, who erects a shrine for Saint George on the Matacão and, thus, turns it into a pilgrim destination; Tania and Batista Djapan, a couple from São Paolo, who use the Matacão to expand their communication business of carrier pigeons; and the central character, Kazumasa Ishimaru, a Japanese immigrant, whose lottery win makes him the most important stockholder of the American company GGG, which is short for the telling name of Geoffrey and Georgia Gamble. Sensing new business opportunities in the promising new resource, J. B. Tweep, the New York manager of GGG, invites Kazumasa to the Matacão. With his three arms, Tweep is the epitome of the US-American entrepreneur and Wall Street capitalist. But Kazumasa stands out in his appearance as well, in that a small ball rotates, earth- or satellite-like, around its own axis in front of his forehead. This ball magnetically attracts Kazumasa to the Matacão and, ironically, functions as the novel's extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator. From this ball-narrator, we learn that all protagonists, except Kazumasa but including the ball, have perished in a mass extinction. Even the Matacão material has long crumbled to dust, and the ball is but a memory from the past, conjured up in an Afro-Brazilian Candomblé ceremony. While the initially overt presence of the ball-narrator quickly recedes into the background, toward the end of the novel, we learn from it that, as the mass extinction began, scientists confirmed that the Matacão

> had been formed for the most part within the last century, paralleling the development of the more common forms of plastic, polyurethane and styrofoam. Enormous landfills of nonbiodegradable material buried under virtually every populated part of the Earth had undergone tremendous pressure, pushed ever farther into the lower layers of the Earth's mantle. The liquid deposits of the molten mass had been squeezed through underground veins to virgin areas of the Earth. The Amazon Forest, being one of the last virgin areas on Earth, got plenty (Yamashita, 1990, p. 202).

Notably, the Matacão plastic is both a site and material, where anthropogenic and ecological processes enmesh with each other in unprecedented ways; where local and global forces circulate, clash, and interact; and where material resources and immaterial ideas are exploited.

In its materiality, the Matacão is a paradoxical phenomenon: at once rock-hard yet malleable, it is easily molded yet also molds other – human and nonhuman – matter.

This article examines the Matacão's plastic matter and plasticity as a metaphor that invites us to imagine and reflect on plastic's aesthetic experiences, cross-cultural meanings, and material properties. This is not to say that material such as plastic is not culturally and geopolitically specific. However, materials, ecologies, and cultures need to be placed within larger, globalizing processes, relations, and significations. My position here aligns with Veronica Strang's (2014) assertion that "cultural specificity and cross-cultural commonality in meanings are not mutually exclusive" (p. 140). This article contends that through the Matacão, Yamashita engenders a narrative about, and an aesthetic experience of, plastic that is inherently ambivalent and paradoxical. While it provides societies with material wealth and aesthetic pleasures, it poses at the same time a profound threat to life, both human and nonhuman. The main part of this article is divided into two sections: in the first part, I read Yamashita's story about the Matacão as historiographic metafiction that ironically comments on the socio-cultural history of plastic and its utopian promises and failures. In the second part, I draw on Catherine Malabou's (2008) philosophical concept of plasticity to unravel the Matacão's material agency, as well as the socio-economic mobility and connectivity of Yamashita's human protagonists in their plastic environments. The theoretical perspective of Malabou's concept of plasticity sheds light on Yamashita's Matacão as both a site and a material that, despite its devastating impact, also holds potentialities for resilience and repair, even for an, at least temporary, utopia.

Literature Review

The interpretations of the Matacão, its meanings and functions, tend to cluster around three critical perspectives: transnational Asian American affiliations, cross-cultural global flows and migratory patterns of economies and ecologies, and environmental pollution and justice. Taking their cue from the transnational turn, scholars like Rachel Lee, Shu-ching Chen, or Kandice Chuh have explored Asian American transpacific and hemispheric migrations and entanglements in global capitalism and argued for expanding the scope of identity politics that had focused predominantly on US-American national boundaries. Where Lee (1999) has called for a radical rethinking of "Asian American foundational subaltern identity politics" (p. 253) and Chuh (2006) has proposed a hemispheric approach, Chen (2004) has celebrated the novel's "innovative reconstruction" (p. 610) of Asian ethnicity, specifically Yamashita's use of the genre of the melodrama and the characters' efforts at reterritorialization, that is, the rebuilding of their local cultures and environments by adapting to the forces of global capitalism in "Asian style" (p. 611). Shaini Rupesh Jain's (2016) study of Yamashita's magical realist representation of the dispossession and ecological ethos of the indigenous peoples of Brazil, places Kazumasa without much ado on the side of the American entrepreneurial, profit-oriented developed world.

Ursula Heise's insightful examination of the destructive impact of globalization on local environments and cultures in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* has opened up the Asian American focus to a broader investigation of the global traffic of materials, ecologies, cultures, and identities. Heise (2008) reads the Matacão as a key symbol of "the imbrication of the local in the global" (p. 102) while also making a compelling case for Yamashita's subversion of such stereotypical figure constellations as the victimized Third World population (as embodied by Chico Paco, Mané Pena, or Tania and Batista) and their ruthless capitalist First World antagonists (personified by Tweep or Kazumasa).

Building on Heise's contribution, Treasa De Loughry (2017) has provided the first in-depth examination of the resource connections of the Matacão, which she reads as a symbol of "the text's world systemic registration of the uneven effects of petro-plastic pollution and oil financing" (p. 332). Importantly, her contribution makes visible the obscured connections between the oil industry, oil capital, and its by-products – plastic and plastic waste. Oil and plastic have not been the only nonhuman materials explored by scholars in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* to date. Aimee Bahng has linked the Matacão to the Amazon rubber boom, specifically to Euro-American and Japanese neocolonial schemes in the early twentieth century at the same time as she has concentrated on Asian American concerns as well. Based on her argument that Yamashita's novel reverses conventional narratives of Asian immigration and otherness in a long lineage of Asian American literature and science fiction, Bhang (2008) has interpreted the Matacão as indicating "the resilience and flexibility of empire, which continues to resurface in mutated form" (p. 127). Recently, Walter Gordon (2020) has elucidated the Matacão's materiality as that of "a unique speculative media ecology" that is "firmly tied to the material world of geology, ecology, and extraction" (pp. 178–179).

This article seeks to expand the scholarship on the Matacão's plastic and plasticity in Yamashita's novel by focusing on the ways in which plastic is represented as a material that shapes social and ecological environments and histories across cultures and places, and that possesses distinct material properties. Malabou's concept of plasticity proves to be particularly fruitful for explicating the agentive aspects of plastic as represented in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* at the same time as it provides a theoretical perspective for a better understanding of the workings of the novel's plastic environments, economies, and ecologies. In doing so, my approach attends to what Begoña Simal (2010) has called the "transnatural challenge" of interrogating nature/culture-binaries and asserting the fluidity between nature and artifice, nature, and culture (no. 3 "The Transnatural Challenge").

The Ambiguous Pleasures of Yamashita's Plastic Utopia

Chronicling the rise of the plastic industry in North America and its global interrelations, Susan Freinkel (2011) reminds us that the plastic cornucopia, which presently surrounds us, and the ever-growing mountains of waste, which we eye with increasing alarm – especially such "throwaway items" (p. 140) as water bottles, shopping bags, or food packaging – initially promised developed Western countries "a new material and cultural democracy" (p. 15) and "utopia available to all" (p. 25). As a new industrially produced material, plastic was indeed first hailed as "utopian," in that, ironically, it was extolled as bringing about a "cleaner and brighter" (Meikle, 1995, p. 68) future, as well as halting the extinction of animals, when celluloid combs or billiard balls replaced ivory, hornbill, or tortoiseshell. Because plastic surpassed the limitations of wood, iron, or glass, after World War II the polymer industry cranked up its mass-production of cheap products for everyday and recreational use, the "natural" looks of which signaled not only a sense of "humanity's growing mastery over nature" (Freinkel, 2011, p. 19), but also the pleasure traditionally associated with artistic mimesis. In fact, plastic came to be admired for its imitation, even perfection, of "nature."

Generally, avant-gardists, design artists, architects, and intellectuals across America, Japan, Brazil, and Europe embraced the new Bakelite, polymer, or nylon materials, albeit in culturally distinct ways and, depending on their political contexts, during different time periods. One exemplary art form that incorporated a multitude of plastic materials and even created a specific aesthetic through them, was pop art. Its heydays were the 1950s, and while European, American, and Japanese artists vigorously engaged in pop art's aesthetic potential and diverse

forms, Brazilian avant-gardists like Waldemar Cordeiro, for instance, "displaced pop art into [his] own artistic corpus" (Svanelid, 2017, p. 219).

Paris became one of the international art centers, where avant-gardists and intellectuals from around the world met and exchanged their visions about modern art and society. Roland Barthes's essay "Plastic" (1991), written after a visit to an exhibition of plastic materials in 1957, perhaps best represents the frequently shared "plastiphilia" (Freinkel, 2011, p. 43) and sense of wonder shared among artists and intellectuals at the time. Although he harbored doubts regarding plastic's aesthetic potential (as opposed to the pleasures derived from its usage), Barthes still marveled at its ability of a "sudden transformation of nature" which, he wrote, left the material "impregnated throughout with this wonder" and "perpetual amazement" (p. 97). *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* revisits and comments on this history of plastiphilia and sense of wonder from a uniquely postmodern perspective of historiographic metafiction. Detailing its characteristics, Linda Hutcheon (1989) explains that historiographic metafiction reworks and "echoes … the texts and contexts of the past" (p. 3) through a self-conscious display of its own fiction and the use of parody.

In her novel, Yamashita (1990) has the ball-narrator – itself a posthuman subject made of Matacão plastic and, therefore, a "source of wonder" (p. 6) – reminisce about the bygone times with a mixture of self-awareness, self-importance, and nostalgia. In glowing terms, it remembers that "the wonderful thing about the Matacão was its capacity to assume a wide range of forms," so that once "the means of molding and shaping this marvelous material was finally discovered, the possibilities were found to be infinite" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 142). Indeed, the ball-narrator gets quite carried away when praising the versatility of Matacão plastic, which could not only be "molded into forms more durable and impenetrable than steel," spread out "as thin as tissue paper with the consistency of silk," but also had the "ability to imitate anything" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 142). The ball's enthusiasm echoes (to use Hutcheon's term) the twentieth-century admiration of and wonder at plastic materials as expressed by Barthes, and as chronicled in the various histories about plastic materials, which have become available since the 1990s.[1] As it does so, the ball smugly comments on its very own contribution to the past, ventriloquizing the self-adulatory pride of an explorer, who has made a revolutionary discovery: "This new era, which some historians would refer to as the Plastics Age, was all made possible because of me, Kazumasa Ishimaru's ball, without which new deposits of the Matacão plastic could not be found" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 144). However, the nostalgia-filled reminiscences of the ball-narrator also contain some disturbing aspects, specifically regarding the worship of the alleged miracle material, which indicate horrors which are, yet, outdone by its shiny new façade:

> At the plastics convention, two tiger lilies, one natural and the other made from Matacão plastic, were exhibited for public examination. Few, if any of the examiners, could tell the difference between the real and the fake. Only toward the end of the convention, when the natural tiger lily began to wilt, bruised from mishandling, were people able to discern reality from fabrication. The plastic lily remained the very perfection of nature itself. Matacão plastic managed to recreate the natural glow, moisture, freshness – the very sensation of life (Yamashita, 1990, pp. 142–143).

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[1] Alongside Meikle (1995) and Freinkel (2011), see also Fenichell (1996) and Davis (2015). Davis's brief history relates more specifically to the idea of the Anthropocene.

Here, the plastiphilia reveals its dark underbelly as the public admiration of the industrially produced perfection of "nature" involves the careless violation of the "real" tiger lily. Moreover, the flower symbolism and the juxtaposition of the "real" and the "fake" enhance and complicate the meanings of the mass worship of the nature of plastic. On the one hand, the tiger lily's Asian descent adds a racialized, orientalist dimension to the conventional trope of representing nature as women and their bodies, out there to be dominated, injured, and ravaged (Kolodny, 1975). In this context, the question of the "real" and the "fake" brings into play the question of identity politics. After all, what trans/national boundaries shall decide what constitutes the "real" and the "fake" tiger lily?[2] On the other hand, when considering that the tiger lily also symbolizes "wealth and pride" (Lehner & Lehner, 2003, p. 126), the question of the "real" and the "fake" can be read as an allegory of the (Asian) tiger economies and their roles in the production, marketing, and consumption of plastic matter and, therefore, the despoliation of "nature" and its beauty.

Furthermore, religious connotations abound in the lily as a Christian attribute of the Virgin Mary and a symbol of sacred purity and innocence (Lehner & Lehner, 2003). Importantly, it is the natural flower that is violently robbed of its purity and sacredness – the lily's "mishandling" and "bruises" indicate rape – whereas the artificial lily attains a status of transcending nature. Indeed, the idea of purity is generally confounded, in that the exhibited flowers occupy the interstices between religion, art, and consumption. As a result, the distinctions between the categories of the artificial and the natural, the divine and the profane, the ideal and the real, can no longer be maintained. The religious worship of the Matacão becomes increasingly intertwined with monetary interests as well. In fact, the clergy – even Chico Paco himself, albeit inadvertently – "capitalize on [its] possible spiritual magnetism" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 49). Economic profit also gains the upper hand in Tweep's American dream of Matacão plastic for all. The parodic image of his three busy arms hark back to Udo Keppler's famous caricature of Standard Oil's tentacular powers during the Gilded Age and, thus, make visible the generally obscured relationship between plastic and oil.[3] Furthermore, GGG's corporate structures, including their monopoly on Big Data, presents an updated version of the historically characteristic concentration of the technological infrastructure of Big Business owned and run by one single company. As Matacão plastic "infiltrate[s] every crevice of modern life" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 143) and makes available a vast array of consumer choices – from essentials like food to everyday objects such as clothes to luxury goods like jewelry – so does GGG's monopolistic power shape consumers' lives across the globe.

According to Meikle (1996), the early plastic materials promised a future of mobility and change to Americans at the same times as they helped shape what many considered a democratic culture of material abundance, on the one hand, and a culture of artifice, even "sham" (p. 327), on the other. Among European intellectuals in particular, there circulated the idea of a "plastic America" (p. 330), which they saw epitomized in the invention of Disney World. This plastic world made in the USA resurfaces in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* in the form of Gilberto's "wild idea" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 166) to build an amusement park entirely out of Matacão plastic. Tweep, of course, enthusiastically embraces the plans for this "paradise

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[2] John B. Gamber (2018) has noted that the novel simultaneously raises questions about the boundaries of categories such as "the natural" and "the artificial," as well as "authenticity" in Asian American literature (pp. 39–40), as Yamashita's distinction between "the real and the fake" lilies can also be read as a tongue-in-cheek nod to Frank Chin's (1991) critical essay "Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake."

[3] Keppler's caricature was published in *Puck* (1904) and has become a staple of history books and websites about America's Gilded Age.

of plastic delights" called "Chicolándia,"[4] whereas its patron saint, Chico Paco, reacts with a mixture of "love and terror" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 166). By the time Chicolándia is ready to open its doors to the public, however, an unknown typhus fever rages and the Matacão's anticipated utopia has long turned into its opposite – a dystopian world of suffering, disease, and death. On the night of Chicolándia's much longed-for inauguration, its anticipated bright future literally goes up in flames and culminates in a veritable death frenzy, which litters the Matacão in blood and human bodies, foreshadowing the imminent mass die-off of poisoned birds, so that soon the Matacão is covered "knee-deep" by "the lifeless bodies of poisoned birds" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 202).

In contrast to the plastic dreams made in America, utopian projects in Brazil have historically been characterized less by a desire for economic success and mobility than by a creative redefinition of nationality, future visions of "political and social justice," and "a desire for renewal" (Kenneth, 2021, p. 10). Artists used irony and satire, included indigenous and folk materials, as well as everyday objects – also made from plastic – to playfully forge a hybrid aesthetic, while also maintaining an energetic exchange with North American and European artists. Constitutive of the reception of American and European art and culture by Brazilian avant-gardists has been the aesthetic practice of anthropophagia or cannibalism. As an aesthetic model, anthropophagia originated among the Brazilian modernists in Paris in the 1920s, but remained largely forgotten until the 1960s. One of the central essays was Oswaldo de Andrade's "Manifesto Antropófago" (1928), which established the notion of imbibing the values and powers of European culture through cannibalism in an ironic twist of the writings by early explorers and conquistadores, whose reports about the cannibalistic indigenous peoples of the tropical regions of the Amazon rain forest were used to justify imperialistic expansion. Anthropophagia has since remained an important aesthetic and postcolonial practice and model (Kenneth, 2021, pp. 15–16).

According to Kenneth (2021), anthropophagia signifies the absorption of the colonizing forces by a diverse and pluralistic Brazilian art and culture and defines itself by its humor (p. 52), a dialectical tension of cosmopolitan and native forces (p. 49) and exterior and interior worlds (p. 79). In this way, anthropophagia envisions a utopian project that draws on the regenerative and self-assertive anti-colonial spirit of Brazil's indigenous origins at the same time as it absorbs modernist currents in a manner that, rather than being regressive, opens up spaces for hybridity and innovation.

I want to suggest that Yamashita's use of the plastic-eating bacteria brings into play anthropophagia as well, so as to ironically comment on the self-destructive anthropogenic "plastification" of the planet, on the one hand, and the cannibalistic posthuman forces – including the bacteria – of the tropical forests of the Amazon, on the other. As the memory of the ball-narrator fades at the end of Yamashita's (1990) *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, we are left with an assemblage of four distinct scenes: the burial of Chico Paco and Gilberto's remains at their "seaside birthplace of multicolored dunes" (p. 209); Batista's energetic guitar-strumming to welcome back Tania at the "enormous pit" (p. 210) that had once been the Matacão; Lourdes and Kazumasa's embrace in the midst of their lush tropical fruit farm surrounded by Gislaine and Rubens; and (4) the Amazon forest, reclaiming the space in and

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[4] Bahng (2008), who examines *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* as both Asian American literature and science fiction, "unearth[es]" in Yamashita's imaginary Chicolándia the intertextual traces of Henry Ford's early twentieth-century imperialist venture of his rubber plantation called "Fordlándia" (p. 123). Ultimately, however, Fordlándia failed, which is why the memory of its fantasy of expanding American progress and civilization is commonly forgotten.

around the now deserted Matacão. These scenes share the indication of a future in diverse local environments that are ravaged yet alive, without Matacão plastic yet distinct from the time before its domination. Or, as the ball-narrator muses, "it will never be the same again. Now the memory is complete, and I bid you farewell. Whose memory you are asking? Whose indeed" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 212). Devoured by the insatiable plastic-eating bacteria and absorbed into the Afro-Brazilian cultural memory of a post-Matacão world, the conjured-up memory of the ball has been cannibalized by both nature *and* culture – a final twist whose irony does not escape the narrator either. In keeping with the characteristic irony of anthropophagia, Yamashita (1990) has the ball comment at the very beginning: "That I should have been reborn like any other dead spirit in the Afro-Brazilian syncretistic religious rite of Candomblé is *humorous* to me" (p. 3; emphasis added).

In contrast to this reading of the novel's ending, Heise (2008) has taken issue with Lourdes and Kazumasa's experience of "bucolic bliss" (p. 105) in a tropical paradise surrounded by rampant environmental destruction, critiquing that the novel offers "a sociocultural solution for a problem that it had earlier articulated in ecological terms" (p. 105). I shall return to this important question once again at the end of this article. Before, however, some clarifications about the concept of plasticity are necessary.

Plasticity and Transdifferentiation in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*

Two central aspects of Malabou's concept of plasticity are constant mutability and *transdifferentiation*, processes that underline change with a difference (as opposed to mere imitation or replication). "According to its etymology – from the Greek *plassein*, to mold – the word *plasticity* has two basic senses," Malabou (2008) explains: "it means at once the capacity to *receive form* (clay is called 'plastic,' for example) and the capacity to *give form* (as in the plastic arts or in plastic surgery)" (p. 5; emphasis in the original). Importantly, Malabou (2008) distinguishes the capacity of "receiving" and "giving form," in the sense of the adaptable, malleable, and self-modulating ability of plastic materials, from being "elastic" (pp. 15–16), or infinitely modifiable. On the contrary, Malabou (2008) asserts that plastic always "retains an imprint and thereby resists endless polymorphism" (p. 15).

However, what may at first sight appear as limiting or irritating a common understanding of the properties of plastic, Malabou takes as a central aspect of plasticity's transformative ability, namely plastic's agency for the genesis of new forms and possibilities, or what she terms the "capacity to differentiate and transdifferentiate" (p. 16). This idea entails plastic's potential to reshape with a difference as it were (and as opposed to mere replication). To elucidate this idea of *transdifferentiation*, Malabou (2008) uses the example of stem cells: Some stem cells renew themselves by "generating cells similar to those of the tissue they come from," whereas others "transform themselves into different types of cells," which means that these cells "change their difference" and "transdifferentiate themselves" (p. 16). *Transdifferentiation*, then, relies on the agentive forces of plastic to transform itself into a different type of material. It is this capability of plastic to change its difference, which she considers fundamental for potentialities for repair and resilience, as well as the possibility for utopia.

Strikingly, Yamashita's (1990) Matacão plastic also possesses a capacity that indicates *transdifferentiation* as the following example humorously demonstrates: "Plastic surgeons would be quick to recognize the practical uses of Matacão plastic and adapt the new technology for use in facial rebuilds. … Suddenly, people in all walks of life would appear to be facially younger, glowing with a constantly dewy freshness. Some would also appear to be not at all

the way anyone remembered them" (pp. 142–143). In contrast to the replicant tiger lily in the plastic exhibition, here, a remake with an – ever so slight – difference is highlighted, in which it is not only the plastic sculpting by the doctors, but also the bodily adaptation to the plastic, which results in an – at least temporarily – constructive synthesis and effects a positive reconstitution rather than a mere replication of human bodies. This example can also be read as commentary on yet another aspect of plasticity, which both Malabou and Freinkel insist on, namely plastic's kinship with humans. Where for Malabou plasticity is central to the human mind, Freinkel (2011) notes that "nature has been knitting polymers since the beginning of life," including the "proteins that make up our [human] muscles … our skin and the long spiraling ladders that hold our … DNA," and which are also polymer (p. 14). There is, then, a relatedness between humans and plastic, in that humans are *of* and yet different from plastic and, vice versa, plastic engenders yet is different from human nature.

There are, however, other, incidents of *transdifferentiation* in Yamashita's novel as well, which involve unpredictable, toxic, and even utterly destructive forms of plasticity, the most well-known of which is, perhaps, Yamashita's (1990) "junkyard in the jungle":

> There was […] about seventy-two kilometers outside the Matacão, an area which resembled an enormous parking lot, filled with aircraft and vehicles of every sort of description. […] What was most interesting about the … rain forest parking lot was the way in which nature had moved to accommodate and make use of it. The entomologists were shocked to discover that their rare butterfly only nested in the vinyl seats of Fords and Chevrolets and that their exquisite reddish coloring was actually due to a steady diet of hydrated ferric, or rusty water. There was also discovered a new species of mouse […] that burrowed in the exhaust pipes of all the vehicles. These mice had developed suction cups on their feet that allowed them to crawl up the slippery sides and bottoms of the aircraft and cars. The […] females sported a splotchy green-and-brown coat, while the males wore shiny coats of chartreuse, silver and taxi yellow. The mice were found to have extremely high levels of lead and arsenic in their blood and fat from feeding on chipped paint, yet they seemed to be immune to these poisons. Most animals who happened to feed on these mice were instantly killed, except for a new breed of bird, a cross between a vulture and a condor, that nested on propellers ... (Yamashita,1990, p. 100).

Yamashita's junkyard powerfully dramatizes the agentic nature and aesthetic experience of plastic materials long after they have fulfilled their purposes. Here, they enmesh with other industrial waste, animals, plants, and organisms in ways that are at once generative and toxic, beautiful and disturbing. Although there seems to be some kind of resilience in the toxic beauty of this living junkyard, it also raises questions about Yamashita's Matacão as well as about Malabou's concept of plasticity: Why is the junkyard kept apart from humans? Where does renewal and resilience stop and destructive plasticity begin? And is there an expiration date to resilience, if there is none to plastic? After all, the "recalcitrance" (Davis, 2015, p. 352) of plastic matter, even in its *transdifferentiated* forms, will outlive human and nonhuman life "by hundreds, if not thousands of years" (Liboiron, 2015, p. 123), while the material itself will continue the process of *transdifferentiation* in intimate, unpredictable, and presumably ever more deadly ways "over generations, and even over millennia" (Liboiron, 2015, p. 96).

In line with a reading of Yamashita's (1990) novel as historiographic metafiction, we can, of course, read this "exclusive junkyard" (p. 101) with its bizarre inhabitants as a scathing satire on that epitome of American plastic commerce and culture, Disney World, and – specifically

the mice – as a parody of Disney's iconic figure of Mickey Mouse. On a more somber note, and in an attempt to broach the questions raised by the fascinating yet mutated lifeforms that populate Yamashita's (1990) "rain forest parking lot" (p. 100), the constructive *transdifferentiation* here can be interpreted as being on the verge of, even no longer distinguishable from, the destructive plasticity brought on by environmental damage. Elaborating on these negative forms of plasticity, which, in their most extreme forms, may lead to annihilation. Malabou (2012) states that "wounds – traumas or catastrophes – [which] are not 'creators of form' in the positive sense of the term … ultimately remai[n] an adventure of form" (p. 17). Yamashita's jungle junkyard, then, represents such an adventurous form of plasticity brought on by an environmental wound, or worse, trauma, a form that already contains the terrors of annihilation.

Such constructive and destructive forms of plasticity and their *transdifferentiations* also reveal themselves in the interactions of Yamashita's protagonists with their social and economic environments, which – like their physical and ecological environments – become ever more entangled with and defined by Matacão plastic. Analogously to the "great decaying and rejuvenating ecology of the Amazon Forest," human life also "adapt[s] itself" in "unexpected" and "expected" ways to the Matacão's "vast plastic mantle" (Yamashita, 1990 p. 101), which increasingly stands out as a vibrant node of a larger network of local and global intersections. To probe deeper into the nature of these intersections, specifically into diverse self-adaptations of Yamashita's protagonists to their plastic environment in social and economic terms, Malabou's concept of plasticity proves particularly fruitful, as it is based on a connectionist model "of relations without any centrality" (Silverman, 2010, p. 94). Yamashita's reference to Udo Keppler's well-remembered caricature of Big Business as all-embracing and domineering top-down business model ought not to be mistaken with the novel's general understanding of the operations of social and economic forces. In fact, scholars like Chuh (2006), Heise (2008), Chen (2010) or De Loughry (2017) have stressed the aspects of social and economic interconnections and networks.

As Marc Jeannerod (2008) explains, Malabou's concept of plasticity needs to be placed in the context of a radically modified "economic and social environment" (p. xii), that is, an environment which has become plastic in the sense of being capable to self-adapt to new circumstances. Quoting Malabou, Jeannerod (2008) further explains that such a plastic environment "rests on a plurality of mobile and atomistic centers deployed according to a connectionist model" (p. xii) as opposed to a top-down economic model "managed from above and overseen by a central authority" (p. xii). Specifically, the Brazil-based businesses in Yamashita's (1990) *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* actively and creatively shape the socio-economic environment of the Matacão despite GGG's corporate power and dominance. Tania and Batista successfully launch an international communication business with their own breed of pigeons; Mané Pena founds "Featherology" (p. 150) as a new discipline at colleges and universities at home and across the world; and Chico Paco launches "Radio Chico," a radio-empire for the spiritual needs of evangelicals across Brazil and worldwide.

Ironically, the protagonists' means of shaping – *transdifferentiating* – their plastic socio-economic environment hardly ever include the use of computers, the Internet, cellphones, the social networks, or any other of the digital media that revolutionized the decades in which *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* was written and published. Gordon (2020) notes that, in doing so, Yamashita "keeps the Matacão firmly tied to the material world of geology, ecology, and extraction" (p. 179). Only the plastic credit cards with their "wealth of data" (Yamashita, 1990, p. 141) and the hint at digital money allude to the media revolution that was underway,

whereas Yamashita has her characters rely on print media, radio, TV, tape recorders, or videos at the same time as they still mostly travel by bus, trucks, and even barefoot. Even so, GGG and Wall Street's profits depend on the liaison with other economic players, whether these are stockholders like Kazumasa, Mané Pena's institutionalized feather studies, Chico Paco's megachurch, or Tania and Batista's pigeon network. Importantly, and despite GGG's monopoly over plastic molding technologies, Tweep is, thus, required to modify GGG so as to adapt to these Brazilian businesses as well. GGG's ever-changing line of products – from feathers (first real, then imitated in Matacão plastic) to magnetic credit cards to Chicolándia – showcases the adaptive dynamics in a plastic economy, also for the giant corporations.

In spite of these remarkable demonstrations of self-transformation and agency within the context of a de-centered, plastic socio-economic environment, however, some of Yamashita's (1990) characters find that interpersonal, familial, and sexual connections are lost: Mané Pena, who increasingly suffers from the "stress and tension of [his] new life" (p. 121) as feather guru, feels an inconsolable "sadness," because there is "nothing connecting him to any [member in his family]" (p. 151) anymore; Batista, who suffers from sexual frustration, anxiety, and bouts of "depression" (p. 171), longs to be "released from his invisible cage" (p. 128) as pigeon entrepreneur; even Chico Paco, who reunites with Gilberto and his mother in his new home at the Matacão, is "traumatized by Gilberto's inexhaustible energy" (p. 189); and Kazumasa, "the Japanese Robin Hood" (p. 81), who seeks to do good among the poor, sick, and hungry, cannot "find happiness" (88) and experiences the pangs of "*saudades*" (p. 146) – a melancholia brought on by his ceaseless mobility.

Heise (2008) has read the social isolation of all these individuals as the result of the "dispersive projects of globalization" (p. 108), whereas Chen (2004) has attributed it to "the uneven development between the public and private spheres under the influence of Western capitalism" (p. 616). I propose to relate these states of loneliness and disconnection also to Malabou's concept of plasticity, specifically her drawing a parallel between cerebral and socio-economic connections. Malabou (2008) notes that the "absence of centrality and hierarchy," as well as "the necessity of being mobile and adaptable constitute new factors of anxiety" (p. 49). Citing sociologist Alain Ehrenberg, Malabou (2008) writes that "[t]he model imposed on the worker is … that of the entrepreneur of flexible labor" (p. 49) in "an unstable, provisional world in flux" (p. 50). As a result of the demand of constant flexibility, careers become vulnerable to unpredictable ups and downs and the drifting from one project to another without ever coming to rest. For human individuals, this condition of drifting and wandering can create a degree of precariousness that threatens to cut them off from social ties with others. Malabou (2008) concludes that a person suffering from anxiety and depression in a world defined by such a flexible, adaptive connectivity, is a "disaffiliated" (p. 52) person.

When considering the plasticity of the socio-economic environment in Yamashita's novel, Kazumasa, Mané Pena, Chico Paco, and Batista Djapan – the majority of the male characters – stand out in their anxiety, loneliness, and depression, whereas only Tweep finds happiness in the global plastic economy and its connectionist mechanisms with the three-breasted French ornithologist called Michelle Mabelle. In contrast, the wanderings of Tania, Lourdes, and Gilberto – the women and the disabled youth – signify an (at least temporary) gain, as the plastic socio-economic environment affords them increased, albeit differing, degrees of mobility and access to autonomy, wealth, and power. Where Tania overcomes her marital dependency and manages her pigeon empire with power and obvious pleasure, the work for Chico Paco's religious radio program affords Lourdes mobility and reconnection with her loved ones across vast distances. Gilberto, in turn, absolutely thrives in the new plastic world,

because it gives him full access to and mobility within society. His ceaseless activities, which seem to follow the motto "faster, higher, further," hyperbolize what marks the lives of the other characters, too, namely the relentless and absurd human pursuit of achieving ever greater feats. Ultimately, however, Gilberto's restless bustle ends in, to use Malabou and Yamashita's terms, a destructive and "unexpected" form of plasticity, namely his own annihilation: As if seeking to outshine even the climax of the public fireworks over the Matacão, and with the help of a cannon, he launches himself into the air in a glittery spacesuit and explodes.

Conclusion

In *The Arc of the Rain Forest*, Yamashita imagines and interrogates the promises, pleasures, and failures associated with the Matacão as a metaphor for the constructive and destructive forces of plastic. With the ball-narrator's nostalgic memories of the Plastic Age and its dramatic ascent and demise, Yamashita's historiographic metafiction ironically exposes the inherent ambivalence of the Matacão's plastic promises and their, by now, well-chronicled failures. Ultimately, the novel rejects the American dream of a plastic commerce and culture and instead embraces the Brazilian practice of anthropophagia for an as yet unrealized posthuman future, whose outcome remains yet to be seen.

If, however, utopia lies in those chance openings for *transdifferentiation*, as Malabou's dialectical concept of plasticity has it, then another narrative emerges in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*. To return to Heise's important point of critique: The ending of Yamashita's novel suggests a narrative, not of great hopes, absurd feats, and futile struggles, which ends in spectacular failure, but rather constitutes a much messier narrative. It is the story of constant change, where persons, goods, and other life forms move about, risk disaffiliation and loneliness, but also self-adapt and transdifferentiate and, thus, experience moments of utopia – if not ecologically, because of environmental damage and trauma, then at least socio-culturally. Finally, I want to suggest that it is such a reparative utopia which lights up at the end of the novel in the scene of Lourdes and Kazumasa's tropical paradise, its clichéd stereotype intimating the impossibility of returning to a life without plastic, as well as the transience and frailty of such moments of resilience.

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SHORT ARTICLE

Developing a Model of Indian Women Library Association to Support Open Access Environment in Academic Libraries in India

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Introduction

With the ongoing Pandemic impacting the countries across the world including India there has been significant challenges for the libraries and librarians in different academic institutions. This floating need for information generation, dissemination and management during this uncertain time has also targeted the allocation of funds and posed a cause of worry. Open Access administers the emerging need for unrestricted access to information to contribute some relief and respite in the shared circle. However, based on different studies alongside referring to the list of Library & Information Science Professionals collected through Documentation Centre for Women and Children (DCWC), National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development portal (2182_20200921124737868.pdf), Physical Research Laboratory (https://www.prl.res.in/~library/list_inst.html), Assam Library Association (https://bit.ly/3iNAESq) and other library websites, personal contacts with the women librarians, it has been discovered that women are predominantly visible in different capacities despite majority of women are seen at lower decision-making level. To empower and uplift the women librarians for the betterment of the librarian's community there is an urgent requirement for like-minded Information professionals to come together to form an Indian Women Library Association to support the open access environment in Academic Libraries (IWLA-OA). The association will offer a culture of enhanced learning for women librarians on open access platform rendering a non-profit plan as per Company Act, 2013 in India.

Need for the Study

Along with the initiatives of The Government of India – National Digital Library, Delhi Declaration, group projects like Open Access in India, and so on. the prime requisite is to draft a legitimate structure for the Indian Women Library Association which emphasizes Open Access and Open Access Initiatives in India specially for women at all levels in academic libraries.

With regard to open access for doctoral thesis, the researcher with past experience and following the related studies on Open Access and Open access initiatives, realized that there are abundant resources available around us but there's no such active association that caters to the challenge that is visible in the field. Nevertheless, as a researcher, no support has been extended to masculine or feminine communities, but a need has been felt to have a model of Indian women's librarian. The association which is focused to sharpen the information technology skills, literacy skills and professional skills while inspiring, motivating and mentoring the women librarians by offering different grants and opportunities for an enhanced professional career with eminence.

Literature Review

According to Engeszer, Sarli, & Becker (2014) there has been emerging progress in open access technology. Discussing the mandatory regulations for open access, the authors concluded that academic libraries are leading to bring out unrestricted access to the different knowledge sources within the interest of their users. Libraries are experiencing intensive changes as given in the study by Sultana & Begum (n.d.). The researchers with prominence stated that the ratio of females as compared to the males in the developing countries is not at par. With the changing need on the professional front, the women librarians require motivation to deliver better services. Based on the survey shared in the study there is a huge difference among gender and job satisfaction of the female library professionals. Based on the

recommendations the study categorically stated that it is essential to get proper training for women library professionals during this ever-changing digital age and handle the leadership position with confidence. (Manoff & Manoff, 2001) in his study advocates the role of libraries in the present virtual age. The author focused upon the symbolic need of libraries in and librarians maintaining a balance between the past, present and future to conserve the culture and heritage. Highlighting the transit approach of professional development, training, conference, and so on, the American Library Association under social Responsibility Round Table unit works to establish and prioritize the role of Women Librarian (*Feminist Task Force | Round Tables*, n.d.). Focusing on the history of women in libraries the "Feminist Task Force" unit works on to provide the resources, publication & other materials alongside promotes and initiates the action on the related subjects. To encourage the young readers, the unit brings out content under the project known as "Rise: A Feminist Book Project". Reinforcing the need and importance of libraries during these changing times (Jaeger, 2011) has elicited the right perspective for the libraries and need to move on in the age of Internet. The study given by(Sultana & Begum, 2012) identifies the gender gap, level of job satisfaction among female librarians. Based on the evaluation of 31 respondents the study indicated that the quality of services depends on the staff of library and job satisfaction plays a vital role in it. The results of the study directed towards the female staff of the library who were found to be less satisfied as compared to male staff members. The study further recommends empowering the female staff members with continuous professional development training with the support of management and the co-workers as well (Kumar & Gupta, 2016) has attempted to portray a holistic approach of continuous education programs as an enhancement to build up capacity for LIS professionals in the present digital age. The research work given by (Ramesh Babu et al., 2007) evaluates the ICT competency required for librarians. Pointing towards needs, means, and methods the study leads to equip the librarians to pace up with the technological changes. The analysis draws attention of the community of librarians to break the traditional mold and embrace the new roles as "cybrarians", "metadata managers", "digital literacy managers", "knowledge mangers", and so on. Drawing attention to the fact that the role of libraries has drastically changed from print to digital. The authors (Nagpal & Radhakrishnan, 2019) intends to portray that the demand of library patrons are changing and perhaps it is time for library and its services to build up a culture of learning which electronically driven. In the exploration given by Naik & Pathak (2020) indicates that India is shaping up the mechanism for accessing the "scholarly knowledge" through open access in unrestricted manner by initiatives like National Digital Library and so on. Articulating the towards Open access for Academic Libraries the research work given by (Joshi et al., 2012) highlights the floating need for digital access and how libraries play a proactive role in information generation, dissemination and management. Discussing the latest developments, the authors have analyzed that with the advancement in the field of Information technology, the open access content attracts better accessibility for the researchers. In parallel there has been exponential growth in electronic content which is mostly restricted to many institutions due to cost. Correspondingly, many academic institutions do not appoint a trained, qualified librarian for purpose of dissemination, management and control of the scholarly output. While discussing India's contribution to open access and the momentum which is trending globally the study categorically highlights the open access trends, knowledge repositories and government initiatives. The study overviews the need and the purpose of qualified library professionals in this changing open access world without any restrictions.

The Objectives of the Study

To foster the skills and literacy related to Open Access and Open Access Initiatives the IWLA-OA will contribute with the following objectives:

- To build up a sustainable and resilient system for moving onto the automated and digitized environment in Open Access environment
- To share best practices to adopt and develop the resources under unrestricted environment.
- To offer specialized courses and impart trainings for professional development and skill enhancement in all possible formats on Open Access and Open Access Initiatives
- To prepare the women librarian for the challenges and opportunities by presenting awards and grants
- To develop and strategize policies for implementing research in Open Access Environment

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the women librarians in India to offer a platform for networking, skill enhancement, professional development, and leadership opportunities. The study will provide a legitimate structure for Women Association with standard operating procedures in the field of Open Access and Open Access Initiatives for Academic Libraries at schools, college and university levels. The members of the Association will be offered support and training for integrating Open-Source Automation Software like Koha, CORAL and Managing Digital Repository using DSpace along with specialized courses will be offered in the or a digital library, Outreach Programmes and E-mentoring.

Structure of Committee

The different committees will be formulated to perform different work and its task following the three P's – Policy, Process & Procedure

Figure 1
Task of the Committee
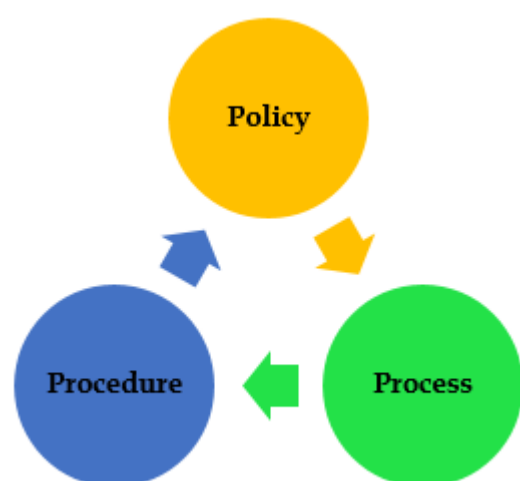
Council of Members as proposed would work as general body would consist of President, Vice- President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Conveners. Following the three P's different groups or divisions will be put in practice different types of Academic Libraries – School, College & University.

Board of Management shall be the decision-making body that would hold overall responsibility for smooth execution of the Association. The Board would be formed consisting of members elected by the council and would be held accountable to the Council.

Methodology

To connect with the Women Librarians across the country different social media platforms will be used. IWAL-OA would work with a non-profit statement offering the skill enhancement, strategy, networking, and leadership opportunities for women librarians in India. With the working plan, financial plan, structure, strategy, services, and members on board would work for the benefit of the women librarian community to progress further. The measurable entities to analyze and interpret the venture would be –

- Growth in the number of members registering for IWAL-OA.
- Number of Conferences, Seminar, Webinar and Workshops offered.
- Increase in the number of enrolments in different courses in emerging competencies.
- Increase in successful design, creation and execution of various courses.
- Number of awards/ grants offered.
- Number of Faculty/Trainers/Leaders on board.
- Quantum of Research output of the members in terms of research publications
- Engagement analytics can be measured through social media platforms in terms of followers.
- Increase in the number of collaborations with different institutions/ Groups/Organizations.
- Increase in number of placements for Women Librarians.

Limitations of the Study

The proposed model is to focus on uplifting and empowering Women Librarians across India within the limited allocation funds. The study is limited to impart knowledge, information, training and implementation on Open Access and Open Access initiatives. The access model will be delivered through online and offline mode with applications only in IT skills, literacy skills and professional skills of Women Librarians in India.

Conclusion

In the present study, the role of Library Associations combining with strategic tools and policy to deal with paradigm shift has been discussed. The study proposes a model to train and equip the women librarians to support open access environment in academic libraries in India. Perhaps, there are many Library Associations active however there is no such Women Library Association in the country. Therefore, this model is proposed to enhance the culture of knowledge and the requirement of qualified professionals in this Open Access world of learning. Initially, the proposed model is limited to Indian Women Library Professionals however the progressing years may proceed with a global outlook. The Association shall

continue to function with the help of membership, donation and sponsorship while maintaining quality & standards. A global expansion of the knowledge community of Open Access will be a part of the agenda in the progressing years.

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A Reading of Philip Roth's *Everyman* as a Postmodern Parody

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Abstract

Philip Roth's 2006 novel *Everyman* borrows its title from the famous fifteenth-century morality play *The Summoning of Everyman*. Yet, Roth establishes no clear or working connection between his novel and its medieval namesake. Roth scholars and critics have endeavored to identify intertextual continuities between these two works but with no tangible results. This article offers an alternative approach with which to view this problem by exploring the potential parodic nature of Roth's text. More specifically, the paper theorizes that Roth fashioned a postmodernist brand of parody in his novel to negotiate the politics of representation of the issues of universality and determinism in the Medieval Everyman and the ideological discourses foregrounding their textual construction.

Keywords: intertextuality, morality play, postmodern parody, representation, Philip Roth, worldview

Introduction

Everyman is the first and best known of the *Nemesis Trilogy*, a series of four short novels (more novellas than novels) that concluded Philip Roth's career as a novelist. The novel is narrated by an older man, a Jewish New Yorker who is telling the story of his life. The central character is unnamed but we identify him with the title of the novel. *Everyman* opens with an extended graveyard scene of the central character burial and then moves to the night before his fatal surgery. He reflects on his life in a bildungsroman-like style, highlighting the traumatic events and forces that shaped it. The course of his life is defined mainly by an inherited genetic disposition to medical fragility and a life-long obsession with mortality induced by childhood traumatic experiences. The novel closes with the moment of the protagonist's death. Roth's unnamed protagonist is the youngest son of a New Jersey jeweler. He succeeds in the New York advertising industry, fails in marriage three times, and faces repeated medical crises, which turns his life story into a sort of medical history of illnesses and surgeries.

Although the title of Roth's novel is an allusion to the fifteenth-century morality play, *The Summoning of Everyman*, frequently referred to simply as *Everyman*, Roth's *Everyman* is nothing like the Medieval play *Everyman*. The morality play is an allegorical representation of the Christian vision of humanity. In that play Everyman, the archetypal representative of humankind, is suddenly confronted by death and asked to make a reckoning in front of God. As everyman was not ready to do so he was given 24 hours to prepare himself for the reckoning. Everyman conducts an allegorical journey towards salvation. This Medieval play enacts the Christian ethos of salvation through good deeds. Man's deeds in his life time on Earth decide whether his immortal soul goes to heaven or hell in the afterlife. God is the ultimate judge of human deeds. The morality play, as such, preaches a warning to all Christians to consider their actions in their mortal life because it is their deeds and actions that will decide their salvation in the afterlife (King, 1994, pp. 240–241).

Roth's *Everyman* is radically different from this theological vision. By contrast, Roth's protagonist is not a Christian by faith. He is not only a Jew but also a staunch unbeliever in religion and the very existence of God. He is a nihilist who does not believe in the afterlife or salvation of human soul after death. He boldly states that there is "no hocus-pocus about death and God or obsolete fantasies of heaven for him. There were only our bodies, born to live and die on terms decided by the bodies that had lived and died before us (Roth, 2006, p. 51). This highly secularized, nihilistic, and materialistic frame of mind makes Roth's everyman a typical representative of contemporary Western Man, whose intellectual worldview is formed by an existential belief in matter and body and that what we are as human is a matter of genetics rather than metaphysics. This philosophical niche is manifestly expressed when Roth's unnamed protagonist-narrator contemplates that "Should he ever write an autobiography, he'd call it *The Life and Death of a Male Body*" (Roth, 2006, p. 51).

Furthermore, the difference between these two texts goes beyond personal temperaments. Whereas the morality play *Everyman* enacts the medieval worldview in an allegorical story where all characters are personifications of concepts, Roth is highly realistic, if not naturalistic, and his Everyman is firmly anchored in the secularist ethos of early twenty-first century America.

However, the word "Everyman" is mentioned one time in the whole novel but it occurs in a totally different context to be relevant to the title of the novel. Somewhere at the beginning of the novel the unnamed everyman tells about his father's genius as a jeweler back in the

Elizabeth, New Jersey, of the 1920s and 1930s. Although a Jewish by faith his father called his store "Everyman's Jewelry Store" (Roth, 2006, p. 29). His father chose this name for its Christian connotations in order not to alienate the thousands of his Christian customers, especially in Christmas and Easter seasons. However, this is not developed any further in the novel and remains a mere detail with no symbolic or thematic significance to qualify as a title. What complicates matters further is Roth's own distancing of his novel from the Medieval morality play. Ina 2006interview with the Danish magazine *Spiegel International* shortly after the release of his novel Roth denied that he intended to pay homage to the medieval morality play. He told his interviewer Volke Hage that he:

> didn't begin with it. Along the way I had various titles. Only at the end did I remember this play, which I had read in college. I hadn't read it since 1952, fifty-four years ago. I re-read it, and I thought this is the right title. But I wasn't thinking about the medieval drama when I was writing my book (2006, August 25, para. 4).

According to Roth, his novel should not be read as an allegory and that leaving his protagonist nameless was purely coincidental.

Critical Endeavor to Relate Roth's *Everyman* to the Medieval Text

But in spite of Roth's distancing of his novel from the Medieval morality play critics were not ready to trust the teller at the expense of the tale. Claudia Franziska Brühwiler, for instance, boldly states that "Still, the novel cannot deny a certain palimpsestic nature as it shares parallels with its English namesake." (2013, p. 120) She lists one parallel, however, which is that "between the summoning by Death and the unnamed Rothian hero's constant confrontation with medical warnings" (2013, p. 120). The act of summoning in the medieval *Everyman* materializes through the agency of Death as a mediator between Man and deity. But in Roth's Everyman the unnamed protagonist's denial of an ultimate metaphysical cosmology renders death a finality by itself, a complete closure of the human existence as a moment of utter annihilation. This renders the act of summoning out of place with the very logic of Roth's text as there is no deity to summon Man through the agency of death.

Similarly, the critic David Brauner adopts the same view when he states that "for all the obvious differences of form and sensibility, however, the two *Everymans* share certain structures." (2007, p. 220) He finds in Roth's *Everyman* echoes of the medieval Everyman's anguished exclamation when he realizes that his time on earth is up – "O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind," (1962, p. 201) especially when the former was lying anesthetized on the operation table at the end of the novel. Roth's preoccupation with aging and death is also in line with the morality play's sole concern with the fate of its protagonist at the point of death. The protagonists of both works share the same increasing "sense of loneliness" (Brauner, 2007, p. 220) as both are gradually forsaken by all their worldly allies and flesh. Finally, Roth's *Everyman* "borrows from its medieval precursor aspare, elliptical quality that is its shortness and brevity". As in its medieval counterpart, the brevity of Roth's novel is "contributing to and enacting the sense of urgency felt by its protagonist" (Brauner, 2007, p. 221).

Liliana M. Naydan goes a step further beyond hunting for structural and thematic parallels between the two texts. She theorizes that Roth negotiates the ethics of the fifteenth-century English morality play to "showcase the ideological and dialogic impasse between religious and secular rhetoric that aim at cross-purposes to ascribe meaning to life, and he suggests that intertextuality as postmodern parody enables him to transcend this impasse (2016, p. 57).

Naydan's hypothesis is based on the premises that this act of textual negotiation is central to the fashioning of the textual politics of Roth's *Everyman* as a contemporary text in cultural dialogue with preceding texts. This gives Roth's the critical edge necessary to engage in such a cultural dialogue via difference and distance. This aspect of Roth's text has been noted by critic Ben Schermbrucker who argues that Roth's novel is "critical of the Christian cosmology expressed in the medieval play *Everyman*" (2015, p. 41). However, this is mostly ascribed to aesthetic ideology rather than to the textual politics of representation in Roth's novel, a case that obliterates the pervasive working of the parodic in *Everyman*.

The Possibility of Postmodern Parody Highlighted

Naydan specifies the brand of parody operative in Roth's *Everyman* to be postmodern because the traditional view of parody, as "a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry" (Baldick, 2001, p. 185), is completely out of context here as Roth's *Everyman* neither imitate nor ridicule the style of content of the medieval morality play *Everyman*. On the contrary, postmodern parody goes beyond the classic attributes of imitation and ridicule to re-conceptualize the pervasive working of parodic textuality. Naydan is right to name in particular Linda Hutcheon's postmodern approach to parody as a potential approach to Roth's text. But, unfortunately, she fails to apply this approach to *Everyman* or to develop further her proposition. She, actually, mentions this approach in a short note and devotes much of her discussion of the novel to establishing intertextual continuities instead of focusing on its parodic nature.

Hutcheon's postmodernist model of parody departs radically from the classic model of parody as ironic imitation. In her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) she rejects the standard definitions and theories of parody that originated in Eighteenth-century theories of wit. Instead, she postulates parody as the defining feature of postmodernism. She finds that the "collective weight of parodic *practice* suggests a redefinition of parody as repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity" (1988, p. 26). Parody, as such, is still a form of ironic representation but it does not highlight similarity as much as difference in order to foreground the politics of representation and the ideologies that promote such a mode of representation. Postmodern parody is not concerned with the formal structural or thematic ironic re-writing of texts as much as with the very politics of textual representation of the "background" or "parodied" text(s). "Through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference." (1989, p.93) parody, in other words, "works to foreground the *politics* of representation" (Politics, 94) and the historiography of past representations. Hutcheon posits postmodern parody as "a kind of contesting revision or rereading of the past that both confirms and subverts the power of their presentations of history" (1989, p. 95). This engagement of postmodern parody with past representation is not "apolitical", or "de-historicized" like Fredric Jameson's pastiche. It is rather "doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies" (1989, p. 101). Hutcheon takes this form of "authorized transgression" as a vital sign of Postmodern parody engagement with history and social reality as it uses irony to interrogate "culture's means of ideological legitimation" (1989, p. 101). Parody, in other words, can offer a way of investigating the history of the cultural process which dictates how do some representations get legitimized and authorized? (1989, p. 101)

Reading the Postmodern Parody in Roth's *Everyman*

Roth's *Everyman*, perhaps unconsciously, invokes this politics of postmodern parody. Roth barrows the title of a Medieval morality play to signal the parodic nature of his work then works hard to distance his text from that morality play in every single detail. Hutcheon sees the title of a literary work as the ultimate sign to signal to the reader its parodic textuality. Roth, however, hammers further the parodic nature of his text by forcing the reader to identify his Jew with the title by refraining to mention the name of his protagonist throughout his narrative. This critical distancing operative in Roth's *Everyman* works by binary displacement; that is, each of the elemental aspects underlying the worldview of the Medieval *Everyman* is replaced by its antithetical binary such as divine/human, allegorical/realist, Thanatos/Eros, Christian/Judaism, etc. In most of these cases the distancing is ironic because the reader, who is already posited into the frame of reference of the Medieval *Everyman*, is soon caught in the grip of ironic inversion. The Christian Everyman gives way to an unbelieving Jew, the classic Christian cosmology of reckoning and redemption gives way to utter atheism, and the allegorical loses its significance in the abyss of excessive naturalism. This ironic inversion happens through the "incongruity" of classic wit. Roth keeps the underlying paradigm of the medieval play but challenges its universality through the incongruous. This congruity is sometimes obvious but most of the time it is very subtle as it operates on deeper layers of the text. The most immediate ironic inversion occurs on the level of the protagonist, his atheism and the absence of any quest except for sensual gratification. However, the space of irony is at times allusively subtler as it is increasingly appropriated in the critical space of the inversion itself. This often happens when the inversion is directed to negotiate, rather than to distancing, the ethos of representation in the Classic *Everyman* as is the case with Roth's parodic appropriation of Everyman begging for a day to prepare for the reckoning:

> Now, gentle Death, spare me till tomorrow That I may amend me With good advisement.
> Death: *(raising his dart)*
> Nay, thereto I will not consent,
> Nor no man will I respite;
> But to the heart suddenly I shall smite Without any advisement.
> And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
> See thou make thee ready shortly,
> For thou mayst say this is the day That no man living may escape away (1962, p. 203).

What is at stake here is the play of a teleology of death as a temporal closure of human existence. Death's rhetoric of its absolute inevitability signifies human mortality. Death is an inherent condition of human existence because the latter is subject to temporality. The Medieval morality play *Everyman* posits death into the ontology of human existence by allegorizing it as a reminder of human subjection to temporality. Death uses this rhetoric of temporality to legitimize itself as temporal closure of human existence which means that the time Everyman is given on earth is not a life but a death. Roth's text appropriates death out of its metaphysical context in the form of mortality. The moment of textual citation in Roth's *Everyman* is essentially parodic as such because Roth relocates death into a condition of human existence. The Medieval *Everyman* celebrates the metaphysics of death whereas Roth's affirms the physicality of mortality. The moment of death in the morality play is a ritualized threshold: Led by his Good Deeds, Everyman steps inside the tomb and is received by death from the inside of the tomb. What is being fashioned here is a politics of transcendence. But is Roth's the citation of this moment is parodic, in the postmodern sense of the word, in that it distances

itself from this ritualized threshold by presenting death as a sudden termination of consciousness, a mere sudden going into the darkness of oblivion: "He was no more, freed from being, entering into nowhere without even knowing it. Just as he'd feared from the start" (Roth, 2007, p. 182). Roth translates the physical entrance of the medieval Everyman into the tomb as a nihilistic annihilation of existential consciousness. This difference, however, unmask an essential similarity between the two texts treatment of death which is that both texts present death as absence from human world regardless of the means to propagate this absence whether through death or mortality.

Claudia Roth Pierpont observers in this respect that "like the fifteenth-century morality play from which it takes its title, *Everyman* is about the fate that claims us all" (2014, p. 285). She quotes Roth's narrator as he muses on death at the age of twenty two: "the adversary that is illness and the calamity that waits in the wings" (Roth, 2007, p. 41). Seen from a comparative perspective, these two works might share a focalized thematic concern with death, yet; they differ in the phenomenality of death in the human context. In the Medieval text death intrudes in the human world through the window of cosmology but in Roth's it is a persistent condition of human existence. The personified gives way to the perceived through human consciousness. Eventually, this qualitative difference in the textualization of death leads each text to develop its distinct semiotic paradigm. In the Medieval Everyman death is a "signifier" of the presence of a "divine" cosmology but in Roth's it is a "signified" in itself as a no-beyond phenomenon in terms of human perception. This is clearly seen in the fact that death persists all over Everyman's life in Roth's novel in a variety of manifestations like disease and aging. But in the Morality play it appears at the beginning and end of Everyman's life journey for salvation. Unlike in Roth's protagonist, death is never a foundational condition of human life in the Medieval text: "Oh Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind" (1962, p. 201).

While Roth acknowledges this absolute inevitability of death he destabilizes its ontological premises on two scores: deconstructing the cosmology of the classic Everyman by positing death as a nihilistic closure of human existence and, most importantly, the fashioning of a desire for a transcendence of the eclipse of death. This latter desire keeps figuring repeatedly in Roth's text. Such a desire finds its best moments in the closing sentence of the novel: "He was no more, freed from being, entering into nowhere without even knowing it" (182). In the medieval play when Everyman jumps into the grave, the allegorical moment of death, there follows three speeches given by Knowledge, Angel, and Doctor (1962, pp. 229–231). They respectively stand for human existence, divine originary and textuality. They act as a Derridian supplement where the materiality of Death is negotiated and inscribed as a presence in both originary eternity and textuality. Roth, however, takes the other way round as he fashions the moment of death as absence from both existential contingency and textuality. What Roth was doing, says critic Debora Shostak, is to re-invents Death as "nothing more than absence, the yawning grave, offered as a blank hole in the narrative if not as the character's reconciliation to fact" (2014, p. 8).

Death in Roth's novel, as such, does not affect any sense of closure as in the medieval *Everyman*. "The circularity of the narrative" says Shostak, "ultimately taking precedence over its linear promise of enlightenment. The ending returns us to the beginning, without ending in insight" (2014, p. 8). This circularity is deliberately employed to signal the parodic nature of Roth's text. The opening scene of the narrator's funeral re-enacts the cemetery scene which closes the medieval *Everyman* which means that Roth's *Everyman* starts where the medieval *Everyman* ends. Roth affects the parodic in his re-enactment in order to highlight communal mourning as a ritual of resistance to the oblivion of death. Roth de-allegorizes the ritual of death in favor of a communal ritual of mourning by choosing not to focus on the teleology of

death as much as its aftermath. Choosing this moment makes death as absence more accessible because what is really represented is the textual translation of death in terms of human experience. Death, as such, is inscribed in the epistemological paradigm of human existence. It derives its materiality from human perception of absence and loss. This is in keeping with the elaborate description of the act of burial which is conducted according to Jewish rituals. This act of burial lays emphasis on the corporeal participation of all mourners in actual burying of the deceased with dust on their bare hands. Although the ritualistic is invoked here as in the Medieval *Everyman*, the aim is to highlight the materiality of death as an event with no metaphysical pretentions whatever. The critic Ben Schermbrucker argues for this case when he states that the wry humor and concision, the phrase "and he was left behind" "confirms how Roth's atheism is also aligned with a materialistic emphasis upon the human body" (2015, p. 40). In almost all the funeral scenes in Roth's *Everyman* the focus is on the dead body in a sharp materialistic way The funeral scene which opens *Everyman* "thus intensifies and continues Roth's materialistic reading of religious rites by focusing on the locus of materiality that, in Roth's view, is constitutive of human subjectivity–the body" (2015, p. 40).

Furthermore, the placidness and serenity of the narrative voice makes it clear that this is a textual space where the narrator is no longer under the sway of temporality, and therefore, a space where death does not exist. Roth, however, re-frames his cemetery scene with a retrospective tone of irony when his already buried Everyman speaks tongue-in-cheeks that "in a matter of minutes, everybody had walked away – wearily and tearfully walked away from our species' least favorite activity – and he was left behind" (Roth, 2016, p. 55). Off Course the irony is directed at the cemetery scene of the Medieval morality play when all of Everyman's new hard earned friends refuse to jump with him into the grave. The aim is to establish the Medieval morality play as the frame of reference of this scene and to establish through irony a critical distance with its ethos. The critic David Brauner declares that this is the point where Roth's Everyman "really connects up most powerfully with the medieval play" (2007, p. 23). He argues that Roth "translates" the narrative trajectory of abandonment that the medieval play enacts where Everyman is gradually being abandoned by his worldly friends and allies. Roth translates this trajectory into "a secular framework" whereby "in old age people do find themselves increasingly isolated because their friends start to die, their parents have died, and often, as in this case, their family is estranged or divorced, not close either geographically or emotionally. That is the most frightening thing about this book, and I think that is where it" (2007, p. 23).

Roth further pushes ahead his negotiation of the teleology of this scene as it occurs in the Medieval *Everyman* through the lengthy (and often artificialized) speeches that some of the mourners give during the burial. Howie, the protagonist's elder brother, mentions something curious about his brother's obsession with the hundreds of broken watches that his brother inherited from his father. Howie evokes this nostalgically:

> All these old watches that he accumulated – most of them beyond repair – were dumped in a drawer in the back of the store. My little brother could sit there for hours, spinning the hands and listening to the watches tick, if they still did, and studying what each face and what each case looked like. That's what made that *boy* tick. [...] He used to take them and wear them – he always had a watch that was out of that drawer. One of the ones that worked. And the ones he tried to make work, whose looks he liked, he'd fiddle around with but to no avail– generally he'd only make them worse (Roth, 2006, pp. 7–8).

Roth's equally allegoric old watches parody the time given to the medieval Everyman by Death. The drawerful of old watches stands for Everyman's life and because he used to put on a new watch every day from this drawer Everyman is said to literally "tick"; that is, subject to temporality and, therefore, his mortality. But since most of the watches are broken and beyond repair the parody can be seen as already carrying the seeds of subversion to this ontological paradigm of human existence. Everyman puts on broken watches most of the days to signify his desire to transcend the inevitability of death. But there is more at stake here than a simple human desire to resist the inevitability of death. The parody unmasks the finitude of determinism of the human world. Nancy, the protagonist's ever loving daughter, puts this eloquently in her funeral speech when she mentions the "stoical maxim" of her father: "There's no remaking reality…. Just take it as it comes. Hold your ground and take it as it comes" (Roth, 2006, p. 5). The deterministic ethos of this maxim is meant to underpin the ironic absurdity (if not impossibility) of the Medieval Everyman's absurd request from Death for extra time to prepare himself for reckoning. Critics, like David Gooblar, interpret this maxim as epitomizing the stoicism and realism of Roth's Everyman. David Gooblar, for one, takes this maxim as "an acceptance of death as a part of life, an acceptance that however unfathomable and intolerable the fact of death is, "there's nothing [. . .] we can do," there is no escape from this universal fate" (2011, p. 153).

The danger with such interpretations is that they focus on the quality of Everyman's response rather than on its philosophical underpinnings. Such a maxim unmasks an existential negation of free will which is posited to counter the teleological polemics of the medieval Everyman. Both texts see human existence as governed by determinism but differ on issues of paradigmatic conceptualization and human response. In the morality play determinism is never worldly, as in Roth's *Everyman*, but is an attribute of a universal cosmology. In Roth's *Everyman* determinism is a condition of human existence as it is dictated by genetic and environmental conditioning. Allowing that death is the ultimate form of determinism in both works each author proceeds to delineate a radically different type of human response to this determinism. In the medieval play the only human response that is legitimized is to fashion oneself to the ethos of the prevailing cosmology. Although the resulting Everyman here is generic, its self-fashioning involves a unification or identification with authority (divine not human) through the familiar politics of hegemony. Roth's novel affects a re-location of divine authority into human agency which ultimately negates any human identification with a metaphysical authority, simply because of the stark materialism of Everyman's world. The resulting Everyman is also generic but is born out of multiplicity and deferral.

Roth concretizes this epistemological paradigm of human existence by shaping the medical Bildungsroman of his Everyman around the play of a Freudian Eros and Thanatos. Indeed, the ever expanding presence of death in the life of Roth's *Everyman* is countered with excessive indulgence in sex and art. In his discussion of "Eros and Thanatos in Roth's Later Fiction," the critic Jay L. Halio observes that while erotics have been a major subject in Roth's fiction death did not figure prominently in his novels in the context of Eros until the later novels where "Eros successfully defies death" (2005, p. 205). This is true of *Everyman* where death (as Thanatos) looms large in the protagonist's life through the latter's ever deteriorating heath, and the detailed medical procedures and surgeries attending this deterioration. Death is also present on the symbolic level of the text. Two traumatic experiences recur throughout Everyman and are used to structure and stratify the protagonist's fear and obsession with death: the floating corpse from a German submarine and the boy in the next bed in the protagonist's ward in his first hospitalization. This excessive presence of death is countered by a mutually excessive indulgent on the part of the protagonist in Eros. Marriages, sexual escapades, and a life-long

desire to paint map the crucial turns in the protagonist's life. Because the dominant drivers in Everyman's world are fulfilment and self-preservation the only option left for the individual is to assert the Life drive or Eros. With the total absence of a rational metaphysics this drive is the only possible sort of salvation available. This indeed is the nexus of the parodic inversion in Roth's Everyman which effaces, in a deconstructive manner, the metaphysical transcendence of divine salvation in favor of a worldly fulfilment. This inversion is both critical and ironic. It is critical as it interrogates the metaphysical premises of the human notion of salvation (as redemption from the prison of worldly human existence as substantiated in the medieval morality play). The irony attending this inversion is equally devastating as Roth's Everyman is set to commit all immoral deeds that his Medieval counterpart is admonished to renounce in his pursuit for divine salvation.

This ironic inversion operative in postmodern parody plays on what Hans Robert Jauss calls the reader's "horizon of expectation" (1982, p. 22) in such a way as to reflect its double-coding politics of history and genre, to use Hutcheon's terminology. "What postmodern parody does," says Hutcheon, "is to evoke what Hans Robert Jauss calls the "horizon of expectation" of the spectator, a horizon formed by recognizable conventions of genre, style, or form, which is then destabilized and dismantled step by step" (1990, p. 130). The background text, which is the medieval morality play, is encoded, via ironic inversion in the foregrounded text, which is Roth's novel. This act of encoding assumes the form of textual appropriation whereby the textual paradigm of the Medieval morality play is interpellated by Roth's text mainly through a de-allegorization of human agency. Hutcheon points out this textual process clearly when she says that postmodern parody "uses and abuses dominant conventions to underline both the process of subject formation and the temptations of easy accommodation to the power of interpellation" (1990, p. 126).

The ultimate aim of this double-coding is to subject to interrogation the fictionality of the Medieval *Everyman* and the specific historical worldview it fashions. It specifically seeks to negotiate the reciprocity of art and historicity underlying the textual fashioning of the Medieval *Everyman*. This might look more akin to New Historicism than to the kind of postmodernist inquiry that Linda Hutcheon advocates because what is really at stake here is not, strictly speaking, what Hutcheon terms historiographic metafiction as much as a New Historicist self-fashioning and the cultural ideologies inspiring it. The parodic remains essential to this self-fashioning as the latter requires the sort of critical and ironic distancing of parody to operate.

Conclusion

What Roth was doing in *Everyman* is not just to fashion a twenty-first century Everyman but to parody the process of self-fashioning operative in the Medieval *Everyman*. Historical determinism fashioned the morality play as the textual medium to disseminate authority during the later Middle Ages. Authority, especially a religious one, often establishes its legitimacy from an ontological paradigm of divine cosmology. Because such religious authority identifies the universal with a metaphysical transcendence it fashions ideological discourses that fix the human in a power web of cosmological relations. Because the allegorical is the only mode capable of incorporating the metaphysical and the human it became a natural choice to disseminate the ideological discourses of this cosmology. The allegorical mode of the morality play affords textual space where a metaphysical transcendence and human eclipse can be inscribed into a discourse of universality.

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Mitigating the Infodemic Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic: Roles of Nigerian Librarians

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Abstract

This study investigates how Nigerian librarians are mitigating the infodemic caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The entire population of Nigerian librarians in major social media platforms of the Nigerian Library Association and its sections were used for the study. An online survey administered through Google forms was used. A total of 186 librarians responded to the survey. The data was analysed with percentages and presented in charts. The findings show that: the majority (80%) agreed that there is infodemic in Nigeria. The major roles played by the librarians in mitigating the infodemic are: correction of misconceptions online (54.8%), posting of official information online(47.8%), and provision of authentic sources to COVID-19 guidelines (39.8%); the majority (91.1%) of the librarians played these roles as personal initiatives; majority (79%) of them believe their roles have been effective; and the major challenges facing their efforts are the issue of low bandwidth (59.1%), distrust for official information (31%) and regard for myths (29%). The implication of these findings is that most of the efforts made by Nigerian librarians to curb the spread of fake news associated with the corona virus were mainly personal initiatives. This further implies that a majority of Nigerian libraries do not have plans and policies in place to ensure service delivery in emergency situations. It was recommended, among others, that Nigerian librarians should go beyond online efforts to use traditional methods in order to reach a larger part of the populace without access to the internet.

Keywords: COVID-19, fake news, infodemic, librarians, Nigerian, social media

Introduction

The year 2020 heralded tremendous changes in global affairs, especially regarding the health sector and the movement of persons from place to place. This was caused by the advent of the novel Corona virus which was first identified in Wuhan, China. The Chinese National Health Commission reported a novel human Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) in December 2019, but it was not until January 2020 that most parts of the world began to come to the reality of the virus (Abdo A. Elfiky, 2020). Even then, it took the World Health Organization (WHO) additional two months before declaring it as a pandemic (Bogoch et al., 2020; World Health Organization, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

Several reactions trailed the declaration of the virus outbreak as a pandemic from different quarters. From scientists, doctors, government officials to normal citizens, reactions were and are still swelling tending from confusion to anxiety. With the outbreak of the virus came a season of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. Many individuals from developed and developing nations alike deliberately used the instrument of the internet to spin false news and disseminate fake information regarding the Corona virus (COVID-19). And with fear and anxiety, many people especially in developing nations received and utilized such information.

In the early days of the current COVID-19 pandemic, Hu, Yang, Li, Zhan, and Huang (2020) noted that "less aligned emphasis has been given to the COVID-19 infodemic coordinating with the COVID-19 outbreak". Jones (2020) equally noted that "Infodemic follows closely on the heels of every pathogen like never-departing shadow". Infodemic basically refers to the outbreak of misinformation, disinformation and enormous spread of fake news and false information. Infodemic could be a product of confusion, ignorance, or a deliberate attempt to derail the efforts of others by mischievous groups and individuals. According to Zarocoatas (2020) infodemic is a form of "global epidemic of misinformation, spreading rapidly through social media platforms and other outlets..."

Hernández-García and Giménez-Júlvez (2020) reported that the internet has played a key role in the dissemination of information on the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study highlighted the spate of fake news and misinformation on the internet on the pandemic. The negative impact of fake news is heightened when social media is the carrier due to the way majority of citizens accept almost everything on social media, and rarely consult other sources except when they have personal doubts (Tandoc, et al., 2018).

Findings from previous studies on global epidemics such as the cases of Ebola and the Zika viruses have shown that online tools are employed by many to misinform the majority of people across different countries irrespective of their social-economic ratings (Oyeyemi et al., 2016).

Infodemic has proven in many cases to be a more dangerous crisis than the main issues. As Rovetta and Bhagavathula (2020) rightly noted "fake news and misleading information have circulated worldwide, which can profoundly affect public health communication". This is in addition to the fact that misinformation complicates and frustrates actions taken to curb or resolve the real issues.

According to United Nations Development Programme (2020) "the COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis. It has social and economic implications from nation to nation". Apart from the effect on the economies of nations, the pandemic has come with major alterations to how people live. Paramount among the changes is how people interact on social media. There

is a spike in how people interact online. In the Nigerian context as well as in other climes too, more and more people have come to rely on information from the internet. The truthfulness or otherwise of the information on the internet, and the capacity to differentiate them is the key issue that will determine how the pandemic is been handled in Nigeria. Since the first case of the corona virus was detected in Nigeria on February 27, 2020 (Nigerian Centre of Disease Control), the social media space in Nigeria went agog with conspiracy theories, religious permutations and fake news relating to the origin of the virus with some even offering herbal/natural cures. In fact, current reactions to the virus in Nigeria have shown that majority of the Nigerian people have been fed with fake news on several aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, from false cures to complete disbelief on the existence of the virus (BBC, 2020; TheWorld, 2020). To address this issue of infodemic, Zarocostas (2020) in listing the efforts of the World Health Organization, highlighted that to fight an infodemic people must have access to right information through the same channels where they often get fake news and wrong information. Librarians, as stakeholders in information dissemination, are therefore, saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that people have access to the right information about the pandemic. In view of this, this study is undertaken to investigate the actions Nigerian librarians are taking to mitigate the infodemic associated with the corona virus pandemic.

Research Questions for the Study

1. How would you rate the extent of the infodemic in Nigeria since the outbreak of the corona virus pandemic?
2. What role(s) have you played in mitigating the infodemic as a librarian in Nigeria?
3. In what capacity have you played the role (s) in question 2?
4. What channels have you employed to play the role(s) in question 2?
5. How would you rate the outcome of your roles so far?
6. What challenges did you encounter in playing your roles effectively?

Literature Review

Coronaviruses (CoV) are positive-sense, single-chain RNA viruses, possessing the largest viral RNA genome known to-date. According to Lu, Zhao, Li, et al. (2020) coronaviruses are known for their rapid spread, unpredictable emergence, and their threat to human health, magnified by the wide range of animal reservoirs and the lack of preventive or curative treatments. Huang C, Wang Y, Li X, et al. (2020) attest that CoV is an infection that affects patients with and without underlying diseases, although most of the fatalities are older patients or patients with significant comorbidities. The vast majority of reported cases have been in adults, decreasing our ability to draw inferences and make recommendations for pediatric patients (Chen et al., 2020).

Infodemic can be described as an overloaded information on a particular issue or problems thereby making solution to such problem more difficult. Infodemic can as well be referred to what is known as fake news/information explosion/information multiplicity. An infodemics according to open dictionary (2020) can also be considered as the spread of incorrect information such as online. This can be confirmed in the statement "we're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic" (WHO Director-Ghebreyesus 2020).

Fake news can be said to be any information that is deliberately meant to be misleading, spread through online social media, but spontaneously existing in the mainstream of information (Jane, 2019). According to Wardle (2017), there are different ways news/information can be considered fake such as when headlines are not supported by the content of the document,

misleading information to frame an issue, when genuine content is shared with false contextual information, when genuine sources are "impersonated", when genuine information is manipulated to deceive, and news content is 100% false designed to deceive and do harm among others. False information is often sensational, dishonest, and outright fabrication, which is then reverberated through social media. It could also be false or misleading information published as authentic news, generally understood to be deliberate, however possibly accidental with no basis, but is presented as being factual (Jane, 2019).

Information explosion can be described as an overabundance of data or information. That is, information explosion is the amount of /increase in information available for the consumption of the citizenry in carrying out their daily activities. Information explosion could simply be defined as the rapid increase in the amount of published information (Kadiri & Adetoto, 2012). According to Wilson (2011) information explosion is also called information overload and can be classified as Personal Overload and Organizational Overload. To him, personal overload appeared to be cognitive which can be defined as a perception by the individual that the information associated with tasks is greater than can be managed effectively and that such overload can create a degree of stress for which effective coping strategies are necessary while organization overload is the extent individual perceived information overload is sufficiently widespread within an organization as to reduce the overall effectiveness of management operations. Etsua-Mensah in Kadiri & Adetoto (2012) explains that there is information overload because more and more information is published every year, and this has created myriads of problems for both users and managers of information.

Roles of Librarians

The roles of librarians in information provision are becoming more critical considering the intensity of the current pandemic facing countries all over the world. These roles range from information dissemination which includes systematic gathering, analysis, matching and delivery of a message to meet a desired outcome. According to Isibor (n.d.) the matching stages is usually facilitated through a systematic approach, an appropriate media and using the right language. He further confirmed that the role of the librarian in information dissemination is very important in health and the provision of balanced perspectives to medical issues. Adio, Akewukereke and Ibitoye (2017) observed that, librarians play essential non-partisan roles in providing information that allows users to make informed decisions as far as health issues is concern.

The 2019-nCoV sudden occurrence and reaction has been accompanied by an "infodemic". That is, an over-abundance of information with some of it been accurate while some are not, making it hard for people to find reliable guidance when they need it. Due to the high demand for timely and adequate information about 2019-nCoV, there is need for librarians to package and disseminate timely and up-to-date information while staying at home. This could involve working round the clock to identify and verify the most adequate information that can be of benefit to the public's health such as positive prevention measures or cures refuted with evidence-based information. This information can be made available through the use of resources such as billboard, handbills, pictures on social media channels (including Weibo, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest) and library websites. With the current exponential growth in knowledge and information associated with corona virus pandemic, librarians as custodians of information should be genuinely concerned. This is because it has always been the traditional responsibilities of libraries to collect, organize, preserve and retrieve information either manually or through the use of Information Communication

Technology (ICT). In view of this, Hinderson (2016) listed the advantages of ICT to librarians as the

- Provision of speedy and easy access to information;
- Provision of remote access to users;
- Access to unlimited information from different sources;
- Provision of flexibility to be used by any individual according to their requirements.

The duties of the librarian would involve the provision of access to the information contained in books, newspapers, magazines, journals, and audio-visual materials to users according to their needs. The librarian is expected to harness the resources at their disposal to stem the tide of misinformation and the deliberate disinformation going on in the era of the corona virus pandemic.

Research Method

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The accidental sampling technique was adopted to sample Nigerian librarians on the major social media platforms of the Nigerian Library Association. The instrument for data collection was online survey designed and administered through Google forms. The form is available at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1w8XSHnTQETNpJdf0rcI5asw2wqdm2_VZtRLtYW9Ylz0 /edit. The survey was open from 14th to 25th April, 2020, and a total of 186 librarians responded to the survey within that period. Their responses were analyzed with calculation of frequencies and percentages on bar and pie charts.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The results of the demographic data and responses to the research questions are analyzed as follows:

Figure 1
Gender of Respondents
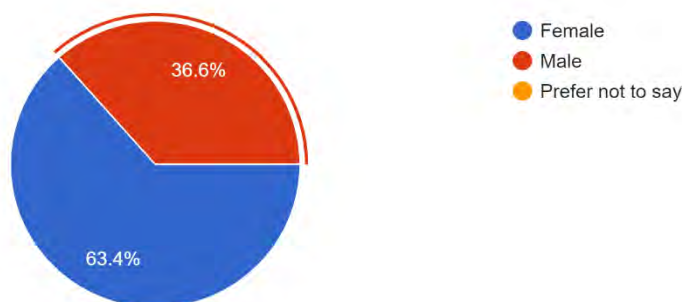
The data in figure 1 shows that majority (63.4%) of the librarians who responded to the survey were females. This finding is consistent previous studies (Aiyebelehin and Omekwu, 2019) that have shown that there are more females among Nigerian librarians compared to males.

Figure 2
Educational Qualification of the Respondents
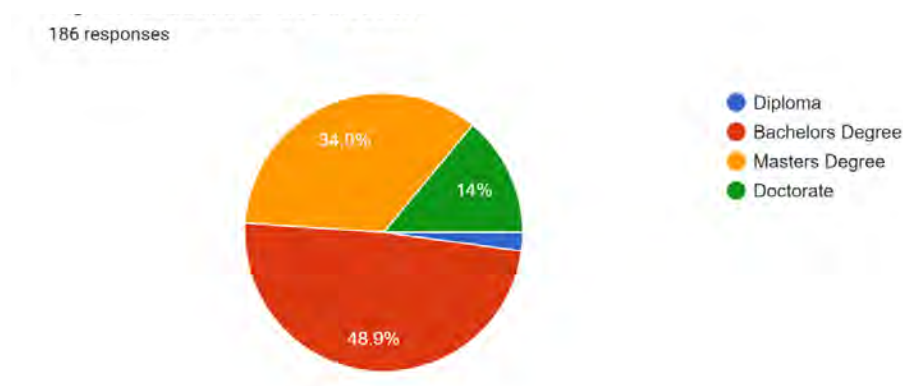
From figure 2 it can seen that 48.9% of the librarians surveyed have Bachelors degree in Librarianship, 34.9% have master's degree in librarianship,while 14% of the respondents have PhD degree in librarianship. This clearly shows that the respondents were all professionals, since according to the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), a librarian is inducted as a professional upon the possession of the Bachelors, Master's or PhD degree in librarianship. The educational qualification of the respondents further shows that the librarians have the educational qualification to render quality service to users whether online or in the physical library.

Figure 3
Extent of Infodemic in Nigeria Since the Outbreak of COVID19
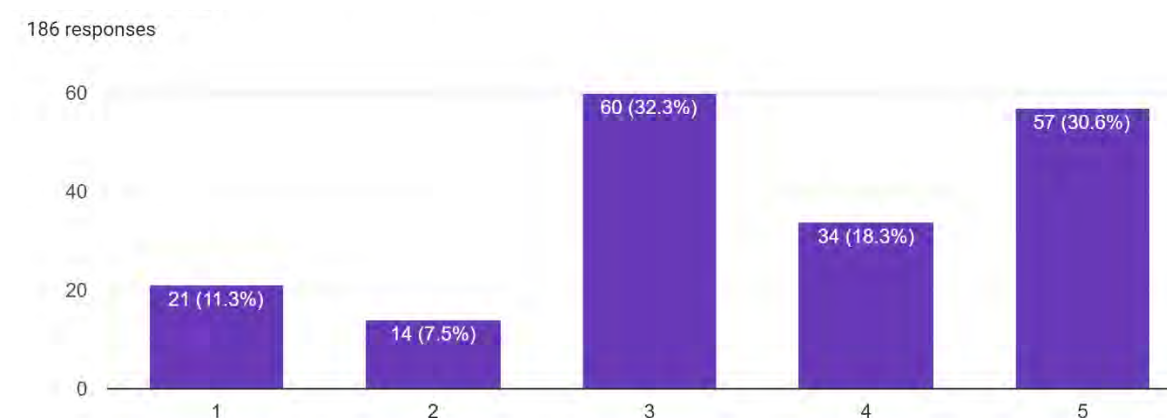
Figure 3 rates the respondents' opinions on the extent of the prevalence of infodemic in the Nigerian information space. The scale ranks from very low extent to very high extent. From figure 3 it can be deduced that on the overall, the extent of the prevalence of infodemic is seen to be very high by the librarians. For an example, 32.3% of the librarians agreed that the infodemic is to a moderate extent, 18.3% agreed that it is to a high extent, while 30.6% agreed that is it to a very high extent. A combined analysis of the data shows that over 80% of the librarians rank the extent of the infodemic from moderate to very high. While less than 20% of the librarians do not think the infodemic is a matter of concern. The opinion that the infodemic is a worrisome issue aligns well with the alarm raised by Paakkari, and Okan, (2020). In fact, Jones (2020) asserted that "infodemic follows closely on the heels of every pathogen like

never-departing shadow". The implication of this is that if not quickly mitigated, the infodemic in Nigeria could largely hamper the efforts of organizations fighting the corona virus pandemic.

Figure 4
Roles played by the librarians in mitigating infodemic in Nigeria
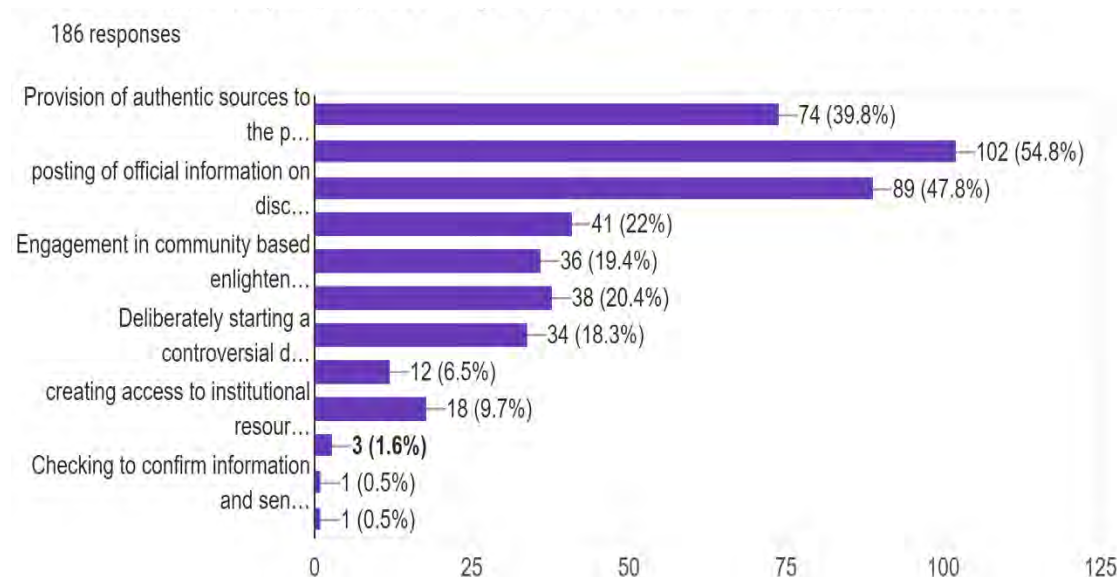
Responses in figure 4 show the various roles Nigerian librarians have played so far in mitigating the infodemic. From the responses it is clear that the major roles librarians have played are participation in online discusions to correct misconceptions (54.8%), post of official information on discusion forums (47.8%) and provision of authentic sources to the public (39.8%). Curiously, the roles least played by the librarians in mitigating the infodemic are the roles that are construed as traditional roles of the librarians. For example, only 6.5% of the respondents gave out handbills to people in their community, while 9.7% of the respondents provided access to institutional resources on information relating to COVID-19. The lack of provision of access to institution resources on COVID-19 or related disease undescores the issue of lack preparedness for emergencies. In fact, with the lockdowns, most libraries in Nigeria were totally inoperative and closed to users both physically and online. The efforts of Nigerian librarians to mitigate the infodemic as shown in the roles they have played are in line with the suggestion of Zarocostas (2020), who noted that to fight an infodemic, people must be given the authentic information through the mediums they have normally receive false and misleading information.

Figure 5
The Capacity from which the Librarians are Playing their Roles
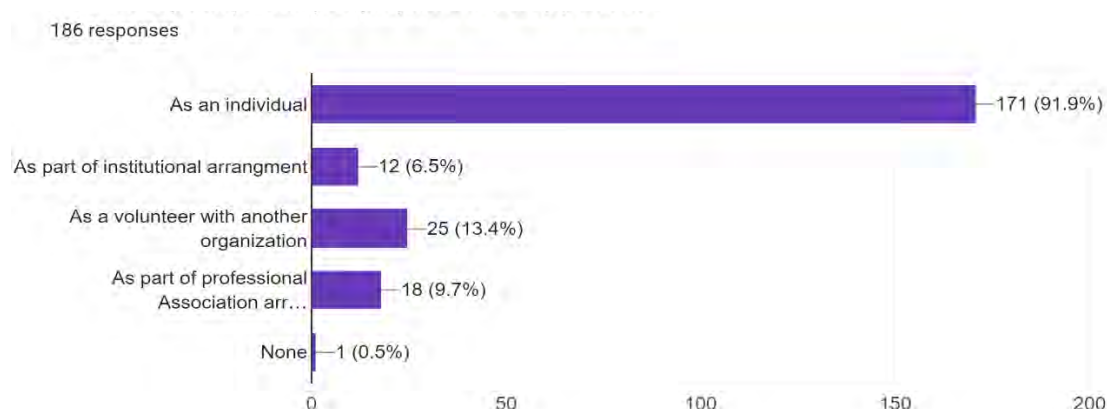
Although the librarians are all practicing and teaching librarians, the results as seen shown in figure 5 present new facts. As seen in figure 5, 91.9% of the librarians are playing the role of mitigating the infodemic from individual effort. This implies that their action is not a product of their organization's plans or employers' ideas. The roles the Nigerian librarians are playing are borne out of a personal response. This fact reveals a much deeper issue that is the issue of lack of preparedness for emergencies. What this underscores is that Nigerian libraries barely have policies and plans for responding to emergencies such as the one caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, only 6.5% of the librarians attribute their roles as part of institutional arrangements. The findings from this study that there is lack of preparedness for emergencies clearly agrees with the findings of Ilo, Nwachukwu, & Izuagbe (2020), who found that many Nigerian libraries were not adequately prepared to handle emergencies.

Figure 6
Channels utilized by the librarians
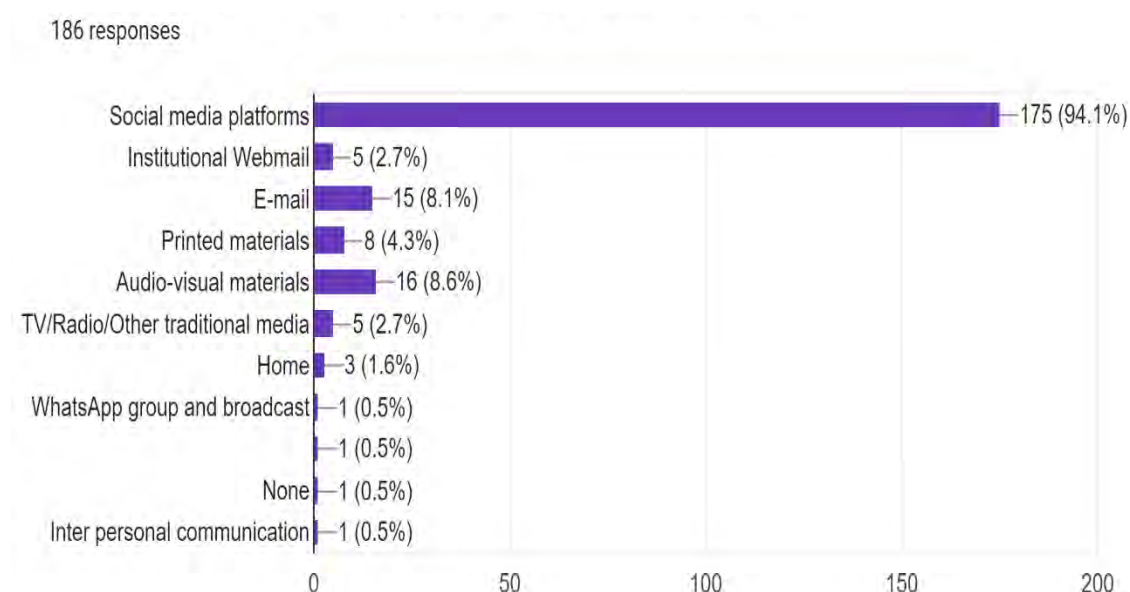
As seen in figure 6, almost all (94.1%) the librarians used social media platforms to engage the Nigerian populace. This is most probably due to the lockdowns, and the effectiveness of using

social media to reach people irrespective of location. Also, the use of social media could also be due to the fact most of the librarians played these roles in their individual capacity. In fact, that only a meager 2.7% of the librarians used webmail shows that most institutions had no plans to reach users and the general populace, especially in the heat of the COVID-19 outbreak. These findings agree with the findings from González-Padilla and Tortolero-Blanco (2020) who reported the influence of social media on the COVID-19 pandemic. Other reports from Nigeria have shown the impact of social media on information dissemination relating to COVID-19, and the how librarians are utilizing social media in this regard (Obi-Ani, Anikwenze and Isiani, 2020; Chukwuyere, Nwanneka, Chukwudebelu, and Chidiebere, 2020).

Figure 7
Success Rate of the Librarians' Roles
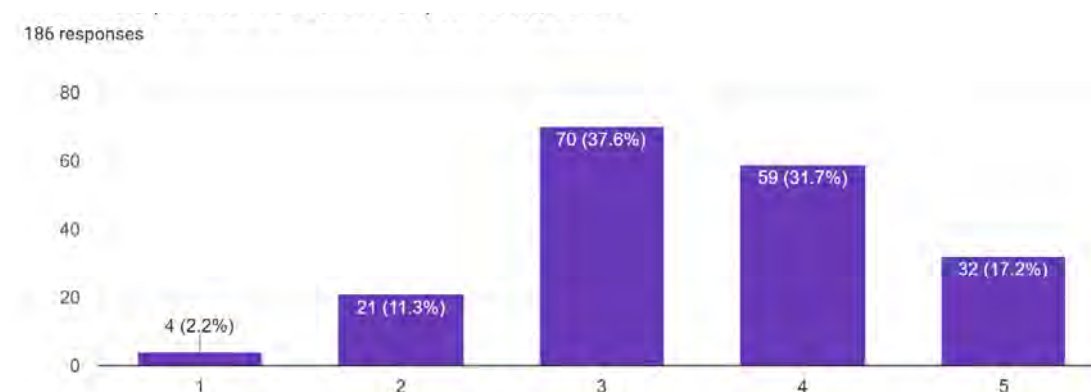
As shown in figure 7, a majority of the librarians agreed that the effectiveness of their roles is in the range of moderately effective, highly effective and very highly effective. A total of 37.6% of the librarians rate their efforts to be moderately effective, 31.7% believe their efforts are highly effective, while 17.2% agreed their efforts are highly effective. Only about 13% of the librarians rate their efforts to be either not effective or fairly effective. While it may be too early to assess the success rate of the roles played by the librarians in mitigating the infodemic associated with the COVID-19 pandemic since it is an ongoing issue, the findings from this question could, however, serve as critical information for decision making in the fight against infodemic.

Figure 8
Challenges Facing the librarians
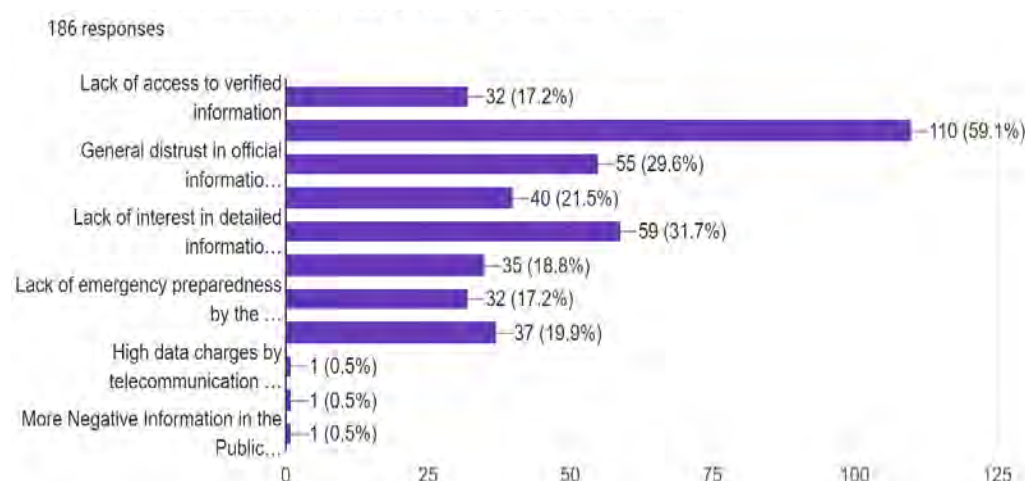
As shown in figure 8, the major challenges facing Nigerian librarians in playing their roles as regards mitigating infodemic associated with COVID-19 pandemic are poor internet connection or low bandwith (59.1%), the lack of interest in detailed information by the Nigerian public (31.7%), a general distrust in official information by the public (29.6%), and entrenched beliefs in myths (21.5%). The issue of low bandwidth has been identified by previous studies as a major hindrance to effective information service delivery (Benson, Okorafor, & Ekeruche, 2017; Ilesanmi & Mabawonku, 2020). The other issues have social implications because they mirror realities in the Nigerian society. In this regard, they present a difficult wall of resistance to effectiveness in fighting infodemic in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

This study has clearly established that librarians are critical stakeholders in the fight against the corona virus pandemic. There seems to be consensus from literatures that the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic requires different actors who will work in synergy to end the various aspects and ramifications of the virus. The fight against infodemic is critical because without that the war against long-term impact of the virus may be lost. Nigerian librarians, despite the challenges they face, are rising to the challenge of fighting the infodemic prevalent in Nigeria. They have used and are still using online tools and devices, mostly as personal initiatives to win the fight against misinformation. While it may sound premature to rate their efforts, findings from this study provide evidence of action on the part of Nigerian librarians. It is important, therefore, that the librarians' efforts are recognized and supported by appropriate authorities in order to sustain these crucial efforts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. That there is need for the librarians to extend their efforts beyond social media and online channels since there is a larger part of the Nigerian society who are cut out of the internet and online tools due to illiteracy, poor infrastructure and other factors. Hence, the librarians should employ traditional means such as public awareness campaigns, and printing of flyers.
2. That Nigerian libraries should come up with a framework for responding to emergencies and that funding should be set aside for providing emergency information services whenever the need arises.
3. That the issue of low bandwidth should be addressed by relevant stakeholders especially the ministry of communication since access to good internet connection is critical for survival especially in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic
4. that the Nigerian Library Association should work with other relevant associations to address the age-old problems of distrust in official information, and love for myths among the Nigerian people.

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Characters' Pilgrimage from the Canon to Fanfiction:
A Gestalt Approach

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Abstract

Most academic circles treat fanfiction as "paraliterature" (Krauss, 1980) created by fans of a certain literary work. Fanfiction (also abbreviated to fan fic, fanfic, or fic) presents a new field of analysis not only for literature, but also for linguistic studies. The current paper aims at combining the research practices of both of them in order to disclose the literary and lingual essence of fanfics within J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* universe. For this purpose, we have made an attempt to apply the cognitive theory of Gestalt (introduced into the research world by the well-known psychologist Max Wertheimer) to the lingual analysis of fanfiction. We shall argue that in the three fanfics studied, the virtual images of Harry Potter, Hermione and Ron are preserved on the level of their individual speech Gestalts. We shall also argue that the fanfic author's personal sympathies may change at least one of the characters' profiles within a fanfic, while leaving the rest of them mostly unchanged so as to serve as an easily recognized background for the favorite personage. In other words, the author's angle of vision structures not only a fanfic's narrative, but it may also re-build the artistic and speech image(s) of one or more characters, though preserving the others' images as given in the canon text.

Keywords: artistic and speech image, character's profile, fanfiction, Gestalt, literary work

Reading is to the mind what exercise to the body
(J. Addison)

Introduction

The presented work is a multi-year project which suggests different ways of applying Gestalt analysis to language and literature studies. This time, our work is dedicated to the analysis of one of the most disputable types of literature known as fan fiction. Modern computer technologies provide great possibilities for both fiction writers and readers. Computer reading has become more appealing to computer operating audience who can use the Internet for getting a new vision of the original text literary semantics. Best sellers of mass literature find a special feedback within their admirers in the form of fanfiction, that is, fiction created by fans of a particular writer or story.

Due to a strong influence of the Internet and technologies, mass media start to determine the modern period in the development of arts as dominance of digital forms, including digital literature. The growing popularity of digital fiction results in gradual changes of the concept of literature itself. Fan fiction, as we see it, occupies a borderline position in modern literary writing. In contrast to other types of digital literature which are initially created as a specific quasi-language code synthesized of verbal and non-verbal elements and written to be read on the computer monitor screen only, fan fiction can be introduced as a paper and a computer story.

Nowadays writing fanfiction on the Internet is considered a mass literature movement within the devoted readers. Having been inspired by the original literary texts, they write their own creations developing their favorite story-plots. S. Burt points out in her article *The Promise and Potential of Fanfiction* that fanfiction "offers new writers a clearer path to potentially interested readers that has ever previously existed" (Burt, 2017). K. Busse stresses that "recent years have brought us a wide range of adaptations, translations, & transformations – at times they use the source as a mere inspiration, at others they critically talk back to the text" (Busse, 2007, p. 127). There is no denying that fanfics evolve the original text, take their roots in it and change it, sometimes twisting the original plotline beyond recognition.

On our part, we believe fanfiction to be actually a new sub-genre of post-modernism in literature. Anti-authoritarianism, on the one hand, and intertextuality, on the other hand, are observed in all fan-stories, connected with each other by the well-known characters taken from the original, or canon story. Fanfics not only develop the original text or give it another angle of vision, but also display skepticism to the canon story, subjectivism or relativism as to the events described. Thus, fanfiction presents a productive field for literature development.

The presented research focuses on investigating speech correlations between the original text and its modifications generated by fan writers. The paramount objective of our investigation consists in singling out the essential feature in the fanfics studied that, together with the canon text, outlines a specific virtual universe of the literary story as perceived by modern readership. In the process of work, the following tasks have been solved: concretization of the notion of digital fiction, determination of its verbal and genre peculiarities together with its esthetical parameters, building up and contrasting Gestalts of speech parties of the main characters of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga and three fanfics based on it.

The corpus of actual material for analysis (4,000 speech samples) represents speech parties of *Harry, Ron* and *Hermione* as shown by J. K. Rowling in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and reflected in three fanfics taken for analysis.

Literature Review

At present, fan fiction does not have a universally accepted treatment in literary semantics since in most academic circles fan fiction so far is still largely considered "paraliterature" (Krauss, 1980; Wershler 2013, p. 368). On the other hand, it has taken a specific niche among literary genres and is defined by Sh. Pugh (2005), as "writing, whether official or unofficial, paid or unpaid, which makes use of an accepted canon of characters, settings and plots generated by another writer or writers" (Pugh 2005, p. 25). Francesca Coppa in her book *The Fanfiction Reader* describes fanfiction as "creative material featuring characters [from] works whose copyright is held by others" (Coppa, 2017).

In our opinion, fanfiction as a special sub-genre of literature written by known or anonymous authors should also be defined in the terms of mass understanding of this phenomenon. The most shining example of such reference Internet source is Wikipedia written by a joint crowd-sourced company. Fanfiction (also abbreviated to fan fic, fanfic, or fic), according to the definition offered in the Wikipedia, is "fiction about characters or settings from an original work of fiction, created by fans of that work rather than by its creator." The Webster definition of the term "fanfic" runs "stories involving popular characters that are written by fans and often posted on the Internet" (Webster). In accordance with recent estimation, fan fiction makes up 33% of all content of books on the Internet (Boog, 2008).

In everyday life, fanfics are usually understood as a piece of amateur creative writing based on popular original literary works, films, TV shows or even computer games. Fanfics are usually written by the admirers of a certain virtual world pictured in the original version of the story. As a rule, fanfic literature is written about a certain set of well-known characters taken from the original work and is posted on the web for non-commercial reasons. Since the advent of the Internet, fanfic writing has become a popular form of amateur (and sometimes professional) narrative enhancing, or developing, or giving another vision of the initial story. Despite their popularity, fanfics are often treated as second-hand literature a "fanfiction and its creators have also traditionally been marginalized by academia as being derivative works not worth full attention" (Littleton, 2011, p. 21).

Notwithstanding the fact that fanfic writing is usually associated with the World Wide Web, this type of literature has a long-run history of its development. It dates back to the late sixties and was actually an expression of fandom and fan interaction of the admirers of *Star Trek* who popularized the plot in the so-called fanzines (fan magazines) produced via offset printing. In 1998, FanFiction.Net was officially introduced online (Buechner, 2002) and made it possible for fans to upload their creations there. On May 22, 2013, the online retailer Amazon.com established a new publishing service, Kindle Worlds. This service would enable fan fiction stories of certain licensed media properties to be sold in the Kindle Store.
In his turn, J. C. Lammers believes that the "earliest forms of fan fiction date back to fan art and fanzines created by science fiction fans in the early 1930's" (Lammers, 2011, p. 5). Looking at John Milton's *Paradise Lost,* A. Hong, a book reviewer and a promising author himself, suggests that Milton's work is a fanfic of the *Bible* itself. He argues that quite a good many of other well-known works of literature sprung up or developed from the stories previously written and published by some other authors (Hong, 2017). However, in our opinion,

fan fiction writing could be spotted much earlier, as far as the 15th century when Robert Henryson wrote *The Testament of Cresseid*. This way he gave the story an ending and expanded the storyline of the original. Another fanfiction researcher K. Busse is of the same opinion, paraphrasing Coppa's quote: "in literary terms, fan fiction's repetition is strange; in theatre, stories are retold all the time" (Busse, 2017, p. 134). Among such stories, we shall name the famous legend of Don Quixote (Don Juan) known in more than 600 interpretations. Rooted in the folk-stories of Mediaeval Spain, the world-known character of the immoral and dissipated youth has travelled through time and countries, acquiring new features and images, changing face masks and media and sometimes even sex (*Don Juan or if Don Juan Were a Woman* filmed in 1973).

As fanfics we should also rate different versions of *Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark*, *Doctor Faust, Dracula, the Vampire*, and so forth. We shall also add that a wide number of popular contemporary best-sellers also successfully transformed from fanfics. For instance, the famous blockbuster *Fifty Shades of Grey* (E. L. James) originated as the fanfic *Master of the Universe* (by the same author) and was based on the *Twilight* saga (S. Meyer). Thus, it can be partly treated as a fanfic creation.

Taking things by and large, we can also mention here, among fan writers, even the great H. Fielding, whose *Shamela* was the author's parody vision of S. Richardson's famous *Pamela.* Moving on in time, we may remember *Gone with the Wind*, M. Mitchell's popular saga which (with kind permission of the author's descendants) was continued by Alexandra Ripley and entitled *Scarlett*. It's also worthwhile mentioning that when A. C. Doyle killed the universally adored character of Sherlock Holmes, the offended readers started writing continuations of their own. Anyway, even now, in the "digital age the essence of fanfiction remains the same: fans of texts creating new adventures for the characters and universes they love" (Littleton, 2011, pp. 30–31).

Thus, having sprung up as readers' development of well-known literary stories, fan fiction is now treated as the most "democratic genre" (Pugh, 2006). It has become intrinsic to the story-world as a special deviation from the source text, typically presented online and expanding the canon text. We believe modern fiction to be much influenced by the fan writers' growing activity as well as by the digital media winning over the interested readership. This type of literature presents to its readers great opportunities of creating their own narrative plots by exchanging ideas between fans of this or that story, inventing their own ways of plot development and finally creating special fandoms, organized by the canon text.

Writing a fanfic becomes a certain literature game where an amateur and canon writers cooperate and challenge each other, acting as co-authors and rivals at the same time. Indeed, a great number of fanfics question the author's canon text. K. Busse (2007) stresses that "fan fiction, at its base, is about processes of reading, and yet as readers become writers, they begin competing for authorial possession if not of the words, then of the ideas, characters, and tropes" (Busse, 2007, p. 128). "Who's the writer?" as K. S. Fleckenstein (2009) puts it.

Method

We suggest applying the principles of Gestalt-theory to the online literary sources frontier for the purpose of disclosing regularities in the literary artistic images and lingual representation of the basic text concepts as given by the author and fan writers. In this paper, we shall try to

explore the complex and ambivalent relations of the source text and its sub-variants existing in the multi-universe of fan fiction.

In our preceding works, we tried to show that the well-known postulate about the unity of language and thought best of all works on the level of syntax (Morozova, 2009; Pozharytska, 2016). Syntactic speech patterns typical of an individual or a group of people bring into the open deep cognitive processes disclosing the speakers' intellectual and psychological peculiarities and this way making them recognizable and distinctive from other people. Individual syntactic speech features are not eye- or ear-catching, but "work on a deeper level" of one's perception for taking in a personality as a whole. This fact brings syntax closer to reflecting the speaker's inner "*I*", no matter whether it is real or imposed.

This paper lies in the field of the intersection of literature and linguistics. From the strictly academic point of view, any piece of literature is materially represented by a text organised in accordance with language traditions accustomed in the given society. The system of characters involved in the story is individualized by means of the author's narrative and self-representation in the personage dialogues.

Even a beginning reader will easily tell a grown-up lady from schoolgirls-teenagers only by the samples of their speech parties given in the text of the novel. This recognition is performed by means of synthesis of all language levels as they are shown in the text of a literary work. Grounding upon the ideas of G. Lakoff (1977) who introduced the classical Gestalt analysis into linguistics, we undertake a contrastive study of syntactic characteristics of the main characters' dialogues in the canon text and its fanfics.

Any classical Gestalt research operates with the following terms: naturally, *Gestalt* itself, *Gestalt projections*, *Gestalt areal, Gestalt limitation* or *contour,* and *Gestalt pregnancy,* or *importance.*

The German word "*Gestalt*" can approximately be rendered in English as "*a tangible figure or image*". In other words, it is a specific organization of parts building up an organic entity. Gestalt is a mental model whose parts make up an organic wholeness bigger than their sum. The cognitive theory of Gestalts belongs to the well-known German psychologist Max Wertheimer (1880-1943), who in 1912, grounding upon the philosophic ideas of Christian von Ehrenfels, arrived at the following conclusion. Any world vision – regardless of its simplicity or complication – corresponds to a multi-dimensional wholeness built up in human mind. He termed such integral phantom image of the world fragment "*its Gestalt*". This assertion wholly agrees with elementary psychology where wholeness, subjectness, permanence and structureness enumerated as Gestalt qualities are considered to be basic features of human perception. On the level of mentality, formation of a concrete notion presupposes creating a certain image or figure against other objects.

Today Gestalt theory is advocated by such famous researchers as D. Häffler (1998), F. Perls & P. Goodman (2001), A. Ramat (2002), Irvin and Meriam Polster (2004), G. Skitters (2007), and so on. It has acquired a great popularity within different branches of related and unrelated sciences, like social psychology, individual psychology, Gestalt consulting, management, linguistics, and so forth.

However, linguistics saw Gestalt theory only in 1977 when George Lakoff in his work *Linguistic Gestalts* (1977), claimed that all our thoughts, perceptions, emotions, and processes

of cognition are organized by means of the same structures which are called Gestalts. He believed them to be integral and available for analysis.

In our work, we have tried to apply Gestalt analysis as an instrument for contrasting speech patterns of the main characters' parties as shown by J. K. Rowling in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and portrayed in three fanfics taken for analysis and illustrating the same period of life of the main characters. Before coming down to the results of the investigation we'd like to dwell upon the already mentioned Gestalt ABC terms.

As a Gestalt building process is a dynamic operation consisting in studying the essential characteristics of an object in question, it presupposes defining the so-called "*significance*", or "*pregnancy*" of the Gestalt. The latter is traditionally understood as a hierarchical distribution of the dominating property in the Gestalt-figure, defining the Gestalt-center of the object (e.g. the center of a person's Gestalt is their face, where the interlocutor usually focuses their attention). The vector shifting of the Gestalt center testifies to the fundamental changes in its figure.

The chosen aspect of linguistic consideration we contrast with a certain *Gestalt projection* of the wholeness studied. The more projections undergo analysis, the more exact and vivid the general image of the construct is. In the process of Gestalt analysis, the "*areal*" of the object under study is also taken into account.

We term "*areal*" as a hypothetic or textual field where one can see the results of Gestalt object projecting which in our case is textual space of the chosen fanfic. *Gestalt limitation* or *contour* outlines the Gestalt figure itself in the area of its projections.

We argue that studying Gestalt projections of an object – abstract or concrete – makes it possible to get a multidimensional focused Gestalt of the given formation. The Gestalt construct in human mind is the very model, possessing and objectivizing the properties of the original.

Thus, a Gestalt is understood in this paper as a multi-dimensional wholeness built up in the human mind as a mental reflection of a world fragment. It is an integral phantom image helping human perceive and classify cognitive information about the surrounding world. In our case, by using Gestalt analysis, we shall try to restore the artistic images of the main characters in three *Harry Potter* fanfics from the point of view of the syntax of their speech.

Taking fan fiction as a subject for analysis, one must admit that as B. Thomas puts it "these fan-created narratives often take the pre-existing story world in a new, sometimes bizarre direction" (Thomas, 2011, p. 1), and it's no news that the fandom of fic-writing falls into several differently oriented story types. Though organized around one and the same plot, fanfic differ in the way of textual representation and fall into a number of easily recognized subtypes. For instance, *angst* refers to a genre of stories with a prevalent physical or, mainly, emotional torment of characters. *Challenge* refers to stories built on somebody else's idea, *badfic* – to those written in a deliberately horrible manner, as a special type of parody story. *Crackfic* presupposes stories in which completely ridiculous, unbelievable, or insane things take place. *Continuation* develops the canon with an open ending, and so forth. There are also *alternative universe* (AU) fics based upon violating the canon, *crossover* fics where characters and events from different stories are entangled and *POV* (point of view) fics where the narration is given through the eyes of this or that character.

For the purpose of achieving objective results, we intentionally restricted our investigation to the following parameters. The fanfics chosen for analysis place characters in their common surrounding or the canon universe. We have not studied crossover fics. The only factor that varied was the point of view of the narrator, that is, the position of the main character may have been shifted.

Findings & Discussion

The speech Gestalts of the characters in the fanfics analyzed were studied within the following projections of vision:

1) sentence surface structure;
2) communicative goal;
3) lineal length of the utterance;
4) volume of the communicative input.

Having chosen the mentioned above projections of vision, we outline in *Figures 1a, 1b, 1c*, the main characters' speech patterns as manifested in the canon; naming them *Hermione, Harry,* and *Ron,* and using three different colors – pink, blue and green, respectively.

In accordance with the principles of "*Ehrenfels circles*" the built up figures represent the corresponding areal of the linguistic phenomenon analyzed. In fact, these circles are employed here for illustrative purpose only. Graphic figures bring mental Gestalt projections reflected in the human cognition closer to the reader, objectivizing the obtained data in concrete images. Built up similarly, *Figures 1a, 1b* and *1c* – red graphs – reflect the average speech characteristics of the same characters as shown in three popular fanfics, (see figures below). As different parameters have been singled out for considering hypothetic Gestalt projections, we shall call them "*Sentence Surface Structure Projection*" (*Figures 1a, 1b* and *1c*) and "*Communicative Sentence Type Projection*" (Figures 2a, 2b and 2c).

The *Sentence Surface Structure Projection* was drawn basing on the frequency of usage of the traditional structural sentence types outlined in linguistics. Hence, as simple sentences (SiSe in the figures) we classified those representing one primary structure of predication (one subject and one predicate in terms of syntax); as complex sentences (CoSe in the figures) we treated those boasting more than one primary structure of predication (several subject-predicate nexi within a sentence); as complicated sentences (Co-d Se in the figures) we interpreted those comprising a secondary hidden predication structure besides one primary structure of predication (i.e. simple sentences with grammatical complexes with the infinitive, the gerund, or the participle, which can be paraphrased into a clause) (Morozova, 2009). We believe this subdivision to be important for perceiving the deep mental organization of the characters studied since the quantity and type of predication structures reflects the type of information metabolism (Morozova, Pozharytska, 2014).

The *Communicative Sentence Type Projection* was outlined, taking into the consideration the communicative purpose of the characters' utterances. Declaratives, or declarative sentences are those stating facts in the affirmative or negative way. Interrogatives, or interrogative sentences, ask for new information and are represented by questions. Imperatives, or imperative sentences, express commands and requests, urging somebody to do something (ibidem).

Both of the syntactic classifications above are universally recognized as basic in language studies. Taking into consideration the deep bonds between a work of fiction itself and its lingual organization, we consider them to be useful tools for our analysis.

We also paid attention to breaks in the narrative (Br N in the figures) and lineal sentence length as these speech features reflect the personage's emotional and psychological state as the author planned to code them.

Here we have deliberately excluded other speech characteristics of the main persons acting in the story (such as pragmatic types of utterances, speech strategies, typical phrases, etc.) so as to show that even the most traditional way of speech analysis may be a reliable criterion for determining a lingual Gestalt of the phenomenon considered.

The sums total of all speech constructions under study within the projection considered are delineated in the paper as circles, where the lines running from their centres are conditionally understood as corresponding to the hypothetical maximum use frequency of syntactic speech characteristics and taken as 100% each. The average use frequency of the corresponding linguistic phenomenon in the speech parties of the canon and fan characters are identified by dot-marks on each of the given oriented lines. By joining the dots, we get a Gestalt-figure of the communicant's speech pattern in the concrete projection of vision.

Figure 1a
Hermione's Speech: Sentence Surface Structure Projection
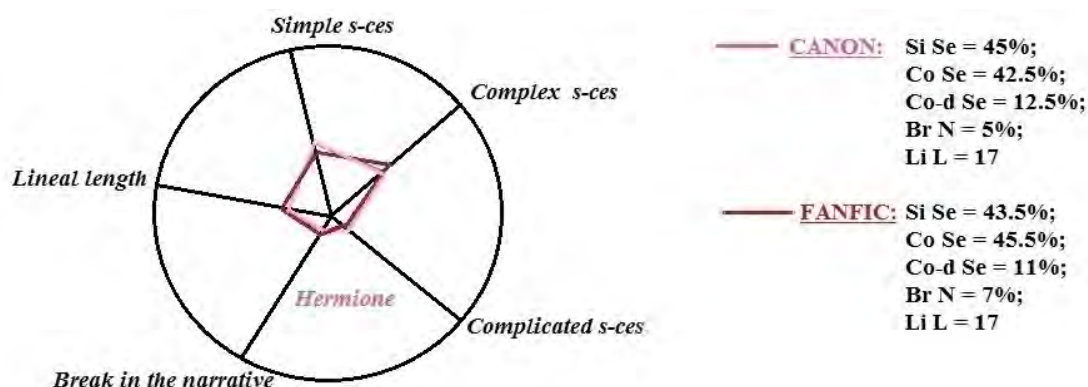
Hermione's speech examples:

    Simple Sentence (Si Se): *"Did you get them?" Hermione asked breathlessly.*

    Complex Sentence (Co Se): *"You'll need bigger sizes once you're Crabbe and Goyle".*

    Complicated Sentence (Co-d Se): *"I've got it all worked out," she went on smoothly, ignoring Harry's and Ron's stupefied faces.*

    Break in the Narrative (Br N): *"Oh, yes," said Hermione eagerly. "So clever, the way you trapped that last one with the tea strainer—"*

    Lineal Length (Li L): *"1) Once 2) they're 3) asleep, 4) pull 5) out 6) a 7) few 8) of 9) their 10) hairs 11) and 12) hide 13) them 14) in 15) a 16) broom 17) closet."*

While in the canon text, simple sentences rate first in Hermione's speech (45%) and complex sentences are runners-up (42.5% of all cases), the situation is the opposite in the three fanfics analyzed: her complex sentences are the most frequent (45.5%) and her simple sentences fall in their number (43.5%). Her complicated sentences fall by 1.5% in the fanfics (11% in the fanfics in contrast to 12.5% in the canon). She speaks with more breaks in the narrative (7% in the fanfics and 5% in the canon text), but the lineal length of her sentences has not changed. The psychological explanation for such changes can be so that the fic-writers meant to make Hermione sound more bookish, thus, using more complex structures in her speech parties.

Figure 1b
Ron's Speech: Sentence Surface Structure Projection
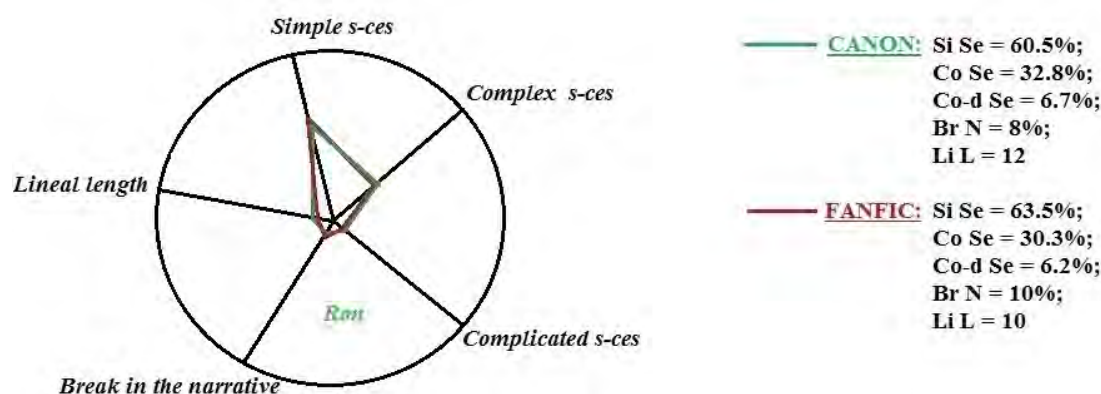
Ron's speech examples:

Simple Sentence (Si Se): *"It's not much," said Ron.*

Complex Sentence (Co Se): *"I was getting really worried when you didn't answer any of my letters."*

Complicated Sentence (Co-d Se): *"Er, no," said Ron, "he had to work tonight. Hopefully we'll be able to get it back in the garage without Mum noticing we flew it."*

Break in the Narrative (Br N): *"Right," said Ron. "Come on, Harry, I sleep at the — at the top —"*

Lineal Length (Li L): *"1) That's 2) how 3) he 4) looks 5) every 6) time 7) a 8) teacher 9) asks 10) him 11) a 12) question."*

Ron's sentence structure Gestalt projections do no differ much in the canon and in the fanfics. His speech becomes more simple (simple sentences making up 60.5% in the canon and 63.5% in the fanfics and compound sentences boasting 32.8% and 30.3%, respectively) and more doubting due to the rise in the frequency of breaks in the narrative (10% in the fanfics and 8% in the canon). On the whole, Ron's speech utterances become shorter in terms of their lineal length (10 lexemes in the fanfics and 12 lexemes in the canon text).

Figure 1c

Harry's Speech: Sentence Surface Structure Projection

Harry's speech examples:

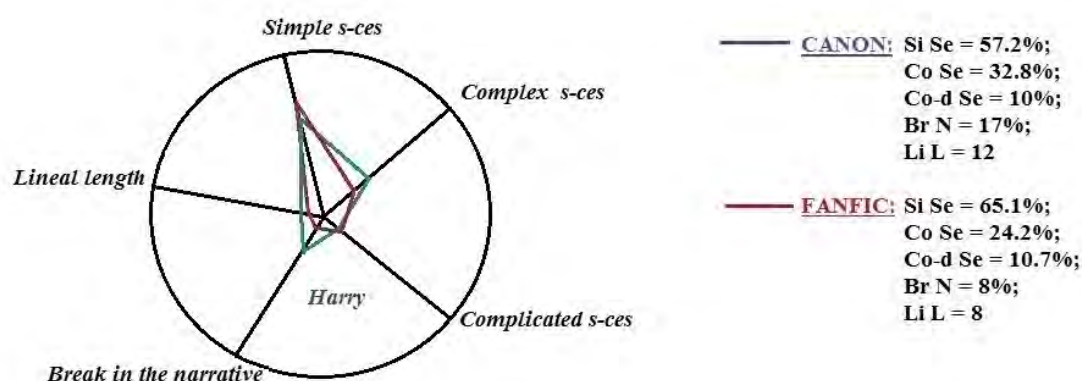>   **Simple Sentence (Si Se):** *"It's wonderful," said Harry happily, thinking of Privet Drive.*

>   **Complex Sentence (Co Se):** *"We've still got to find out where the Slytherin common room is."*

>   **Complicated Sentence (Co-d Se):** *"I'd like to see you try it."*

>   **Break in the Narrative (Br N):** *"Er, yes," Harry muttered. "Er—sorry to bother you—I wanted to ask—"*

>   **Lineal Length (Li L):** *"1) Then 2) you 3) noticed 4) that 5) after 6) I 7) spoke 8) to 9) it, 10) the 11) snake 12) backed 13) off?" said Harry.*

In Harry's surface structure Gestalt projection, the situation is far more interesting. While his complicated sentences do not differ radically in their frequency (10% in the canon and 10.7% in the fanfics), the main protagonist's simple sentences have risen in their quantity considerably. They make up only 57.2% in the canon and have a share of 65.1% in the fanfics. Harry uses more complex sentences in the canon than in the fanfics (32.8% to 24.2%), but speaks more confidently, breaking his narrative half as often in the fanfics (only in 8% of all cases in contrast to 17% in the canon). His speech utterances are shorter, making up only 8 lexemes on average in contrast to 12 lexemes in the canon text. Thus, we believe the fic-writers to have altered Harry's original speech Gestalt from the canon in order to make him sound more honest and straight-forward since it is a well-known fact that honesty is associated with simplicity of expression (Morozova, Pozharytska, 2014; Morozova, Pozharytska, 2018).

The comparative analysis permitted distinguishing a number of similarities and differences existing in the speech patterns employed by the canon and fic characters. It is easy to see that *structurally* simple sentences prevail in all characters' parties, whilst complex and complicated sentences are used not so often. However, we may observe evident deviations in the frequency of different sentence types and their lineal length within the speech parties of Harry, Ron and Hermione. It is noteworthy that both in the canon and in the average fic version they make up approximately the same figures with Ron and Hermione, but not with Harry. Harry's *Sentence*

Surface Structure projection changes to the side of a more confident and less hesitating type (more simple sentences, no '*if*'-clauses, fewer breaks in the narrative).

The same alteration in Harry's speech Gestalt is observed in the *Communicative Sentence Type* projection (see *Figures 2a, 2b, 2c*).

Figure 2a
Hermione's Speech: Communicative Sentence Type Projection
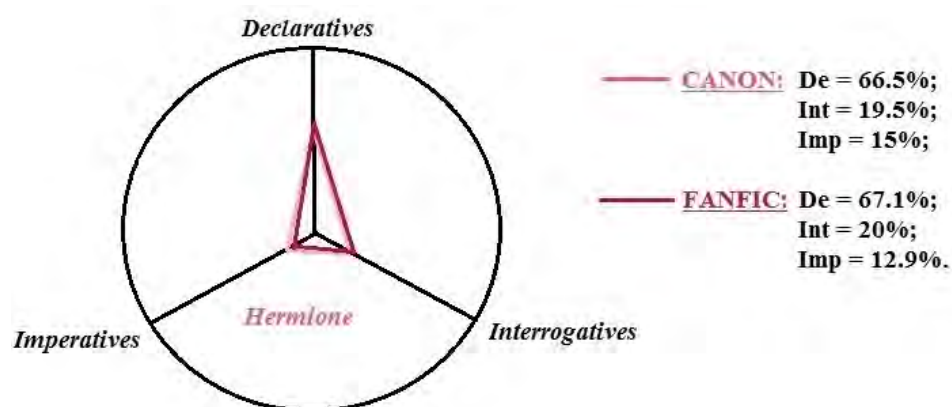
Hermione's speech examples:

> **Interrogatives:** *"Where now?" said Ron, with an anxious look at Ginny.*

> **Declaratives:** *"It could affect our whole future," she told Harry and Ron as they pored over lists of new subjects, marking them with checks.*

> **Imperatives:** *"Go away!" Hermione squeaked.*

Declaratives rate first in Hermione's speech Gestalt (66.5% in the canon and 67.1% in the fic), interrogatives differ by 0.5% in favor of the fanfics (19.5% in the canon text and 20% in the fanfics), and imperatives fall by 2.1% in the fanfics (15% in the canon and 12.9% in the fics). Altogether, Hermione's communicative sentence type projections do not differ much in the canon and in the fanfics we analyzed.

Figure 2b
Ron's Speech: Communicative Sentence Type Projection
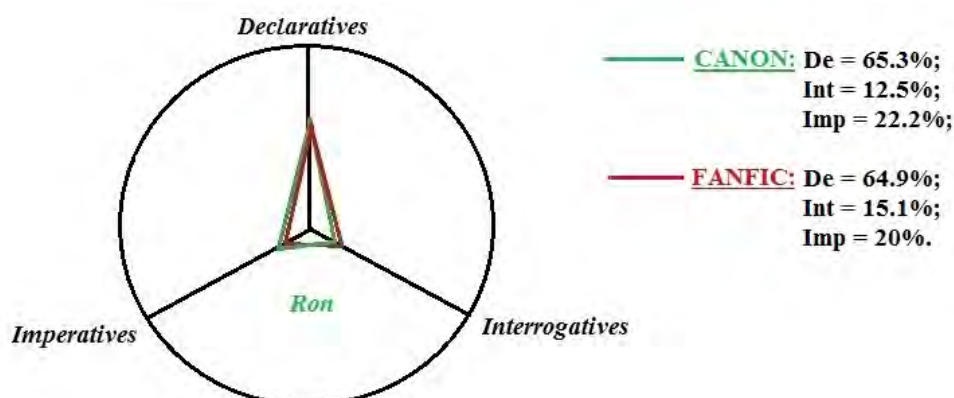
Ron's speech examples:

> **Interrogatives:** *"Where now?" said Ron, with an anxious look at Ginny.*

> **Declaratives:** *"His memory's gone," said Ron.*

> **Imperatives:** *"Go on and get it out," Ron whispered, shifting his chair so that he blocked Harry from Madam Pomfrey's view.*

Ron's communicative sentence type projections are almost the same in the canon and in the fanfics. He uses declaratives the most often (65.3% in the canon and 64.9% in the fanfics), next rank imperatives (22.2% in J. K. Rowing's text and 20% in the fic-writers works) and interrogatives (12.5% in the canon and 15.1% in the fanfics). Thus, his speech is preserved in almost the original form from the canon. Another background character for Harry, Ron, the same as Hermione, is characterized by the similar communicative sentence types in his speech both in the canon and in the fanfics, which deviate by no more than 3%.

Figure 2c
Harry's Speech: Communicative Sentence Type Projection
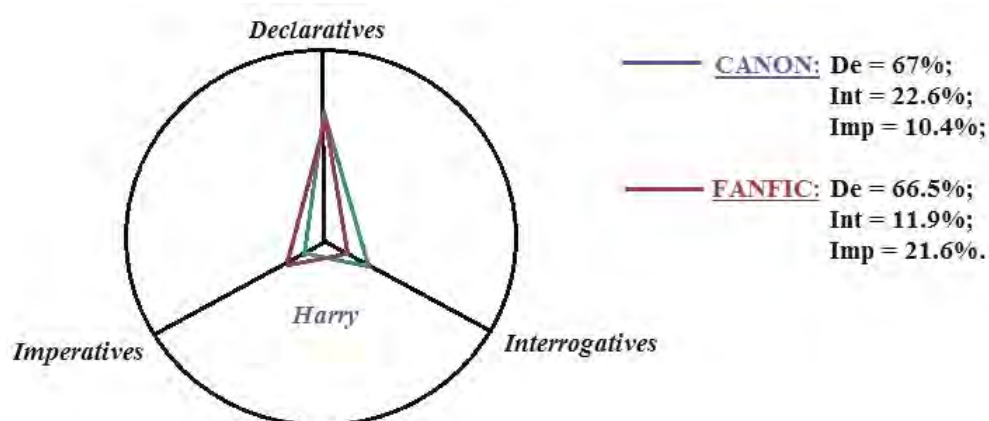
Harry's speech examples:

> ***Interrogatives:*** *"Proud?" said Harry. "Are you crazy? All those times I could've died, and I didn't manage it? They'll be furious…"*
>
> ***Imperatives:*** *C'mon, Ginny, let's get out of here—*
>
> ***Declaratives:*** *"Well, you haven't finished it," said Harry triumphantly.*

Harry's communicative sentence type projections differ radically in terms of interrogatives and imperatives. While the main character's declaratives do not change in their frequency (67% in the canon and 66.5% in the fanfics), his questions and commands/requests get almost mirrored in the fanfic. Interrogative sentences rank second in the canon (with 22.6%), but only third in the fanfics (11.9%). Imperatives, on the contrast, peak in their number up to 21.6% in the fanfics in contrast to 10.4% in the canon text. Our interpretation of this fact is that this way the fic-writers make Harry Potter sound more like a leader (as those are known to be less doubtful and asking fewer questions), manifesting the wishful qualities ascribed to him by his admirers' fanfic writers.

Conclusion

The carried out investigation allowed the making of the following conclusions. While Ron and Hermione, in full accordance with their psychological types, in the canon and fanfics demonstrate practically the same features, Harry's character in most fics undergoes certain changes. He stops asking questions (a typical trait of a dependent personality) and starts giving orders (demonstrating his capability to be an informal leader).

We have also spotted a few non-typical speech peculiarities in Harry's utterances. Here belong the phrases and language behavior we have never encountered in the canon text, like specific vocabulary showing the way Harry reacted, clipped phrases and too short constructions (exceeding no more than 3-4 lexemes), informal shortenings (like *dunno, wanna* etc.), extra emotional coloring. Some of such examples are given below:

> *** Harry (?):** *"How old are you?", He **glared**. "**Marry me**!" he said as a matter of fact (The Moment by B_Soms). – out of style;*
> *** Harry (?):** *"He's not that bad," Harry defended."I think Dobby is **kind of** cute?" "Okay, maybe not cute. But - well - likeable. **Kind of.**" (Callidus Prince and the Poisoned Fang by ContraryToEverything)*
> *** Harry (?):** *"You could - **I dunno** - come with us?" Harry suggested with amusement. (Ibid.) – too colloquial and informal*
> *** Harry (?):** *"Wow!" Harry exhaled. "It's **awesome**! **Try it now**! **Do as I say, mate!**" (Harry Potter and the Bloodroom by JJBee)*
> *** Luna:** *"You do have someone with you?" The concern in her voice is evident.*
> **Harry (?):** *"Yes. I won't say who." The answer is trying to be vague. "Do you need any help?" "**No, not now.**" (Bungle in the Jungle: A Harry Potter Adventure by jbern) – too laconic, too straight-forward.*

We consider such speech features attributed to the main character's image to illustrate the fanfic writers' personal understanding or correction of the original canon text's image as they see or would like to see it. This way they make Harry more passionate and assertive. Colloquial language also brings him closer to the reader as it adds authenticity to the dialogue.

Hence, having analyzed the obtained canon and fanfic speech Gestalts, we can make the following observations. The author of the story and her fan writers manifest a number of regularities in the speech parties of their main characters. Fan fiction has been hailed as "a democratic genre" (Pugh, 2000), its proponents celebrated as "textual poachers" (Jenkins, 1994) who radically disrupt but also reinvigorate canonical texts. It is indisputable that the ability to post and respond to stories on the World Wide Web has led to an upsurge of desire to mould the favorite character, differentiate him or her so as to show them in a better light.

The Gestalt patterns of the speech portraits studied remain generally unchanged in fanfics regarded by us as individual projects of the media text. This fact we attribute to the necessity of there being certain key elements of the author's original text that stay put, serve as the original's framework and hold the story universe together. As we can deduct from the results of our investigation, such key elements exist on both plot and language levels and stand in the way of fanfics tearing away from the canon text.

The undertaken analysis permits restoring Gestalt images of the main characters used in the canon and fanfics where they serve as prop elements for the narrative of the story. Various fanfic creations, though constituting separate stories, can be brought together to generate a whole universe developing after its own laws suggested by the author of the canon. We believe fanfics to merge floating from one story into another, giving them spin-offs, which are focused on particular personages enlivened by the fanfics' authors' imagination. The fanfic writer's personal sympathies are easily detected by the transformations in the individual speech characteristics of their favorite character(s), while the rest are used for placing this character(s) in the specific fandom universe. The Gestalt approach employed here for particular reasons of outlining the speech peculiarities of the leading characters of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga may serve as an effective instrument for penetrating into the inner structure of the fanfic universe, restoring it as a multi-dimensional Gestalt built together by the canon author and fic-writers.

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SHORT ARTICLE

Novels of Martin Amis: A Review of the Critical Reception

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Introduction

Spanning four decades of his literary career with fifteen novels, ten works of nonfiction, five short story collections, two anthologies and more than four hundred reviews and essays, Martin Amis is currently one of the most interesting living British writers. While his work "has prompted new considerations of realism, postmodernism, feminism, politics, and culture…" it also "inspired some of the most controversial literary debates of the contemporary time" (Keulks, 2006, p. 1) because of his employment of dark and sinister humor, radical sexual themes, shocking vocabulary, unpalatable characterization and the purported commodification of women. This essay would review Amis's narrative and thematic engagement in the light of the adverse critical comments he has been receiving.

A *Smorgasbord* of Critical Responses

The *New York Times* called Amis the master of "the new unpleasantness" (Stout, 1990). The novelist Adam Mars-Jones remarked that "It's easy to write Amis-like sentences, hard to write good ones" (Mars-Jones, 2012).

Notwithstanding such damning criticism, Amis's literary merit has been highly regarded. Damian Reilly emphasized that he is "the greatest living British writer" (Amis, 2018). Several major commentators on English novels of the postmodern and post-postmodern schools also recognized Amis as a master narrator with an unmatched and unprecedented prose craft. Gavin Keulks in his introduction to an anthology of essays on Amis wrote that it is "… easier to regard him as a literary father in his own right… Amis remains a writer in transition, one who has never failed to captivate readers' interest and imaginations" (Keulks, 2006, p. 3).

The Narrative Style

Amis's narrative style makes some readers supremely satiated while others turn antagonistic and hostile. Theo Hobson, in his essay 'I'm bored of Martin Amis' in *The Spectator* wrote, "An author who makes his name by elevating style over substance so dramatically, I suggest, cannot come back from it. It is a one-way act, like losing your virginity" (Amis, 2018). The contemptuous responses were incited as Amis hyper-created meaning through style. While some of his novels like *The Rachel Papers* followed a linear exposition of events, some were partly epistolary as in *Experience*. Some others followed the techniques of time reversal and confused chronology as in *Time's Arrow*. Brian Finney observed that Amis employed three interrelated techniques: a narrative form of temporal reversal, a narrative perspective of splitting the protagonist and the narrator, and a narrative mode of irony that produces black humor (Finney, 2006, p. 104).

Amis has some characteristic techniques of narration. Mirror narcissism and self-reflectiveness were used in *The Rachel Papers* where Charles Highway frequently observed his own self in the mirror, ostensibly to survey his face but primarily to confront the reflection of his alter ego. Doubling was another technique employed on usually two male characters, as in Gregory and Terrence in *Success,* to highlight their opposing personalities and the reversal of their fortunes. Amis employed the first-person narration technique in *Success* as well as the use of the authorial voice in *Night Train* to ensure that the author's point of view could be clearly communicated to the reader. Amis literally swam against the extant literary practices of narration and story-telling, thereby inviting both approbation and opprobrium for his body of work.

Epistolary Narration

In *Experienc*e*,* Amis communicated with his parents through letters, an end-product of the exuberance of a teenager, overflowing with ideas and unable to restrict his desire to flaunt his newly acquired knowledge of literature, resulting in a surfeit of ideations but incoherent articulations. However, Amis later apologetically admitted this initial profusion and penury in his memoir *Experience,* "It would be nice to say that I 'make no apologies' for my early letters, which will punctuate the first part of this book. But I do: I make fervent apologies for them" (Amis, 2000, p. 12).

Initially he concluded his letters to his parents with P.S. and then P.P.S., which gradually tapered off to only a P.S. or even without that later. His very first letter concluded as:

> P.P.S. On [sic] retrospect I consider 'Middlemarch' to be FUCKING good – Jane Austen + passion + dimension. Very fine.
> Love Mart, (Amis, 2000, p. 11).

The expletive in capital letters expressing one's predisposition is both novel and shocking, but not surprising, as Amis had himself stated in the Prospect Interview that he didn't want to write a sentence that anyone could have written. "Nice things are boring nasty things are funny" (Amis, 2010).

However, these coalesced in the opinions of some discerning readers who argued that Amis's *oeuvre* lacked depth and reeked in the eddies of the disgusting and the unspeakable. To them, the aesthetics of literature were overpowered by an iniquitous cesspool of shallow words and sentence constructions. Jason Cowley disparagingly referred to Amis as "a turbocharged cartoonist" who was "lost in "the monotonous sublime of caricature" (Cowley, 2001).

Shocking Neologisms

With his first novel, *The Rachel Papers*, Amis foregrounded the absurdity of contemporary society through satire and caricature, catapulting him to a unique position, where no other writer excited such extreme adulation or tremendous outrage. What made him particularly unique was his linguistic dexterity and neoteric wizardry. He remarked to Emma Brockes, "We are all held together by words" and "when words go, nothing much remains" (Amis, 2017).

In this respect, Amis is a votary of Barthes who had argued that a word "can be erotic on two opposing conditions, both excessive: if it is extravagantly repeated, or on the contrary, if it is unexpected, succulent in its newness" (Benyei, 2006, p. 47).

An example of his unique neologism from Dead Babies for which Amis is famous, or rather infamous is the conversation between Quentin and Andy about the pornographic magazines in Keith's possession and his modus-operandi of attaining sexual gratification through the visuals in them: "Yeah, he page-fucks the models" (Amis, 1988, p. 26).

The novelty lies as much in the recentness of the word "page fucks" as in its antiquity. It resonates of the picture-names used in old English as in *Beowulf*, where the body was referred to as a 'bone-prison' (Hall, 2005, p. 47).

"Page-fucks" also calls to mind a more contemporary picture-name visual accompanied by the mental masturbations of a sexually unsatiated individual. These were as highly evoking as they were colorful and a fine blend of the antiquated and the contemporary.

The salaciousness of repetition of the word "fuck" found representation in a conversation between Giles and Keith in Amis's novel *Dead Babies,* igniting the dwarf's concupiscence ("Andy's fucked her, Quentin's fucked her", Amis, 1988, p. 20).

But the reception was heterogeneous – to some this was an absolute literary ravishment while to others, it was the introduction of a new vitality and contemporaneity in the language.

Foregrounding Taboo Subjects

Based on the malaise and the excesses of the late capitalist western society, Amis's novels have been anything but euphonious; centering on the unthinkable and the unutterable: male violence, sadism, sexual dysfunction, and pornography, along with the fatuities of contemporary society, contemporary living and millennialism.

Male violence was exposed when Geoffrey physically assaulted his wife, in *The Rachel Papers*. Sadism was exhibited when Quentin and Andy forced a physically incapacitated Keith to test drugs for them first before they tried it themselves in *Dead Babies*.

Sexual dysfunction was highlighted with Andy's inability to cohabit as the antithesis of a macho man in *Dead Babies.*

Pornography was pronounced through the evocative sexual act between Rachel and Charles in *The Rachel Papers*.

Amis matched his language with the theme of his engagement. He featured them all with great devotion and absolute frankness. It is a veritable no-holds-barred exposition of the sordid details of life, so far shrouded in genteelness and civility. Being the problematic realities of life, they needed to be confronted for their resolution. While few would take the risk, Amis took up the responsibility of their exposition, for their proper understanding and ultimate mitigation.

Treatment of Women

Amis experienced scathing criticism on the grounds of the objectification and commodification of women.

Shanti Padhi stated that Amis's portrayal of women was "indecent" and "callow" (Parker, 2006, p. 56). Sara Mills thought that he was a "quintessentially sexist writer" (Parker, 2006, p. 56). Such allegations of misogyny cost Amis a Booker nomination. Helen Mc Neil and Maggie Gee, two of the panel of judges for the Booker Prize 1989, had objected to the shortlisting of Amis's *London Fields* for it on the grounds that its female character Nicola "was a sexist figure of the male fantasy" (Brook, 2006. p. 88).

Amis had tried to escape such ignominy at the very onset of his literary career in his interview on *The Rachel Papers*, "Sex had become fundamentally un-mysterious. I tried to exaggerate this. I mean I wouldn't like you to think that I felt that way about women, no not at all" (Bragg, 2010).

Despite such protestations, the disrepute of misogyny has stuck to him ever since. Even his attempt at exoneration by putting a woman at the center in his eighth novel, *The Information* failed to offer any redemption.

Amis's Legacy

Amis, with his particular literary techniques, is a master raconteur. His unique style of writing in his linguistic jugglery, neologisms, word spins and biting satire is what makes one cringe and yet, ponder upon the sublime. His pyrotechnics are, after all, not lyrical language or verbal beauty, but the harshness of the word that reflects the reality around man, making him reflect and endeavor to continuously improve and progress in the journey called 'life'. However, the very fact that, despite such a mélange of caustic criticisms, Martin Amis continues to excite such interest in his work testifies to his continuing relevance and overriding importance in the English novelistic scene of the day.

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Mapping Spaces, Identities, and Ideologies in *The Parisian* (2019)

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Abstract

The Parisian (2019) is Isabella Hammad's debut novel. It provides a dynamic spatial representation of a transitional era and a history that was unfolding and changing the face of the earth at the critical time between the two World Wars. Adopting the realistic tradition of nineteenth- century novelists, Isabella Hammad manages to provide a textual cartography of the places she dealt with in the Levantine and in France, mapping alongside the evolving sense of identity in the wake of drastic political, social, and cultural changes. By depicting those parallel worlds, the text dissects the Nabulsi society and reveals the heterogeneity that underlies its superficial homogeneity. It also introduces those spaces, specially Nablus, discursively bringing out their many facets through multifocalization. This paper aims at showing how the text underscores both the subjective experiential sense of place and the objective analytical and ideological sense of how place materializes the fabric of immanent relations of power. This is done through a geocritical approach that links together the literary representation with the lived spatial referent in ways that help readers understand a lot about the past and the present of this part of the world.

Keywords: Isabella Hammad, geocriticism, history, postcolonial literature, identity, Nablus

> *The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space...we live inside a set of relations.*

(Foucault, 1986, p. 23).

Introduction and Literature Review

Literature Plays a very important role as a treasure box of culture. By the sheer power of narrative, identities are (re)formed, spaces are (re)defined and ideologies are (re)shaped. Edward Said (1994) once said that "the main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested and even for a time decided in narrative" (p. xiii). Accordingly, Said lamented that "the Palestinian narrative was lacking in literature" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. xi). It is evident that some important writers wrote about the Palestinian issue and highlighted its history. Among those are Ghassan Kanafani, Mourid Barghouti, Radwa Ashour, and Elias Hoary. However, all their great works were written in Arabic and were not widely read outside the Arab World. A new trend of writers from Arab origins and Western nationalities began to address this lack and provide texts written in English and gaining recognition and acclaim in the English-speaking world and elsewhere. Among those are Suzan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), which is an international bestseller published in twenty-six languages. Isabella Hammad's debut novel *The Parisian* (2019) is another very important instance of those novels. Not only is it deemed "one of the most ambitious first novels to have appeared in years" (Thomas-Corr, 2019, para. 3), but is also described as "a sprawling, sweeping historical epic" (Williams, 2019, para. 1). It has the additional merit of going back further in history than most of the other Palestinian novels. While the majority of texts deal with the period from the 1940s onward, *The Parisian* chooses to examine the roots of the Palestinian issue as it began to materialize from 1914 until 1936 and how this affected the society's march towards modernity.

With the growing interest in the spatial turn, which "associates both geometric and philosophical coordinates of life—time and space—in a spatiotemporal scheme. A geo- critical analysis locates places in a temporal depth in order to uncover or discover multilayered identities, and it highlights the temporal variability of heterogeneous spaces" (Westphal, 2011b, p. xiv). Within the framework of this analysis, it has become possible to explore real geographical spaces as they are mapped through narrative and to uncover the ideological messages that go into identity formation therein. This analysis emanates from a postmodern belief in the decentered subject. At the top of the pioneers of this approach are Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who managed through their collaborative work to rethink the relation between place, space, culture and ethics. Their examination of human, animal and even inanimate bodies within their livable territories aims at "reconnecting theory with daily practices of resistance. Foremost among Deleuze's concerns is the idea that the philosophy and politics of difference must take into account the experiences of oppression, exclusion, and marginality" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 164). The vitality of this kind of thought lies, not in its total dissolution of collective identity in any nihilistic or negative way, but rather in its "affirmation of a new kind of bonding, a collectivity resting on the recognition of difference, in an inclusive, i.e., non-exclusionary manner" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 162). Their work opened the door for the spatial turn that took the study of places and spaces to new horizons and paved the way for many important names like Bertrand Westphal, Robert T Tally Jr. and Yi-Fu Tuan among others to develop the geocritical approach to literature, history, culture and society. This paper

will use geocritical mapping and analysis to foreground the dialogue between geographical terrains and their cultural and ideological manifestations.

In this context, the merits of the novel are best represented through the spatial networks that bring together the personal and the social within the framework of the political and the global negotiations and transgressions of intersecting worlds and characters. Nablus, Cairo, Constantinople, Montpelier, Paris, Jerusalem, and Damascus are represented as socially constructed spaces implicated in racial, religious, ethnic, and gender-related constrictions. These milieus are far more than just settings, or background to the story line as they become crucial means of plot construction and tools that help unfold the underlying meaning of the text. Intertwined with this focus on space comes the equal focus on temporality. Within the scope of this paper, spatiotemporal analysis becomes a way to examine "the silenced spatiality of historicism" (Soja, 1989, p. 13). By focusing on spatialized time, light is shed on how the dynamics of linear time intersects with the resonant spaces to produce an intricate narrative that represents in a spatially molded way the history of Europe and the Middle East during the first part of the 20th century: from World War I until about 1936.

On a micro level, the novel tells the story of Midhat Kamal who is born in Nablus. His mother dies when he is two years old. His father moves to Cairo which was the center of trade at that time. Midhat visits his father in Cairo, then is sent to Constantinople for his high school education, then to Montpelier to study medicine at the university there. After a painful personal experience, he leaves Montpelier and moves to Paris to study history. Eventually, he comes home to Nablus to get married and start a family of his own.

On the macro level of national and global concerns, the Middle East (a term that was not yet coined then) was at that time in a very important transitional period of its history. It was part of the Ottoman Empire and as thus it was, politically and economically, one block of land. The writer aims at highlighting the realities of the area and the major historical changes that ultimately lead to the change of geography and history. This can be detected in the novel in the ease and simplicity of traveling and commercial movement of individuals and merchandise in and between Egypt, Palestine, Syria, etc. The protagonist's father would bring high quality silk from the Golan heights to "Muski St." in Cairo where his store is. He would take the route from the Golan to Cairo passing by Nablus several times a year to check on his store there and to see his son and family. This ease of movement is also highlighted in the story of Haj Hassan, who is a fugitive wanted for being a nationalist. He spends his time between the Galilee district, the Druze Mountain area, and Damascus without any boundaries keeping him.

Nablus' Segmentarity

According to deleuze and Guattari, there are lines of rigid segmentarity that divide society using classifications of class, sex, religion, among others. However, there are also flexible lines and lines of flight that help transcend classificatory opposites and retain the fluidity that helps deterritorialize and reterritorialize these strata. Nablus is a perfect embodiment of the constant interaction between those contending forces, between rigidity and fluidity. The city is the corner stone of the novel. Both spatially and temporally, it represents the origins and transformations of a traditional Palestinian society, simultaneously stressing its segmentarity and its heterogeneity under the surface of unity. It is where Midhat grows up, it is his point of reference to which he constantly compares other places he visits and lives in. Nablus is a trade center "merchants were the glue that bound Nablus to the surrounding villages: for the village people they functioned as credit lines, patrons, employers, even friends; for city dwellers they

were both harbingers of novelty and pillars of tradition" (Hammad, 2019, p. 177). As "far as living memory could reach the foundation stones of Nabulsi society had been the mosque, the city gates and the central marketplace, Khan al-Tujjar" (Hammad, 2019, p. 177). It is clear here that the first pillar of authority in Nablus is religion, represented through the space of the mosque. Despite or even because of the Christian and Samaritan elements, Nablus was a perfect specimen of the Islamic city" (Hammad, 2019, p. 276). At "the twilight years of the [Ottoman] empire, keeping time had become a problem. The official year still began in March. … But the Christians followed the "Georgian calendar, led by January…, while the Jews adjusted their terms to accommodate the cycle of the earth, [but] the Muslims followed the lunar Hijri" (Hammad, 2019, p. 18). Eventually, everyone "even non-Muslims followed the moon" (Hammad, 2019, p. 18). This uniformity of time despite religious and cultural differences becomes metonymic of the seamless surface of life in Nablus that hides beneath a great diversity. The Muslims comprise the majority of the population. However, the Christian and the Jewish parts give Nablus its special character.

The coexistence of society's different segments is stressed by shedding light on religious difference and its ramification. At the age of seven or eight, Midhat develops feelings for his little Christian friend, Hala. By the age of eleven, "just like the Muslim girls, Hala donned a veil and stayed indoors" (Hammad, 2019, p. 88). Thus, Midhat could not see her anymore as part of the Nabulsi cultural practice that assigns separate spheres for the two genders and forbids any kind of mingling between them. However, crossing the religious line is not foreign to that society as it is represented in the novel through the love story of Abu Islam, who "had married a Christian woman from the east of Nablus" (Hammad, 2019, p. 229).

The Samaritans form an important portion of the Nabulsi religious texture. They consider themselves "the original Israelites and consider Mount Gerizim the sacred summit upon which Ibrahim was called to sacrifice his son" (Hammad, 2019, p. 206). However, they do not live within the community of Nabulsi people but rather seclude themselves in the Samaritan quarter at the outskirts of Nablus. The synagogue lies at the heart of their quarter. Like most minorities, the Samaritans are "objectively definable states, states of language, ethnicity, or sex with their own ghetto territorialities" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 106). It is "by regionalizing or ghettoizing, that one becomes revolutionary; rather, by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating them, one invents a specific, unforeseen, autonomous becoming" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 127). In this context, the Samaritans' difference is underlined, not only through their separate space but also through their different cultural practices, the minority elements that distinguish them from the rest of the Nabulsi population. Clothes become the first sign of difference. When Midhat and his grandmother are on their way to meet the Samaritan high priest, Yitzhak, they run into a woman "dressed in pantaloons and unveiled but of a scarf over her hair" (Hammad, 2019, p. 221), an unthought of attire for an ordinary Muslim or Christian Nabulsi woman.

The Samaritans are famous for two things, two elements that make them stand out in Nablus. The first element is magic. While the whole of the Nabulsi community is remarkably superstitious, the active party, the ones who actually do magic are the Samaritans. It is noteworthy that Islam prohibits magic and deems those working with magic as heretic and unbelievers. The Muslims visit the Samaritan priests to "set the evil eye on someone, […] to prophesy" or to make a charm for love (Hammad, 2019, p. 222). The Samaritans retain an enigmatic air and their "religious texts written in their language" trigger in Midhat a "fearful curiosity, so that his heart still turned a little at a mention of the infamous book and its occult runes" (Hammad, 2019, p. 225). The second element is their role as harbingers of modernity.

In the field of clothes-making, the local stores, including the Kamal store provided bed linens and clothes for "clients in the hinterlands, so there was limitation in type and style" (Hammad, 2019, p. 244). The Samaritans, on the other hand, provided for an "upper-class market" (Hammad, 2019, p. 244). These clients aimed to imitate the European patterns but with a local flavor. Not belonging to the mainstream culture makes them more liable to open up for foreign influence and to deterritorialize that foreignness and reterritorialize it into the local environment, thus bringing into it seeds of change and evolution. The two elements seem in binary opposition to one another, as one is expressive of the primitive mind while the other is tied to innovation and development. However antithetical they may seem, they remain complementary characteristics of the function of the outsider as the site of what is abject, what is foreign and thus does not have to abide by the norms of the mainstream group. The Samaritans represent the nomadic and differential trait, a kind of energy which overflows every restriction.

In a similar vein, the hybrid spatiotemporal dimension of the story is underlined through "Nouveautés Ghada", Midhat's new shop in Nablus. The French name stands out as a signifier of the cultural allegiance of Midhat, the Parisian. However, the shop still helps in mapping the layers of identity that make up the Nabulsi society, stand witness to its diversity, and underline its evolution into a modern capitalist society. The shop becomes a microcosmic representation of a more inclusive Nablus where a Muslim merchant with a French education, becomes partners with Eli, the Samaritan and both rely on Butrus, the Christian tailor. Westphal (2011) quotes Homi Bhabha as he explains this phenomenon as producing a cultural third space that includes "the interstitial passages and processes of cultural difference that are inscribed in the 'in-between,'" (Westphal, 2011a, p. 71). Eli's desire to give up his separateness and to become partners with Midhat is interpreted by the text as "the inveterate caution of a member of an endangered sect trying to survive in another culture" (Hammad, 2019, p. 403). The dressmaker cannot confine himself to the ghetto for want of clients, especially high-class ones. Out of the ghetto, he becomes threatened by the encroachment of a hostile mainstream culture on his peculiar cultural entity. Thus, the way out is to take refuge in a hybrid "third space" where he, Midhat and Butrus can unite.

Their trade in women's fashion is in vogue as the city evolves into a westernized modern city. Traditionally, "the standard garment of the Nabulsiyyat [was]… a cloak and above that her veil, and then a shawl" (Hammad, 2019, p. 219). The "rural fellaha women selling vegetables … did not wear the black veil" (Hammad, 2019, p. 219). By the 1930s, "veils, though not gone entirely, had thinned into vapours of chiffon…; skirts concluded at the knee, and the black stockings on the shelves of Nouveautés disappeared almost as soon as they were laid there" (Hammad, 2019, p. 397). Clothes become a synecdoche for an overall change in the status of women represented by Sahar, Hani Murad's wife, who "worked as an activist both for the national movement and for women's rights across the Arab world, including raising the marriage age and removing the veil. … The women she associated with came from all parts of society, including the fellahin; all classes, all religions" (Hammad, 2019, p. 405). However, things change with the development of the resistance movement, led mainly by peasants or Fellahin. Though peasant women had not worn the face veil before, now their men took Western clothes as signs of Western hegemony and they "sang about the whores who wore Western clothes" (Hammad, 2019, p. 491). Even Sahar, the leading feminist, has no problem in putting on the face veil she long fought against. She believes that "they were here to fight on their behalf, ready where the ulema [religious scholars] and politicians had failed. … Was that such a heavy price to pay, though, for their freedom?" (Hammad, 2019, p. 491). Gender freedom is thus sacrificed for the bigger and more pressing need for nationalist freedom.

Accordingly, in times of communal danger, the people are propelled towards a rigid segmentarity that negates the religious other, i.e. the Samaritan, and essentializes him/her. Desire[1] "is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1978, p. 215). The apparent march towards modernity is interrupted by the new circumstances in Palestine as waves of Jewish immigrants arriving there as a consequence of the circumstances in Europe, result in the emergence of anti-British resistance groups such as the Qassam group. In a time when "Jewish immigration swelled with refugees" (Hammad, 2019, p. 398) and the Jewish National Fund was trying to acquire land by any means and at any price, the Nabulsiyyat "took to the podium before the post office to point at the sky and unleash their fury at British hypocrisy, and at every local person too weak for the cause" (Hammad, 2019, p. 398). Midhat was stigmatized for not being "a political activist [who] had gone into business with a Samaritan" (Hammad, 2019, p. 398). The Samaritans who had always lived as part and parcel of the Nabulsi society "had woken to the sound of rocks showering their houses. 'We are not even Jews!'" protested Eli but "to a dispossessed farmer they were all the same, all 'Jews'" (Hammad, 2019, p. 403).

When "one people in need, [is] trespassing on the rights of another" (Hammad, 2019, p. 455), it becomes difficult for the latter party to retain any degree of inclusiveness or tolerance. In such dire circumstances, the voice of the liberal democratic group in Palestine seems to recede to the background and the majority of the people, the poor Muslim farmers, do not understand what nationalism is. The word "nation" is an empty word for them "they never had one before […] you have your land, your livelihood, and your religion" What Qassam is doing is "appealing directly to their faith" (Hammad, 2019, p. 412). The English have a manhunt for Qassam which finally results in his death. But Qassam's death does not put an end to his ideas, the "Brits had accidentally made Qassam into a martyr"[2] (Hammad, 2019, p. 447). Eventually, "Qassam-inspired armed bands continued to roam the countryside. Attacks on Jewish civilians were followed by retaliations against Arabs" (Hammad, 2019, p. 447) and the vicious circle of violence and counterviolence never ceases to continue and to claim more lives till our present day.

Nablus' Insularity

The second "foundation stone" of Nablus is "the city gates" (Hammad, 2019, p. 177). According to Deleuze & Guattari, "the gates of the city […] are barriers, filters against the fluidity of the masses, against the penetration power of migratory packs, people, animals, and goods" (Hammad, 2019, p. 368). The emphasis on the importance of the gate underscores the insular nature of Nablus, which makes it "practically impenetrable to outsiders" (Hammad, 2019, p. 280). Despite its biblical significance as it has Jacob's Well in its valley, Nablus never adapts itself to the role of a tourist attraction. On the one hand, nearby cities like Jerusalem

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[1] Desire, for Deleuze & Guattari, is not a component of the psyche that overwhelms the more rational part of the human self. It is rather a vital force, a productive and positive conception of material flow as it actualizes through real life situations.

[2] Qassam Izz ad-Din al-Qassamia a Syrian Muslim preacher who was educated in Al-Azhar religious University in Egypt and was one of the leaders of the Islamic Revivalist Movement. He led the resistance against British and French Mandatory rule in the Levant in the 1920s and 1930s. He was also a key-player in the anti-Zionism militant struggle there. In the 1930s, he founded local resistance groups that targeted British and Jewish groups. He was killed in a manhunt as a retaliation for the killing of a British policeman. He was declared a martyr by the Palestinian locals and has since been the inspiring figure of all Islamist resistance groups in Palestine.

"were forming whole quarters for pilgrims and artefact seekers" (Hammad, 2019, p. 276). Nablus, on the other hand, "had not a single hotel for foreigners" (Hammad, 2019, p. 276). No Nabulsi "cared for European tourists at all" (Hammad, 2019, p. 276). This seclusion and special nature make it almost impossible for the British forces to recruit any native informants. One of the British officers complains in 1920 that "we've not got any […] intelligence […] from there since about nineteen seventeen or thereabouts" (Hammad, 2019, p. 310). For the British occupation forces, Nablus is "a town of fanatics. Lot of troublemakers" (Hammad, 2019, p. 310); it is "one of the more organized in terms of, well activities, as well as … more unruly" (Hammad, 2019, p. 311). But this insularity had its economic repercussions. Nablus

> Penned in by her two mountains, was not […] growing at the rate of other towns. Compared with Jaffa and Jerusalem and Haifa and Akka – all open to the sea, to Christian Pilgrimage routes and tourism, electrified and full of cinemas – this town was decaying in her provincial backwaters, subsisting on memories of former glory, her inhabitants recalling […] the days when she used to be called "the little Damascus" (Hammad, 2019, p. 399).

The city could not compete even with its famous Nabulsi soap as the "Jews set up their own factories for export, selling "Nabulsi-style soap", but using castor oil, instead of olive, which was far cheaper" (Hammad, 2019, p. 398). Thus the city gates, being too tightly locked, badly affect the third "foundation stone" which is "the central marketplace, Khan al-Tujjar" (Hammad, 2019, p. 171). What happens is that Nablus ceases to be "isomorphic". According to Deleuze & Guattari (1987), "all States and all social formations tend to become isomorphic in their capacity as models of realization: there is but one centered world market, the capitalist one, in which even the so-called socialist countries participate" (Hammad, 2019, p. 436). While capitalism leaves space for heterogeneity, it necessitates that "the domestic market is developing and expanding […] in the center" (Hammad, 2019, p. 436). Being at the heart of the old world, Nablus must suffer as no place is permitted to meet "capitalist demands with too much resistance and inertia" (Hammad, 2019, p. 436).

However, Nablus's history negates its insularity and examined from a spatiotemporal perspective it appears to be totally heterogeneous. It brings together many heterocosms, or separate worlds, palimpsestically arranged to ultimately form the current toponymy. Its present status rests on multiple strata whose temporal depths make it one of those polychronic spaces whose historical variations belie any attempt to homogenize its actuality. A "city does not become historic merely because it has occupied the same site for a long time" (Tuan, 1977, p. 174). In the same vein, our reaction to Nablus changes as the text reveals the layers of narrative, real, and imagined that have been "carried on the wind between the two mountains of Nablus [and] had settled over the years into legends" (Hammad, 2019, p. 139). The city has witnessed the passing and settlement of Canaanites, Romans, Jews, Christians, Muslims, European Crusaders, Ottomans, and English people. In addition to the Samaritans, it encompasses Jacobs Well where it is said that Jesus "met the woman of Samaria", and he, according to the Bible "being wearied with his journey, sat thus on a well" (John 4.6). During the time of the crusades, Queen Melisende of Jerusalem was "banished from the Holy city … [and] spent the rest of her life in a palace at the centre of Nablus" (Hammad, 2019, p. 139). During the Arab empire, "the Qaysi and the Yemeni clans" (Hammad, 2019, p. 200) settle and retain their rivalry in their new environment.

Multifocalization

The image of Nablus is represented in its versatility through multifocalization where "the point of view is relative to the situation of the observer with respect to the space of reference" (Westphal, 2011, p. 128). The text involves, in its spatial representation, a "confrontation of several optics that correct, nourish, and mutually enrich each other. Writing of space may always be singular, but the geocritical representation emerges from a spectrum of individual representations as rich and varied as possible" (Hammad, 2019, p. 143). Through the lens of multiple focalizers, Nablus reveals its multi-faceted characteristics. Frederic Molineu represents the exogenous point of view which "reflects the vision of the traveler" (Westphal, 2011a, p. 128). For Molineu, Nablus becomes "a metonym of Orientalism, a metonym of exoticism" (Hammad, 2019, p. 147). He has never visited the orient, but he does the next best thing, which is bringing an oriental home as a native informant, a practice not foreign to orientalists of the time. Frederic Molineu is a university professor specialized in social anthropology. His research on "language and the progress of civilization" (Hammad, 2019, p. 82) starts off from the assumption that "the Muslim [is] a deviation from the onward progression". He wants to prove [the extent to which one might actually recuperate a deviation … [by teaching] them to conform …[to] the value of liberty, for example. What isn't present in their religious texts" (Hammad, 2019, p. 83).

It is clear that Nablus for Molineu represents the stereotypical Arab space where Midhat is living "in a desert" (Hammad, 2019, p. 60). It is the land of superstition and backwardness. It is the land of primitive people using a primitive language: the title of one of the passages written by Frederic in his notes on Midhat is "The effect of a New Language Learned by a Primitive Brain" (Hammad, 2019, p. 130). So, Midhat in his naiveté "had thought his difference [from the French family he lives with] no difference" (Hammad, 2019, p. 131) and thought of himself as their guest, as their equal, to the extent of thinking to marry their daughter. The reality is that "he was [just] the father's subject" (Hammad, 2019, p. 131), Molineu defends himself that he was "attempting to humanize" Midhat (Hammad, 2019, p. 134). Thus, Molineu embodies all the traits of an orientalist with his ethnocentric way of thinking, his hypotheses being built on the binary opposition between the west and its other(s) and his uncontested belief in the superiority of the western/French culture.

Père Antoine represents another facet of the exogenous point of view. He is a professor of Oriental Studies at l'École Pratique d'Études Bibliques in Jerusalem" (Hammad, 2019, p. 276). The relation between knowledge and power, typical of orientalist discourse, is clear in his cooperation with the British Criminal Investigation Department who wants to benefit from his "special expertise in Nablus" (Hammad, 2019, p. 310). Antoine represents the stereotype of the missionary who is complicit with colonial authorities as the English officer suggests: "I know you are a holy man but it's quite common among your profession" (Hammad, 2019, p. 311). The text also represents this type through the example of the English missionary doctor who tried to "convert" (Hammad, 2019, p. 263) one of his patients. However, the text does not fall in the trap of generalization and represents the sisters, the nuns who run the municipal local hospital, as helping the Palestinian resistance fighters against the British. Père Antoine thought the nuns were complicit with the British and this assumption induces him to act the way he does. He then wondered "whether, had he known the truth earlier, he might have felt differently about Nablus" (Hammad, 2019, p. 446). Père Antoine's attitude also alludes to another very important orientalist feature, namely, "the pressures of conventions, predecessors, and rhetorical styles" (Said, 1978., p. 22), in short, of discourse. Père Antoine builds his initial reaction towards Nablus on the assumption that Sister Louise looks down upon the Arabs and

plots with the British against them. When he realizes the truth, he cannot but wonder how "his opinion of an entire people, could in the end be so mutable, so subject to the opinions of his peers" (Hammad, 2019, p. 446).

The allogeneous point of view is represented by Midhat Kamal, the Parisian. This point of view becomes the feature of a "cultural situation of the in-between (or of accelerated deterritorialization); [it] tends to transform the world into a purely liminal space" (Westphal, 2011, p. 129). Although Midhat is a native of Nablus and should thus be described as endogenous, he cannot possibly be described as such. The endogenous "point of view characterizes an autochthonic vision of space. Normally resistant to any exotic view, it limits itself to familiar space" (Westphal, 2011, p. 128). Midhat, with his cosmopolitan character and French education transcends this locality and takes on a glocal hybrid character that makes him more of an insider/outsider. From the beginning of the novel and since his stay in Constantinople, France is represented in his mind as "the pinnacle of Europe and exemplar of the modern age" (Hammad, 2019, p. 25). For him, to go to France is tantamount to going "straight to the heart of modernity" (Hammad, 2019, p. 25). In this "city of strangers" (Hammad, 2019, p. 157), Midhat is able to shed any manifestation of his oriental identity and to live as a libertine focusing on his sensuous pleasures than on ideas of belonging "with a freedom born of strangeness, he had bypassed the laws of family and dallied in the alleyways of chance and rapture" (Hammad, 2019, p. 190). After his major disillusionment in the Molineus who dehumanize him and treat him as an inferior, he becomes for the first time aware of the strength of the deeply entrenched stereotypical image of the people he comes from. His reaction is to try to escape being identified as an Arab.

Midhat's description of all the spaces he goes through from Nablus to Constantinople, to Cairo to Montpelier, to Paris is "stereophonic… [and] promotes the emergence of the third space" (Westphal, 2011, p. 129). Midhat lives most of his life in cosmopolitan cities, in Constantinople, then in Paris. In both he enjoyed "a freedom born of strangeness, he had bypassed laws of family and dallied in the alleyways of chance and rupture" (Hammad, 2019, p. 190). He believes that "he did not belong in Nablus" (Hammad, 2019, p. 240). During his stay in Paris, he has learned "to dissemble and pass between spheres and to accommodate, morally, that dissemblance through an understanding of his own impermanence in each (Hammad, 2019, p. 166). In Paris and later on even in Nablus he shows "an embrace of otherness that at first he admired in Faruq but which now appeared in his mind a skewed, performed version of what it was really like to be in a place but not of it, not to know it truly" (Hammad, 2019, p. 161).

Appropriating his own inferiority, he thought that his French friend, Laurent, "exceeded him in virtue, as well as in intellect, and in manner and culture, and even in appearance" (Hammad, 2019, p. 119). In appearance, he was "closer already […] to the pale Italian or Greek […] than to the inhabitants of those apostatized subaltern continents who had so defected from civilization as they occurred in picture books and nursery rhymes and the imagination of French children" (Hammad, 2019, pp. 160-161). His "old fantasies of becoming French" having been ruined by the attitude of Molineu, "he still clung to a particular idea of cosmopolitan life" (Hammad, 2019, p. 189). He "was two men: one here, one there" (Hammad, 2019, p. 470). He learned "to dissemble and pass between spheres and to accommodate, morally, that dissemblance through an understanding of his own impermanence in each" (Hammad, 2019, p. 166). Midhat ultimately represents "the Levantine, with his mouchoir and new suit […] the figure of the Parisian Oriental as he appeared on certain cigarette packs in corner stores" (Hammad, 2019, p. 160). During his time in Paris, his life "had become multiple" (Hammad, 2019, p. 166) and this sense of a divided self does not abandon him as he moves back home to

Nablus. For the freedom-seeking Midhat Kamal, Nablus is a place of restrictions, of "boredom, and deference to views not his own" (Hammad, 2019, p. 190).

It is noteworthy that Midhat's relation to space is metonymically expressed through his relation to the female body. Through his amorous conquests "we enter into what John Douglas Porteous has called the bodyscape, which in this case is more geomorphic (body as landscape) than anthropomorphic (landscape as body). In the grand scheme of things, this bodyscape is feminine" (Westphal, 2011, p. 68). His initial relation to France is expressed through his infatuation with Jeannette Molineu's body which he desired to own and acquire legitimately through marriage. After his humiliating disappointment with the Molineus, Midhat's way of mastering the French space and of compensating for his sense of inferiority and marginalization is through conquering the female body beginning with Claire then lots of other women, paid or otherwise. It is worth noting that his first amorous expedition takes place in a five-storey building ripped off during an air-raid. The milieu of war, decay, and destruction negates any kind of elation or pleasure. Despite "this picture of manly achievement" (Hammad, 2019, p. 157) he tries to forge, the fact remains that she is the one who takes the lead, and the experience is at first "painful to recall" (Hammad, 2019, p. 157).

The experience with Claire must be reconstructed and many details must be added or removed to keep his sense of false mastery and cover up his inconsequentiality. Moreover, Midhat's ideal of social/class mobility is constantly based on the female body. He tries to do this in a legitimate way through marriage first to the "superior" race (Jeannette), then when back to Nablus through marrying into the Hammad family who are considered among the city's dignitaries. His courtship of Fatima is territorialized as it takes the shape of visiting the street where her house is. The house is represented as a fortress to be conquered. He goes around the house and can only see "the peaked windows that showed over the high wall" (Hammad, 2019, p. 257). He "began to feel the same blissful consolation of running to meet a lover. Except that all he was meeting was a house, and not even an entire house: only what segments of window and roof were visible over the wall" (Hammad, 2019, p. 257). There is a series of metonymic relations that govern Midhat's love for Fatima. In this series, the house stands for the girl, Fatima, and the girl stands for a family, the Hammads, and the family stands for social status and upward mobility.

It is clear here how difficult it was for two young people to meet because of the totally separate spheres allocated for men and women in the Nabulsi society. The very rigid segmentarity on the basis of sex necessitated the existence of a parallel world inhabited exclusively by women. As Westphal (2013) remarks "If the Land of Women existed [...] it's a safe bet that it would lie on the edge of the masculine world" (Westphal, 2013, p. 55). This parallel world, in which women could meet away from the eyes of men, is represented in the novel through the hammam (public bath) and the "Istiqbal" (the reception, a lady's gathering). It is useful here to use Ray Oldenburg's (1999) concept of the three places: "one is domestic, a second is gainful or productive, and the third is inclusively sociable, offering both the basis of community and the celebration of it" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 14). In this sense, while the Istiqbal is domestic and restricted, the hammam, as a third place, is neutral, leveled, and accessible. The Istiqbal is usually held by women in private homes. When invited to an Istiqbal, a girl "would be covered in velvet and embroidered lace or whatever drapery best displayed her twin virtue of wealth and taste" (Hammad, 2019, p. 209). The "space is made up of an ensemble of local entities, whose limit is fixed by a homogenous perception of communal experience" (Westphal, 2013, p. 28). The Istiqbal is the space of social propriety and showing exemplary social behavior, or else the woman who fails to show respect for those norms would be shunned by the group. It

is a chance to show social class, through wearing the latest fashions and the finest jewelry. It is also a chance to show off the latest possessions, for example Madam Atwan hosts an "Istiqbal" in the courtyard of her palace to show the women a "Kodak" camera, an invention never seen before in Nablus.

The hammam (public bath) is a perfect example of the "third place … where you relax in public, where you encounter familiar faces and make new acquaintances" (White, 2018, p. 6). The ladies, on their way to the hammam are totally covered up from head to toe, being just "figures in black muslin" (Hammad, 2019, p. 208). Once they enter, they shed off their clothes and be at ease. The hammam is "important for the health of the physical body, but even more important for a healthy social body" (Hammad, 2019, p. 209). While the "Istiqbal" is a private space and the host is free to invite or neglect anyone she wants, the "Hammam" is a leveler, which is "by its nature, an inclusive place" open for all (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 24). Stripped of their clothes, they become mere bodies without class or wealth, just "flesh shining with water and sweat, dimpled and variegated in the coloured light from the roof" (Hammad, 2019, p. 209). The "sustaining activity of third places everywhere…. is conversation" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 26). Thus, in addition to being cleaned of impurities, the women "gossiped on benches around the walls, inhaling vapour as they picked at watermelon and cheese brought by the maids in cane trays" (Hammad, 2019, p. 210). In such a closed community as Nablus, gossip becomes a social interaction that helps women gain and exchange information. It also creates reciprocity and strengthens the social bonds between the teller and the hearer. Being excluded from the public sphere dominated exclusively by men, women find their power through the networks they create via their own spaces. Women's claim on their own power shows clearly as they use these spaces to choose brides for their sons by inspecting the young ladies closely and putting them under scrutiny. They also used gossip as weapons to get at their opponents: the women "locked at last in their homes […] divert their vigour into childbirth and playing music, and siphon what remained into promulgating rumours about their rivals" (Hammad, 2019, p. 201).

The masculine version of the third place is Café Sheikh Qassem where the men meet. Some of the "regulars" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 33) are always there as it "was the most popular café in Nablus and could be relied upon for company at all hours" (Hammad, 2019, p. 199). The men gather to smoke the nargila pipe and drink tea. They also read the newspaper and talk about politics and the latest news of demonstrations against the British in other town and cities. At times, they host a rawi in the café. The rawi is an oral poet who recites and sings the stories of popular heroes such as elhelaly salama. It is noteworthy that while women are harbingers of modernity, or at least of a more westernized way of life, men seem more adherent to the old ways. In their Istiqbal, women celebrate the Kodak camera and treat the shooting session as a considerable event, while men celebrate the rawi at the expense of the more modern gramophone "a circle of lamps in one corner indicated the rawi, sitting beside a qanun player with a stage around them. … Behind him stood an idle gramophone" (Hammad, 2019, p. 230). Here the intertextual reference to Abu Zayd al-Hilali[3] is highly significant. According to Westphal (2011), intertextuality is a very important element of geocrtiticism as it brings "fictional territories into relation with those of the referential world" (Westphal, 2011a, p. 97).

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[3] This story is told through the epic "Taghribat Bani Hilal". It narrates the story of Abu Zayd al-Hilali and his tribe from the middle of the 4th Hijri century till the middle of the 5th Hijri century (11th century of the Georgian calendar). Drought hits their land in the Hijaz area in the Arab Peninsula for eight consecutive years. The hero, Abu Zayd leads his people to Tunisia and goes through many adventures, wars, and conspiracies before he and his people come out victorious.

The story of al-Hilali and his heroic strife to save his people from the drought that hits their land and his attempts to settle them in a new land after defeating their enemies resonates well within the realm of the novel. The story summons the meanings of heroism, resistance, and the communal spirit that the Nabulsi society in particular and the Palestinian society at large were in need of at that critical time of their history. It also stresses the people's Arab identity and origins at a time when this identity is at stake. The story of al-Hilali whose people suffer and move to another place, Tunisia, which is already populated by another people ironically invites comparison with the Jewish people rather than the Palestinians who readily identify with them as it is clear in the people's reaction to the rawi.

Conclusion

The Parisian ultimately provides a dynamic spatial representation of a transitional era and a history that was unfolding and changing the face of the earth at the critical time between the two World Wars. Adopting the realistic tradition of nineteenth-century novelists, Hammad manages to provide a textual cartography of the places she dealt with in the Levantine and in France, mapping alongside the evolving sense of identity in the wake of drastic political, social and cultural changes. By depicting those parallel worlds, the text dissects the Nabulsi society and reveals the heterogeneity that underlies its superficial homogeneity. It also introduces those spaces discursively bringing out their many facets through multifocalization. The text underscores both the subjective experiential sense of place and the objective analytical and ideological sense of how place materializes the fabric of immanent relations of power. This is beautifully done through combining sensory details and intertextual references that populate the world of the novel. It portrays a concretized picture of its places linking together the literary representation with the lived spatial referent in ways that help readers understand a lot about the past and the present of this part of the world.

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Journal Articles

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NOTE: In fairness to all authors, we do not accept manuscripts sent to the editor via email for review. These papers WILL NOT be reviewed nor responded to. All submissions must be made via the Submission Portal during official submission periods.

We will only accept one submission from any author in a particular issue and no more than two submissions, in different issues, over the course of a year. This includes both individual and shared authorship. If you submit as an individual you may not be a shared author on another submission, and vice versa. Also, if you have had a submission rejected you cannot be an author on another paper for that same issue.

Aims & Scope

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The IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship aspires to find a balance between promoting cutting-edge research in the relevant fields and providing a forum for dialogue about the forms, roles and concerns of literature and librarianship in the 21st century. It also aims to place the latest work of well-established and respected experts alongside the breakthrough pieces of up-and-coming academics, fostering the sense of a conversation between generations of thought leaders.

Articles should be submitted through the online submission form in Microsoft Word format. Before submitting your article, please ensure that it is prepared in accordance with the Author Guidelines which can be found on the website.

Contributors are expected to submit the initial draft of their paper in the IAFOR Journal house style, which is APA (the American Psychological Association). For details see Purdue Owl https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/. If accepted for publication, the paper's style will likely be slightly modified to provide consistency across papers. There may also be minor edits to ensure the academic rigor of the language, grammar and spelling. British and

American English are both acceptable but spelling and punctuation conventions should be consistent with the form of English used.

Please note: Submissions that do not respect our Author Guidelines, ignore our Aims & Scope or have evidence of Plagiarism (checked with iThenticate), are NOT reviewed and will be returned by the Editor-in-Chief. If a manuscript is returned to an author because of the above, no further submission is allowed for that issue of the journal. Furthermore, submissions will not be reviewed unless there is sufficient referencing to the current, worldwide, mainstream literature (usually within the last 10 years, unless seminal works, and with scholarly references). Please avoid the use of websites and popular sources.

Article Structure

Title

Ensure that your title accurately reflects the contents of your paper and is free of errors.

Abstract

A concise and factual abstract is required (maximum length of **250 words**). The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions. An abstract is often presented separately from the article, so it must be able to stand alone. For this reason, references should be avoided, but if essential, then cite the author(s) and year(s). Also, non-standard or uncommon abbreviations should be avoided, but if essential they must be defined at their first mention in the abstract itself.

Keywords

Immediately after the abstract, provide a minimum of 3 and a maximum of **6 keywords**.

Introduction

Present purposes of the study and provide background for your work.

Literature Review

Include a pertinent literature review with explicit international connections for relevant ideas. Discuss the findings of published papers in the related field and highlight your contribution.

Methodology and Methods

Provide sufficient detail to allow the context of the work to be thoroughly understood and/or for the work to be reproduced. Provide sufficient detail for readers to understand how you engaged in your inquiry. Clear descriptions of your context and participants along with strategies used to collect and analyze data should be described.

Discussion

This section should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. Combining your results and discussion into a single section may be suitable. Returning to

relevant literature from the introduction should show how your work connects with or interrupts already published literature.

Conclusions

The main conclusions of the study may be presented in a Conclusions section, which can include the main findings, the implications, and limitations.

Appendices

If there is more than one appendix, they should be identified as A, B, and so on.

Acknowledgements

Collate acknowledgements in a separate section at the end of the article before the references and do not, therefore, include them on the title page, as a footnote to the title or otherwise. List here those individuals who provided help during the research (e.g., providing language help, writing assistance or proofreading the article, etc.).

Footnotes
Footnotes should be used sparingly. Number them consecutively throughout the article, using superscript Arabic numbers.

References

Citation in text:
Please ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa). APA style to be used.

Reference style:
Text: Citations in the text should follow the referencing style used by the American Psychological Association (APA). References should be arranged first alphabetically and then further sorted chronologically if necessary.

DOIs:
Full DOI's need to be added, where available, to the referenced work (please see below).

Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 16*(3), 148–164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.005

Checklist

* Times New Roman font (size 12)
* Single-spacing throughout the document; paragraphs, justify.
* Double space (instead of indent) to designate a new paragraph or section
* Page numbers at the bottom center of each page
* Margins: Microsoft Word "Normal" (2.54 cm)
* Page that includes title, authors, their affiliations, their contact information, and the topic of the submission

* Authors and affiliations repeated at the beginning of the body of the paper
* Manuscripts should be between 4,000 and 7,000 words in length; manuscript too short or incomplete will be rejected. However, if revisions and development are needed, articles may be a little longer than 7,000 words in length.

Short Articles

We also accept submissions of **short original essays** and articles (800 to 2000 words) that will be peer-reviewed by at least three of our team members like regular research papers. From these submissions, editors will select three short pieces which receive positive feedback and which show clear contribution to the fields of **Literature or Librarianship** and include these in out regular issue of the journal.

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https://iafor.org/journal/iafor-journal-of-literature-and-librarianship/author-guidelines-2/

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