Proceedings of the second annual AEGS conference

Struggle and/as Transformation

Marquette University

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Sponsored by the Association of English Graduate Students (AEGS), the Department of English, and the Graduate School at Marquette University

Decolonial Ethos and Praxis

In these proceedings, it was our aim to make visible as many presentations as possible, especially since decolonial knowledge production disrupts the hegemonic gatekeeping in academia and the hypervisibility of imperial knowledges and those produced in the global north. We regret that we were not able to offer economic compensation to all presenters, even though we recognize that knowledge production is labor. However, we hope that this forum will be decolonial praxis which works in a small or large ways to undo the injustices of erasure that reinforce institutionalized domination throughout the globe. As Andrea J. Pitts emphasizes, "given North American Anglophone and Western European institutional dominance, a decolonial geopolitics of knowledge from such centralized sites will require a careful set of strategies to de-link it from the homogenizing and totalizing trends of neocolonial expansion that characterize so much academic production in the U.S., Canada, and Europe."[1] It is our aim to challenge these trends, so that there can be significant change within our institutions, but we also put this out into the world in recognition of the capacity for knowledge generation to be politically transformative beyond the confines of academia.[2]

We produce this from our spatial location on land impacted by colonial histories and in a city affected by segregation and stratification along racial and economic lines. Marquette University is located in Milwaukee, which are the homelands and waters of the Menominee, Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, Fox, Mascouten, Sauk and Ojibwe nations, who have known this land and water as a relative for millennia and who remain our hosts on the land today. Furthermore, the greater Milwaukee area is home to a large, resurging urban Indian community that includes diasporic Indigenous peoples from around North America, as well as from the Global South, the Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

It was our aim for the conference to serve as a forum for careful and nuanced transdisciplinary dialogue, so we respect the social positionalities and identificatory practices of presenters, audience, panel chairs, and volunteers. This includes acknowledging raced, classed, and gendered identities, and ethnicities, religions and ways of being, communal affiliations, linguistic orientations, sexual orientations, disabilities, migration statuses, and other positionalities. We recognize, however, that systemic racism, imperialism, patriarchy, and coloniality are pervasive and, therefore, we would be remiss to ignore the current and historical power differentials at the intersections of these identity positions. We, therefore, recognize that a careful examination of power dynamics necessitates an exploration of complex and thorny social, political, and economic issues, and we hope that these proceedings will reflect the vigorous discussion, debate, and critique that was central to our conference, while also rejecting domination in its different covert and overt forms.

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[1] Andrea J. Pitts, "Decolonial Praxis and Epistemic Injustice," In *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, edited by Ian James Kidd, José Medina, Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. (Routledge, 2017), 151.

[2] Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo, "Global Coloniality and the Decolonial Option," *Kult 6 - Special Issue Epistemologies of Transformation: The Latin American Decolonial Option and its Ramifications* (Fall 2009), 144. http://www.postkolonial.dk/artikler/kult_6/MIGNOLO-TLOSTANOVA.pdf

Table of Contents

Reflections from the Conference Committee: What does struggle mean to you? **3**

Presentations and Presenter Bios. **8**

Conference Papers **29**

Generational Heritage in Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" by Sara Elif Tufekci.....29

Decolonizing the Biocolonial Mind: Rebooting Resistance against Ecopolitics and Biocoloniality in Select Indigenous Female Poets' Poetry in Bangladesh by Ariful Islam...46

Prophetic Past: Enforcing Framework Through Transformation in Maryse Condé's *I, Tituba* by Matthew Noteboom.....76

AZTALAN by Maxwell Gray.....86

Appreciation **91**

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Reflections from the Organizing Committee:
What does struggle mean to you?

This conference has been in the works for a year now, with our academic committee, peers in the department of English at Marquette University, and departmental and institutional lifelines supporting our coincidental and planned discussions. The discussions that we had stem deeply from the power dynamics that impact our collectivity. Oftentimes our discussions were supportive and validating, but they were also vigorous and critical as we questioned and interrogated, at times for longer than anticipated. It could be conceived that our collective struggle stems from our liminal position in the university; as graduate students in institutions of higher learning, we occupy the borderland and we are impacted by forms of disempowerment that are not always visible. However, we found in the different methods that we used to resist hegemonic structures and systems of domination a community of sorts. The following is an engagement with the theme of the conference "Struggle and/as Transformation" in our voices and from our different positionalities.

Jen Stanislawski

I send a warm welcome to you as an attendee of Marquette University's 2023 conference, "Struggle and/as Transformation." I am honored and excited to be a part of this conference as a committee member; it has been a very enriching and valuable experience. I have gained great insight working through the organizing process and combing through the fine details with my fellow colleagues. As both a first-time committee member for AEGS and a first-year master's student in Marquette's English department, I have only just begun my journey in graduate work, but my academic endeavors connect closely with our conference's themes of struggle, transformation, and resistance.

Like you, I ask, "How can we explore and deconstruct oppressive and hegemonic structures in our society and in literature?" Alongside the lens of decolonization, my interests are grounded in examining the presence and function of personal identity that tap into analyses of feminist and queer theory. Honing in on the embodiment and power of identity opens the door to critiques of institutions of our past and present society. Through examining issues in an intersectional framework, for example, by looking at the marginalization of women, gender minorities and queer individuals, we can recognize and analyze how institutions continue to perpetuate patriarchal, heteronormative, and colonial forces that dominate our everyday lives, such as in education, in the workplace, and in the medical field. The interactions we have in these areas affect our identity and agency, as our culture influences communities to surveil notions of otherness and divergence.

Last semester, I had the opportunity to engage in a graduate course, "Histories of Anti-Capitalism," which focused on resisting capitalist structures where we closely examined how capitalism intersects with issues relating to areas such as feminism, racism, homophobia, and disability. Engaging with deconstructive texts and discussions further inspired me to imagine and theorize a world where justice, equity, and accessibility are prioritized. Thus, I believe it is imperative to give all citizens a voice, access to essential education and resources, opportunities

to grow in their personal and professional lives, and the chance to thrive outside of the constricting bounds of western, colonialist-capitalist structures and timelines.

I am posed with the question, then, "What does struggle mean to you?" To me, struggle is the result of a conflict or tension that creates a division between the values we hold and the values external institutions expect us to possess. Struggle occurs when our voices are overshadowed and oppressed by a larger, more influential force or group. By bringing marginalized voices to the forefront, we will continue to question and address structures that have commonly been accepted as permanent and unchanging. To me, this conference acts as a bridge between analysis and action. I am enlivened to take part in such conversations that will promote critical analyses and spark important dialogues that further mobilize deconstruction and empowerment.

Jen Stanislawski is a first-year master's student in the English Department at Marquette University. Alongside AEGS, she is committed to other areas at the university, including engaging in Marquette's philosophy club and working as a graduate teaching assistant in the Methods of Inquiry core. Her research interests include women's literature, 19th and 20th-century historical fiction, queer theory, Marxist theory, and themes such as identity, liberation, and feminism. Outside of academia, she enjoys painting, puzzles, and reading political nonfiction. She hopes to complete a master's thesis in her second year.

Alex Gambacorta

My father's first language was Italian but after traveling back to Italy during the summer between school, he lost his English fluency. It was suggested to my grandparents that they only speak English in their home so that their children's schooling would not be impacted. My grandparents, wanting their children to grow up to be "successful" and achieve the "American Dream," complied. I grew up knowing my father and his parents believed they had to shed their language identity in order to be successful; violence in the centering of whiteness and assimilation for survival. My grandparents' lives as Italian immigrants and their experience of having only had the opportunity to obtain a 5th-grade education, shapes how I view education and the world. The idea of education and its possibilities have been deeply instilled in me and my graduate work has been centered on understanding a decolonial classroom and the institutions of education (museums, archives, and schools).

My graduate research focuses on the colonial archive and archival materials relating to Native American Mission and Boarding Schools operated by the Catholic Church, particularly the extensive Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions (BCIM) records held in the Marquette University Special Collections and University Archives. The project of Native American Mission and Boarding Schools deeply implicates Jesuit Educators, the Catholic Church, and the United States Government. The goal of Native American Mission and Boarding Schools run by religious entities and the U.S. Government was to assimilate, convert, westernize Indigenous Peoples, and to confiscate land— cultural genocide. With the recent discoveries of unmarked graves at residential schools in North America, the true history of the boarding school era in the United States is slowly being uncovered for non-Native peoples.

Additionally, I work as a Teaching Assistant inside Wisconsin prison and jail institutions and on campus with Marquette University's Education Preparedness Program (EPP) which creates pathways to higher education for people impacted by incarceration and expands traditional boundaries of higher education through collaboration across the Milwaukee community. As an educator in carceral institutions and other nontraditional classroom settings, creating a space that allows for the collective production of knowledge, and moving away from perpetuating systems of hierarchy and white supremacy is at the forefront. For me, this conference is an opportunity to break from academic silos that systematically and intentionally confine our opportunities for creative collaboration and collective resistance.

Alex Gambacorta is pursuing an MA in English at Marquette University. She is a graduate researcher with Marquette's Indigeneity Lab focusing on the Native American Mission & Boarding School Archives, particularly the extensive Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions (BCIM) records held in the Marquette University Special Collections. Additionally, Alex is a Teaching Assistant for the Education Preparedness Program (EPP) at the Center for Urban Research, Teaching & Outreach. EPP works to create pathways to higher education for people impacted by incarceration and expands traditional boundaries of higher education through collaboration across the Milwaukee community. She is a member of Marquette's chapter of The Community, a nonprofit that addresses the effects of the criminal legal system through Pre-entry and Correcting the Narrative, and a facilitator for Narrative 4, an organization that uses a story exchange model to cultivate radical empathy while empowering students to improve their communities and their world.

Ayo Ibiyemi

I am delighted to welcome participants to the "Struggle and/as Transformation" conference hosted by the Association of English Graduate Students at Marquette University. The word "struggle" has a meaning that seems clear but it is also amorphous, its meaning could depend on individual experiences. When we concluded on the theme of this graduate students' conference, our intention was to make people engage the theme of struggle from their own perspectives with the goal of representing multiple voices and coming to terms with the idea of struggle. We also asked ourselves an important question, "what does struggle mean to you?" For me, struggle is how we live life, it is how we make progress. Struggle can be positive if channeled towards human progress.

I am also aware that when we discuss the idea of struggle, we risk romanticizing it. We must also be aware that struggle is not fun, it is real life for a lot of people. It is not just another academic idea, it is something with real life consequences. We must treat struggle as the debt we owe society and the generations after us. Being part of the academic committee has been beneficial and humbling for me because it made me question my notion of struggle and ask myself how I have navigated it over the years. It has also been a way for me to put some of my education to practice. The goal of every academic conference is for participants to get insights on their work and get feedback from others. It is my hope that these discussions would benefit every participant and we would all come out of this conference as better human beings.

Ayọ̀délé Ìbíyẹmí is a Master's student in the department of English at Marquette University. He is from the Yoruba nation in Nigeria and previously worked as a Yoruba language teacher and culture journalist in Nigeria before moving to the United States for graduate education. He currently works in the Indigeneity Lab and is researching the historical interactions and contestations between Africans and the African Diaspora in the United States using a wide range of cultural texts. He has written book reviews, movie reviews and profiles of historical figures. He won the Ken Saro-Wiwa Prize for Critical Review in 2021. Some of his writings can be found here.

Ibtisam M. Abujad

Struggle, for me, is to find in collectivities solidarity, and in reflexivity awareness, and in research hope, and in resistance will, and in voice a path, and in learning a mast, and in the future a past. Here is how…

Recipes for Record Righting

When I began to write,
my ancestors taught me to record recipes.
In your books, they spoke out,
take it down,
salata bildamma is when sulta S-sounds are snake-like,
long and deceptive, like the sand paths in 1948

It is staunch walls and boundaries,
cords and accords,
and Unbinding UN (dis)agreements and trade contracts
checkpoints and mic checks
borders, orders, hordes
boundaries, bound hands, not ever homeward bound

They said, in a shelter in Balata, you don't escape the eyes,
Even in camps, sirens and smoke rising, uprisings in rotundas and squares,
unraveling lives,

ضمة if you listen carefully you hear the hoot of birds migrating, fleeing
Sounds like a beating,
no, fleeing Sounds like a beating
The damma an uh in hurt, no may be like oh in court,
corrupt not court,
no trial or may be no lawyer for children like Ahed Tamimi

A soft u like in muslim surahs
Ibada not eebada, like worship,
Not like warships
The words sound the same in English

Damma, arms around children's bodies,
ضمته امه
I must be wrong, it means bearing arms, arming bodies, alarming children
ripped from **امه**, armies **ضمته**
Dam, destruction,

دمدم عليهم ربهم

Records from ruins,
nourish then **ادام**,
Listen, they said,
when we write, we right

We want to thank you all for joining us on this collaborative global endeavor that traverses the constructed geographical borders, boundaries that are hierarchies located in systems of domination. We join you in locating ourselves in justice-oriented work that persists even under the weight of social, economic, and political oppression, the oppression that seeks to dictate how we recover ourselves from the erasure imposed on us, lest we find our way out from the clutches of systemic racism, gender oppression, colonial hegemony, and capitalist exploitation. I speak alongside my peers, Ayo, Jen, and Alex, in recognizing emancipatory possibility in liberatory struggles, in our cultural productions, in our institutions, on the streets of our cities, and within our communities. Yes, that is our right.

Ibtisam M. Abujad is a doctoral candidate and teacher in the department of English at Marquette University in the United States. In her research, Ibtisam examines how oppression and resistance function culturally. She uncovers how global systems of oppression that are economic, social, and political are cultivated in media, literature, film, and in everyday cultural practices through race, gender, class, national borders and boundaries that act as mechanisms. She explores how resistance to these forms of oppression can occur culturally and communally through ways of being, doing, and knowing that disrupt these mechanisms. To enable this comprehensive anti-oppression decolonial framework in her "critique and praxis-oriented" research, teaching, and creative writing, she utilizes transnational and intersectional feminism, cultural studies and historical approaches, critical race theory and ethnic studies, theories of class and politics, and Critical Muslim Studies. Ultimately, her work stems from her positionality as a Muslim and Palestinian woman, migrant, mother, academic and poet, enabling a solidarity with those most vulnerable in the world and growing from a recognition that oppression is a complex system of interrelated power dynamics existent on a global scale. You can engage with her research and writing here at her ResearchGate page.

Presentations

Ahmed Aljaberi

Title: An Asset or a Burden? Refugee Youth and Educational Struggles in Refugia

Description: When refugee youth arrive in the USA, they try their best to integrate into their new systems through education, employment, and citizenship. However, many of them arrive with a prior lack of adequate literacy and/or formal education due to forces or factors that made them flee their homelands and seek refuge in other countries. In this paper, I discuss the struggles that refugee youth might face as they seek education and literacy in their "refugia" to show that such struggles can prevent their fair transformation into productive citizens in their newly adopted communities. I argue that the welcoming educational systems and institutions might not properly address or even fail to address the educational and literacy gaps and needs that refugee youth might have as they attend middle and high schools in the Fargo-Moorhead area in ND and MN. This can lead to very serious educational and learning challenges for these learners with the potential of transferring such challenges to their future academic and educational milieus in colleges and universities. I posit that such troubles can contribute to seeing these newcomers as a social burden rather than an asset in their refugia. I suggest that this happens because of the lack of proper preparedness and willingness on the part of the welcoming educational institutions and teachers to address these students' literacy and learning gaps ethically and fairly. Therefore, I suggest that participatory action research (PAR) can be used to help the educational systems and educators know, learn, and be prepared, comfortable, and encouraged to address refugee youth needs to contribute actively and positively towards their overall educational and literacy endeavors in their refugia.

Bio: Ahmed Aljaberi is a doctoral candidate of English Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture and a teaching assistant at North Dakota State University (NDSU). He has two MA degrees, one in English language and linguistics from Al-Qadisiya university in Iraq, and the second in English literature and culture from the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He is currently teaching Technical and Business professional writing for upper division students at department of English/ NDSU. His scholarly interests include Digital Rhetoric and writing, Postcolonial Studies, Critical Race Theory, Cultural Studies, Affect theory, and social justice pedagogy.

Andrea Färber

Title: "Finding One's Identity Within the World of Climate Change Literature: An Analysis of How Female Characters Overcome Personal Struggles with the Help of the More-Than-Human"

Description: Climate change and uncertainty about the future of the planet are two issues that can no longer be separated from each other. Climate change literature is grappling with the portrayal of the looming crisis in many ways: from apocalyptic landscapes of the future to realistic settings in the present. This paper focuses on the portrayal of female main characters in climate change literature, their struggles with identity in a rapidly changing world, and their relationships with the more-than-human that help them find a purpose to transform their lives. The three novels

analyzed in this paper, Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, Jamie Bastedo's *On Thin Ice*, and Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior*, are all set in the present world that is slowly watching the planet unravel due to the consequences of climate change. Dr. Patricia Westerford, Ashley and Dellarobia are all displaced in different ways within their own communities. Through interactions with more-than-human animals and trees amidst a changing climate, their perception of the world starts to shift. I argue that these impactful experiences with the more-than-human allow the characters to find meaning and new values within nature and themselves. This, in turn, helps them recognize the urgency which is needed to protect the planet from climate change, and the power within them to take the first steps.

Bio: Andrea Färber is a PhD student at the American Department of English and American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria. Furthermore, she works as a research assistant at the Centre for Intermediality Studies in Graz (CIMIG). Her research interests particularly focus on climate change literature and the representation of and interaction with the more-than-human in literary texts. She is the deputy chairwoman of *TINT*, an ESL Literary Journal and Association.

Andrei Belibou

Title: Coopting and being coopted: On critiques of identity politics

Description: In this paper, I critically analyze the accusations of cooptation that are brought against identity politics. My purpose is twofold: to systematize and categorize such critiques and to analyze the emancipatory possibilities that they foreclose or open.

All the critiques I analyze involve a historiographical dimension, i.e., a narrative of how the left used to be, how the left is now, and how identity politics participated in that change. My critical engagement with several US-American theorists, from Fredric Jameson to Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, seeks to understand the political stakes of their views on developments of emancipatory possibilities. I classify these theorists' works on identity politics according to the temporal and causal role that identity plays within them. Based on these criteria, the narratives I analyze imply different political imperatives: either turning inward toward clearing the left of harmful tendencies, or outward toward understanding structures of cooptation and finding solutions to them within existing politics.

I make no attempt in this paper to answer the empirical questions that such historiographies inevitably raise or to assess the emancipatory possibilities of identity politics. What I do argue based on my analysis is that critical social theorists have two ways of asking questions about identity politics, neoliberal cooptation, and contemporary political openings: either "What is identity politics doing to the left?" or "What can identity politics do against the structures of capitalist cooptation?" While the answer to the latter can still be "nothing," I hope to show that it nevertheless is the more generative approach of the two.

Bio: Andrei Belibou is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the Graduate School of North American Studies, the JFK Institute for North American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. His thesis is tentatively titled "Subjects of capitalism: identity politics, class, poverty."

Ariful Islam

Title: Decolonizing the Biocolonial Mind: Rebooting Resistance against Ecopolitics and Biocoloniality in Select Indigenous Female Poets' Poetry in Bangladesh

Description: Struggle and transformation maintain a cause-and-effect relationship, regardless of its time and context. This paper is in fact an attempt to explore how Indigenous women in Bangladesh are responding to the act of both installing the sense of collective struggle among the mountain people and mobilizing it as a collective resistance. The fundamental gap between the flatlanders and the mountain people in Bangladesh is due in large part to both their different viewpoint apropos of the evaluation of human-nature relationship and their prejudiced understanding of the majority-minority issue. Thereby, their struggle has always been concerned about decolonizing the biocolonial mind of the flatlanders and the hegemonized spirit of the mountain people. Their struggle highlights their active role in fighting against the question of identity and capitalist mindset of the people in power and authority. Through rereading some select Indigenous female poets' poetry in the light of development conspiracy (Trijinad Chakma 2013), ecopolitics (Eric R. Wolf 1972), biocolonialism (Debra Harry 2020, Hannah Butt 2012, Laurelyn Whitt 2010, Gayatri Spivak 2000), and biopiracy (Clare Barker 2019, Ashleigh Breske 2018, Vandana Shiva 1997), this paper will investigate Indigenous communities' different forms of resistance against both ecopolitics and biocoloniality. Explaining the root reasons in this regard, this paper will also elucidate different layers of transformation they are experiencing and expecting. Finally, the concluding remarks regarding Indigenous female poets' "struggle and/as transformation" will throw light on both their great expectations and their ambiguous decolonizing mission against ecopolitics and biocoloniality.

Bio: Ariful Islam, currently a senior lecturer in the Department of English, East West University, Bangladesh, is waiting for his PhD defense in the Department of English, Jahangirnagar University. He has been teaching since 2012. He has presented papers in both national and international conferences on Baul Philosophy, Spiritual Literature, Ecocriticism, Mountain Literature, Indigenous Communities, Migration Studies and Translation Studies. His areas of interest also include African Literature, Postcolonial Literature, Comparative Literature, and Continental Literature. He writes plays, poems and songs. Some of his plays are *There Is Not Then What Is Nor What Is Not*, *The Sixth Sense*, and *Chhayachhobi*.

Austin Bryan

Title: Transformed by health development aid, activists in Uganda advocate for 'incremental' decriminalization and slow liberation

Description: Kampala, Uganda is home to vibrant LGBTQ+ communities (regionally known as kuchus), a growing network of harm reduction activists, and an expansive interconnected sex worker and women's rights movement, which have all been successful in framing issues of gender, sexuality, labor, and risk in terms of a "human rights-based approach" for HIV development aid. Uganda holds a distinct position in the political economy of HIV with one of the largest annual HIV budgets and well documented social histories of disease. Like many countries globally, homosexuality, sex work, drug use, and the transmission of HIV are criminalized in Uganda presenting constant problems for reaching target goals to ending new HIV infections. After Uganda's response to the devastating HIV epidemic was considered a

global “success story” in the 1990s, the country has for decades maintained a budget for HIV/AIDS, funded by international state development bureaucracies, that exceeds the entire government healthcare budget in size and scope. Drawing on long term ethnographic fieldwork in Kampala (nonconsecutively from 2015-2022) with activists, NGO workers, and state aid agency officials this paper describes a transformation in the work of Uganda’s contemporary social movements towards ‘decriminalization’ in relation to development aid industrialization and the trauma of economic sanctions. Despite the problems posed by criminalization, increasingly leading activists and legal advocates for “key populations” oppose a swift “decriminalization approach” to building liberation; they fear that a swift decriminalization approach will reduce the budgets they only recently gained access to through implementing partners as “key populations” for HIV.

Bio: Austin Bryan is a PhD candidate and National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University where he is also a Researcher at the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. His research on Uganda has been published in the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, a special issue on Justifying Gender in Africa in *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*, and in edited collections published by the University of Rochester Press and University of London.

Ayodele Ibiyemi

Title: Utopia and the Impossibility of Utopian Life in Chimeka Garricks’ *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*

Description: This essay traces the attempts at personal and communal utopia by characters in Chimeka Garricks’ novel, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, to show the impossibility of utopian life in a petro-capitalist state. By examining each character’s personal traumatic experiences and how communal history is narrated through these experiences, the essay shows that oil exploration in a capitalist economy only leads to dystopia for individuals and the community. Through a close reading of Chimeka Garricks’ *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, this essay examines how trauma self-replicates in the lives of people from the Niger Delta region, relying on Cathy Caruth’s conception of trauma as “a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind.”

The essay concludes that trauma resulting from environmental crises is as much in the future as it is in the present because of its self-replicating nature and the contemporaneity of the crises. Characters in the novel are enmeshed in crises that are not of their making and are forced to abandon communal activism and radicality for personal survival as they try to negotiate existence and identity in the face of environmental pollution, militarism, and poverty.

Bio: Ayodele Ibiyemi is a graduate student in the department of English at Marquette University. He is a Yoruba man from Nigeria and previously worked as a journalist in Nigeria before moving to the United States for graduate education.

Babatunde Opeyemi Salami

Title: Manifestations of Racialized Hieroglyphs in Diasporic Spaces: The Example of Nollywood

Description: The racialization of blackness has subjected Africans to specific (mal)treatment in terms of oppression and violence. Over the years, the black person has, therefore, accumulated a number of racialized hieroglyphs on their flesh as a result of slavery, colonialism and neocolonial racial realities. These hieroglyphs are 'breathing scars' that create a form of distorted identity that is attached to and moves with the African wherever they go as a quasi-identity. This claim stems from my understanding of historicized political violence and its trans-generational significance within neoliberal contemporary societies—specifically in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. I investigated the workings of these racialized hieroglyphs through two scholarly voices: exploring the idea of hieroglyphics of the flesh in Hortense Spiller's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" and the concept of racialized assemblages in Alexander Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus*. In a literary analysis of two Nollywood films, *Anchor Baby* (2010) and *Gone Too Far* (2013), we are presented with situations where black characters are engaged and victimized in diasporic spaces based on racial signatures (hieroglyphs) marked by voicelessness and identity distortions. Alongside the effect on individual characters, there is a repercussion of family disintegration – a consequence of isolation and separation that the protagonists of both films suffer. Howbeit, making visa and immigration laws more transparent and humane would be a positive step in stopping racialized violence against Africans and other people of color in developed Western countries.

Bio: Babatunde Opeyemi Salami is a Ph.D. student in African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His current research explores how we can understand the radical definition of African family in popular culture, not only as a cultural work but also as a profound political work capable of reshaping public life and sociality. He also has interests in African festivals, African drama and other popular cultural productions. He has a B.A in English from University of Ilorin and an M.A in English Literature from University of Lagos.

Camilo Villanueva

Title: Transforming Japanese EFL Students through the Creative Writing Workshop

Description: Writing fiction in English can be quite the challenge for students learning English as their second language (L2). The standard in learning how to craft language is the writer's workshop. It originated in Iowa in the 1930s and is still going strong today, but there are critics who say that the workshop model actually silences writers (Chavez, 2021; Kashiwabara, 2022). This paper describes a one-year study of an online fiction writing workshop for Japanese university EFL (English as a foreign language) students. The focus of the workshop was to introduce creative writing to students who had never had a creative writing class. Changes in the design of the workshop encouraged social learning and commentary about students' lives and their daily struggle in an intense educational setting. Data was collected from twenty participants in their third or fourth year of study. Several were marked as "repeaters" by the university, which meant that they had previously dropped out or failed the writing course. Students provided anonymous questionnaires, writing samples, and reflective essays detailing how the workshop course helped them transform their learning. It was found that through the critical analysis of fiction and their own story writing, students could find meaning in their lives. Furthermore, this study presents a workshop model to help EFL students benefit from and succeed in the field of creative writing, an area of English that is struggling to earn respect from Japanese universities.

Bio: Camilo Villanueva is an EFL Lecturer at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies in Japan. He is also a doctoral student in the English pedagogy program at Murray State University in Kentucky. He received his MFA in fiction at Concordia University, St. Paul, where he wrote a 200-page book of short fiction along with a critical paper on Kōbo Abe as his graduation thesis. Villanueva's research interests are in literature pedagogy and the use of creative writing and literature in the EFL classroom. His forthcoming publications include a study of the critical essay in creative writing EFL classes along with literary studies of Natsume Sōseki's *I Am a Cat* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein.*

Colin Crawford

Title: Simon Pokagon, the Theologian: God-Talk on the White City's Margin

Description: Simon Pokagon's father, Leopold—chief of the Pokagon Band of the Pottawatomi in Michigan—was a devout Catholic, who appealed the Bishop of Detroit to send missionaries to his community. Simon himself seemed to have inherited Leopold's faith, writing his mother's last will and profession of faith as she dictated it to him from her deathbed in 1851. Forty years later, however, in a book titled *The Red Man's Rebuke* that was printed on birch bark and distributed at the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago, he wrote of the Potawatomi that "sooner would we hold high joy-day over the graves of our fathers, than to celebrate our funeral, the discovery of America." Despite the celebratory air of the Exposition, Pokagon condemned the environmental destruction and Indigenous genocide of the very Western Civilization the fair was built to idealize. He used a mix of Indigenous and Christian theology to do so.

In this paper, I will ask how Simon Pokagon's experience as a Native American in the Great Lakes Region during the late nineteenth-century affected his critical embrace of Catholicism. Guided by the scholarship of George Tinker, I will ask how priorities of space and place, community, and the interrelatedness of creation shaped Pokagon's expression of faith. Beyond the content of *The Red Man's Rebuke*, I will ask why scholars have not previously engaged with Pokagon as an Indigenous theologian. I will also confront issues of the authorship of his work, as well as problems with assigning him a religious affiliation. This paper will engage with theology on the margins and expand the study of Catholicism in the Michigan to include Indigenous perspectives.

Bio: Colin Crawford is currently a graduate student in Marquette University's Department of History. His focus is on United States religious history, particularly 19th-century American Catholic orientalism. He served as a Jesuit Volunteer in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 2019-20.

Dafna Lavi

Title: Women Survivors' Struggle and Transformative Mediation in Divorce Disputes Involving Violence

Description: The paper deals with the interface between the transformative mediation process from the school of Bush & Folger and the phenomenon of divorce disputes involving violence. It examines the criticism of the judicial process in handling such disputes, through the lens of the

judicial justice this process creates. The paper asserts that there are substantive failures in judicial justice, such as the lack of ability to empower the women survivors of domestic violence. Ultimately, this explains the immanent limitation of the judicial process from constituting the ideal solution for the survivors, which gave rise to the critical narratives voiced against the judicial system in its handling of such disputes.

As an alternative, and through the presentation and mapping of the characteristics of alternative transformative justice that transformative mediation provides, the paper proposes transformative mediation as a preferable solution for such disputes, both on the personal, individual level and in the sphere of the general society and its values.

The central theme of the paper is that basic characteristics and perceptions of transformative mediation, including the focus on 'empowerment' and 'recognition', can be expected to make a significant contribution not only for the women survivors of domestic violence themselves, but also for changing and promoting a different legal, societal and cultural struggle with respect to this painful phenomenon. Statistics show that more than one in three women around the globe are victims of domestic violence. Transformative mediation has an important message. If only we would listen.

Bio: Dafna Lavi is a senior lecturer (associate professor), head of the disciplinary tribunal and the dean of students at the academic center for law and science, Israel. For the past 15 years she has conducted research in civil procedure, alternative dispute resolution and online dispute resolution. She is the author of the book alternative dispute resolution and domestic violence: women, divorce and alternative justice (Routledge, 2018). Dr. Lavi is also a lecturer in advanced degree programs and received the outstanding lecturer prize for 2019.

Debadrita Saha

Title: No more patriarchy's doll: Female desire and the fin-de-siècle New Woman in Rabindranath Tagore's "Manbhanjan"

Description: Written in 1895, Rabindranath Tagore's fin-de-siècle short story, "Manbhanjan" (Fury Appeased), narrates the saga of a woman's disavowal of the imposed identity of an aristocratic zamnidar's neglected wife to become a theatre actress, a career that acknowledges her artistic talents, and sexual assertiveness. "Manbhanjan," confined to the inner recesses of their household, are barred from public spaces. Their philandering husbands would reduce them to sources of material prosperity through dowry, or vessels of procreation. The Indian counterpart to "Angel in the House", labelled grihalakshmi (goddess of the prosperous home), these married women of nineteenth-century Bengal, would crave respect and reciprocation of their conjugal desires from their husbands, the affluent Bengali gentlemen, or bhadrolok, who would abandon the wives to seduce other women, usually prostitutes, and actresses, collectively branded Patita, or "Fallen Women." Tagore's brilliance lies in his refusal to conform to the social binary between "Angel in the House" and "Fallen Woman," essaying a groundbreaking Bildungsroman of the emergence of the emancipated "New Woman" through the protagonist Giribala. She crosses the threshold of the home, steps into the world, breaks free of the shackles of patriarchal expectations of wifely duties and challenges her husband Gopinath by showing

that women can gain success in male-dominated arena of fine arts. The paper will contextualise Tagore's story against the backdrop of nineteenth-century Bengali society and analyse his depiction of women's nuanced emotional struggles against patriarchal hegemony. The wronged woman's fury can only be appeased once she destabilises the masculine ego and notion of female honour.

Bio: Debadrita Saha completed her postgraduate degree in English Literature from Presidency University in Kolkata and works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of English and Literary Studies, Brainware University, Kolkata. Her fields of interest include postcolonial studies, literature in translation, critical race theory, caste and gender studies, ecofeminism, contemporary politics, art and cinema. In June 2022, she chaired a panel on "Ecofeminism and Climate Change" for the *Women in World (-) Literature conference* hosted by the University of Warwick. At present, she researches at *People's Archive of Rural India*, a multimedia journalistic platform that records an authentic picture of non-urban India, and contributes to the library of non-canonical literature at *Decolonising our Bookshelves*, a non-profit virtual organisation which aims to bring voices of socially marginalised literati to the fore. As a member of UnCaNi (The University of Cambridge Nationalisms & Identities Research Group), she contributes to research on racial and gender identities.

Fatima Rasoul

Title: Transforming Struggle into Resistance: Kurdish Women's Approaches to Feminism

Description: The Kurds have been resisting oppression for over a century, using many tactics and strategies to revolt against powerful established nations that severely oppress them. For a long time, Kurds felt as though they were a forgotten people because the international community often does not recognize their struggles and their never-ending fight for sovereignty. It was not until the rise of ISIS in 2014 that Kurds began dominating the news and media because of the Kurdish Peshemerga becoming the main military force on the ground resisting ISIS. Although the Kurds have a long history of resistance against colonialism, imperialists, and corrupt power, this was a moment of global recognition for the Kurds. Within this long history of Kurdish nationalist resistance movements, Kurdish women have been actively engaging in feminist thought and action that was heavily linked to, and overshadowed by, the larger nationalist movement. The "Kurdish question" and the "woman question," were occurring simultaneously and these Kurdish women found avenues to express and act on their desire for change and resistance through magazines, poetry, language and education, along with military action. This paper explores how Kurdish women have engaged in feminist activism and art throughout history, while also contributing to the broader nationalist movement. There is also discussion of the foundations of Kurdish feminism and how the current Jin, Jiyan, Azadi movement in Iran Peshmerga means 'those who face death' in Kurdish. The military forces of the autonomous regions of Kurdistan in Iraq and Syria were active in resisting ISIS, mainly because of geographic location and their proximity to ISIS held territories. This was influenced by the activism of Kurdish women from the generations past but is once again being diminished.

Bio: Fatima Rasoul is currently working on a dual master's program at Loyola University Chicago, studying social work and gender studies. She is a graduate research assistant for Loyola

School of Social Work, involved in research focused on the links between mothering, mental health and experiences of racism. She feels passionate about feminism, social justice, advocacy, and resistance movements. She considers herself a transnational and Marxist feminist, mainly focusing on the struggles and resistance of women in the global South. She is interested in the relationship between leaders for social change and mental health, racial and ethnic trauma, and healing from such trauma. This spring she will be interning with KLBRI, a grassroots organization and fiscal project of Los Angeles Indigenous People's Alliance (LAIPA). The mission of the Institute is to uplift and sustain advocates and leaders through an ecosystem of care, well-being, and healing.

Giordana Poggioli-Kaftan

Title: The Creation of the Subaltern Subject in Luigi Pirandello's "Madam Mimma"

Description: My presentation focuses on Luigi Pirandello's short story "Madam Mimma" which deals with the disastrous aftermath of Italy's poorly achieved national unification in 1861. Italy's unification was carried out by Italy's northern regions colonizing the southern regions and Sicily. Thus, the newly formed Italian Parliament outlawed Sicilian century-old practices, like that of delivering children by midwives, utterly ruining Mimma's life. In her struggle for survival, Mimma tries to shed her midwife identity to acquire that of an obstetrician, as required by the law. However, she fails. Her attempt to become what the northern laws require her to be is what Bhabha refers to as the mimicry condition of the colonized. As a colonized subject, Mimma is expected to acquire a northern identity like that of the Piemontesa, the obstetrician who came from the northern Piedmont region to usurp her job. However, Mimma can never achieve "sameness" with the Piemontesa. Not being able to live in this cultural split —to be required to be what is not possible for her to achieve—Mimma completely loses her identity, her profession, and her status within her people. Alcohol's destructive power becomes her only consolation.

Bio: Giordana Poggioli-Kaftan specializes in 19th and 20th century Italian cultural productions, especially those dealing with the promises and shortcomings of Modernity. Particularly, she focuses on the Italian nation, its images, its discourses, and the creation and marginalization of the subaltern Other—women, Jews, and the Italian Southerners. Her academic interests lie both in the articulation of exclusionary rhetorical strategies and the resistance to that discourse. She is the director of the Italian Program at Marquette University.

Haniyeh Asaadi

Title: Control and Resistance in Behrouz Boochani's *No Friend but The Mountains*

Description: The award winner Behrouz Boochani, a Kurdish-Iranian journalist and asylum seeker, in his 2018 narrative, *No Friend but the Mountains*, narrates his nearly seven-year detention memories from 2013 to late 2019 in Australia's notorious offshore refugee camp centered in Manus Island. He wrote his story in Persian through thousands of WhatsApp messages on a contraband cellphone. In *No Friend but the Mountains*, Boochani recounts terrors and hopes, beauty and cruelty, and the experiences of abjection and displacement through poetic and analytical language. In a metatextual narration, he becomes the voice of voiceless refugees and asylum seekers that have been kept under the dreadful condition as slaves ruled by the

remote-control system of the Australian government. Besides describing the hints of brutality, Boochani underlines how the Australian state and government disregard human rights regulations concerning refugees. In this paper, I will discuss how Boochani portrays the Kyriarchal and biopoliticized system and networks of power and suppression in Australian detention camps and it will be displayed how Australian refugee and illegal arrival regulations have set up neocolonial and neoliberal privatization of the detention camps on offshores in order to exclude the asylum seekers from access to legal advocacy, citizenship support, and welfare benefits. Moreover, it will be investigated how Boochani in this decolonial text deconstructs and overpowers the colonial Australian rules and Pacific Solution which lead to the socio-political campaigns and reformations concerning the refugee camps all over the world. Besides, it will be analyzed how Boochani overcomes his psychological and physical struggles and distresses through creative, ecological, and other categorizations of resistance.

Bio: Haniyeh Asaadi is a literature researcher who has completed her studies at the University of Tehran. Her research is mainly focused on feminist utopianism, cultural studies, postcolonialism, ecocriticism, and Arthurian literature.

Jaclynn Joseph

Title: The Marginalized Hawai'ian Identity: A History of Colonialism Within the Tourism Industry

Description: Hawai'i's move from an entirely oral culture to a literate culture in the historical context of Western imperialism, and the subsequent shift from Hawai'ian to English as the dominant language of discourse, have had far-reaching implications for the structures of power in the islands. From the 19th century to the present, Hawai'ian culture and how it is represented has been a site of struggle between Natives and Western conceptualizations of reality and human relationships-- between Indigenous and Western ideologies. Since contact with the West, Hawai'ian culture has been variously constituted and reconstituted by different discourse; into the exotic ritual of the Other by the first Europeans; into a hedonistic and licentious society by Christian missionaries; into cultural commodities by the tourist industries; and into symbols of cultural identity and nationalism by Hawai'ians. The currently dominant myth is that Hawai'I is an exotic, but accessible, paradise where a multi-ethnic population shares in the social benefits of progress. The myth has appropriated Hawai'ian culture to entertain visitors as a thing to be consumed, an object for the tourist's gaze. This study will attempt to recover the history of Hawai'I, to locate what has been silenced by the now dominant myth, as well as the various Western myths that preceded it. It offers an alternative interpretation of Hawai'ian history, with a major focus being the relationship between the changing material conditions and forms of social representation in the islands using a Marxist/Althusserian structuralist focus on transformations and symbolic representation, with a post-structuralist focus on the power of language and discourse.

Bio: Originally from Hawai'I, USA, now based in Asia, Jaclynn is pursuing a Ph.D. in philosophy while working in Taiwan as a university lecturer. In addition to academic work, Jaclynn works as a journalist and published writer on various platforms, and is an activist working in the field of women's rights and gynocritical research. She is co-founder and chair

member of the NGO Taiwan Women's Association 臺灣女性協會, and volunteers with various other non-profit organizations. A heterodox thinker with a love of free speech, her passions include traveling, history, critical thinking, and challenging the status quo.

Kavon Franklin

Title: When the Struggle Is Too Real: Black Women in Fiction and In Peril

"Bein a Strong Black Woman Can Get U Killed!!"—or so says Laini Mataka, author of a poetry collection by the same name. The message in Mataka's work and a good deal of American literature is that black women are expected to be strong in order to save themselves from a society determined to undermine or destroy them. My work engages with the role constant struggle plays in the lives of black American women. It is at the heart of Angelina Grimke's "Fragment" and Patricia Smith's "What It's Like to be a Black Girl…." It's in the poetry of Sonia Sanchez, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Lucille Clifton; the essays of Audre Lorde ("Eye to Eye") and Michele Wallace; and the novels of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. My interest, however, is in examining the ways that black women, from all age groups, are rejecting the notion that "Strong Black Woman" is synonymous with "Struggling Black Woman." These women want a "soft life." Some want hypergamous romantic relationships and others want peaceful, childfree lives. They are not altering the "Struggling Black Woman" script due to their own trauma, but due to witnessing the trauma of the women who came before them…and learning from it. In this presentation, I will explore the ways in which society normalizes black women and girls—especially poor, heavy, dark, and "unconventional" looking black women and girls being on the bottom of the socioeconomic and beauty barrels, and I'll examine how creative artists either accept or reject those notions.

Bio: Kavon Franklin is an associate professor of English at Alabama State University. She received a BA in journalism and an MFA in creative writing from the University of Alabama. She earned a PhD in English from Florida State University. Her areas of interest include African American history and cultural studies, narrative nonfiction, media studies, and twentieth and twenty-first century American literature. Past awards include the Excellence in Teaching Award from the National Society of Leadership and Success and the McKnight Fellowship. Her work has appeared in the *Pierian Literary Journal*, *Trespassing Journal*, and the *Journal of South Texas English Studies.*

Krishna Payeng

Title: Creative transformations: A Critical Study of Kashmiri Pandit narratives

Description: Decolonial praxis and discourses are imperative in nation and state-building. But it comes at the expense of human lives and puncturing their quotidian living, just the way the once colonized people want to root out the residues of the erstwhile colonizers. Likewise, there is a simar enactment of the process of decolonization continuing in the Kashmir valley in the name of ethnonationalism. The process teeming with violence led to the genocide of the Kashmiri Pandit community who were regarded as the 'outsiders.' Although religious conversion is endemic to the region, the mainstream literature that ensued from the Kashmir valley effaces or accommodates negligible mention of the ethnic cleansing of the Kashmiri Pandit community

who were the aboriginals of the Kashmir valley. The deliberate erasure of a community's history could either be to prevent the furtherance of communal conflict or a systematic strategy to efface the history of the Kashmiri Pandit community, as the destruction of material culture is also involved. The fall-out could have been a similar violent retaliation, so they invested in creative outpourings, resorting to the practice of 'healing' through the 'medium of art.' This resisted the mainstream narrative and addressed their struggle for justice before the international community. My paper purports to look into the aspect of writing as resistance, cure, and healing in the Kashmiri Pandit narratives.

Bio: Miss Krishna Payeng is a 2nd year Ph.D. scholar in the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, India. She is working on the Kashmiri Pandit diaspora of India who are scattered in India as well as in other parts of the globe. Her research focus is the shifting thematic of home in line with those who are forcefully displaced from their homeland in the turbulence of state building. Her primary materials include memoirs, short-stories, and poems.

Lyzette Wanzer

Title: Portions from Trauma, Tresses, & Truth: Untangling Our Hair Through Persona Narratives

Description: From grammar and high schools to corporate boardrooms and military squadrons, Black and Afro-Latina natural hair continues to confound, transfix, and enrage members of white American society. Why, in the 21st century, is this still the case? Why have we not moved beyond that perennial racist emblem? And why are women so disproportionately affected? Why does our hair become most palatable when it capitulates—and has been subjugated— to resemble Caucasian features as closely as possible? How do we, as Black women, alter the prism through which our hair is interrogated? *Which* differences make a difference? And *when*?

I will present a portion of one of my essays from my new book, *Trauma, Tresses, & Truth: Untangling Our Hair Through Personal Narratives* (Chicago Review Press 2022). My work interrogates a systemic bias that is cognizable and legible.

Natural hair bias figures in many current and legislative events across the country. My work provides a lens into the myriad manners in which our hair remains misread and misunderstood. Particularly relevant during this time of emboldened white supremacy, my work explores how writing about one of the still-remaining systemic biases in academia and corporate America might lead to greater understanding and respect.

White Americans haven't had to live as racialized beings. The white standard is implicitly the baseline against which all others are measured—precisely the type of lens which problematizes my natural hair. This book is my way of encouraging course correction.

Bio: Lyzette Wanzer's work appears in over twenty-five literary journals, books, and magazines, and she is a contributor to *Lyric Essay as Resistance: Truth from the Margins* (Wayne State University Press), *The Chalk Circle: Intercultural Prizewinning Essays* (Wyatt-MacKenzie), *The Naked Truth,* and *Essay Daily.* A four-time San Francisco Arts Commission, three-time Center for Cultural Innovation, and first-time California Humanities grant recipient, Lyzette serves as Judge for the Soul-making Keats Literary Competition's Intercultural Essay category and the

Women's National Book Association's Effie Lee Morris Fiction category. She has been accepted to writing residencies across the country and in Canada. She teaches creative writing, with a specialty in professional development, at several Bay Area institutions. Her book, *Trauma, Tresses, & Truth: Untangling Our Hair Through Personal Narratives,* came out from Chicago Review Press in November 2022. She's currently writing her next book, *Building a Career as a Literary Artist of Color.*

Matthew Noteboom

Title: Prophetic Past: Enforcing Framework Through Transformation in Maryse Condé's *I, Tituba*

Description: Maryse Condé's iteration of Hester, originally created in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, demonstrates not only the struggles Tituba combats as she resists the transformations cast on her by an oppressive culture, but also the cultural mechanisms that allow, and dictate, the perpetuation of archetypal roles to every minority classification, both included and excluded on the surface of the Western literary framework. Yet, while Hester is absent in the historical Salem, her presence in the Western literary framework functions to maintain the classical tradition of the West by reframing its past history onto modern works. This paper explores how the inclusion of Hester in Maryse Condé's *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* showcases the methods in which the Western literary framework enacts its forces onto new works. Hester's own circumstances ensure that she remains tied to the beliefs of her ancestors by transforming her into an encyclopedic tool to shape Tituba as the Puritan witch demanded by Western culture.

Bio: Matthew Noteboom is a current non-degree seeking graduate student at the University of Minnesota studying English Literature. His research specializes in early modern studies, John Milton, and epic poetry, particularly in relation to epic heroism and the effect *Paradise Lost* has had in reshaping classical conceptions of heroic ideals. In 2022, Matthew graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in English Literature and a minor in Religious Studies.

Maxwell Gray

Title: AZTALAN

Description: My current creative research project is a digital collage project called AZTALAN about the city on the Crawfish River in southern Wisconsin, USA. It curates texts and images from nineteenth-century Americana to revisit and reconsider relations among white settler ideas of the Aztec, the Maya and the Ho-Chunk inside and across the American empire.

Bio: Maxwell Gray is a digital scholarship librarian in Raynor Memorial Libraries at Marquette University. He studied literature and information at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His ongoing creative research project is a digital documentary poetry project called MOUNDS.

Muhammed Farouk Salem

Title: Correcting “all the wrong Creole scenes” in *Jane Eyre*, or the Art of de-romanticizing Victorian Female Servitude in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Description: The above quote is from a letter which Jean Rhys (1890-1979) had written to literary editor and journalist Francis Wyndam, expressing her mixed feelings towards *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855). Determined to correct what she believed to be wrong in Brontë’s text, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a subversive narrative which disentangles itself from the imperialist web to develop an authentic identity of the Creole woman. While abundant criticism has drawn the parallels between *Wide* and *Jane*, most of it has solely focused on Rhys’s characterization of Antoinette/Bertha in contrast to that of Brontë. How about the portrayal of female subordinates in both works? As Hai puts it, *Wide* could not have had such critical reception without its servants (517). Combining Bloom’s premise on the anxiety of influence with Spivak’s subalternity, this paper argues that Rhys’s revisionist prequel undoes Victorian female servitude through Christophine, who challenges the patriarchal rule of the unnamed Rochester, thanks to her linguistic abilities and mastery of Obeah through which her intersectional subordination diminishes. Additionally, Rhys demystifies the docility of Thornfield’s servants, portraying an articulate Grace Poole who laments on how punitive Victorian patriarchy is for all women, irrespective of their classes. Representing the new generation of liberated slaves, Christophine is a model of progressive, anti-Victorian servitude that ardently negotiates colonial patriarchy, resisting being othered or essentialized by it.

Bio: Muhammed F. Salem is a graduate of English and Comparative Literature from the American University in Cairo. Salem’s research interests span gender, feminism, intersectionality, sexual difference, among other interdisciplinary corpus within the field of literary criticism. In his MA thesis, Salem discussed master/servant relationships in English, Arabic, and postcolonial texts, with a focus on how female servant(s) are depicted in works which write back to the empire. He holds another MA in International Relations from Sciences Po Grenoble. In addition to being a trilingual translator, Salem is a freelance journalist who has contributed to English-local media outlets, notably with book reviews. He presented his papers at the ACLA 2022 annual meeting, UCLA, among other academic venues. Salem’s latest article, “Loving my Brother-in-law: Sister Rivalry in the work of Lehmann and Foenkinos,” is currently available on JSTOR by *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics.*

Nick Estes

His keynote address is titled “Ancestors of the Future: From the Boarding Schools to Indigenous Liberation.”

Description: This talk focuses on the history of boarding schools, settler colonialism, and Indigenous resistance. In it, he follows his own family’s boarding school experience and connects it to the Red Power Movement and modern, Indigenous-led resistance against extractive industries.

Bio: Nick Estes is a citizen of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe. He is the author of *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (Verso, 2019), co-editor with Jaskiran Dhillon of *Standing with Standing*

Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement (University of Minnesota, 2019), and co-author with Melanie K. Yazzie, Jennifer Nez Denetdale, and David Correia of *Red Nation Rising: From Bordertown Violence to Native Liberation* (PM, 2021). In 2014, he co-founded The Red Nation, an Indigenous resistance organization, and he is co-host of *The Red Nation Podcast*. His writing has been featured in *The Guardian, Intercept, Jacobin, Indian Country Today, High Country News,* and elsewhere. Estes was the American Democracy Fellow at the Charles Warren Center for Studies in History at Harvard University (2017-2018). He is an Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Olúwadámilọ́lá Ògúnmúkò

Title: Killable Bodies and Necropolitics in *Aníkúlápó* and *Black November: Struggle for The Niger Delta*

Description: This paper uses literary methods and analysis to explore how sovereign power is complicit in producing deaths to control subjects in *Aníkúlápó* and *Black November: Struggle for the Niger Delta.*

Drawing from Achille Mbembé's necropolitics, Giorgio Agamben's bare life concepts, and state of exception, the paper explores the politics of death in two Nigerian films: *Aníkúlápó* by Kunle Afolayan and *Black November: Struggle for the Niger Delta* by Jeta Amata. By choosing these films set in postcolonial Africa, the paper explicates how violence is used as a measure of control and how filmmakers make comments about contemporary issues. It explores necropolitics using Mbembé's "fungibility" and "mutual zombification" to analyze the relationship between sovereign power and subjects, and how this culminates into death production. It debates the hierarchy of power political institutions wield and expounds on how death and violence are used to keep political subjects in control. This essay focuses on the commodification of the value of human lives and how political rulers determine who lives or dies, thereby showcasing the nuances that occur within the discourse of violence, politics, and human bodies and the role of popular culture in depicting this as everyday life worthy of serious scholarly engagement.

Bio: Olúwadámilọ́lá Ògúnmúkò is a first-year Ph.D. Student in African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research intersects African and African Diaspora Studies, Cultural Studies, Migrant Studies, and Ethnography. Broadly speaking, she is interested in how transnational exchanges and identity formations shape global black cultural productions. Her intellectual enquiry includes studying the tension between Africans and Black Americans. Oluwadamilola is interested in exploring agency in relation to race, gender, and sexuality. She has a master's degree in English Literature from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and a bachelor's degree in English Language from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Onur Kaya

Title: Turkic and Indigenous People from Greenland to Alaska Through Canada in the Literature

Description: The world hosts many communities and people from different corners of the world. Among these, Turkic people, who first appeared in the Central Asia region in history then spread to many corners of the world including Europe and America, and the world's western Northern

Hemisphere's Indigenous people, who spread to different corners including Greenland, Canada, and Alaska, have certain intersecting communities. These intersecting communities have been the issue in literary works.

The paper will focus on theories of space, time, ethnicity, and identity to help understand the ethnicity, identity, and location of the Indigenous people and Turkic people in the regions of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska. Therefore, the literary works focusing on these two people-related areas and communities will be analyzed and the way the intersections of two people and the areas represented in literary works will be revealed.

Bio: Onur Kaya is Fulbright Scholar at the University of Mississippi, in Oxford-USA. He has certificates in five languages ranging from Italian to Spanish. He is also an authorized tour guide in the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism and a Chef with AA. Degree in Culinary Arts. He has 20 years of teaching experience in different countries ranging from USA and UK to Iceland and Turkey.

Rachna Pandey and Averi Mukhopadhyay

Title: Identifying Women and Nature in The Realm of Otherness in Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas Of Impossible Longing*

Description: Identity in vivid conceptualization is the tool for collective and individual existence. The existence of women, for centuries, has been determined by their endeavour to acquire congruence with the 'first gender.' The sheer perplexity to comprehend biological sex and socially fabricated gender arising out of the intangibility of distinction between sex and gender has prompted Judith Butler's idea of 'subversion of identity' that rejects limits on 'sex' based on socially constructed gender and its roles. Women now alternately identify themselves with nature, both as debris and resurrect. The cynical conformity to deny the quiddity of 'second gender' and 'nature' expedite the unification of ecology and women. In Anuradha Roy's novels, women try to find escape in trees, animals, art and children from the subjugation and the sense of "otherness." Roy brilliantly puts forward the micro-narratives of effectual women and nature between the meta-narratives of war, capitalization and industrialization against the Indian backdrop. The question of gender identity in her works delineates the upliftment of women. Meera in Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* reflects longing of a forlorn woman for identity and a desired life. The main objective of this paper is to study the intensification of alienation which results in "othering," where the subalterns or the voiceless, here women and nature, long for the bare-bones of existence, rights, colours of life and the quest to be understood and protected. This paper is also an attempt to interrogate the possibilities of peaceful co-existence of male-female and human-nature.

Bio: Rachna is a PhD Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social sciences (English) at Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur. She has worked as Assistant Professor at Central University of Odisha.

Bio.: Averi Mukhopadhyay is an Assistant Professor of English at Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur. She has worked as Assistant Professor at Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya, India. She has done her PhD from Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee. Her

papers have been published in *The Atlantic Critical Review* and *International Journal of Culture Studies and Social Sciences.* Her paper on Philip Roth and Srividya Natarajan have been published in *A&HCI* and *SSCI Journals- Journal of Dharma* and *SAGE Open* respectively. One of her papers has also been published as a chapter in an edited book titled *Linguistic Foundations of Identity: Readings in Language, Literature and Contemporary Cultures*. Her interview with the bestselling author, Amitabha Bagchi has been published in *The IUP Journal of English Studies,* recently a paper on same author has been published in the same journal.

Sara Tufekci

Title: Generational Heritage in Alice Walker's "Everyday Use"

Description: The 1970's saw a rise of movements such as the Black Arts Movement, Black Power and Civil Rights Movement that all focused on the histories of roles upheld by African Americans in America. However, the exclusion of Black women's narratives from white women feminism movements and the Black Arts Movement lead to the rise of Womanism that focused on the intersectionality of identities and experiences of Black women's diverse voices. Womanism instructs Black women regardless of age, class and interests to break their silences on issues affecting their status by demonstrating how Black women can have different identities and be free. As of today, Womanism has continued to be a component of other scholarly works focusing on women of color and Black feminism studies because of Alice Walker's coinage of the term in her prose novel *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* in the early 1970s. Published in 1973, Alice Walker's short story, "Everyday Use," discusses the experiences of three different Black women in the 1970s. "Everyday Use" centers on Dee returning home from city life to visit her mother, Mama, and sister, Maggie, in the rural countryside. This paper analyzes Walker's use of Mama's maternal voice as a first-person narrator that tells the stories of these three Black women to show the impact education has on their views and identities, and how it can unintentionally create contradicting views on how they honor and pass on their her-stories.

Bio: Sara Elif Tufekci holds a M.A. in English from San Diego State University and currently works as an English teacher in Istanbul, Turkiye. Her research interests are focused on studying intergenerational relationships in Turkish American, Muslim American and Bosnian American families as well as Memoirs, Young Adult novels, Muslim Women narratives, Pop Culture, Youth, Cinema, Postcolonial theory, Race & Othering Studies, Eastern European, Middle Eastern & American Literature. Her M.A. portfolio paper, "Generational Heritage in Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use'" analyzes the role of maternal voice and womanism in African American women stories. Growing up in San Diego, she was rarely exposed to stories about Bosnian refugees who fled the tragic war of the 1990's in Bosnia, and she noticed a lack of representation of Muslim Women voices in pop culture and literature. Knowing nothing about the Srebrenica Genocide and Bosnia affected Sara, yet it became the starting point of how she would see herself dedicated to the studies of storytelling, refugees, the pursuit of social justice, and migrancy later on throughout her life.

Shaimaa Mohamed Hassanin

Title: Shifting the Voice Postcolonial Feminism in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and *In the Heart of the Country*

Description: This paper explores the crossing points of women's liberation and postcolonialism as far as the issue of silence and narrating is concerned. It does so by analyzing the characters of Madga and Lucy in J.M. Coetzee's novels' *In the Heart of the Country* and *Disgrace*. It is contended that colonialist ideology capacities work by the same way that patriarchal philosophy does with regard to the abuse of racism and feminism, separately. Coetzee's novels draw our attention to the threats of allotment characteristics of any philosophy. Vitally, the novels handle the verbose resistance to the colonialist and patriarchal ideology through Magda and Lucy. By interlacing postcolonialism and women's liberation, Coetzee's accomplishment, hence, is twofold: a study of western totalizing accounts and multiplying of political and ideological thrust of his novels. J.M. Coetzee is routinely and thoroughly locked in investigating the ontological and epistemological issues significant to the anecdotal discourse. The arrangement of his authorial positions and the arranging of his area in post-apartheid South Africa occurs fundamentally through the textual positions. Coetzee appears to support the view that self-reflexive writing is the only mode through which he can rise above the concerns of reality and history.

Bio: Shaimaa Mohamed Hassanin is a lecturer in English language and American literature at Horus university-Egypt (HUE). She writes in different branches of literature with a proficient background in American Literature (Poetry- Novel- Drama). Her research interests are primarily in the area of early modern literature. She is interested in topics related to literary reception, translation and imitation practices, transnational and comparative literature, women's writing, epic and revolutionary poetry, language learning, and cultural diversities. Also, she is a writer, as she published many short stories and poems in different journals.

Tianne Jensen-DesJardins

Title: Métis Futurisms: Rougarou as Decolonial Transformation

Description: The term Indigenous Futurisms was coined by Grace Dillon in 2003 to represent Indigenous science fiction texts that explore alternate, decolonial futures through revisiting or rewriting the past. Though the field of Indigenous Futurisms has only just garnered academic attention in the last twenty years, the sub-field of Métis Futurisms is even younger still. Chelsea Vowel's 2022 collection, *Buffalo is the New Buffalo,* is a crucial text in the field of Métis Futurisms due to its privileging of Métis epistemologies and its power to transform stories of struggle into stories of sovereignty, though no scholarly work has yet been written on it. Unlike Dillon, Vowel sees the science fiction genre as something to play with, change, or avoid altogether. My project seeks to analyze Vowel's collection of stories through a Métis-futurist lens; that is, to recognize Métis Futurisms as existing outside "whitestream" genres, to borrow Vowel's term. I will engage with the first story of Vowel's collection, "Buffalo Bird", in which a two-spirit rougarou is presented not through a colonial lens — as a blight on the community — but through the Métis lens of transformation.

Bio: Tianne Jensen-DesJardins is a Master's student in the Department of English at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. As an Urban Indigenous person, Tianne connects with her community over the internet, whether that means chatting over Facebook or attending Zoom events hosted by the Métis Nation of British Columbia. She is a Métis scholar interested particularly in the ways in which Métis identity is seen through a blending of genres, perspectives, and time periods—as seen in Métis futurisms. In addition to Métis literatures, Tianne is also interested in queer literature and young adult literatures, which, of course, often overlap with Métis literatures.

Vani Maria Jose

Title: Carcerality and Surveillance: Defying Privacy in The Post-Modern Era

Description: The origin of the term carceral can be traced back to 1988 when Elizabeth Bernstein coined the term carceral feminism to describe the feminist commitment to a law and order agenda. It has become an inextricable aspect of current security paradigms in scientist discussions of a carceral age and carceral states (Moran et al. 2018, Garland 2013, Wacquant 2000). Carcerality refers to a system beyond the notion of a physical prison. Carcerality and surveillance are terms which are intricately interwoven. They existed even during prehistoric times. But with the advent of technology, this system of imprisonment became latent. Even the biometric used at offices and airports are agencies of body politics creating polemic space. They function as the agencies of intrusion and exploitation of people. How do you define carcerality and surveillance in the post-modern discourse? How do they act as agents of body politics and racialization? How will mankind retaliate to such systems in a new paradigm? The paper tries to answer these questions.

Bio: Vani Maria Jose is a research scholar of English Literature at Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India. At present she is an Assistant Professor at Sree Sabareesa College Murukkumvayal, Kerala. She has presented papers at International Conferences, of which the latest one was at the University of Johannesburg.

Yasmin Rioux

Title: Examining multilingual/international students' assumptions about writing in order to improve writing pedagogy in the college writing classroom

Description: The insights, prior knowledge, experiences, and voices of international and/or multilingual students are at times overlooked in writing pedagogy. We oftentimes fail to recognize how our "voiced" students might be dominating our own bases for and approaches to creating courses, assignments, or way we structure lectures and classes. We focus on what non-marginalized students' assumptions about writing are, thereby ignoring, neglecting, and othering the writing assumptions of our international or multilingual students.

Writing assumptions depend on and reflect the student writer's cultural background, suggesting that it is imperative that we, as teachers of writing, become more knowledgeable about what our students associate with writing and related items, such as research, plagiarism, academic writing, etc. In order to provide our composition students with a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally

reflective writing classroom, it is important that we are aware of the writing assumptions our international and multilingual writing students hold when they come to the college classroom, because this information allows us to provide them with better approaches to writing.

Research suggests that many of our approaches to teaching are infused with colonial, Western ideologies that ignore important facets and realities held by members of other cultures (Reiter, 2019). These epistemological and ontological discrepancies between contemporary popular educational practices and our international students' perceived realities impact all aspects of life, including education. Due to this fact it is imperative to ask our Composition students writing-specific questions that elicit more insights into their assumptions about writing, so that we may become better teachers for our students while improving our own contemporary pedagogies.

If we are able to better understand our international students' assumptions about writing, then we can serve them in a more purposeful, respectful, and empowering way (Larke, 2013). In order to create more inclusive writing pedagogies for my international students, I rely on and use open-ended survey-based data to examine how our international writing students perceive writing, see the writing task in an academic setting, and what general assumptions they may hold about writing practices within or outside of the writing classroom.

Bio: Dr. Yasmin Rioux received her Ph.D. in English – Composition and Applied Linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and she currently teaches writing at Divine Word College in Iowa where she is also the Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies. Her main areas of research interest are ecocomposition, multilingual writers, narratives, and multigenre work. She has written about her work and presented at various national and international conferences. She lives in Iowa with her husband and children.

Zandria Sarrazin

Title: Materiality and Indigenous Resistance in Philip Round's *Removable Type: Histories of the Book in Indian Country*, 1663-1880

Description: As a mixed Indigenous and European woman my academic work examines the relationship between social and cultural memory in literature. I am particularly interested in how intergenerational trauma and survival is inherent in the cultural connections for Indigenous people, especially those, like me, who grew up dislocated from our communities and cultures because of colonization. As such, dislocated Indigenous people turn to texts to understand and participate in reclamation. In this paper, I will argue that social memory communicated through the colonial medium of the book plays a crucial role in linking place and personhood to Indigenous identity regardless of connection to community. Social memory links personhood to Indigenous identity and provides context and opportunity for a connection where one may not have been. In "Making Space for Indigenous Feminism" Shirley Green notes, "We are creatures of context: our identities are formed in the context of history, family, community, gender and culture" (274). I consider these contexts in relation to displaced Indigenous and the contexts they inhabit. Who and what dictates how urban Indigenous people engage in both the creation and reclamation of identity when living in a world where genocide and erasure rule? My paper aims to interrogate how they participate in and understand reclamation through the book as social and

cultural artefact and to what extent these texts can be used, if at all, to explore and understand one's place.

Bio: Zandria Sarrazin is currently an MA student in English literature at Simon Fraser University. Her work focuses on the interplay between literature and sociocultural memory as modes of reclamation for Indigenous people who grow up disconnected from their cultures and communities. She is interested in examining how identity, community and culture are interdependent on one another, and how they act as context for the displaced urban Indigenous person.

Conference Papers

Generational Heritage in Alice Walker's "Everyday Use"

Sara Elif Tufekci

Abstract:
The 1970s saw a rise of movements such as the Black Arts Movement, Black Power and Civil Rights Movement that all focused on the histories of roles upheld by African Americans in America. However, the exclusion of Black women's narratives from white women feminism movements and the Black Arts Movement led to the rise of Womanism that focused on the intersectionality of identities and experiences of diverse Black women's voices. Womanism instructs Black women regardless of age, class and interests to break their silences on issues affecting their status by demonstrating how Black women can have different identities and be free. As of today, Womanism has continued to be a component of other scholarly works focusing on women of color and Black feminism studies because of Alice Walker's coinage of the term in her prose novel *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* in the early 1970s. Published in 1973, Alice Walker's short story, "Everyday Use," writes about the experiences of three different Black women in the 1970s. "Everyday Use" centers on Dee returning home from city life to visit her mother, Mama, and sister, Maggie, in the rural countryside. This paper analyzes Walker's use of Mama's maternal voice as a first-person narrator that tells the stories of these three Black women to show the impact education has on their views and identities, and how it can unintentionally create contradicting views on how they honor and pass on their her-stories.

Keywords: Womanism, Alice Walker, African American women literature, 1970s, maternal voice

African American women writers and activists like Alice Walker in the 1970s saw feminism as a white women's movement and the Black Arts Movement as a male-dominated movement that did not incorporate black women's narratives. As a result, they started a new movement called Womanism that highlighted the intersectionality of identities and experiences of diverse black women's voices. In her 1973 short story, "Everyday Use," Alice Walker writes about the experiences of three different black women in the 1970s. "Everyday Use" centers on Dee returning home from city life to visit her mother, Mama, and sister, Maggie, in the rural countryside. Walker uses Mama's maternal voice as a first-person narrator to tell the stories of these three black women to show the impact education has on their views and identities, and how

it can unintentionally create contradicting views on how they honor and pass on their African American her-stories.

Both in her fiction and nonfiction works, Walker is notable for depictions of African American women's struggles to maintain their voices in a predominantly heterosexual and patriarchal society, marked by segregation, sexism, and racism. Walker's coming of age during the 1970s and her experiences as a young black female college student and as a Civil Rights political activist are weaved into her writing. Her transition into motherhood, along with the stories from her foremothers give color to the complex identities of her characters. In her "The World of the Word: Mediating Self" in *Understanding Alice Walker*, Thadious Davis summarizes how Walker's experiences show up in her writing:

> "Walker has, instead, produced work projecting her truth and a womanist identity that is neither fragmentary nor contradictory despite its fluid boundaries. She has acknowledged personal pain, while also reading the harm, often systematic and deliberate, inflicted on vulnerable human beings and on the earth itself. She has persisted in writing, witnessing, and testifying to what she sees and understands about the world" (133-134).

Walker's insistence on telling the truth despite its limitations reveals how her investment in Womanism influences the complex identities of her characters in her writings. The Womanist lens is used to show the complex issues affecting her characters' voices and human experiences as they struggle to survive in complicated times. Walker's storytelling incorporates her lived experiences in her complex characters to provide a Womanist centric voice that reflects on a dynamic notion of "her-stories" in her writing.

Womanism started off as a movement in response to the lack of representation of black women's voices in academic discourses and literary studies dominated by white or black male

voices and white feminists. During the early 1970s, Walker coined the term "Womanism," which is explained in four definitions in her prose novel *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* as:

> "A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female." Loves struggles. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. *Regardless.* Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender" (xi-xii).

Womanism instructs black women regardless of age, class, and interests to break their silence and demonstrate how black women can have different identities and voices. In her work, Alice Walker shows how Womanism is pertinent to the struggles black women face and at the same time proves that black women have different experiences even amongst themselves.

"Everyday Use" is an example of a womanist text that fits one of the tenets of "Womanism" that starts with: "Loves struggle. Loves the folk. Loves herself. Regardless" (xi-xii). Walker uses Mama's brass maternal voice to tell the stories of Maggie, Mama, and Dee in "Everyday Use." The story begins with Mama preparing for the special arrival of someone who seems to be her daughter but is referred to as a third-person pronoun, "I will wait for her in the yard" (23). The reference to her daughter in the third person gives the reader foresight into the distance that exists between Mama and Dee. Additionally, when she introduces herself, Maggie and "her," the reader learns right away that there is closeness between Mama and Maggie and a distance between Mama and "her." Walker immediately captures the reader's attention by using Mama's dreams to pique their interest to wonder why there is a distance between Mama and Dee and between Maggie and Dee, while Mama and Maggie have a closer bond.

Early in the story, Mama's maternal voice quickly informs the reader of her physical stature and educational background. Mama is described as a large and strong woman who can perform a man's job, such as working in the fields or milking cows. She refers to her large body

as: “My fat keeps me hot in zero weather. I can work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing” (24). Walker uses this maternal voice and Mama’s experience to educate the reader of the typical type of intense manual labor black women had in those times. Black women with limited education were often sharecroppers and maids to provide for their families in the South. Black women like Mama had little opportunity for upward mobility because Mama was a second-grade-educated woman who was unable to pursue her education due to laws that prohibited African Americans’ rights in the 1920s: “the school was closed down. Don’t ask me why: in 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now” (26). Despite Mama’s limited education, she does her best to equip her daughters to survive in a racist and sexist society, but little does she know that the access to education will create tensions between the mother-daughter relationships. Her survival tactics, however, are instilled by the fear the Jim Crow Laws had on limiting the right to vote and access to education for African Americans. Mama offers a real-life critique of the impact of segregation laws on black women starting with their backgrounds. On the other hand, Dee also offers a real-life critique perspective on how the younger generation wants to connect with their African heritage that differs from the older generation’s heritage.

In Dee’s her-story, she is introduced as an educated college student with a different perspective on education and an aggressive personality, as told by Mama’s maternal voice: “She used to read to us without pity; forcing words, lies, other folks’ habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice” (26). This tension reveals the perspective of whose voice matters: the maternal voice of Mama or the voice of an educated daughter like Dee, yet the maternal voice of Mama continues to be the focal point of continuing their her-stories as three different black women throughout their differences with education. Walker uses Dee’s her-story to emphasize how many African Americans of the 1970s want to connect to identities of

their African ancestors by changing their names to names of African origin. During Dee's visit to Mama and Maggie, she introduces herself with a new name, "Wangero," and shares her reasons of changing her name:

> "I can't bear it any longer, being named after the people who oppress me," said Wangero. Mama responds to Dee: "You know as well as me you are named after your aunt Dicie," I said. Dicie is my sister. "But who is she named after?" asked Wangero. "I guess after Grandma Dee," I said. "And who is she named after?" asked Wangero. "Her mother," I said, and saw that Wangero was getting tired. "That's about as far back as I can trace it," I said. Though, in fact, I probably could have carried it back beyond the Civil War through the branches'' (29).

Dee's choice to change her name to "Wangero'' signifies an emergence of a new black identity in America, starting with the rise of the Civil Rights movement, through the Black Arts, Black Aesthetic, Black Pride movements of the 1970s and heavily defined by a person's access to education. Dee's new name "Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo" (29) shows that she is a young woman who is trying to adapt to a new environment, one that is different from her background of growing up as a poor black girl. Dee, or "Wangero," now greets Mama and Maggie with the African saying "Wa-su-zo Tean-o!" (28), which means "Hope you had a fulfilling morning or a blissful sleep" (Hoel 36). While Mama may question Dee's "blackness" as an African American woman by asking her about the meaning behind her name, Dee also questions Mama's "blackness" when she questions her knowledge of honoring their African heritage. Mama cares about honoring her immediate former female relatives starting with Dee's grandmother by naming her daughter after her descendants, but she feels no connection to her African ancestors. Interestingly, Dee is not necessarily rejecting her black slave heritage that has been passed down by matrilineage and oral histories and embracing white culture; rather, she is simply trying to

break away from the influences of slavery and to rediscover her African heritage. Through Dee, Walker exemplifies how young African American adults adopt the gospel of Black Political Movements that educate them on a different side of their her-stories in contrast to the history taught by their families at home.

While the reader learns how access to education creates a distance between Mama and Dee, Walker also uses Mama's two dreams to reveal Mama's desire to get Dee's approval. The first dream shows when a child embraces her parents on TV saying, "the child wraps them in her arms and leans across the table to tell how she would not have made it without their help" (23), which reveals Mama's desire to get approval from Dee. The second dream that has Mama with Dee on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* shows not only Mama's physical appearance as different than what Dee would have wanted her to look like through Mama's maternal voice but it also shows her reunion with Dee, "Then we are on the stage and Dee is embracing me with tears in her eyes"(24). Even though her dreams turn out to be the opposite of what is expected, Mama is clearly proud of Dee's educational accomplishments and wants the world to recognize her daughter, and herself th'ough TV. Mama's dreams also reveal where Mama craves, on an unconscious level, approval, and gratitude she feels she does not have from Dee in real life.

Dee's role in redefining her identity as an African American woman may be caused by alienation from the rural African American setting she was raised in along with her mother and sister. In spite of the rural setting, Dee was lucky to attend college with money raised by the help of Mama and the church. Mama was unaware of how access to education would have unintended consequences in the connection she had with her daughters and the connectedness between them. Although Dee and Maggie belong to the same generation, they have different lifestyles due to their educational backgrounds and they struggle to love each other; however, they decide that they have different interests in life and forms of freedoms as black women.

While the 1970s political movements focus on raising issues that affect African American communities and their rights, womanists like Walker critique the lack of black women voices and perspectives. Walker is particularly interested in the absence of black women matrilineage and mother-daughter dialogues narratives. Korenman's article, "African-American Women Writers, Black Nationalism, and the Matrilineal Heritage," argues how the mother-daughter relationship explored in black feminist writings like Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" celebrates mothers with high praise while daughters get confused and brainwashed by the presence of political and social movements that aim to distract their knowledge of learning about the importance of their heritage: "The specific form that conflict takes, however, will vary with the historical and cultural climate in which it arises" (158). Even though it is tough to assume Mama's true feelings, she puts an effort to accept Dee's choice of changing her birth name to "Wangero" and shares a different side of their family history about the meaning of Dee's birth name. Unlike Mama and Maggie, Dee also learns about African culture and the Black political movements of the 1970s in college because her access to education allows her to redefine her identity as a young African American woman and to reclaim her African identity by rejecting a name originating from white oppressive slave owners.

Black women have been more oppressed than white women throughout centuries by patriarchal culture in history. Despite the oppression and abuses enacted by patriarchy, black women's resilience and survival have inspired black women writers like Walker, to write under her own name to show how the matrilineage continued to exist. This is explored in Diana Sadoff's "Black Matrilineage: The Case of Alice Walker and Zora Neale Hurston," which describes the context of the matrilineal heritage from the perspectives of black women writers such as Alice Walker as, "Race and class oppression intensify the black woman writer's need to discover an untroubled matrilineal heritage. In celebrating her literary foremothers, however, the

contemporary black woman writer covers over more profoundly than does the white writer her ambivalence about matrilineage, her own misreading of precursors, and her link to an oral as well as a written tradition" (116). Sadoff's analysis of matrilineage in Walker's writings connects with "Everyday Use" where Mama tells the story of the mother-daughter relationship through her own maternal voice, not the daughters' voices, which indicates that Mama preserves the oral tradition of storytelling by honoring the matrilineage. The matrilineage of black women writers like Walker begins with acknowledging the difference between past and present black women writers that have experienced different histories yet their connection with matrilineage all relates back to survival. Their ability to survive starts with them continuing to pass down their stories across generations; first, through oral histories and then, through published works.

Womanism helped to bring more unity among black women writers pointed out by Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi who explained the impact that Womanism had on unifying black women writers in her article, "Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English":

> "The force that binds many black female novels in English together is, thus, womanism. As a woman with her own peculiar burden, knowing that she is deprived of her rights by sexist attitudes in the black domestic domain and by Euro-American patriarchy in the public sphere; as a member of a race that feels powerless and under siege, with little esteem in the world–the black female novelist cannot wholeheartedly join forces with white feminists to fight a battle against patriarchy that, given her understanding and experience, is absurd. So, she is a womanist because of her racial and her sexual predicament" (79).

Ogunyemi makes a point on how Womanism is not only revealed through the characters in black women's stories and their continuous struggle towards achieving self-independence, but also

how it is often attached to the author's background and to an extent are semi auto-biographical. Black women writers like Alice Walker and their writings continue to strengthen the values upheld by Womanism that focus on uplifting the image of African American women in society and telling their her-stories. Marianne Hirsch, in *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, refers to the stories of mothers and daughters as "unspeakable" (8) because mothers will both speak for themselves and on behalf of their daughters, and will teach their daughters to carry on the tradition with their own daughters. Hirsch explores how the narratives written about mother-daughter relationships and motherhood differ between white women feminists and black women feminists. For instance, the presence of psychoanalytic Freudian discourse affects the stories of the mother and daughter in the narratives told by feminist writers. On the other hand, black women writers like Walker dramatize the critique of mother-daughter relationships by analyzing how the impact of access to education shows how they view the world.

The mother-daughter dialogues in "Everyday Use" reinforce Womanism discourse by upholding the voices of diverse black women in their daily life experiences dealing with issues ranging from politics, family to civil rights. Walker, like her other black women contemporary writers, relies on mother-daughter dialogues in "Everyday Use" to highlight the intensity of these contrasting views between different black women voices. Walker chooses Mama to be the maternal voice of the story because Mama oversees the narrative to show us that her voice has always existed as well as her relationships with her two daughters that have gone in different directions with their interests in education and in life. The importance of acknowledging the existence of Mama's maternal voice as the narrator of this Womanist text shows us that storytelling starts with the elder of the family. Mama, as part of the older generation, has not only experienced life-changing events based on gender and race, but her generation also highly

values survival and informs the value Womanist writers place on the stories of survival. Mama may not fit the image of the educated African American woman like Dee who embraces African culture that rejects the influence of white slave colonizers, but she knew she had to make some hard sacrifices to ensure at least one of her daughters could get a college education. Walker provides an unexpected twist in "Everyday Use," when Mama, Maggie and Dee all come together with the expectation of how Dee's college education is persevering them to remain as a family of three. Education was supposed to create opportunities for their family, but instead it creates a divide in their family. Mama and Maggie now see Dee as more different than them due to their contrasting views on black culture and authenticity such as the familial artifacts preserved in the family household. The most important familial artifact in "Everyday Use" is the quilts that play an integral role in the story that shows the different ways Mama, Maggie, and Dee want to honor their her-stories in connection with their African American heritage. While the sisters have experienced tensions among themselves due to their differences in education, Mama helps to unite them around their appreciation of the family heirlooms such as the familial quilts through her maternal voice.

Stories are passed down generationally from the elders to the adults and to the children. Some families prefer passing down their traditions orally through storytelling while some prefer to focus on forms of artisan crafts like quilt making. The quilt gives families an accessible means of comfort that reveals the purpose of communal work, female unity, and resilience in their families. The background of quilting in black women's stories is introduced in Alice Walker's womanist prose essay "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" that considers black mothers and grandmothers as "artists" who create quilts to maintain their African American her-stories in American society to pass along to their children. Familial quilts are created over time with each piece of the quilt signifying forms of intergenerational strength and this significance is seen in

the two quilts that are prominent in “Everyday Use.” The first quilt has a “Lone Star” pattern and the second has a “Walk Around the Mountain” pattern. Both quilts are handmade by Grandma, Big Dee, and Mama, and the patterns are described as:

> “In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty or more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell’s Paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra’s uniform that he wore in the Civil War. (...) Some of the quilts are from great-grandmother’s clothes: Mama explains that “Some of the pieces, like those lavender ones, come from old clothes her mother handed down to her,” I said, moving up to touch the quilts’’ (32-33)

This her-story related to the quilts indicate their past family members’ histories of participating in historical events like the Civil War to show that they are a part of this American history. The materials used to make the quilts also show the history of their economic statuses. While both daughters value the history of the quilts, the way each carries on the tradition with the quilts is influenced by their access to formal education. The quilts reveal the conflict between Maggie and Dee to demonstrate how their educational backgrounds engender different perspectives based on their respective connections to their African American heritage.

Dee, influenced by the presence of the Black Arts Movement during her education, prefers to preserve the family’s heritage by hanging the quilts on the wall. She wants to put these quilts into “everyday use” by displaying them just as though they were in a museum so that they can be visible to everybody. When Dee arrives at Mama’s home, she uses her polaroid camera to take Mama and Maggie’s picture and the house without herself in the photos because they reveal her honest perspectives on her family as archives, not objects. Her photos of Mama and Maggie will likely be preserved on a family album created by her as a way of preserving Mama and Maggie’s memories. The maternal voice points out here that Dee had once refused to take them

to college with her because they were out of style, but Dee's new perspective shaped by her education is a way of making up for her previous lack of appreciation for the quilts that honor the matrilineal heritage. Mama prefers to give Dee machine sewn quilts since they last longer or perhaps, she thinks that Dee prefers a new style of quilt. Dee disagrees with Mama by saying with the quilts in her hands that: "She did all this stitching by hand. Imagine!" (32-33) which points out that she was trying to connect with her grandmother. It is certainly Dee's right to change her mind once she learns to appreciate who she is because her education taught her that these quilts are a way for her to connect with that past. However, Mama told Dee that she could have only one, not both, though Dee assumes that she will get both, commenting that Maggie's use of the quilts will turn them into "rags. Less than that!" (33) since Dee thinks that Maggie would be backward into taking care of these quilts as Dee would preserve them better.

Maggie is the stay-at-home daughter who refrains from venturing outside her domestic sphere, like her Mama. Maggie did not have the same opportunities as Dee in terms of formal education because a fire burned down their home, leaving scars on Maggie's arms and legs as a child. Maggie's scars are explained by the maternal voice here: "Sometimes I can still hear the flames and feel Maggie's arms sticking to me, her hair smoking (...)" (25). Maggie is less confident about herself, and her speaking skills are described by the maternal voice as a low pitch and her stride as "walking like a dog run over by a careless car driver" (25). Even though Maggie is the same generation as Dee, Maggie's traditional and uneducated view of honoring her grandmother's quilts differs from that of her educated sister, Dee. As Walker shows through the maternal voice, Maggie has acquired making quilts from her grandmother and aunt, remembering her relatives' names, and performing housework as a form of her own education in contrast to Dee's. Maggie knows how to take care of the everyday use tradition because Grandma Dee passed it down to her, and Maggie will use the quilts to be a part of her daily life

as her grandmother intended to do. The purpose of the maternal voice here is to have the readers feel this conflict because Dee, the educated daughter, does not take one of the two quilts leaving the readers to sympathize with Maggie and leaving them wondering about Dee in the end of the story.

Dee's presence makes Mama briefly forget the promise that she gave to Maggie about the future ownership of the quilts because she originally planned to give Maggie the family quilt as a wedding gift. Noticing this, Maggie selflessly tells Mama, "I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts'" (34). Hearing Maggie's use of the word "grandmama" creates a sense of self-awareness for Mama, which leads her to hug Maggie and tell Dee to pick one of the two quilts. Mama's maternal instincts strengthen her decision to promise Maggie the possession of the quilts over Dee. Maggie, like other uneducated black women, only needs stories of her grandmother and mother to keep their memories alive. Maggie will start a family of her own and continue the family legacy that honors the stories of her grandmother by passing it down to her children. Dee, inspired by how the presence of the Black Arts Movement and her education has allowed her to express her "Womanism," continues to honor the mother-daughter relationships and take care of the quilts in the everyday use tradition by preserving the quilts as art that represents her heritage and not continuing its everyday use as a family tradition.

Black women's rights and identities have been suppressed and oppressed by mainstream feminism and black men led Civil Rights movements. Their perspectives have been overlooked by both movements. Unable to be seen or heard by either movement, guided black women to claim their own place by creating their own movement known as "Womanism." Interestingly, while the 1983 version of "Womanism" only focuses on incorporating the stories of black women, it has grown to include a space for the stories of other women of color. Stacey Floyd Thomas has expanded the focus of "Womanism" to include the stories of other women of color

writers such as African American Muslim and Latinx in her *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society* essay. This is important to consider how black women's her-stories have influenced the incorporation of other women of color narratives into "Womanism" because Walker emphasizes survival and resilience as the main tenets for women regardless of their age, race, and gender to look after community and fellow family members in society. The importance of respect, survival, and resilience as the main tenets of "Womanism" and the themes of the black woman artist and matrilineage are illustrated on how these aspects function in Walker's stories.

"Everyday Use" is unique in how Mama tells her-story and her daughters' her-stories through her maternal voice in the story. Mama's maternal voice exemplifies the differences and opinions that black women have on issues affecting their connections with heritage and identity and at the same time aims to retrieve lost black women stories for the younger and older generations of adults and children. Like the essays in Walker's *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* that connect Walker's experiences with motherhood, heritage, activism and being an artist as a black woman, "Everyday Use" connects both the experiences and stories of what it means to be a black woman regardless of one's opinions, background, and family connections. It shows that "Womanism" is relevant to black matrilineage, African American her-stories and different freedoms and lifestyles.

In the scene where Dee prepares to leave the home, she shares her honest opinion of Mama and Maggie about their "lack of understanding" of their African American heritage and departs without taking the quilts:

> "'Your heritage,'" she said. And then she turns to Maggie, kisses her, and says, "You ought to try to make something of yourself, too, Maggie. It's really a new day for us. But from the way you and Mama still live, you will never know it.'" (34-35)

The ending of the story leaves the reader wondering about where Dee is heading and what it means for Maggie to remain by Mama's side. It also shows that their connections with their African American heritage will likely remain despite their differences. Dee's visit teaches her about her family's past her-stories through her interactions with Mama and Maggie, while Mama proves that she is a strong woman who clearly stands as the head of the family.

Mama represents the past her-stories of black women dating back to the 1920s where black women worked as maids, sharecroppers, and were excluded from schools. Maggie represents the present her-stories of contemporary black women such as the traditional role of being a housewife and caretaker for their families. Dee represents the future her-stories of black women who are utilizing technology with expectations for a new fresh start. Mama's her-story is a guidance for the younger generations to retrieve unforgettable past her-stories of black women who once existed in history. The causes of the generational heritage divide between the younger and older generations matter to my paper because it is still relevant to any family regardless of their race, class, social status, and background. Dee's connection with her heritage and the quilts may be seen as being detached but she has every right to redefine her identity as an African American woman. Dee's everyday use tradition also proves that not only will she not give up on her her-stories, but her quilts serve as reminders of her heritage and the women who came before her generation. Regardless of their access to education differences, their her-stories show us how they are unique individuals in contemporary society where the recognition of systematic racism and discrimination exists due to social media, and the educational system's impact on younger generations' interest in pursuing more equality through social movements.

Mama, Maggie and Dee's her-stories and voices can provide a platform for black women and women of color's her-stories that is accessible and creates a model for women of color literature and activism. Generational differences are an ongoing topic for all families, but Walker

can incorporate the influences of "Womanism" and African American her-stories in the fictitious lives of her characters in her works and to have her characters express their lifestyles and identities as different black women.

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Decolonizing the Biocolonial Mind: Rebooting Resistance against Ecopolitics and Biocoloniality in Select Indigenous Female Poets' Poetry in Bangladesh

Ariful Islam

Abstract:

Struggle and transformation maintain a cause-and-effect relationship, regardless of its time and context. This paper is in fact an attempt to explore how Indigenous women in Bangladesh are responding to the act of both installing the sense of collective struggle among the mountain people and mobilizing it as a collective resistance. The fundamental gap between the flatlanders and the mountain people in Bangladesh is due in large part to both their different viewpoint apropos of the evaluation of human-nature relationship and their prejudiced understanding of majority-minority issue. Thereby, their struggle has always been concerned about decolonizing the biocolonial mind of the flatlanders and the hegemonized spirit of the mountain people. Their struggle highlights their active role in fighting against the question of identity and capitalist mindset of the people in power and authority. Through rereading some select Indigenous female poets' poetry in the light of development conspiracy (Trijinad Chakma 2013), ecopolitics (Eric R. Wolf 1973), biocolonialism (Debra Harry 2014, Hannah Butt 2012, Laurelyn Whitt 2009, Gayatri Spivak 2000), and biopiracy (Ashleigh Breske 2018, Vandana Shiva 1997), this paper will investigate Indigenous communities' different forms of resistance against both ecopolitics and biocoloniality. Explaining the root reasons in this regard, this paper will also elucidate different layers of transformation they are experiencing and expecting. Finally, the concluding remarks regarding Indigenous female poets' "struggle and/as transformation" will throw light on both their great expectations and their ambiguous decolonizing mission against ecopolitics and biocoloniality.

Introduction

It is well known that struggle and transformation maintain a cause-and-effect relationship, regardless of its time and context. This paper aims at both investigating how the act of rebooting resistance against ecopolitics and biocoloniality is happening in Bangladesh and exploring how Indigenous women in Bangladesh are responding to the act of both installing the sense of collective struggle among the mountain people and mobilizing it as a collective resistance. In course of discussing the root reasons behind the struggle and transformation of Indigenous women in Bangladesh, this research will answer why they are struggling and what kind of transformation they are experiencing in the light of such key concepts and theories as development conspiracy (Chakma 2013, Butt 2012), ecopolitics (Eric R. Wolf 1973),

biocolonialism (Harry 2014, Butt 2012, Whitt 2009, Spivak 2000), and biopiracy (Shiva 1999, Breske 2018). Finally, the concluding remarks will elucidate how Indigenous female poets in Bangladesh are dealing with decolonizing both the biocolonial mind of the flatlanders and the hegemonized spirit of the Indigenous people.

The investigation of this research is based on only Indigenous female poets' observation for two reasons: firstly, I have not included both male and female Indigenous poets lest the range of the study would be larger and less focused; secondly, be it colonization, neocolonization, decolonization, recolonization, or biocolonization, the status and role of women has always been a serious concern. Besides, it is unanimously recognised that nature and women are inseparable from each other due to their similar role and status although the causes of environmental changes vis-à-vis the ill-treatment of ill-fated Indigenous women in Bangladesh is still being either overlooked or underrated. The epistemological foundation of their way of dealing with the apocalyptic consequences of ecologically unfair environmental conjuncture not only depicts their intrinsic eco-consciousness but also elucidates the layers of ecopolitics with all its concomitant chaos and crisis in the lives of Indigenous women in the contemporary socio-economic context of Bangladesh. For example, Catriona Sandilands' (1999) etymological study elucidates "women's concern for the natural environment [that] is rooted in [their] concern for the health and well-being of our family and community" (xi):

> The word ecology derives from the Greek word "oikos," meaning house. Ecology, then, is the science of the household—the Earth's household. The connection between the Earth and the house has historically been mediated by women. (4)

Of course, rereading Indigenous female poets' poetry in the light of affective ecofeminism can solve the puzzle (Adams & Gruen, 2022, Aldo Leopold 2007, Erika Cudworth, 2005). Kate Sheppard's (1888) "Ten Reasons Why the Women of New Zealand Should Vote" is an effective

reference to argue why Indigenous women's creative, critical, and intellectual response must be taken care of. Both women and nature are caregivers, and both of them can speak. It is humanly possible but logically impossible to imagine that men's representation of the mountain way of the world is good enough to reflect what is actually happening in the lives of women living in wilderness. For example, Bidhu Chakma's "The Stories about the Mountains" (194) delineates the depth of women-nature relationship. The beauty of the mountains walks in parallel with the beauty of Indigenous women; but, both of these caregivers have lost their charm due to negligence of the caretakers, i.e., the Indigenous male-bodied people as well as the careless flatlanders. Besides, Pipika Tripura's "Thoughts" (254) highlights the absolute eco-consciousness of Indigenous women. It not only indicates Rob Nixon's (2013) "slow violence" (2) but also votes for the axiom of "tit for tat": i.e., how nature will treat us depends on how we treat nature.

More significantly, double marginalization of Indigenous women and absolute carelessness about wild nature walk in parallel with each other; both are the victims of the male-dominated gender-biased compass of hierarchy with a sort of 'already-always-negative' viewpoint about the attachment between women and nature. To conclude, both wild nature and Indigenous women are analogous due to their shared ontological essence. Both women and nature always remain outside the power-and-practice orbit of collective development and comprehensive civilization.

Finally, the focus of this paper is based on only Indigenous female poets is to highlight what the Indigenous women are doing in response to the ongoing environmental and to offer a clean way out of the politics of environmental hegemony so that the readers can be aware of the fact that the gender issues are bound up with the environmental conjuncture and that the female hopes in this regard can lead us to find a sacred and symbiotic intimacy between humans and nature in future.

Background of the Study

The traditional structure of effective research sometimes avoids the puzzling situation: what if the researcher has either insignificant findings or almost nothing or nothing at all? For example, it is impossible to use "expropriation and erasure of traditional Indigenous practices and ecological knowledge" (Saggar 2019)[1] to refer to biocolonialism in Bangladesh. That is to say, this research — very surprisingly and shockingly — may disappoint the readers because the issue of biocolonialism along with biopiracy is almost absent in Indigenous female poets' poetry in Bangladesh, whereas their creative insight overloaded with intellectual discussion apropos of colonization, neocolonization and decolonization is obvious in their poetry. Lots of research papers on the contribution of Indigenous knowledge to the economic success of Bangladesh are also available. Now the puzzling questions are: Why have the Indigenous female poets in Bangladesh written almost nothing about it? Is it because they are less interested? Or is it because it is less important? Or is it because of their fear of majority-minority politics? Or is it because of their lack of knowledge about both biocolonialism and biopiracy? Keeping this fact in focus, this paper aims at not only recovering silenced and erased knowledges in a decolonial way but also sharing them with readers from an objective viewpoint.

The Brazilian government is earning $25 million per year by exporting a native medicinal plant called *Pilocurpus jaborandi* for the treatment of glaucoma although the Guajajara people who discovered its use are not getting it anymore (Posey and Dutfield 1996, 53). This research paper argues that the similar thing is happening in the context of Bangladesh; but the form and structure of the practice here in Bangladesh is — a weird phase of biocoloniality indeed — unlike that in there in Brazil due to "the [different] logic and ideology of biocolonialism" (Barker 2019, 95) here in Bangladesh where the concern about decolonizing the biocolonial mind is still an invalid point to be noted due to many reasons including the mainstream politics that intentionally avoids any situation leading to the unpleasant consequences of the politics of

controversial issues. Arguably, this research paper is the first attempt to find Mary Taylor Mann's (2020) case of Brazil's biocoloniality in Bangladesh.

1.1 Rebooting Resistance against the Myths of Ecopolitics: "*Unnoyon Shorojontro*" (i.e., "The Development Conspiracy")

Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh edited by Himel Barkat (2013), one of the best anthologies of Indigenous literature in Bangladesh, not only gives birth to the questions about the shaping influence of social constrains on Indigenous communities' voice and silence but also elucidates ecopolitics in relation to biocolonialism, something essential for this kind of research.

Addressing the issue of Indigenous community as "a new product in today's market" (199), Trijinad Chakma (2013) refers to the contemporary unique style of robbery as an expression of "new capitalism" (199) in the guise of "new humanism" (199). This development conspiracy walks in parallel with the civilizing mission in early colonial period. This is what World Development Report 2012 has mentioned as "smart economics"[2]. Trijinad Chakma's poem entitled "The Development Conspiracy" sides with all Indigenous poets in their concern about the major six fake promises of ecopolitics, i.e., highly controversial unwanted developmental projects in Indigenous areas like Chittagong in Bangladesh (Datta 2019, Skogvang 2013): better land, better culture, better identity, better opportunity, better life, and better future. For example, Lipa Chisim Augastina's (2013) dream to maintain her cultural identity fades away when she sees her own people following foreign cultural practices (120). Gita Devbormon (2013) shares her decision to leave "the dark cave behind" (246), acknowledging that it is the demand of time to keep pace with changes and that it has benefits in future. Thus, Gita also represents those who surrendered to the political hegemony of the idea of the survival of the fittest (Spencer 1864). That is to say, both Lipa and Gita have thrown light on Indigenous people's evolutionary — of

course, not revolutionary — behavioural patterns in a sort of Orwellian language: “already it was impossible to say which was which” (Orwell 1996, 131). These Indigenous people have chosen the road not taken by their ancestors; they have taken the decision, with all its concomitant pains and gains.

Indigenous people living in mountain areas and coastal areas “protect 80% of global environmental biodiversity” (Datta 2019, 1). As of 2023,[3] there are 51 protected areas, 18 national parks, and 9 eco-parks in Bangladesh, a small country with more than 170 million people. The existential crisis of the Indigenous people in Bangladesh is affected by the local, national, and international politics of the capitalist conspiracy under the guise of so-called development projects, in that this crisis is connected to the replacement of wilderness and displacement of Indigenous communities (Butt 2012, Barkat 2013, Tripura 2013, 2014, 2016, 2020, 2021, 2022).

Indigenous communities in Bangladesh are against the idea of both eco-park and artificial forestry inasmuch as eco-parks confirms the safety of the ecosystems, rejecting its’ caregivers, i.e., the Indigenous communities, and artificial forestry “creates new hope [only] for environment”,[4] not for people who need wood to cook; they lose shelter, food, and fuel instead. In a nutshell, both eco-park and artificial forestry are really environment-friendly steps, but not entirely humans-friendly projects. More importantly, they are no less than a creative destruction of a natural ecosystem. For example, projects like artificial mangrove forest near the coal-powered power plant at Rampal near the Sundarbans only “reduce a little bit of bad impact of the power plant on the Sundarbans’ flora and fauna”.[5] Sailo Snal, an Indigenous person from Madhupur village in Tangail district in northern part of Bangladesh, reports about the bad impact that the eco-park project called Madhupur National Park[6] has on Indigenous people:

> Mandi women will die without their forest. It becomes tough for them to go to the forest surrounded by a wall. The authority has introduced ticket system. Now we go to the forest to collect such things as wood, potato etc. Forest guards torture us, and it will increase when the eco-park will be open for all officially. I have lost one son for eco-park; and I do not know how many more sons I am going to lose in future. (Barkat 2013, 34)

In response to these weird practices of deforestation and reforestation without following environmental ethics, Indigenous female poets have argued that this "domineering tendencies" (35) among people against nature has in fact resulted from colonialism and that every environmental loss in micro level is in fact a loss for humans on earth in macro level (Pipika Tripura 2013).

1.2 Rebooting Resistance against the Facts of Biocolonialism and Biocoloniality

One of the worst phases — arguably, the last chapter — of colonization till now is biocolonization, and it is impossible to deny that "we live in an era of biotechnology and biocolonialism — the extension of the process of colonization" (Kanehe 2014, 331).

Here in Bangladesh, the key issues of colonialism in parallel with biocolonialism illustrates why, how, and to what extent colonial mathematics and biocolonial mathematics follow the same rules to deal with problems. For example, biocolonialism — a part of the most recent phase of colonialism— is (a) an opportunity to expropriate "traditional Indigenous practices and ecological knowledge" (Shiva 1999, 21); (b) "the new form of colonialism" (Spivak 2000, 324) against the 'new subaltern people'" (324); (c) the "new imperial science" (Whitt 2010, xiv), i.e., a "western capitalist enterprise" (28); the "neoliberal trade practices" (Breske 2018, 24); and, "the science of salvation" (Saggar 2019).[1]

Secondly, it is logically possible to juxtapose East, Asia, Africa, and the Indigenous world not only because that "East [i.e., Indigenous world] is a career"[7] but also because that colonialism [i.e., biocolonialism] is "a lucrative commercial operation" (McLeod 2010, 18). Butt (2012) has used "international commercial surrogacy"[2] to define biocolonialism because she believes that the Indigenous world "represents a commercial 'OPORTUNITY.'"[2] Besides, speakers in a seminar in 2020 on "Biocolonialism: Historical Roots and Contemporary Threats to Indigenous Knowledge, Lands, and Self-Determination" organized by the Institute for Advanced Study have argued that "Indigenous knowledge and biodiversity is regarded as a vast untapped market waiting to be exploited by both private and government researchers."[8]

Thirdly, Edward Said's (1978) concept of Otherness is aligned with Spivak's (2000) "the new subaltern" (339) who are the victims of exploitation, or biopiracy; here, Indigenous communities are no less than the new 'Other' people. Indigenous identity is in fact an 'othered' identity (Barkat 2013, Tripura 2021, 2022; Sumon 2022). It is also possible to rephrase what Karl Marx, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, said: "They [i.e., Indigenous communities] cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (qtd. in Said's *Orientalism*). Foibi Siring Marak (2013) in her "Discrimination" illustrates the pains of hierarchy in detail in light of both deep metaphors and ecological metaphors. She argues that the gardener, or the state takes care of none but the flatlanders, whereas she is left in an abandoned jungle although all are known as trees, or the citizens of the same country (105). Similarly, Prianka Putul (2013) says:

> When the entire world has progressed,
>
> Humans have reached the moon,
>
> Mountain life here in Bangladesh is horrible.
>
> …
>
> Without education and nutrition,

Poor mountain life is dying! (239)

Finally, colonizers' exploitation is aligned with biocolonizers' expropriation which is not simply "a practice of economic exploitation by powerful multinational corporations (MNCs)" (Breske, 2018, p. 58) but also "deeply offensive and culturally destructive" for "Indigenous knowledge systems" (Whitt, 2009, 27).

Biocolonialism in Bangladesh is a normalizing mission for the marketization of Indigenous knowledge to reach a great financial success. Of course, not always all biocolonizers in Bangladesh have the bad intention to violate Indigenous people's intellectual property rights by exploiting "Indigenous knowledge and biological resources" (Harry, 2014, 702); they accept, appropriate, and apply this knowledge for the welfare of human beings. But the problem is they are carefully careless about sharing acknowledgment of and profit with the actual owners of the knowledge. Breske's (2018) explanation of biopiracy is good enough to make this case more understandable: "[biopiracy] is done on the premise that Indigenous knowledge is communal, and not privately 'owned,' and therefore available to everyone." (p. 59)

Although no explicit reference is available in *Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh*; that is to say, not a single poet has written anything about expropriation and biopiracy, different newspaper articles and research papers have concerns with biopiracy. Indigenous fashion has entered mainstream fashion culture in Bangladesh due to both the newness in their style and their 'green' motifs, and many fashion houses in Bangladesh are working on Indigenous dress and ornaments.[9]

Three major sectors in Indigenous ways of the world in the contemporary context of Bangladesh that are remarkably affected by biocolonialism are medicine, food, and miscellaneous (i.e., Indigenous dress, costume, cosmetics, bags, furniture, showpieces etc.)

1.2.1 Indigenous Prescription

> "Chikmang, a huge mountain. It is abundant with medicinal trees and plants that can help dying people get recovery even when hospitals have failed." (111)
>
> — Porag Risil, "Chikmang," *Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh*

Scientists and researchers in Bangladesh are working on Indigenous knowledge about traditional medicinal plants, and they have acknowledged that many of these 'alternative' medicines are far better than synthetic drugs inasmuch as they usually do not have any remarkable side effect. According to their research papers **(see Table 1)**, Indigenous communities have amazing knowledge about the bioactivities of the medicinal trees and plants that they use as 'alternative' medicine; they use medicinal trees and plants to fight against diseases including skin diseases and snakebites which are very common in Indigenous areas in Bangladesh.

Table 1: A concise list of research works vis-à-vis biopiracy in the biocolonial context of Bangladesh: Medicine in Focus

SL.	Title of the Work Author(s), Journal/Source, Date	Rationale of the Research (Quotation from the paper)
1	Ethnobotany of Medicinal Plants Used by Rakhine Indigenous Communities in Patua Patuakhali and Barguna District of Southern Bangladesh	"A total of 86 plant species belonging to 71 genera and 43 families were reported to be used for treating more than 57 various physical ailments under 14 illness categories from the study area. … The results of this study have

	A. T. M. Rafiqul Islam, Mahadiy Hasan, Tahidul Islam, Ashikur Rahman, Shawon Mitra, and Subroto K. Das. SAGE Publications, *Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine* 2020	shown that Rakhine Indigenous communities still depend on conventional plant-based medication to remedy various diseases and therapeutic purposes in the study area.”
2	Evaluation of Bioactivities of Gouania tiliaefolia Lam., an indigenous Traditional Medicinal Plant of Bangladesh Tufael Ahmed, Rifat Khan, Nafisa Tabassum, and Fahima Aktar. *Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Journal*, V. 22, I. 2 2019	“Despite the revolution of modern medicine in the twentieth century … one-third of the world’s population [are bound to use] traditional (herbal), complementary and alternative medicines … (Twarog *et al.*, 2004). In addition, international public health organizations like World Health Organization (WHO) are encouraging the use of traditional medicines due to its wide biological activities, higher safety-profile and lower costs compared to the synthetic drugs (Sharma *et*

		al., 2008; Moniruzzaman *et al.*, 2018)."
3	Indigenous knowledge of herbal medicines in Bangladesh: Treatment of skin diseases by tribal communities of the hill tracts Mohammad Atiqur Rahman. *Bangladesh Journal of Botany*, V. 1, I. 39. 2010	"The ethnobotanical investigation [started in 1995] on skin diseases among Chakma, Marma and Tanchunga tribes revealed that mostly elderly men and women are commonly suffering from eczema, scabies, septic abscess, fungal/ bacterial infection, boils, wounds, and skin allergy. More than 70% of them receive herbal treatments from either *Baiddaya* or elderly women."
4	Ethnopharmaco-logical Survey of Medicinal Plants Used by Traditional Healers and Indigenous People in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, for the Treatment of Snakebite Mohammad Fahim Kadir, Karmoker, James Regun Karmoker, Md. Rashedul Alam, Syeda Rawnak Jahan, Sami Mahbub, and M. M. K. Mia.	"Snakebites are common in tropical countries like Bangladesh where most snakebite victims dwell in rural areas. Among the management options after snakebite in Bangladesh, snake charmers (*Ozha* in Bengali language) are the first contact following snakebite for more than

	Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine. 2015	80% of the victims and they are treated mostly with the help of some medicinal plants.… The survey represents the preliminary information of certain medicinal plants having neutralizing effects against snake venoms, though further phytochemical investiga-tion, validation, and clinical trials should be conducted before using these plants as an alternative to popular antivenom.”
5	Efficacy of some indigenous plants in controlling vector snails of trematode parasites of medical and veterinary importance IS Shanta, A Anisuzzaman, UK Mohanta, T Farjana, and MMH Mondal. *Bangladesh Journal of Veterinary Medicine*, V. 6, I. 1 2010	“Snail-borne parasitic diseases (SBPDs) are major parasitic diseases that remain important public health issues worldwide, particularly in impoverished countries. … Instead of using artificial medicines it is better and safer to rely on the bioactivities of trees and plants from nature.”

The major points of discussion include the fact that "biocolonialism and Indigenous health"[1] in Bangladesh is no less than a car with uneven wheels. World Health Organization's (WHO) permission for the use of traditional medicines suggests the effectiveness of their smart medicinal knowledge and practice (see research paper 2 from Table 1). Although it is true that not all medicinal plants are harmless, at least local scientists can identify the wrong plants; and it is imperative for them to appreciate Indigenous people for their contribution to the field of medicine.

1.2.2 Indigenous Dish

According to the research papers (**see Table 2**), scientists in Bangladesh are trying their level best to ensure proper use of Indigenous knowledge to improve both popular food industry and mainstream agricultural sector. Besides, the growing popularity of Indigenous food among people is a key factor for the entrepreneurs — both Indigenous and flatlanders — to get involved in food business.

Table 2: A concise list of research works vis-à-vis biopiracy in the biocolonial context of Bangladesh: Food in Focus

SL.	Title of the Work Author(s), Journal/Source, Date	Rationale of the Research/Article
1	Effectiveness of indigenous plant powders as grain protectant against Callosobruchus chinensis MA Hossain, MAA Bachchu, KS Ahmed, and MA Haque.	"Pulses play a pivotal role in the diet of common people of third world country including Bangladesh. These are also called "poor man's meat" since

	Bangladesh Journal of Agricultural Research, V. 22, I. 39 2014	they are rich source of protein (20-40%) and are fairly good sources of thiamin, niacin, calcium, and iron for the under privileged people who cannot afford animal proteins (Sharma, 1984; Bhalla *et al*., 2008)."
2	Isolation and Identification of Indigenous Bakers' Yeast Nasrin Jahan, Nafisa Khan Azmuda, and Anisur Rahman. *Bangladesh Journal of Microbiology*, V. 24, I. 1 2010	"Yeasts are of great economic importance. … Most of the baking industries of Bangladesh use baking powder (mixture of NaHCO3, potassium hydrogen tartarate). In recent years, the use of bakers' yeast has increased in bread making in our bakery industries. Its use is more expensive than chemical because bakers' yeasts are not produced in our country."
3	Breeding for the improvement of indigenous chickens of Bangladesh	"The conservation and improvement of indigenous chicken genotypes. …

	S Faruque, AKFH Bhuiyan, Md Yousuf Ali, and Ziaul Faru Joy. *Asian Journal of Medical and Biological Research*, V. 14, I. 3 2017	Population and growth of poultry in Bangladesh: Poultry population in Bangladesh is estimated about 304.17 million where chicken population is about 255.31 million and duck population is about 48.86."[10]
4	Productive and reproductive performances of indigenous chicken in the rural condition of Bangladesh S Jahan, F Islam, MSA Bhuiyan, and AKFH Bhuiyan. *Bangladesh Journal of Animal Science*, V. 27, I. 46 2017	
5	A Remarkable Public Response to the Indigenous Food Festival in Dhaka https://bangla.bdnews24.com/bangladesh/z5w2v8vszx 13 August 2022	A one-day "Indigenous Food Festival" took place in Dhaka to present both indigenous and mainstream food.
6	Hebang: A Different Delicious Dish of Mountain Food in Dhaka	Hebang is the name of a restaurant of Indigenous food

	Shabnur Akter Nila https://www.tbsnews.net/bangla/ ফিচার/news-details-102830 21 July 2022	run by Indigenous women; it is situated at Mirpur in Dhaka.

One of the major suggestions is to commercialize the effective Indigenous knowledge with proper acknowledgement and fair profit-sharing policy to ensure better health benefits of medicinal trees and plants available in the mountains in Bangladesh. Besides, more ethnobotanical investigation along with ethnopharmacological survey of medicinal plants used by the Indigenous communities in Bangladesh must be encouraged to enrich medical research and to ensure a healthy generation. Last but not the least, it must be ensured that no restaurant run by the flatlanders should have the logo of Hebang, a restaurant of Indigenous food run by Indigenous women, without proper acknowledgement and fair profit-sharing policy.

1.2.3 Indigenous Look (Indigenous dress, costume, cosmetics, furniture etc.)

In course of time and context, mainstream fashion culture in Bangladesh is changing, and it is appreciating Indigenous outfit due to both the newness in their style and their 'green' motifs. Similarly, Indigenous ornaments, shoes, bags, showpieces, and furniture have a great market value in mainstream 'popular' consumer culture in contemporary Bangladesh (**see Table 3**).

Table 3: A concise list of research works vis-à-vis biopiracy in the biocolonial context of Bangladesh: Miscellaneous

SL.	Title of the Work	Rationale of the Research/Article

	Author(s), Journal/Source, Date	
	Colourful Indigenous Dress Nusrat Jahan Champa https://m.priyo.com/i/বর্ণিল-আদিবাসী-পোশাক March 27, 2013	"Many fashion houses in urban areas in Bangladesh are now working on introducing and promoting Indigenous dress in mainstream fashion culture."
	Mainstream Fashion Culture in Indigenous Style Afroza Akter (https://www.jugantor.com/todays-paper/features/out-of-home/আদিবাসী-অনুষঙ্গে-ফ্যাশনের-ধারা) April 23, 2019	Indigenous dress, costume, ornaments, shoes, bags, showpieces, and furniture have a great market value in mainstream 'popular' consumer culture in contemporary Bangladesh.
	Bangladeshi Women are Fond of Indigenous Dress https://m.somewhereinblog.net/mobile/blog/Dailycht/30175830 January 4, 2017	
	Dress at Dhaka International Trade Fair M R Karim	

	https://www.deshrupantor.com/rup-rupantor/2020/01/16/193369 January 16, 2020	

The major points to be noted here include the facts that no authentic study is still available on how the mainstream fashion industry is dealing with Indigenous fashion including their dress, costume, cosmetics, and furniture. It has yet not been investigated whether this cultural exchange is fair to the extent that people from mainstream fashion culture are appreciating Indigenous outfit, and vice versa, and that the mainstream is maintaining management policy properly in case of copyright law, profit-sharing agreement, and payment issue. There is a question if Indigenous people are getting support from the government, non-government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enough to ensure a better future for Indigenous fashion culture in Bangladesh. Also, it is unclear if the Indigenous people are getting a share of the financial success of the tourism sector in Bangladesh. The tourism sector in Bangladesh is one of the blooming sectors due in large part to the tourists' interest in Indigenous products (e.g., Indigenous dress, costume, cosmetics, ornaments, shoes, bags, showpieces, furniture etc.).

1.3 The Root Reasons behind Struggle and Transformation

Indigenous people's switch from "simple life in wilderness (Barkat, 2013, 63)" to "Why won't I protest? (143)" summarizes the whys and wherefores behind their struggle and transformation (see Table 4). The five root reasons behind their struggle are (a) their poor relationship with the flatlanders who tend to abuse the Indigenous peoples' politeness, (b) flatlanders' anthropocentric viewpoint about human-nature relationship — i.e., their 'green' arrogance — affecting

Indigenous communities' environment-friendly lifestyle, (c) the controversial developmental projects of people in power, (d) biocolonialism, and (e) biopiracy.

For example, Ilina Lotuber (2013) says that people of Khaisa community (also known as Khasi people) living in Bangladesh are mostly poor and generally good, that they earn their livelihood mainly by selling betel leaf (popularly known as *paan*), and that they try their best to ensure a peaceful co-existence with the flatlanders who, very unfortunately, keep cheating on them in all possible ways (67).

Athuishi Marma (2013) in "Hiding" identifies the false promises waving their hands in the name of so-called better life in future. Athuishi Marma not only repeats what Said (1978) has argued about the Other but also advances the concept by illustrating a new form of exploitative Othering under the guise of controversial developmental projects. She says,

> After a long time, now it has been revealed that
> capitalism and imperialism
> both of you have hidden colonialism
> so that in a new style
> secretly
> it can oppress us. (353)

1.4 The Layers of Transformation among Indigenous People

Both ecopolitics and biocoloniality have metamorphosed the Indigenous people into different categories. For example, not all Indigenous female poets are unhappy about everything. Some of them are hegemonized, and they have accepted both ecopolitics and biocoloniality as blessings. For instance, Devbormon (2013) shares her decision to leave "the dark cave behind" (246), acknowledging that it is the demand of time to keep pace with changes and that it is beneficial.

Thus, Gita represents those who surrendered to the concept of "the survival of the fittest" (Spencer, 1864).

By contrast, Mrittika Chakma's decision not to attend Bizu (169) highlights the silence about both ecopolitics and biocoloniality. A similar response is in Mukta Chakma's "Around Me" where a girl is unable to develop an intimate relationship with her lover as she is sort of traumatised by the unpleasant things happening around including the replacement of wilderness, the displacement of Indigenous communities, and the development of a new hybridized cultural identity. Finally, she apologizes, "I am in no mood to be fascinated about you." (190)

Most of the Indigenous female poets have questioned both the myths of ecopolitics and the facts of biocoloniality. Going against the politics of environmental hegemony, poets like Tijinad Chakma and Athuisi Marma have exposed the hidden politics of the capitalist discourses of development (see 1.1 and 1.3). Such Indigenous female poets as Monkyoshoyenu Nevy (2013) demand "the awakening of the mountain people" (342) as early as possible. Jorita Chakma's (2013) "Rise Women, as a [Conscious] Human Being" (196) and Madhurika Chakma's "Take Weapon, O Women" (197) ask all Indigenous women to rise against dirt and darkness, chaos and crisis, disturbances and disorders, and corruption and discrimination until they achieve liberation. Karina Hasda (2013) points at the exploitative (bio)colonial modernity that affects the direct relationships between family and land, where the loss of land can be interpreted as a loss of kin (see the case of Sailo Snal, an Indigenous person from Modhupur village in Tangail district in northern part of Bangladesh, in 1.1). Karina Hasda says:

> For family, for land,
> for everything,
> to get them back as they were once upon a time,
> I will really protest. (414)

Unlike Karina Hasda who has demanded for regaining her lost paradise, i.e., the mountains as they were green and safe once upon a time, some of the Indigenous female poets are remarkably radical about their demand for a free, independent, and sovereign state, rejecting any sort of interfere from the flatlanders. Maybe, they are influenced by Raja Tridiv who "did not join the movement for Bangladesh, largely because he thought the regional autonomy of the Chittagong Hill Tracts would be more threatened in an independent Bangladesh than in Pakistan" (Schendel 2020, 150). For example, Hega Changma (2013) also says,

> Where will I get you? Where are you, my rights?
>
> I demand free, independent, and sovereign state… I will… (202)

It is, of course, obvious in Himel Barkat's *Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh* (2013) that their struggle and transformation in fact bother only about a separate independent state within the State, not actually about capitalist exploitation of Indigenous resources, their way of the world, or their great expectations for living together in peace and harmony. By contrast, such Indigenous poets as Amal Toppo, Marry Rengshai, Nilu George Ruram, Matendra Mankhin, L. Padmamoni Devi, A K Sheram, Karam Nilbabu, Khoirom Kamini Kumar, Mong E Khen Mongmong, and Likolas Narendra Koch in Himel Barkat's *Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh* (2013) have neither rejected their Bangladeshi identity nor demanded for a separate state; they have mentioned their contribution to such glorious chapters of the political history of Bangladesh as the Language Movement of 1952 and the Liberation War of 1971 instead. They have also acknowledged that the birth of independent Bangladesh was possible only for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975), the Father of the Nation.

Conclusion: Ambiguous Re-civilizing Mission Towards a Solution

Indigenous female poets' attempt to decolonize the biocolonial mind of the flatlanders and the hegemonized spirit of their fellow people is no less than a re-civilizing mission for a number of reasons. Their poems aim at redefining the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, educating people about the fundamental differences between eco-consciousness and ego-consciousness, and prescribing a perfect solution for a better world where the Indigenous people will live happily together with the flatlanders without facing any form of discrimination. However, keeping the above discussion in 1.4 in mind, it is possible to argue that their re-civilizing mission is ambiguous to some extent for at least three reasons: (a) their attempt to rewrite history contradicts with what their fellow people mentioned above are saying about the history of Indigenous communities in Bangladesh; (b) these radical activists do not have any formal manifesto along with guidelines till now that can properly elucidate how it is possible to ensure a better life with all possible facilities for them without doing any harm to the natural juxtaposition of Indigenous communities and wild nature; and, (c) Indigenous female poets in Himel Barkat's *Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh* (2013) have said not that much about biocolonization and biopiracy although this paper has highlighted how three major sectors — medicine, food, and miscellaneous (i.e., Indigenous dress, costume, cosmetics, bags, furniture, showpieces etc.) — in Bangladesh are affected by them.

To conclude, majority of the Indigenous female poets in Himel Barkat's *Collected Poems of Indigenous People in Bangladesh* (2013) have maintained a non-violent way in case of rebooting resistance against ecopolitics and biocoloniality with a view to decolonizing the biocolonial mind of the flatlanders and the hegemonized spirit of the Indigenous people, whereas some of them have sided with constructive violence and systematic resistance. But, the fact is that Indigenous communities in Bangladesh cannot expect an easy and quick solution to afford a release from the grip of ecopolitics, biocoloniality, and biopiracy in near future until and unless they can change

their subaltern status that has resulted from such key factors as their lack of education, knowledge, and unity.

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Endnotes

1. Shelley Angelie Saggar gave a speech on "Biocolonialism: Perspectives from the Humanities" in a conference entitled "Research Symposium: Biocolonialism: Perspectives from the Humanities" organized by the School of English at the University of Leeds on May 22-23, 2019. Retrieved from https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/english/events/event/1086/research-symposium-biocolonialism-perspectives-from-the-humanities
2. Hannah Butt wrote "A Response to the World Development Report 2012". *E-International Relations*. OCT 18 2011. Retrieved from https://www.e-ir.info/2011/10/18/a-response-to-the-world-development-report-2012/
3. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_protected_areas_of_Bangladesh
4. Retrieved from https://bangladeshpost.net/posts/man-made-forest-creates-new-hope-for-environment-56574
5. Retrieved from https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/artificial-mangrove-forest-in-the-offing-near-rampal-power-plant-1522583987
6. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhupur_National_Park.

7. Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) has said it in *Tancred (1847)*. This sentence has been quoted from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978).

8. Institute for Advanced Study Co-sponsored by the Office for Public Engagement (University of Minnesota) presented an event entitled "Biocolonialism: Historical Roots and Contemporary Threats to Indigenous Knowledge, Lands, and Self-Determination". 2020. https://www.northrop.umn.edu/events/biocolonialism-historical-roots-and-contemporary-threats-indigenous-knowledge-lands-and-self

9. See https://m.priyo.com/i/বর্ণিল-আদিবাসী-পোশাক and https://www.jugantor.com/todays-paper/features/out-of-home/আদিবাসী-অনুষঙ্গে-ফ্যাশনের-ধারা

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Prophetic Past:
Enforcing Framework Through Transformation in Maryse Condé's *I, Tituba*

Matthew Noteboom

Maryse Condé's use of Hester Prynne, a character's whose origins date to Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter,* emphasizes both the struggles Tituba combats as she resists the social transformations cast on her by an oppressive culture, as well as the cultural mechanisms that allow, and dictate, the perpetuation of archetypal roles to minority classifications, both included and excluded on the surface of the Western literary framework. While Hester is absent in the historical Salem, her presence in the Western literary framework functions to maintain the classical tradition of the West by reframing its past history onto modern works. This paper explores how the inclusion of Hester in Maryse Condé's *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* displays the methods in which the Western literary framework enacts its forces onto new works. Hester's own circumstances ensure that she remains tied to the beliefs of her ancestors by transforming her into an encyclopedic tool to shape Tituba as the Puritan witch demanded by Western culture.

Hester's involvement in Condé's novel is a subject that has not received a large amount of scholarly attention. When she is mentioned, it is often due to her relationship with Tituba rather than herself. Notably, critics point to either the characters' contrasting agency or Hester's symbolic place as an American canonical figure as opposed to Tituba, whose only historical record is: "a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo'" (Condé 110). However, Hester performs a much more influential task in the novel. She, herself, is a figure of resistance and protest. Moreover, while past criticism has denoted the disparity of agency between the two women, I argue the opposite. Hester is the one without choice. Her inability to be perceived as Other forebears her actions from diverging from the cultural identity that created her–the same identity that labels Tituba as Other. This is nowhere more clear than

the instances of Hester's so-called education of Tituba, which is in actuality a subconscious perpetuation of the very ideals that had imprisoned her and foreshadows her future as the bearer of the Scarlet Letter.

Junghyun Hwang has called Salem "an enduring specter that haunts American cultural history, conjured again and again only to be dismissed as an abnormal episode of old world superstition, which appeared to take place in America but was never of America" (44). In other words, The Salem Witch Trials are necessary to define the American identity purely because they represent everything that America is not. Tituba becomes a figurehead of this otherization. Mara Dukats takes a more personal approach, stating that *I, Tituba* "takes the events at Salem as a backdrop for the exploration of the ways in which Tituba's silenced narrative has been incorporated into canonized texts and, more significantly, for an exploration of the ways in which this silenced text has functioned as an enabling or conditioning force for canonized texts" (55). Vital to this remark is the realization of Tituba's influence on American history. Despite being silenced, she is incorporated into canonized texts. That incorporation assumes compliance; it assumes acceptance of Western values onto her self-acknowledged sins.

I, Tituba offers a possible window into Tituba's struggle–the part of her narrative that *was* silenced.[1] Significantly, Condé opposes both historical traditions in such a way that Tituba's acquiescence is less a forfeiture as it is a difference in emphasis. As Gema Ortega states, "[Tituba's] authorship grants her autonomy from a multiplicity of social and cultural positions as she moves across racial, gender and national borders" (114). Tituba lives in the moment; she has no past lineage to locate within herself, even going as far as to claim the same anonymity as

[1] Gema Ortega's article, "The Art of Hybridity," offers a counter to Dukats in claiming that "witchcraft does not function in the novel as a mere element of the plot but as a counter-discourse, which serves to denounce any narrative that claims the power to represent others" (118). The authority given to Tituba in the novel serves as a disruption in the Puritan framework that had silenced her voice in the historical record.

Moses floating along the water in a cradle (Condé 99). Moreover, her name itself lacks history, being created for her alone as a demonstration of imagination and one's agency to claim what they want (Condé 6). It is not therefore surprising that she fails to make her way into history books. To the Barbadian slave, the past holds no meaning; there is only the moment and one's own experiences. Simply Ie the history is not recorded does not equate to an absence of it entirely. When made aware of the Puritan tradition, Tituba chooses instead to hold her own past, and subsequent experiences, maintaining a history of her own which, while nowhere near as expansive as the Puritan's, is no less real. Her entire journey through the novel evinces a history that could have happened. Its creation is an admission of the invisible lives that escape mention in Western history, hidden but nonetheless real.

The lack of a recorded narrative induces us to define Tituba through her relations with others. To gather information about Tituba, we place her alongside figures such as Hester for comparison. Hwang states, Tituba is "neither an object to be controlled nor a concept to be subsumed in the Puritan totality of possessive individualism… emobdiedness is the fundamental human condition whereby existence happens as both the subject and object through constant interaction with the world" (54). When drawing comparisons, it is all too easy to form imbalanced connections such as pitting Tituba against the "Puritan totality" or fitting her individuality in relation to ideological frameworks. When Tituba joins the caste of Other, she loses her embodiedness; she becomes part of a framework herself.

Allotting a connection between one's personal embodiedness (or lack of) and the broader societal framework they find themselves within reveals the problem of delimiting identity on axes of societal perception. The Puritans relegate Tituba, as an outsider, to an opposing collective and thus silence her voice within their own community. Yet they offer Hester no such consideration. More precisely, they refuse Hester a position capable of oppositional struggle in

relation to her framework. While Tituba's otherness innately threatens the Puritan totality because of its exclusion from Puritan identity, Hester can never remove herself from the framework in the first place. She is not allowed to threaten her own heritage.

> Scholarly criticism commonly points to difference in agency between Hester and Tituba: "whereas Hester chooses not to speak about Dimmesdale, Tituba's testimony is silenced/replaced by official directives. Whereas Hester decides to hang herself, Tituba is violently hanged by a mob of white plantation owners. In other words, Hester's choice could be made visible in the American literary scene at the expense of the historical eclipse of Tituba's non-choice. Again, as Dukats succinctly puts, 'when we paint Hester black, then *The Scarlet Letter*, as we know it, becomes inconceivable'" (Hwang 8).

However, a close reading of the text itself presents the inverse. *Tituba* is the one with agency while Hester remains powerless. At its most literal, Hester's immurement comes from the actions of another while they remain free of punishment. Her affair lacks the ability to become a disruptive force on its own, simply negating her agency before it can threaten any significant change to her society. Nor is her identity feasibly her own, as noticed when she refers to patriarchal naming conventions "a law" (96). Further, Hester finds it necessary to "start from the beginning if I want you to understand something of *my* story" (97, emphasis mine). Tituba's story requires knowledge of her ancestors; her story is a communal one in which she is nothing more than an extension of an already established legacy. Hester as an individual is not important to her identity, molded by Puritan society to fit the past and its established narrative.

Significantly, Hester either speaks in passive voice throughout her story or relinquishes control to outside forces altogether. She was pushed into marrying her family's friend. Once married she was given four children by her husband—children who the "good Lord called to him" (97). Moreover, the passing of her children were not the sole actions of God: "I'll let you in

on a secret, Tituba. The number of potions, concoctions, purges, and laxatives I took during my pregnancies helped me to arrive at this fortunate conclusion" (97). Notice how, even when revealing her hand in aborting her children, Hester remains dependent on outside aid: "the potions… helped me to arrive at this fortunate conclusion." Rather than acting as objects for Hester to utilize, the potions possess enough agency to effect change, exhibiting as much, if not more, agency than Hester herself.

Hester will not acknowledge her personal agency because of the awareness she has of her position. Gifted with the "misfortune" of a privileged education of the past, she knows her standing in the world and its subsequent inflexibility (Condé 97). She does not even construe her affair as something of her own choice, citing that it was the result of "two generations of visible saints stigmatizing carnal pleasure resulted in this man and the irresistible delights of the flesh" (98). In the calculus of Hester's fault, she lacked the ability to resist; her failure was doomed from the beginning regardless of her own sensibilities.

In contrast, Tituba's position as an outsider to the Puritan framework provides us with a different perspective in analyzing the possibility of individual agency within these constructs. Her threatening relation as a potential usurper to the status quo indicates that the framework is not, in actuality, equitable to a cosmic force capable of perpetuating itself across time. Tituba's ability to struggle against it allows for the possible availability of agency for everybody constituting the framework.

Notice the directness Tituba maintains when responding to Hester's confessed abortions: "I, too, killed my child" (Condé 98). She has no exterior aid, nor does she even conceive of Hester's actions as such. In her mind, both of them possess agency. There is a certain performativity in how both women ascribe agency. In parallel to this is the burden of knowledge and their disparate emphases to comprehending the past. Hester's "misfortune" coincides with

her inability to enact seize control of her actions. Her struggle is doomed to failure from the beginning; learning that information only confirms her lack of agency and renders her cognizant of her place within the Puritan totality.

As such, we must divorce the character of Hester from the role her heritage had molded her to fit. She certainly possesses disruptive ideas, positing them, as Carolyn Duffey states,

> "to try to impress and influence Tituba. She lays out a misogynist legal and literary history of Europe which she universalizes, telling Tituba she hopes to overturn it one day by writing an Amazonian social compact for all women, a design for women's lives far from the misery of her own arranged marriage and cowardice of her subsequent lover, the spineless Dimmesdale" (102-3)

However, even then she perpetuates the Western framework that she simultaneously abhors. By universalizing Western history, she accords it with such importance that every other history becomes subsumed underneath her own. Her future idyll ironically creates a hierarchy that establishes the dominance of her own misogynist heritage.

Duffey also notes how Condé uses Hester as a manipulating tool (again conceived of as an object rather than a character or independent force) to "reconfigure Tituba's story" to save her from execution "at the cost of deforming her [Tituba's] written history in her fictional confession" (105). Tituba again becomes a legitimizing tool in validating the dominance of her Puritan oppressors. *Her* history is the one that becomes deformed so that the Puritan's may retain its integrity.

Despite their mutual want of comradery, the two women are diametrically opposed to one another. One needs only look at their first conversation with one another to understand their disparate positions. What begins with connotations of equal footing (Condé draws our attention to Hester's black qualities while having Hester dismiss the title of mistress before Tituba),

almost immediately restructures those boundaries, first by establishing the ubiquitous dominance of patriarchal societies. Hester's exclamation that "it's not my society. Aren't I an outcast like yourself?" fails to survive the extent of the dialogue (96). Hester can only conceive of the world through her Puritan lens. She may hate the world because of that, but she is not an outsider to her heritage. In the same conversation that she renounces her ties to Puritan society, Hester continues to perpetuate its tradition by coaxing Tituba into the "correct" way of answering the impending accusations against her. She aligns Tituba with her own position, one without agency, and only capable of survival so long as it accords with what the rest of the world expects from it.

Under the cover of knowledge, Hester refuses the polyvalence of specific words. She presses her own definitions onto Tituba, leaving the Barbadian woman forced to adhere to foreign definitions, as well as all the subtext that goes with that. Most prominent, of course, is Tituba's identity as a witch. Throughout the novel, Tituba never once renounces her identity as a witch. It is part of her and, importantly, does not possess any inherently malignant connotations. She laughs at the idea of witches as people who "do strange and evil things" (Condé 96).

The struggle, instead of falling on the accusation of a title, directs itself to the meaning of the title itself. It becomes the opinion of Cotton Mathers against Tituba's own beliefs. She *chooses* to reject the Puritan totality in favor of her own experiences. Yet that choice is unspoken. In its place is the assimilation that accords with the historical record. As put by Dukats, "by confessing, then, Tituba escapes death, yet legitimates the authority of her oppressors" (55). Until Condé's story, Tituba's deferral to Puritan authority encompasses her entire identity. We do not become aware of the struggle she faces when pitting her Native Barbadian beliefs against that of the Puritans. We do not see that her identity as a construction that exists in place of the original.

Tituba herself claims that she "do[es] not belong to the civilization of the Bible and Bigotry. My people will keep my memory in their hearts and have no need for the written word" (Condé 176). This one quote encompasses both the struggle Tituba faces and her defiance, for her historical narrative is an unwritten—but not silenced—one. Indeed, to try to assimilate herself into Puritan history would be nothing more than a deferral of her own agency. Moreover, her lack of belonging comes from her own admission. Tituba is not only othered by the Puritans, she chooses to abstract herself from them and perpetuate an identity incongruous to their beliefs. The entirety of the novel is based around Tituba's travels and *spoken* to, first Condé, and through her, to us. We consider the struggle that Tituba, and others, endure as silenced purely because there is no authentic voice to speak to the modern audience.

Elisabeth Mudimbé-Boyi makes the assertion that "in letting Tituba speak and tell her story in her own words, Condé gives her a voice, restores her history and her identity, and allows her to acquire language and thus to participate in society" (751). This sentiment is correct, if not entirely accurate. It is not so much as bequeathing a voice to Tituba as it is discovering it, much like the imposition of allowing her to acquire language is in actuality the possibility of publishing her words in a way that compares her narrative to the rest of the Western literary canon. Tituba does not need her story to be recorded, for she and her people "have no need for the written word." Such practice does, however, make possible the communication of texts and that is, I believe, the core of Mudimbé-Boyi's allowance of Tituba to participate in (Western) society.

Finally, it is necessary to consider that, while Tituba's story receives notice through *I, Tituba,* the foundation of that comes from giving voice to someone outside of the Puritan totality. Tituba's narrative achieves its importance precisely because it is neither Western nor viewed through a Western lens. She is given the validation of struggling against a dominant culture as a

minority outsider, of telling her story and all the ways that it differs from the stories told by the Puritans. Returning to our second struggling heroine, we see the truth of that all too clearly. Hester Prynne, whose story here is also purely oral, has no voice other than that of the Puritan's. Her struggles do not end in the actualization of an alternative narrative, but instead result in both molding Tituba to align with the Puritan totality and, later, Hester's suicide. Despite her written history, identity, and allowance of language, she cannot participate in society. Her silencing is internal; her own societal framework becomes her opposition and refuses to allow any deviation from its values.

Unlike Nathaniel Hawthorne's telling of the *Scarlet Letter*, in which Hester Prynne makes "pride" out of "punishment," Condé's use of Hester, which revolves around the Puritan framework's oppressive confines on her person, ensures that Hester's only defiant outcome is to silence herself (74). Her one act of agency is to choose not to be an agent at all. At the core of *I, Tituba* is a struggle for identity. Yet Tituba's struggle, the struggle of being an Other to Puritanism is not the only one that takes place. On the level of overarching frameworks, Tituba's struggle is one doomed to failure; she will always be the Other. So too is Hester's position solidified by the divide. She cannot be anything *other than* a Puritan figure, despite her own inclination. It is in the margins, however, that Tituba can manifest her own narrative, free of Puritan authority. *I Tituba* grants the titular character a voice of her own that remains independent of the historical oppression visited upon her by the Puritans. She tells us the other story of her life—the Other's story of life.

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"AZTALAN"

Maxwell Gray

White settlers encountered Aztalan in the fall of 1835, on the shores of the Crawfish River in south-central Wisconsin, USA. The city was built by Indigenous peoples circa 1100 CE. The Ho-Chunk people have called the region home since time immemorial. Milwaukee settler Nathaniel Hyer gave Aztalan its name, mistaking it for the homeland of the Aztecs of Mexico. Hyer related Aztalan to the Aztecs based on the resemblance he saw between the site's mounds and Aztec pyramids. Another Milwaukee settler, Increase Lapham, mapped and excavated the site in 1850. He published his research in his *The Antiquities of Wisconsin, as Surveyed and Described* (1855), where in his description of Aztalan he cites John L. Stephens's *Incidents of travel in Yucatan* (1843).

The following digital collage poetry is composed of text from "The Trickster Cycle" found in Paul Radin's *Winnebago Hero Cycles: A Study in Aboriginal Literature* (1948). The text appears as if in relief, under the erasure of white space generated from the shapes of image fragments of plates and engravings found in Increase Lapham's *The Antiquities of Wisconsin* (1855) and John L. Stephens's *Incidents of travel in Yucatan* (1843). The white space is the impression left by the virtual or empty shapes of image fragments developed using Adobe Acrobat's image recognition technology to analyze/excavate the plates and engravings from Lapham's and Stephens's books.

In the poetry, I'm struggling to reconsider and reimagine some small histories (past and present) of white settler colonialism where I live, work and study, myself a white settler in southern Wisconsin, USA. I'm trying to compare and connect how white settlers, ourselves included, think about the pasts of the "middle ages" and/or "American antiquities"—and how they (we) think about the presents of colonization and empire. I'm struggling to represent how

thinking about the past is always also thinking about the present, and to do so critically, that is, from—and also of—my own positionality and locatedness. I'm struggling with white settler documents and archives to make (find) space for (of) counter and emergent forms of history and knowledge.

Special thanks to undergraduate researchers Sierra Cruz and Noah Smith for their help researching and thinking together about Aztlán and Aztalan at Marquette University.

CYCLE

cohabits
wishes to
discourages owers fro him on warpath
kills

brother

Children die because Trickster

Trickster swims in ocean inquiring ore is
Trickster chases
mimics man pointing
ducks and talking anus

tines

placed in box
sent across water

Women rescue Trickster

son

child of union cries
Trickster visits wife and son
Laxative bulb

Mothers seek
Skunk to dig hole through hill
Mothers lured in hole and eaten
Tree teases Trickster who gets held fast in fork
Wolves come and eat food under tree
Flies in elk's head lure Trickster who gets caught
People split elk's head off
Trickster changes self into deer to take revenge on hawk

Mink outwits Trickster and gets bear meat
Trickster pursues mink in vain
Chipmunk causes Trickster to lose part of his penis
Discarded pieces thrown in lake and turn into plants
Coyote leads Trickster to village

imitates muskrat who turns ice into lily-of-the-valley roots

bear

final meal on retires

CHIEF COHABIT OMAN BEFO

there which who was just pre-
he warpat the material with
fire, tha ere summoned. To
, "You for the fire; bring me
These wer him and then, those
them, his on the fire.
had been invite not
, going on the
to join him.
finished their and
him
to
orror they
sting place

as going on th war-
builders. When they
deer and
with them ey
eer and two lar ears.
However, as the mals
was being , left
ose honoured in-
They waited om
id anythin ou
the guests w wait As
he found him woman. " the
for you," him. "Is so?
consume

ereupon the messenger returne and reported o those
he had witnessed, and all the guests went to their separate homes
, there was nothing further to be accomplished.

a while it was a rumored that the chief
because he was on the warpath.
he wanted, he id, "Four of the largest
commanded, we to be obtained. As on
ews went out to hunt em. Soon, they brough
for and then put on the fire to cook.
now began to ve. Then the feast sta
designated what people were to be given heads
out. He did not re So, after a while,

cohabiting with woman. When this
They had
after, for the time, it was rumored
By this because of what
realized that this all mere talk.
would all go. But also knew that the
warpath. As on the
his nephews to bring four this time
returned with them and, i ediately, the kettl
sat down for the feast. , among them,
been invited and, surprisingly
over.[8]

2. CHIEF WISH

Now just as the feast was
his arrow-bundle, exclaimed, "I
he descended until he came to
immediately. All those who
those capable of fighting,[11] got
able-bodied men went along
path. they pushed out
they ending. As the
the [illegible]rd the shore
I who on this warpath
"You Why
on land and smashed it to pieces
Then those who
and returned home

After a while the
above the ground.
on the warpath, I!

is I who am going
am going. I can

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