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The Rise of Totalitarianism, Colonial Mimicry, and Gender and Sexuality in the Twentieth Century English Literature

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The Rise of Totalitarianism, Colonial Mimicry, and Gender and Sexuality in the Twentieth Century English Literature

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Final Master's Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the Field of English

with a specialization in Literary & Textual Studies

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Dr. Bill Albertini, First Reader

Ms. Kimberly Spallinger, Second Reader

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Analytical Narrative

It was Saturday, August 5, 2017. After 26 hours of long tiring flight from Dhaka, I landed at Chicago O'Hare International Airport as an "alien." I came to the United States on the Fulbright program as a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA), and my task was to teach Bengali at Fayetteville State University (FSU), North Carolina, for the 2017-2018 academic year. As an English major, I always dreamt of pursuing my Master's and Ph.D. in English in the United States. When I joined FSU as an FLTA, I kept on navigating US universities where I could do my Master's in English. My supervisor Professor Sharmila Udyavar knew my goal as I shared my vision with her. And, one day in November 2017, she forwarded me a link to Bowling Green State University's (BGSU) English program in Literary & Textual Studies, saying that, "This is a nice program and you can consider it." Without delaying a second, I decided to apply. In February 2018, I was offered admission, I accepted, and here I am. That was one of the best decisions I have ever taken in my life because the decision has changed my life fundamentally.

I came to BGSU with three objectives in mind. First, learning how to research. Second, learning how to write articles and publish them in academic journals. And third, using this program as a stepping stone for my next journey, earning a Ph.D. in English. After starting my Master's work, I understood that the program is designed to keep my needs in mind, and my task is to study and get things done. Although I struggled in my first semester to balance my workload and learn my way at a new institution, it was one of the most productive and effective semesters as I learned how to research and write in the humanities. Four books, Gregory M. Colón Semenza's *Graduate Study for the Twenty-First Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities*, Booth et al.'s *The Craft of Research*, Eric Hayot's *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the*

Humanities, and Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* that I studied in ENG 6010 Introduction to English Studies with Professor Bill Albertini have given me clear ideas about how to research, how to write, and how to thrive in graduate program. From the second semester, I would say I started to thrive since by then I had learned the factors critical to success and how to balance learning and teaching at the same time.

From Gregor Semenza's *Graduate Study for the Twenty-First Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities*, one of the significant things I have learned was the importance of publishing articles in quality academic journals in order to strengthen academic career. After that, my aim was to revise my seminar papers in order to publish the revised pieces as articles in academic journals. Within three semesters, I submitted five articles and a book review. Among them, one book review and one article have already been published, two articles were sent to me back for further revision, and two articles were rejected. This portfolio has been beneficial for me as it has given me a great opportunity to revise and work on my articles. Out of four articles that this portfolio contains, one, "Teaching Literature: Great Professors in the Literature Classroom," has just been published, and another one, "Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: A Cautionary Tale of Totalitarian Ideology," is due to be published this summer. I am confident that the two remaining pieces will eventually be published, as I know what I need to do to improve their quality significantly.

In my undergraduate days, I was deeply interested in classical and modern drama. Over the time my interests have shifted. And at BGSU, I have explored my new research interests, and some of them reflect in my portfolio. I have been interested in the representation of marginalized groups, gender and sexuality, political ideologies, and the teaching language and literature. My four articles are distinguished from each other in terms of research area and target audience. They show

my diverse interests and ability to reach out to diverse audience. At BGSU, I tried to utilize the resources available and grow personally and professionally. I believe I have been successful in my pursuit and my four articles reflect my growth as a Master's student of literature.

The first project in this portfolio is my substantial research project: "Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: A Cautionary Tale of Totalitarian Ideology." I originally wrote this essay in the fall of 2018 for Professor Kimberly Coates' ENG 6820 Literature and the Rise of Fascism. In this course, we examined literature from the first half of the twentieth century produced mainly in Europe that portrayed the nature of fascism and how it spread across Europe, led to the rise of Hitler in Germany, and many other authoritarian regimes. This article is an analysis of Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel *Brave New World*. It contributes to the study of the novel by providing an alternative reading for literary professionals that went overlooked in literary scholarship but has relevance today. This article reads Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a cautionary tale of the totalitarian ideology that Huxley speculates might emerge in Europe if liberal democracy fails to ensure quality education for the citizens. Last year, I submitted this paper for publication, and received reviewers' comments in February 2020. I have made substantial revisions with the help of Professor Bill Albertini, and now I am hoping to see this project published in the *Minnesota English Journal* this summer 2020. During revision, I have focused on the need of my audience, worked on its internal organization following recommenders' suggestions, and improved its style and overall presentation. Of all the pieces in my portfolio, I have probably spent the most time on this article.

The second project I have chosen for my portfolio is "Bakha's Mimicry in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*." This article was originally written for Professor Bill Albertini's ENG 6010 Introduction to English Studies class. The class was designed to prepare first-year graduate

students by teaching them how they can grow in the humanities and use their learning both in academia and outside of academia. With Professor Bill Albertini, I developed a shorter version of the article. Later, with Professor Piya Pal-Lapinski's ENG 6070 Introduction to Critical Theory class, I worked on it further and made it a full-fledged article. This article is different from others as it uses Homi K. Bhabha's theory, colonial mimicry, as a theoretical base to interpret Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. According to Bhabha, mimicry has profound and disturbing effects on colonial authority, and this article examines the effects of Bakha's mimicry in light of Bhabha's theory. Bhabha argues that colonial mimicry has complex and sometimes contradictory effects. On the one hand, the colonizer seeks to remake the colonized in the colonizer's image, as a tool of control. On the other hand, the colonized subject who effectively mimics the colonizer can have profound and disturbing effects on colonial power, as perfect mimicry threatens the self/other distinction on which colonial power hinges. Critics have understandably focused on the latter part of Bhabha's theory, as it offers space for resistance. *Untouchable* is useful because of its difference from that trend. I argue that in Anand's novel, mimicry hardly empowers Bakha against colonial power because colonial authority uses mimicry in order to serve their interests not the interests of marginalized groups. In revision, I worked on polishing my argument as previously, it was not very clear. Besides, I tried to engage with Bhabha by integrating his theory thoroughly explaining how it is and is not relevant to Bakha's experiences in the novel. I struggled a lot while I was working on this project because it is a long project and I had no prior experience in working in such a long format. I submitted this article to the *Asiatic*, a reputed literary journal on Asian literature, for publication. Although the journal rejected my paper, its reviewers gave me valuable feedback. I have revised it many times and made it better. I will keep on revising and improving it until it gets published.

The third project I am using for this portfolio is “David’s Sexuality in James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*,” an article originally written in the spring of 2019 for Professor Bill Albertini’s ENG 6820 Queer Before Stonewall. This class examined literary and cultural works on LGBTQ life prior to the Stonewall riots, the event that is popularly remembered as the founding moment of modern LGBTQ rights activism in the United States. When I read *Giovanni’s Room*, I loved it and planned to write a paper on it. This is my first work on gender and sexuality. This paper examines the sexuality of David, the protagonist of the novel, and argues that David is a sexually ambivalent character who cannot take a position regarding his sexuality. I presented this paper at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, and submitted it to *The Explicator*, a literary journal, for publication. I received some valuable feedback from its reviewers, and I revised it in light of their feedback. During revision, I tried to build my argument by engaging with the text closely and integrating secondary source materials. I removed many paragraphs that were not relevant to my argument and tried to keep focused on one issue, sexuality, instead of bringing in many issues that might have distracted my audience. The work is still in progress and I will keep working until I am satisfied with it and my editor finds it ready for publication.

The fourth and final project in this portfolio is “Teaching Literature: Great Professors in the Literature Classroom.” This article was written for Professor Allen Emery’s ENG 6090 Teaching Literature class. The class was meant to facilitate English teachers with resources to develop their teaching skills and strategies. As a student of literature, I found this course fascinating as I learned how professors of literature think, design their syllabus, and facilitate their classes. This paper reflects my opinion regarding teaching literature and engages in critical conversation with some experts in the field. Drawing on the works of Himmelfarb, Showalter, and McKeachie, I argue that professors should not impose their political and philosophical views on

their students by targeting them as their potential followers. In revision, I tried to proofread and make it better grammatically as it has just been published. Although it has been published, I have revised it because the act of further review still has use, as it is a chance to learn about writing.

In conclusion, this portfolio shows my diverse interests and love for writing articles for literary journals. The pieces included here also reflect my ability to work in different areas and get them published. Through revising and reworking these articles, I have grown as a writer and learned how to shape and build arguments, contribute to the study of fiction, and contribute to critical conversations. I have learned how to think of audiences, their expectations, and the purpose of writing. I have also learned how a writer addresses a conceptual problem and strives to solve it in a manner that invites the reader to care about the solution. I would say I am better, sharper, wiser, and more efficient today than what I was two years earlier. My days at BGSU have been productive, effective, and rewarding. Now I would like to share my papers with the world, and I hope that the insights I provide can be beneficial to people. I feel happy as I have done my job and made some substantial contributions to the field of literature. I believe many readers will find my articles significant and cite my papers in their projects. If a single person benefits from my projects, I would consider my work a success.

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Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: A Cautionary Tale of Totalitarian Ideology

ABSTRACT

This article reads Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a cautionary tale of the totalitarian ideology. Drawing on the work of Laura Frost, it argues that Huxley's *Brave New World* alerts the readers of the nightmare of the totalitarian ideology critically portraying a dehumanized world that not just restricts civil liberties but also controls individuals' body and mind through Pavlovian conditioning, promiscuous sexualities, and institutionalized propaganda. Scholars have long interpreted that the novel warns the readers about the unchecked advancement of science and technology, which can pose a significant threat to humanity. Besides, some scholars interpret the novel as a document of the abuse of the lower classes by the powerful elites who control science and exploit the masses using its power. Moreover, some historical critics interpret the novel as a Utopian vision of Huxley. This paper, however, challenges these interpretations because they overlook a significant exposure of the text, which is its critical portrayal of the very essence of the totalitarian ideology that in the name of community, stability, identity, happiness, and national security envisions controlling every aspect of individuals' life. This paper is important because it not only presents an alternative reading of the novel that is, in fact, essential in terms of today's concern over the rise of authoritarian fascist governments across the world but also provides valuable insights regarding the possible readings of *Brave New World* as it rereads, reviews, critiques, and incorporates scholars' various interpretations of the text. Therefore, the readers, especially the practicing English teachers, can be significantly benefited from this article as it embodies the established scholarship while pointing out a contemporary relevance to the novel that went overlooked.

Keywords: *Brave New World*; Huxley; the World State; science; ideology; totalitarianism; dehumanization; humanity; promiscuous sexuality.

In *Texts and Pretexts*, first published in 1932, discussing his concern regarding the present and future Huxley asserts: “Personally, I must confess, I am more interested in what the world is now than in what it will be, or what it might be if improbable conditions were fulfilled” (6). In the same year, Huxley publishes his futurist novel *Brave New World* that portrays a dehumanized community in a totalitarian state named the World State that John the Savage, the central character of the novel, calls brave new world. A body of controllers consisting of Alpha double pluses governs the World State based on the ideology of its founder Henry Ford. After its publication, however, some critics interpret the novel as a cautionary tale of unchecked scientific development in the area of genetic engineering because this development can pose a severe threat to humankind in the future. On the other hand, some others interpret it as a cautionary tale of the abuse of the lower classes by the powerful elites who control science and dehumanize the masses exploiting its tremendous power. Besides, some historical critics interpret the novel as a Utopian vision of Huxley. According to them, Huxley himself is a eugenicist and a strong advocate of human genetic manipulation. In support of their argument, they present Huxley’s other contemporary writings as evidence. Therefore, because of Huxley’s ambiguous position, scholars’ opposing stances, and the novel’s rich and ambivalent narration, some problems might appear before our readers that need to be addressed to understand its comprehensive meaning in a broader context so that they can gain some valuable insights of the novel and apply their understanding to facilitate a critical discussion in their classroom. Hence, in the analysis of Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the problems might appear: Whether the novel is a cautionary tale of the unchecked expansion of science and

technology or it is a document of the abuse of the lower classes by the powerful elites who exploit science for their ideological interests. Alternatively, whether the novel celebrates the lifestyle of the community living in the World State, or it warns the readers of the nightmare of the triumphant totalitarian ideology that rules the World State. This paper, however, reads *Brave New World* as a cautionary tale of the triumphant totalitarian ideology that envisions controlling individuals' body and mind through Pavlovian conditioning, promiscuous sexualities, and institutionalized propaganda. In short, this paper is essentially arguing that *Brave New World* is a cautionary tale of the totalitarian ideology that undermines the core values of humanity: truth, justice, equality, liberty, and human dignity.

Now, the readers might wonder what this paper refers to by the term 'totalitarian ideology.' By the term 'totalitarian ideology,' this paper does not necessarily intend to make reference to historical Stalinism, Hitlerism, and Italian Fascism; instead, it defines totalitarian ideology as nationalistic and revolutionary, anti-liberal, anti-Marxist, pro-capitalistic, fascist, and authoritarian political religion that aspires to establish its absolute control over individuals and society destroying previous economic, social, political, and cultural institutions, structures, and values (Gentile 35). This ideology goes beyond time and space and continuously evolves integrating social, political, cultural, scientific, and technological factors. This paper, however, does not differentiate between the terms 'totalitarianism' and 'fascism' and often uses the phrases 'totalitarian ideology' or 'totalitarian fascist ideology' interchangeably to refer to totalitarianism that is going to be defined here in detail. As drawing from Paul M. Hayes' *Fascism*, Emilio Gentile defines totalitarianism:

an *experiment in political domination* undertaken by a *revolutionary movement*, with an *integralist conception* of politics, that aspires toward a *monopoly of power* and that,

after having secured power, whether by legal or illegal means, destroys or transforms the previous regime and constructs a new State based on a *single-party regime*, with the chief objective of *conquering society*; that is, it seeks the subordination, integration and homogenisation of the governed on the basis of the *integral politicisation of existence*, whether collective or individual, interpreted according to the categories, myths and values of a *palingenetic ideology*, institutionalized in the form of a *political religion*, that aims to shape the individual and the masses through an *anthropological revolution* in order to regenerate the human being and create the *new man*, who is dedicated in body and soul to the realization of the revolutionary and imperialistic policies of the totalitarian party, whose ultimate goal is to create a *new civilization* beyond the Nation State. (Gentile 33-34)

Although this definition may appear to be a lengthy one, this paper incorporates it as it arises from a deliberate choice of how to present the phenomenon. Besides, the complexity of the novel necessitates this definition as it is a “remarkably rich text, open to many legitimate and edifying interpretations” (Woiak 111). Therefore, this paper contains this definition and promises its readers to present a comprehensive reading of the novel that can be used in the classroom to facilitate a critical discussion.

The *Brave New World*, in the portrayal of a totalitarian nightmare, is a cautionary tale. The novel portrays the World State as an absolute nightmare that dehumanizes the individuals by controlling every aspect of their life in the name of stability, happiness, and security. The World State controls not only the number of population and their ranks but also their functions in the name of stability and happiness. The controllers of the World State believe that if there is no control of population growth and their functions, there will be instability and anarchy in the State. In reply

to John's query why he is not making everyone Alpha Double Plus, Mustapha Mond, the World Controller of Western Europe, asserts, "Because we have no wish to have our throats cut. We believe in happiness and stability" (189). In making this comment, Mustapha Mond argues that it is their policy to control the population and their ranks because their central goal is to keep the State stable and happy. For ensuring stability, they cannot give everyone free choice because they cannot take any risk of making the state unstable. Besides, the World State keeps the artifacts of high culture locked up and engages its citizens in various unintellectual entertainment activities for ensuring its uninterrupted security. The text depicts that the individuals in the World State are under absolute control and surveillance of their central government. This absolute control of an individual can only happen in a totalitarian condition. In her *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt states, "A single individual can be absolutely and reliably dominated only under global totalitarian conditions" (392). From Arendt's assertion, it becomes evident that the World State is a classical condition of a totalitarian state. In addition, in interpreting Huxley's *Brave New World*, Laura Frost in her "Huxley's Feelies: The Cinema of Sensation in *Brave New World*," asserts: "As much as it is a nightmare of a totalitarian, genetically engineered future, though, *Brave New World* is also a cautionary tale about a world in which artifacts of high culture are held under lock and key while the populace is supplied with 'imbecile' entertainment" (447). Basically, Laura Frost is saying that the novel portrays a totalitarian nightmare depicting the traits of a totalitarian ideology to warn its readers. According to Bob Barr, Huxley's *Brave New World* offers a "cautionary tale," portraying a society that, in the name of ensuring security, stability, and happiness, controls both body and mind of the individuals revoking freedom from them (Barr 853-854). Barr rightly observes that in the World State, the government not only restricts civil liberties but also controls all aspects of the economy from production to distribution. Therefore, from the

arguments of Arendt, Frost, and Barr, it becomes evident that *Brave New World* depicts a nightmarish portrait of a totalitarian state to warn the readers about the danger of a totalitarian ideology that ultimately revokes civil liberties through state-sponsored mechanisms.

The totalitarian fascist ideology of the World State is the critical factor behind limiting academic and artistic freedom. The World State not only restricts scientific research but also regulates art and literature. It neither allows its citizens to research on individualized experimental projects nor permits them to read Shakespeare. It restricts academic and artistic freedom for ensuring happiness because it believes absolute freedom and absolute happiness cannot coexist. Therefore, the state has chosen happiness over freedom and wants to maintain this status quo at any cost. The novel depicts the ideology of the World State through Mustapha Mond, portraying him as the top political personality who holds the executive, legislative, judicial, and moral authority. Mond defends the policy of the state and tries to convince John the Savage why the state has restricted academic and artistic freedom. He philosophically analyzes the necessity for limiting science; as he asserts: "I'm interested in truth, I like science. But truth's a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it's been beneficent. It has given us the stablest equilibrium in history. [...] But we can't allow science to undo its own good work. That's why we so carefully limit the scope of its researches" (193-194). Furthermore, Mond defends the policy of the World State for not giving any space for art and literature. According to Mond, the state has blocked the access and practice of art and literature neither being ignorant about its aesthetic beauty nor being malicious towards it but being motivated from the idea of ensuring stability of the state. In response to John's claim about the better life in *Othello's* world, Mond argues: "Of course it is. But that's the price we must pay for stability. You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We have sacrificed high art" (188). Referring to the disasters of the 'Nine Years

War,' Mond analyzes the reasons for restricting science and banishing the concept of truth and beauty from the World State. As he points out:

It's curious,' he went on after a little pause, 'to read what people in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to have imagined that it could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest was secondary and subordinate. Right, ideas were beginning to change even then. Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty cannot. And, of course, whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered. Still, despite everything, free scientific research was still permitted. People still went on talking about truth and beauty as though they were the sovereign goods. (194)

Certainly, Mustapha Mond's speech is open to many legitimate and edifying interpretations. Sensible and artistic-minded readers might find his speech alarming, and they might be shocked to see that in the World State, there is no place of art, knowledge, beauty, truth, and creativity that they value the most. They might consider the World State as an uninhabitable place to live in because they are more likely to view the essence of humanity in liberation, not in restriction. On the other hand, many readers might find this controlled world fascinating because there is no war, no instability, no challenge, and no need to worry about life, security, and happiness. They might find the World State as a fantastic place to live in. Because of this textual ambivalence, two questions might appear before readers that I would like to address in the following two paragraphs.

Is *Brave New World* a tale of Huxley's nightmarish vision of human beings' inevitable reality because of their lunatic actions? Is the novel a portrayal of an ideal world where genetically engineered superior races would determine the future of the world, upholding the motto "Community, Identity, Stability"? According to Renata Reich, Huxley's primary purpose of writing *Brave New World* was to alert "mankind to the dangers of an overly technologized society, in the midst of which mankind loses its most valuable possession: its very humanity" (Reich 34). In support of her claim, she points out the dehumanizing process in the novel that "Occurs as a consequence of the fact that the ruling class does not permit the members of the other classes to choose their destiny according to their free will. Slavery, even if it is in the form of a frantic search for pleasure imposed upon the other classes by the ruling class, is, in essence, dehumanizing" (Reich 45). Reich reads *Brave New World* as a cautionary tale that warns people of a dangerous consequence rushing to them because of unchecked scientific and technological development. In contrary, in her "Designing a Brave New World: Eugenics, Politics, and Fiction," Joanne Woiak claims that Huxley's main concern was to use scientific knowledge and technologies to improve human life efficiently, and in particular to "create well-ordered states out of the perceived social and economic chaos of postwar Europe" (110). The bottom line of Woiak's argument is that Huxley's *Brave New World* is not a cautionary tale; instead, it is the vision of Huxley, who believed in the power of science and technology not only in improving peoples' living standards but also in creating a well-planned world state(s) that will not seek chaos and war but stability and happiness. For Woiak, therefore, the portrayal of the World State in Huxley's novel is not a cautionary tale of the totalitarian nightmare; instead, it is his ideal world vision, a Utopia.

Although both Reich and Woiak seem convincing, (and many readers might have read the novel according to their interpretations) their arguments fall short of conceptualizing a critical

aspect of the text, which is its critiques of the totalitarian ideology that in the name of stability and national security exploits the power of science and technology to establish its hegemony over its citizens. Huxley might be interested in creating a well-ordered state using science and technology that would not only ensure security, stability, and happiness for its citizens but also significantly improve their living standards. But he is not unaware of the nature of human beings that all humans are not equally rational and act rationally. He knows it very well that many people are violent and believe in destructive ideologies. Consequently, if this advanced knowledge of science and technology falls into the hands of the violent people who believe in destructive ideologies, they will abuse them and bring disasters for entire human beings. Therefore, I do not agree to Reich's point that Huxley wants to warn his readers about the dangers of an overly technologized society, because the novel explicitly shows that it is not science and technology that manipulates the citizens but the ideology of the World State that envisions to establish Fordism, a totalitarian ideology, in all aspects of its citizens' lives. Moreover, the World State has systematically stripped civil liberties, banned art and literature, and imposed restrictions on individualized scientific research that is nothing to do with the advancement of science and technology. The novel shows that the scientific experiments are not uninterrupted because the World State absolutely controls scientific projects, and it does not allow those projects that do not go with its ideology. So, I do not think that any freedom-loving individual, including Huxley, would be interested in living in the World State that the novel portrays. On the other hand, although Woiak's argument seems interesting, I am afraid I have to disagree with her because her argument also falls short to perceive the larger picture of the novel. The novel hardly celebrates the well-ordered camp life in the World State; instead, the text satirizes it showing absurdity and meaninglessness of their lives. Here, I am not saying that Huxley may not have any dream of creating a well-ordered state that would possibly

stop war and ensure stability. What I am saying is he may not dream of creating a totalitarian state like the World State that would restrict academic freedom, limit civil liberties, and control every aspect of peoples' lives in the name of security, stability, and happiness. In my view, Huxley is more interested in a well-designed progressive secular liberal democratic state that would uphold truth, liberty, equality, and justice for all. And we do not definitely see any reflection of these values in the World State that might lead us to think that it could be Huxley's ideal state.

Huxley is concerned about the failure of liberal democracy and the possible rise of the totalitarian dictatorships in Europe. His writings published during the 1930s reflect this idea. In his article "What Is Happening to Our Population?" Huxley expresses his concern about the future of lasting democracy because of the lower level of IQ among his fellow British citizens. As he asserts, "How do they expect democratic institutions to survive in a country where an increasing percentage of the population is mentally defective? Half-wits fairly ask for dictators. Improve the average intelligence of the population and self-governance will become, not only inevitable, but efficient" (154). This statement might (mis)lead many readers to believe that Huxley is interested in the genetic manipulation of human beings like the Nazis as historically eugenics is associated with Nazism. Here, we need to consider the fact that the novel was published in 1931, and the Nazis took over Germany in 1933. Huxley is concerned about the shallowness of his fellow British citizens because he somehow perceives that the totalitarian ideologies might replace the democratic institutions taking advantage of intellectual vacancies. He believes that only meritorious, intellectually sharpened citizens can uphold the values of liberal democracy, and his eugenics is for democracy that will challenge totalitarian ideologies. Huxley is concerned about the failure of democratic institutions and the rise of the totalitarian dictatorship in the distant future because of the lack of intelligence of the people. As in *Brave New World Revisited*, he points out:

In 1931, when *Brave New World* was being written, I was convinced that there was still plenty of time. The completely organized society, the scientific caste system, the abolition of free will by methodical conditioning, the servitude made acceptable by regular doses of chemically induced happiness, and the orthodoxies drummed in by nightly courses of sleep-teaching -- these things were coming all right, but not in my time, not even in the time of my grandchildren. (2)

Basically, Huxley is saying that the world is moving fast towards a nightmarish reality where individuals would have no liberty but to lead a controlled life in an insane world. Although some critics might argue that the World State is Huxley's ideal state because it has achieved significant progress in different fields – ensured stability, stopped war, brought happiness, and conquered aging – many critics, however, may not consider these achievements as real progress. According to Firchow, "This kind of progress is really no progress at all. Real progress, in Huxley's term, can be defined as 'personal progress' or 'internal progress'" (Firchow 452). I agree with Firchow that to Huxley, real progress means an individual's internal progress, more particularly her intellectual progress where she has the freedom to think, freedom to choose, and freedom to lead a life the way she wants to live. And the novel reveals this urge for autonomy through John's call for freedom: "'Don't you want to be free and men? Don't you even understand what manhood and freedom are? Don't you? Very well then, I'll teach you; I'll make you be free whether you want to or not'" (182). Based on the textual evidence presented here, it becomes clear that Huxley's *Brave New World* tends to warn its readers about a possible catastrophe which is peeping in the horizon and appearing slowly but surely. Therefore, this paper is essentially arguing that the novel is not a cautionary tale of the advancement of science and technology; instead, it is a critical portrayal of a totalitarian ideology that envisions to subjugate individuals' liberty in the name of security,

stability, and happiness. Thus, it becomes a cautionary tale for the readers of the upcoming totalitarian fascist ideology that will not just subjugate the universal values of truth, liberty, equality, justice, and human dignity but also will dehumanize human rights weaponizing the power of science and technology.

Brave New World alerts the readers of anti-intellectual culture, dehumanization, and intoxication from prescribed promiscuous sexuality. The World State promotes effortless pleasures and prevents intellectual awareness keeping people engaged in different unintellectual activities. According to Laura Frost, Huxley was concerned about the implications of the cinema in stimulating individuals' body and mind. And he imagined "Cinema's potential to be either an instrument of social and political reform or a medium of cultural degeneracy" (Frost 445). For Huxley, since cinema has intoxicating influences on individuals' body and mind and brings ready-made pleasures for them where the primary task of the cinema viewers is to sit down and watch, these effortless pleasures may not be ideal for them as a rational and intellectual being. As a result, this effortless mental pleasure may lower their intellectual abilities which would be dangerous for entire human cults. Similarly, Jonathan Carey argues that *Brave New World* is "The classic denunciation of mass culture in the interwar years" (qtd. in Frost 448). Likewise, Josephine McQuail claims that the central message in *Brave New World* is that "Only the alienated individual – or at least the person aware of being alienated- can achieve true human consciousness, if not happiness" (31). In my view, McQuail has rightly pointed out Huxley's concern regarding the alienation of the individuals from an inner life in the World State that essentially keeps the citizens away from achieving any intellectual awareness. Besides, the World State is designed in a way which prevents its members from enjoying solitude, as Mond asserts, "But people are never alone now. We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it's almost impossible for

them to have it” (200). Mond outlines the policy of the World State which is not to keep the individuals alienated but to engage them in different activities that will not only keep them intoxicated but also provide them with pleasures. In the same line, Theodor Adorno argues, and I agree, that Huxley in *Brave New World* is "Inwardly an enemy of intoxication," as he asserts:

[T]he regularly occurring communal orgies and the prescribed short-term change of partners are logical consequences of the jaded official sexual routine that turns pleasure to fun and denies it by granting it. But precisely in the impossibility of looking pleasure in the eye, of making use of reflection in abandoning one's whole self to pleasure, the ancient prohibition for which Huxley prematurely mourns continues in force. (qtd. in Frost 448-449)

For Huxley, these aspects of prescribed hypersexual life are dangerous for human beings because they prevent individuals from achieving self-awareness and keep them detached from their inner life. Hence, *Brave New World* portrays the World State as a totalitarian fascist and anti-intellectual state where individuals grow through the process of genetic and psychological conditioning and serve the state being nothing but efficient tools that the state requires to continue its functions. And here, Frost's argument that the novel is both a nightmare of totalitarian, genetically engineered future and a cautionary tale of a possible totalitarian state on earth is significant. I agree with Frost that *Brave New World* is both a portrayal of a nightmare of totalitarian ideology and a cautionary tale because the novel depicts that explicitly through the representation of John the Savage. For John, it becomes utterly impossible to live in the World State, his 'brave new world', because human beings are absolutely dehumanized, and their values are seriously undermined.

The World State promotes promiscuous sexuality where individuals engage in sexual acts with other bodies although they have no real connection with their minds. This sort of mechanical

sexual relations we see in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* where after sex, the partners depart as if nothing happened between them, and they get engaged in other activities like machines. Although it seems the members of the community are happy, their happiness is not because they feel they are happy from their inner selves, but because they are being taught every day that they are happy. This Pavlovian conditioning in the World State is so acute that the individuals cannot think of their existence outside of the camp. The system does not give them any chance to think and reflect their awareness as an individual.

Furthermore, in the World State, women do not have absolute rights over their bodies. Although they can choose their sex partner(s) from available men, they cannot enjoy their maternity because having a baby is considered a disgrace. Hence, women in the World State are nothing but commodity that are essential for the state's stability. However, although the World State aims to remove the self from the individuals, and has taken specified initiatives introducing soma, promoting promiscuous sexuality, and arranging shows of feelies, the new world has not achieved much success in their goal because some individuals feel bored and lonely. Based on close observation, this paper has reached to the point that Huxley's *Brave New World* is not a cautionary tale of the development of science and technology; instead, it is a cautionary tale of the totalitarian ideology that takes over the World State and prescribes the controllers to control both the body and the mind of the individuals and restrict their liberty by manipulating the advancement of science and technology.

The World State has turned into a nightmare because of the rise of the totalitarian ideology, Fordism, that controls every aspect of peoples' lives from birth control to the banishment of the individuals making them slaves to the state. In the World State, everything of an individual, including her life, her activities, and even her death, is for the sake of the state whose motto is

community, identity, and stability. For controlling every aspect of individuals' life, the World State has a policy which is to keep the individuals busy in effortless activities and to make specific arrangements for them to get involved in hedonist pleasures. For example, in reply to John the Savage's assertion that life in the World State is "Awful," Mustapha Mond asserts, "On the contrary, they like it. It's light, it's childishly simple. No strain on the mind or the muscles. Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the soma ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies" (190-191). Here, this becomes clear that Huxley's *Brave New World* both satirizes and critiques this anti-intellectual, effortless lifestyle of the World State that squeezes human beings into brainless consumers who consume anything and everything the state offers without thinking or questioning further. Therefore, the idea that the novel is a Utopia of Huxley, and he designs this as an alternative to the present world to solve the problem of humanity, does not hold water. Instead, the idea is contrary to the novel's portrayal of the World State.

Huxley's *Brave New World* portrays the fundamentals of the ideology of Henry Ford, the founding father of the World State, and its applications through state mechanisms. A group of controllers consisting of Alpha double pluses, genetically engineered superior individuals, administer the World State based on the ideology of their founding father. Although it might seem that the novel does not explicitly condemn the lifestyle of the World State, a close reading of the novel would explore the inconsistencies and contradictions in the World State and the deep agonies among its citizens. For example, although Mustapha Mond claims that nobody in his world is unhappy, it's not clear whether he is happy or not. He could not pursue his passion for continuing scientific studies and research because of the system, which did not allow him to seek knowledge that might go against the interests of the World State. Consequently, he had to choose whether he would live in an isolated island or stay in the center as an administrator leaving scientific projects.

Since the text does not clarify his mental state, the readers may not explicitly know whether he is happy or not, but from his speeches, the readers can assume that he misses his past ventures. Although we cannot be sure whether he is happy or unhappy, we can understand that he has chosen power over passion, and a stable high life over truth and beauty.

Some objections to this reading may be that the paper ignores both the concerns of the novel for rampant and unchecked scientific and technological development and the advocacy for a well-designed community that ensures stability and happiness for its members. Besides, some critics might disagree with my argument that the text is a cautionary tale of the triumphant totalitarian ideology that envisions to dehumanize the people who live in the World State. They might argue that Huxley's novel is a celebration of the well-designed state where sexuality is liberated, women are made free from the burden of pregnancy and childbirth, and stability is established. Taking these objections in mind, this paper, however, carefully examines the novel and Huxley's other writings. Based on textual observation, this paper argues that *Brave New World* is a cautionary tale of the totalitarian ideology, not the advancement of science and technology. Also, those who claim that the World State is a Utopia and Huxley dreams to design such a world as a possible solution for the people of the world; this paper challenges this claim because the novel and Huxley's other writings do not explicitly support such type of claim. In contrast, the novel denounces it showing the contradictions and inconsistencies in the World State. For example, Mustapha Mond wanted to practice science but could not proceed on because the authority of the World State did not allow him to go ahead with his projects. Moreover, he reads the *Bible* and Shakespeare, but he cannot allow these books to others because being an administrator his responsibility is to implement the ideology which prohibits the members of the community from reading these books. Although this double standard seems to be hypocritical and

unjust, he can neither comprehend this nor possess any freedom to defy the ideological position of the World State. Because of these contradictions and inconsistencies, it becomes evident that the World State is no such ideal place to live in and, therefore, it is not a Utopia. Moreover, the state not just absolutely controls peoples' body and mind through Pavlovian conditioning but also restricts their movements through state sponsored mechanisms.

Although the World State restricts civil liberties, controls individuals' body and mind through Pavlovian conditioning, promiscuous sexualities, and institutionalized propaganda, it has not achieved absolute success in establishing its hegemony over the individuals. The novel shows that some of the individuals choose to defy the rules and decide to lead a life that they want. And here lies the hope of the continuation of humanity despite apparent triumph of the totalitarian ideology. As *Brave New World* is "Remarkable for its accurate predictions about science and technology, economics and politics, and arts and leisure" (Woiak 107), this novel is significant and deserves greater attention. Upon realizing the significance of the novel, this paper attempts to solve some of the problems that might appear before the readers by presenting an alternative reading of the novel, which has not just a contemporary relevance but also went overlooked in popular interpretations. In presenting an alternative reading of the novel, the article, however, has introduced readers with a wide range of possible readings, which can surely be helpful for them in teaching the novel in their classroom. This reading is critical because, in the contemporary world, we see a sharp rise of authoritarianism. And the authoritarian governments around the world not just try to control the citizens through various state-sponsored mechanisms but also restrict their activities in the name of stability, security, and economic development. For Huxley, totalitarianism, rampant consumerism, promiscuous sexuality, and the feelies are something dangerous for the entire humanity. And he expresses his concern through his creative writing,

Brave New World. I agree with Woiak that *Brave New World* is a remarkably rich text and it can be interpreted in many ways because it is open to many legitimate and edifying interpretations. However, although I grant that the novel allows its readers to come up with many different interpretations, I still maintain that it is simplistic to term the novel as a cautionary tale of highly technologized human society or read it as a utopia. Therefore, upon critiquing and challenging these interpretations, this paper presents this alternative reading of the novel to its readers that the novel intends to alert the readers about the nightmare of the totalitarian ideology, which is an existential threat to humanity because it envisions to restrict humanity's core values: truth, justice, equality, liberty, and human dignity.

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Bakha's Mimicry in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

ABSTRACT

This article examines the effects and the underlying reasons behind the failure of Bakha's mimicry in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. Drawing on Homi Bhabha's work on mimicry, it argues that Bakha's mimicry hardly empowers him against both colonial power and colonized social structure because in both communities – particularly in Indian religion based caste community – marginalized groups have no space to grow and lead a decent human life. In the novel, the mimicry of the protagonist Bakha originates from his underlying desire to lead a fashionable life like his colonial masters since he is attracted to their lifestyles and finds his masters more humane than his native Hindu community. Anand thus shows the appealing aspect of colonial modernity in the colonized society that might appeal to a particular segment of the society, creating (false) hopes of emancipation, high life, and prosperity. By considering *Untouchable* as a novel about the representation of marginalized groups in British colonial India, this article shows the negligence of colonial and colonized social structures in creating a viable space for marginalized groups which resulted in the failure of Bakha's mimicry in creating an impact in a colonial society where both the British and the caste Hindus doubly colonize him.

Keywords: Mimicry; ambivalence; Anand; Bhabha; colonial power; colonized society; religion; Hinduism; untouchables; agency; modernity; hybridity; culture.

In Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 novel *Untouchable*, the protagonist Bakha, a sweeper boy of 18 from an untouchable community, struggles inwardly and outwardly to liberate himself from untouchability and to achieve agency within his colonized society which is dominated by Hinduism that considers untouchables a social outcast. Being a sweeper in British colonial India, Bakha is not only a British colonial subject but also a subaltern in colonized Indian caste-based Hindu society –doubly colonized in the colonized society. Although he is born in a poverty-stricken, marginalized, illiterate untouchable family, he wants to change his socio-economic condition being a literate person receiving colonial education and dreams “to speak the *tish-mish*, *tish-mish* [English] which the Tommies [British] spoke” (Anand 30). Bakha's indomitable attraction for speaking English and leading the Western lifestyle grows while he works in the British barrack as a cleaner. In the barracks, he works for the British soldiers and wears their used clothes that shape his attitudes. In Western clothes, he starts feeling superior to his fellow untouchables and sets a goal to live a complete life of his colonial masters. To achieve this goal, he starts imitating the British as much as he can in his everyday life. He wears British clothes, smokes expensive “Red-Lamp” cigarettes, sleeps with his day clothes on, and avoids making noise during drinking tea because, unlike the Indians, the British do not make any sound while they drink tea. In short, he mimics the British as best as he can because he wants to be one of them. In this context, a question comes that needs to be addressed to understand the problem of Bakha's mimicry. The question is whether there is any effect of Bakha's mimicry in British Indian society. This question is significant here as this paper applies Homi K. Bhabha's theory of mimicry as a theoretical lens to examine the effects of Bakha's mimicry portrayed in *Untouchable*. According to Bhabha, although mimicry is a colonial device, which is designed by the colonizers to make the colonized refined and recognizable other, it has profound and disturbing effects on colonial

authority; as Bhabha asserts, “The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing” (Bhabha 126). Since the novel presents Bakha as a colonized subject, Bhabha’s theory of mimicry seems to apply to Bakha’s mimicry as well as the protagonist wholeheartedly imitates his colonial masters (British) to be recognized as a refined one. But we need to consider Bakha’s unique condition as well. Bakha is not just colonized by the British but also colonized by the colonized caste Hindus. As he is a doubly colonized subject, he complicates Bhabha’s idea of mimicry and poses a question of whether Bhabha’s theory speaks for marginalized individuals like Bakha. Since we do not see any disturbing effect in Bakha’s mimicry on his colonial and native masters, a question appears why is there no significant effect of Bakha’s mimicry in colonial and colonized communities? Why does not the novel empower him providing with the agency? What does the narrator imply portraying Bakha devoid of agency? Upon close reading of the novel, this paper observes that neither British colonial devices nor Indian caste-based social apparatus guarantee agency and empowerment for the marginalized people; instead, both groups want to control their bodies and minds through their distinctive discursive practices. In short, this paper is essentially arguing that neither British colonial authority nor Indian colonized society offers a viable space for marginalized groups to grow and lead a decent human life. And the novel draws readers' attention to that reality portraying Bakha with no agency because it envisions to portray a realistic picture of the society, which is inherently discriminatory.

Untouchable complicates Bhabha’s idea of mimicry. According to Bhabha, mimicry is a complex strategic discourse that can be used by the colonized subjects to create a profound and disturbing effect on the authority of colonial discourse. Bhabha takes the idea of mimicry from Lacan’s essay “The Line and Light,” where Lacan defines mimicry almost like an effect of “camouflage” “practiced in human warfare” to exploit the advantage from the background

(Bhabha 125). In "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," Bhabha examines the psychic mechanisms of the colonized subject, and his desire to imitate the colonizer. Bhabha draws on Lacan's notion that mimicry is a form of 'camouflage' that allows the mimic to exert an advantage over the one being mimicked. Bhabha sees colonial mimicry as a snake in the grass which, speaks in "a tongue that is forked," and produces a mimetic representation that "Emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" that "represents an ironic compromise" from both colonial masters and colonized subjects (Bhabha 126). Therefore, the colonial masters are ready to compromise with those colonized subjects that they consider as "reformed, recognizable Other,...*as a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite*" (Bhabha 126). However, the effectiveness of mimicry depends on several factors, as Bhabha asserts, "In order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha 126). The novel shows that being an impoverished and marginalized youth, Bakha fails to imitate his colonial masters adequately putting on various fashionable clothes, and his mimicry mostly relies on the charity of his colonial masters. In consequence, his sartorial mimicry fails to 'Continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference' that Bhabha theorizes is necessary for mimicry to be effective. Now the question is if he were able to imitate his colonial masters exactly, could he receive better treatment from the communities? It seems very unlikely because the novel shows that untouchables are badly treated not because of their clothes but because of their births as untouchables. Besides, the novel depicts that it is not at the hand of Bakha to be considered as a recognized and refined other, but at the hand of his colonial masters [British and Hindus] who determine whether he would be accepted in the community or not. In the novel, we see that Bakha's mimicry fails to produce a profound impact on colonial authority, although he tries his best within his capacity to imitate his masters.

Therefore, the paper intends to search the underlying reasons behind the failure of Bakha's mimicry in creating any impact in the community while taking the fact into consideration that Bakha is impoverished and marginalized, and he has limited means to grow financially and imitate his colonial masters.

Bakha's mimicry hardly brings success for him in British colonial and Indian colonized communities because, being an untouchable, he cannot inherently be a 'reformed, recognizable Other' in that discriminatory societies. According to Bhabha, colonial mimicry not just has a 'profound and disturbing impact' on colonial discourse but also has the potential to pose a threat to colonial authority showing resemblance to it. Thus, mimicry can become a strategic weapon for the colonial subject to produce anxiety and fear in colonial authority, although it's essentially a colonial discourse designed to perpetuate colonial power on the colonized. As Bhabha asserts:

It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that my instances of colonial imitation come... The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (Bhabha 127)

Although Bhabha argues that mimicry has potential to produce a threat to the colonial authority by the 'displacing gaze' of the mimics, Anand's *Untouchable*, however, depicts that Bakha's mimicry fails to produce any 'profound and disturbing' impact on colonial and colonized authority, and the elements of 'resemblance and menace' inherent in mimicry that Bhabha theorizes become pure fantasy. For example, although Bakha receives better treatment as a human from his colonial masters in the British barracks, he continues to be treated as an untouchable, and Colonel Hutchinson, a colonial missionary working in India, plans to convert him into Christianity. He

takes Bakha to his apartment and wants him to confess his sins so that he can convert him. But seeing Bakha in the apartment, Colonel Hutchinson's wife Mary Hutchinson, a middle-aged English woman who is living India for many years with her husband, becomes angry with Colonel Hutchinson and scolds her husband for spending time with untouchable Bakha because she does not recognize Bakha as a refined subject although he does his best to imitate their lifestyle. Colonel Hutchinson's wife, seeing Bakha in her house, shouts at her husband, and the text sketches that moment in Colonel Hutchinson's wife's word: "'Oh, is that what you've been doing, going to these blackies again!... I can't keep waiting for you all day while you go messing about with all those dirty *bhangis* [scavenger] and *chamars* [leather maker]'" (123). As Mary Hutchinson is living in India for many years, she knows local culture and dialect. She knows local people call untouchables 'bhangis and chamars' based on their professions. Mary Hutchinson's behavior shows that she is heavily influenced by the behavior of the caste Hindu women who abuse the untouchables every day and use indecent terms while they address the untouchables. Mary Hutchinson's transformation reminds me of Kurtz's transformation in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of darkness*, although this comparison is very imprecise. This moment of the text, however, shows that Bakha's mimicry is of utmost ineffective in a colonial house, and he receives maltreatment that his fellow untouchables would have received in that situation although he has a reputation to work in the British barracks, and he maintains the art of cleanliness that stands him out from his fellow untouchables. Therefore, it becomes evident that there are no such 'profound and disturbing' effects in Bakha's mimicry, and the idea of 'resemblance and menace' in mimicry does not reflect in *Untouchable*. So, the text does not reflect this part of Bhabha's theory. Here, I am definitely not invalidating Bhabha's theory based on this observation; what I am arguing is Bhabha's theory does not reflect much in *Untouchable*, especially in this part of the novel.

However, although Bakha shows profound respect to Colonel Hutchinson and her wife because of their superior status – they are sahibs – he becomes frustrated when he leaves their house. The text paints the moment as Bakha asserts: “‘Everyone thinks us at fault. He wants me to come and confess my sins. Moreover, his mem-sahib! I don't know what she said about *bhangis* and *chamars*’” (123). At this moment, the text reveals the emptiness of his mimicry, which neither affects any person nor any community, although he spends most of his money and time purchasing European clothes and thinking about the life of the sahibs that he wants to lead.

Although the British do nothing to empower him, he continuously seeks agency and empowerment in British clothing because he has no other viable alternative. He unconsciously becomes a subject of mimicry that Bhabha theorizes as ‘one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge’ specially designed for the colonized subjects as a part of their so-called “epic intention of the civilizing mission” that attempts to civilize the subjects who are “‘Human but not wholly human’” (Bhabha 126). Colonial mimicry establishes its absolute control over Bakha’s body and mind; consequently, he turns into a mimic man, and mimicry becomes his way of life. He purchases British clothes, smokes British cigarettes, and thus willingly serves the purposes of the colonizers that he never comprehends because he does not control his body and mind rather his indomitable desires to live a colonial life through mimicry controls his way of life. Pointing at Bakha’s sartorial mimicry, Jose Sebastian Terneus asserts, “Sartorial mimicry does not help empower the colonized [Bakha], but rather this form of emulation threatens to disempower further native groups [untouchables] who abandon their national identity and clothing” (Terneus 109). Although I disagree much what Terneus says about the disempowerment of the native groups because of sartorial mimicry because I am not convinced that mimicry disempowers the colonized subjects since I do not see such a thing in *Untouchable*, I, however,

fully endorse his argument that this type of mimicry does not empower the colonized Bakha because mimicry is not designed to offer agency and empowerment to the colonized groups. Instead, it is designed by the colonizers to control the body and mind of the colonized so that they can continue their exploitation in the name of ‘civilizing mission.’ I disagree with Terneus regarding the disempowerment of sartorial mimicry because Bakha’s clothing does not disempower him in his community, although it does not offer him anything except his mental satisfaction. I care about his mental satisfaction and his effort to be happy inwardly. Therefore, I cannot agree with Terneus that sartorial mimicry disempowers the colonized subjects because if something does not empower, it does not mean it disempowers. Besides, colonial mimicry may not empower the colonized subjects by providing them with agency, since the colonizer encourages mimicry as a form of social control rather than as a tool for agency. If the colonized subjects can achieve empowerment exploiting mimicry, there remains no moral ground for the colonizers to continue their presence in colonized lands. To perpetuate colonialism, the colonizers need to establish an idea in the consciousness of the colonized subjects that their colonial masters are better human beings who are not just morally superior but also hold superior language, literacy, culture, religion, and civilization, and out of benevolence, they want their subjects to be as superior as their masters. Therefore, the colonizers create this false consciousness that this transformation from inferiority to superiority can only happen through continuous imitation of the masters’ lifestyle from the part of the colonized subjects.

The colonizers create a false consciousness of superiority and inferiority and spread them through discursive practices so that they can continue their colonization without facing many challenges from the natives. The colonizers need to create this false consciousness because the colonized need to know what their masters are offering them and how they can be benefitted from

their offer(s). Since the colonizers control the power dynamics, mimicry, being a colonial discourse, becomes a tool of power that can be used to perpetuate the domination of the colonizers. Although the colonizers offer reformation and recognition through mimicry, they cannot make the colonized quite like them because then the ethical ground that they want to perpetuate would become questionable. According to Bhabha, mimicry brings both parties, colonial and colonized, into a table of discussion and makes an ironic compromise where the colonizers continue their domination over the colonized and the colonized explore themselves nearer to the power. As Bhabha asserts, “Within that conflictual economy of colonial discourse which Edward Said describes as the tension between the synchronic panoptical vision of domination – the demand for identity, stasis – and the counter-pressure of the diachrony of history – change, difference – mimicry represents an ironic compromise” (Bhabha 126). Referring to Said, Bhabha basically means that after establishing colonies, the colonizers attempt to integrate the colonized to their colonization process mitigating the tensions that emerge within the colonized society because of their loss of identity and the changes they notice because of the presence of the colonizers in their land. In this process of integration, Said thinks mimicry represents an ironic compromise because the colonizers want the colonized to be reformed so that they can trust them and use them, but they also fear that it might make the colonized “Turbulent for liberty” (Bhabha 127). This idea matters to my argument because *Untouchable* shows that Bakha wants to liberate himself from his untouchability and he adopts mimicry as a possible means of emancipation although his mimicry does not produce any effective result that he strives for. However, while Bhabha explores this colonial discourse as a representation of ironic compromise, Frantz Fanon finds it as a tool to establish colonial hegemony over the colonized. In his *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon asserts:

While I was forgetting, forgiving, and wanting only to love, my message was flung back in my face like a slap. The white world, the only honorable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger. I shouted a greeting to the world and the world slashed away my joy. I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged. They would see, then! I had warned them, anyway. Slavery? It was no longer even mentioned, that unpleasant memory. My supposed inferiority? A hoax that it was better to laugh at. I forgot it all, but only on condition that the world not protect itself against me any longer. I had incisors to test. I was sure they were strong. And besides. . . . What! When it was I who had every reason to hate, to despise, I was rejected? When I should have been begged, implored, I was denied the slightest recognition? I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an inborn complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known.

(86 – 87).

Untouchable reflects Fanon's idea more vividly than Bhabha's theory because the novel portrays that the protagonist Bakha tries his best to be recognized in the society, but like Fanon he remains ignored and marginalized. Bakha finds the British alluring, attractive, and powerful and wants to be one of them at any cost although he is not unaware that he cannot be one of them because he is born untouchable. Unlike Fanon, he believes that his life is meaningless if he cannot become a 'sahib' because they [sahibs] are superior humans, and, except them, all are inferiors including himself, his father, and also his native Indian people from superior castes. But, with time, he becomes tired of his mimicry and keeps on searching for his agency in other discourses as well. He visits Gandhi's campaign to hear what Gandhi offers for him. Besides, he keeps on listening to

the discussion made by two young men after the campaign of Gandhi. He is utterly confused about what to do and how he can get rid of his untouchability.

Colonized India's caste-based social structure fails Bakha in achieving agency and empowerment. Although Bakha tries his best to achieve emancipation from untouchability, Indian society fails to create a viable space for him because it is governed not by reason but by discriminatory religious belief that believes in karmic reincarnation. For this theological doctrine, marginalized groups have no chance to achieve agency in society. Because of his birth as an untouchable, Bakha cannot get agency because, for untouchables, there is no space in Indian caste-based social hierarchies. According to Jose Terneus, colonial mimicry cannot give Bakha agency; instead, Indian "clothing and identity" can be used as an "anti-colonial weapon that challenges the structure of the empire," and can give Bakha agency and empowerment that he seeks (Terneus 110). In short, Terneus argues that mimicry not just deprives Bakha of agency and empowerment but also keeps him away from the fight against colonialism. Although I agree with Terneus that colonial mimicry cannot empower and give Bakha agency, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that 'Indian clothing and identity' can provide him with agency and empowerment because Bakha's father Lakha shows different picture and disproves Terneus' argument. For example, although Lakha wears Indian clothing, holds Hindu religion, and expresses pride in Indian identity, the caste Hindus humiliates and abuses him every day. His 'Indian clothing and identity' does not provide him with agency and empowerment. Neither the British nor the caste Hindus consider him a human who deserves equal treatment. Although Terneus' argument seems to be compelling in a sense that it suggests using local clothing and identity as a weapon to fight against colonialism, his argument falls short to reflect Bakha's unique condition. If Bakha were a caste Hindu colonized by the British, I may consider agreeing with his argument. Given Bakha's situation, I am afraid I

cannot agree with him that Bakha's Indian clothing might change the dynamics of the situation because Indian colonized society fails to provide a viable space for marginalized groups to grow and lead a decent human life with agency and empowerment. If we consider Indian caste society as a colonial society where untouchables are the colonized group, we see mimicry does not help the untouchables because the caste Hindus do not consider them as humans. Here, again *Untouchable* challenges Bhabha's theory that mimicry "Coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensify surveillance, and poses an imminent threat to both normalized knowledges and disciplinary powers" (Bhabha 126). In *Untouchable*, we don't see any such effect of Bakha's mimicry, and Bakha knows that except his English aping mind and English clothing, he has nothing to challenge the society. Although Bhabha's theory might have higher reflections in many literary texts, in *Untouchable*, it has little reflection, and it is because of Bakha's unique situation as an untouchable in a caste-based hierarchical community where, being voiceless, he lies at the bottom.

Bakha is the most marginalized character in the novel, and he has not just had no position in the caste-based Hindu social hierarchy, but also the caste Hindus continuously oppress him and keep his voice silenced in the name of religion. Besides, within the Hindu religious thought, there is a justification for this maltreatment towards the untouchables. Runoko Rashidi in his "Caste and Race in India" asserts:

The existence of Untouchability has been justified within the context of Hindu religious thought as the ultimate and logical extensions of Karma and rebirth. Hindus believe that persons are born Untouchables because of the accumulation of sins in previous lives. Hindu texts describe these people as foul and loathsome, and any physical contact with them was regarded as polluting. (Elgibreen 1112)

Since there is a social and religious justification for the notion of untouchability, the untouchables have no option left to remove untouchability within the framework of their community dominated by Hinduism. Bakha experiences the problem of their community and seeing no way to upgrade his social standing, he accepts colonial mimicry as a means to become like his colonial masters because he has heard that they are the superior human beings who are ruling India. Therefore, if he can be like them through mimicry, he will not just be able to remove his untouchability but also be a part of the power structure. But the problem is he has adopted a false discourse that cannot offer him agency and empowerment that he seeks. Bakha's ineffective mimicry shows that Bhabha's notion of mimicry falls short of conceptualizing the diverse conditions of colonial and colonized societies. While Bhabha's notion of mimicry has a profound and disturbing impact on colonial authority, in Bakha's mimicry there is a little impact in the communities where he hopes to live a human life.

Bakha is not just deprived of agency but also deprived of knowing the reasons of his oppression. Bakha does not know the reasons why the Hindus hate and why untouchables are marginalized in the community. Although his father has accepted his fates as granted because he knows he cannot change this status quo, which has been continuing for generations, Bakha cannot accept this situation. He wants to challenge this status quo although he does not know how this can be possible. Although he has no agency to change the situation, he does not want to adapt to the situation and survive to be socially outcast. According to Nicole Thiara, the novel not just deprives Bakha of agency but also keeps him "incapable of understanding the source of his oppression" (Thiara 659). I agree with Thiara's view that the text does not give Bakha agency and Bakha does not know the source of his oppression because the text shows it explicitly that Bakha strives to know the reasons behind his sufferings and why he cannot protest against his oppressors

when they unjustly slap him and molest his sister, Sohini. Not knowing the reason of his sufferings, Bakha goes to his father, Lakha, and asks him why the Hindus hate them describing the day's incidents how he is abused all day long by caste Hindus in different times of the day. His father tells him the reason of their oppression. As the text presents in Lakha's words: "'They are really kind. We must realize that it is religion which prevents them from touching us.' He had never throughout his narrative renounced his deep-rooted sense of inferiority and the docile acceptance of the laws of fate" (74). His father clarifies that the problem is not the people, the problem is the religion that prevents people from behaving good with them. The religion, Hinduism, considers the untouchables polluted and cursed because of their birth in the lowest caste. As the religion believes in reincarnation based on the actions of previous lives, it theorizes that the untouchables in their past lives must have committed crimes. For their sins, they have returned to the earth as untouchables to suffer. Their salvation depends on suffering, and they should go through torments for resurrections because of their previous wrong actions. Therefore, for their past actions, they are born untouchables to receive the punishments for the sins they committed in their previous lives.

In contrast to Jose and Thiara, Ben Consbee Baer argues that the text does not "stage Bakha taking the road of sub-oppression, but rather treats his 'mimic man' tendency with pathos and humor" (578). For Baer, the text acknowledges an emancipatory aspect in colonialism and leads its characters in that direction. As Baer asserts:

He accedes to an awakening consciousness of shared humanity as well as expressing contempt for the abjectness of his untouchable fellows. It is a real historical paradox that colonialism did have an emancipatory aspect for India's lower castes, and the novel

acknowledges this. However, it also, from the start, writes in the aporia that the humanist expression of equality comprises when transposed into colonial space. (Baer 578)

Although, to some extent, I agree with Baer to the point that Bakha is a “mimic” man, I disagree with his view that the text acknowledges emancipatory elements in colonialism for the lower castes. In my view, the text ridicules the British colonialism in India and their discursive practices to convert the lower castes into Christianity for perpetuating their colonial rule in India. The text implies that colonial mimicry, status quo of Hinduism, converting into Christianity, and Gandhi’s religion-based political vision cannot change the situation of marginalized groups in colonized India. For emancipation, they need something different than traditional discourses, which has the potential to ensure equality for all.

The novel leads Bakha to find his own way of life through a journey where he experiences the hollowness of mimicry, prejudiced religious views both in Hinduism and in Christianity, and no clear direction in the speech of Gandhi. The text complicates the situation and shows that there is no space for marginalized people in the communities. Colonial mimicry does not empower Bakha in his native Hindu community because they have a complicated caste-based closed social structure where being an untouchable Bakha has no space to grow. Bakha’s mimicry is centered around wearing British clothing because he thinks that the clothes may change his status and make him British. Although he continues imitating the British in everything, his mimicry does not prevent him from being abused. As he cannot understand that the mimicry does not have potential to change his situation, he keeps on thinking that the people who abuse him do not know the art of mimicry. Whenever he becomes a victim of verbal abuse at home by his father, he consoles himself thinking that he is doing a great job mimicking the British, but his father cannot understand the importance of his activity. When his father scolds him for not taking a quilt while he shivers

because of extreme cold, he thinks to buy another blanket because he sees the British use blanket not quilt. He tolerates the abuse thinking that his father does not know about the lifestyle of the British; as he says to himself: “I must get another blanket. Then father won’t ask me to put a quilt on. He always keeps abusing me. I do all his work for him... I don’t take a moment’s rest and yet he abuses me. And if I go to play with the boys, he calls me in the middle of the game to come and attend to the latrines. He is old. He doesn’t know anything of the sahibs” (4). To become a ‘sahib,’ Bakha is ready to abandon immediate gratification and he keeps on learning the ways he can turn into a sahib. Soon he learns that to be a sahib he needs to receive their education and be able to speak in English, the language the sahibs speak. But there is no school for him to study because the Hindu society does not want an untouchable boy to be in school. Besides, no teacher is there to teach him because all of them are from caste Hindu background and they are afraid of getting defiled by being touched by him.

Furthermore, no Hindu parent wants their children to study with an untouchable boy because his touch will pollute them though they do not have much problem when their children play in the field and touch him. *Untouchable* shows this hypocritic aspects of the colonized society that has an inhumane hierarchical social structure where the subalterns have no rights to lead a decent life. Since Bakha has a great thirst for learning, he feels an extreme desire to go to school when he sees Babu’s sons, two brothers from an upper-class background, go to school. However, being an untouchable, he cannot go to school because schools are reserved for the caste Hindus only. As the text presents:

How nice it must be to be able to read and write!...One could talk to the sahibs... His uncle at the British barracks had told him when he first expressed the wish to be a sahib that he would have to go to school if he wanted to be one. And he had wept and cried to be allowed

to go to school. Then his father had told him that schools were meant for the babus, not for the lowly sweepers... He was a sweeper's son and could never be a babu. Later still he realized that there was no school which would admit him because the parents of the other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of the low-castes man's sons. How absurd, he thought, that was, since most of the Hindu children touched him willingly at hockey and wouldn't mind having him at school with them. But the masters wouldn't teach the outcastes, lest their fingers which guided the students across the text should touch the leaves of the outcastes' books and they be polluted. (30-31)

Although Bakha wants to receive education, he has no opportunity to do so because his native people do not want him to go to school, and they have blocked all the ways for him to access to education. In this situation, how can Bakha achieve agency and empowerment? Is there any chance for him to achieve agency following his native cultural patterns? I agree with the critics who argue that colonial mimicry does not empower the colonized subjects, but Anand's *Untouchable* shows that colonized social structure can become oppressive and inhumane and can create another hegemonic rule where the marginalized never achieve agency because colonized society does not offer them any space and opportunity to achieve agency though marginalized groups might have tried their best. The text draws readers' attention here showing that not just colonial authorities but also colonized social structure can be oppressive and inhumane.

Bakha's mimicry not just deprives him of agency but also becomes a reason for further humiliation and abuse. His mimicry does not overcome his hesitation to buy a packet of cigarettes with his own money from a Hindu shopkeeper. Bakha feels nervous to place an order for "a packet of Red-Lamp" from a betel-leaf-seller because "For a sweeper, a menial, to be seen smoking constituted offence before the Lord" (34). Knowing this, Bakha tries to comply with being much

humble with the shopkeeper as if he were waiting for receiving charity. His English clothes and his English-aping mind do not embolden him to be bold enough to buy a packet of cigarette from the shopkeeper the way the British or the Hindus buy. The text shows Bakha's vulnerability and his disempowerment despite his outward mimicry and inward thinking that he is more like the British. Mimicry does not change anything, and he continues to be recognized as an insignificant untouchable whose touch would pollute others, and in receiving money from Bakha, the shopkeeper needs to purify the coin with water because otherwise his all money in cashbox may get polluted. The shopkeeper treats Bakha as a dog as if he were waiting to get a piece of bone, not a packet of cigarettes. The text represents this scene strikingly:

Bakha's eyes travelled to the cigarettes. He halted suddenly, and facing the shopkeeper with great humility, joined his hands and begged to know where he could put a coin to pay for a packet of 'Red-Lamp.' The shopkeeper pointed to a spot on the board near him. Bakha put his anna there. The betel-leaf-seller dashed some water over it from the jug with which he sprinkled the betel leaves now and again. Having thus purified it he picked up the nickel piece and threw it into the counter. Then he flung a packet of 'Red-Lump' cigarette at Bakha, as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing round the corner of his shop. (34)

The text shows that his mimicry does not give him agency and he get abused both in Hindu community mostly and in European community partially. Though he thinks he is becoming a sahib wearing European clothes, he is considered as an untouchable and he receives the treatment that other untouchables receive in Hindu community. Moreover, sometimes his obsession to lead a life of the sahibs makes him absentminded while he walks on the street, he forgets that in a crowded place he needs to shout to warn others about his approach so that they may not get polluted

getting touched with him. While he is returning from the bazaar [downtown] after buying cookies, he starts looking at the billboards where advertisements of “Indian merchants, lawyers, and medical men, their degrees and professions” (38) are posted. He starts thinking that to be a sahib he needs to know how to read them, and this thought makes him inattentive, in a result, an upper-caste Hindu gets touched with him, and he becomes a victim of not just verbal but also physical abuse that time. The Hindu caste man shouts at him saying, ““You swine, you dog, why didn’t you shout and warn me of your approach!’ Don’t you know, you brute, that you must not touch me!””(38). Besides, hearing the man’s shouting, other caste men gather at the place and surround Bakha from every corner. They create a barrier for Bakha that he cannot break because if he pushes anybody to leave the place, many others will get defiled to, and the text describes this situation as a “moral” barrier for Bakha that he cannot break. The text reflects upon Bakha’s mental state:

But then he realized that he was surrounded by a barrier, not a physical barrier, because one push from his hefty shoulders would have been enough to unbalance the skeleton- like bodies of the Hindu merchants, but a moral one. He knew that contact with him, if he pushed through, would defile a great many more of these men. And he could already hear in his ears the abuse that he would thus draw on himself. (39)

Bakha cannot alter his fate because he is born untouchable, and his society does not allow an untouchable to have agency. That day, a Muslim man rescues him out of kindness; otherwise what might happen then he does not know. His mimicry becomes pointless in his native society, and he goes abused by caste Hindus always.

He does not know the reason of his untouchability and his sufferings. *Untouchable* portrays his mental states with great care and empathy. As the text represents his agonies:

Why are we always abused? The sentry inspector and the Sahib that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines every day. That's why they don't touch us, the high-castes. The tonga-wallah [a man on horseback] was kind. He made me weep telling me, in that way, to take my things and walk along. But he is a Muhammadan [Muslim]. They don't mind touching us, the Muhammadans and the sahibs. It is only the Hindus, and a sweeper, sweeper- untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am untouchable! (43)

Being an untouchable, he has no position within a caste-based social structure. He is insignificant in every community. He is not just colonized by the British, he is also colonized by the caste Hindus. There might have some effects of colonial mimicry, but it does not produce any effect for Bakha.

Besides, while getting abused by caste Hindu men, Bakha also gets abused by caste Hindu women, which shows the hollowness of his mimicry. Bakha goes for begging foods from one building to another chanting "Bread for the sweeper, mother" (59) as per his almost daily routine. He shouts from the outsides of the buildings because "For being an outcaste he could not insult the sanctity of the houses by climbing the stairs to the top floors where the kitchens were" (59). However, that day – the day the story is set – he sits on a doorstep of a caste Hindu house, and seeing this a woman from the house starts abusing him verbally shouting, "'You eater of your masters, may the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you perish and die! You have defiled my house!'" (63). Although the lady gives charity to a "sadhu" [a Hindu devotee] with great pleasure, she forces Bakha to clean her drain for foods while her son relives himself before him (65). Furthermore, she throws "paper-like pancake" (65) at him from the fourth story

of her building. Bakha, though feels insulted, “picked it up quietly and wrapped it in a duster with the other bread he had received. [...] and made off without saying a thank you” (65). This angers the lady as she receives no courtesy from Bakha although she gives Bakha foods, and she shouts, “Aren’t they a superior lot these days! They are getting more and more uppish” (65). Her abuse of Bakha depicts a significant insight about the position of Bakha in his native community because in Indian society women are considered to be very soft-hearted towards the needy, and she shows her softness to a sadhu, but she becomes hard with Bakha. Through this portrayal, Anand’s *Untouchable* signifies that colonial mimicry does not empower an untouchable in his native society because there exists another complicated social structure based on an exclusionary discourse. Therefore, the text depicts that neither the colonial authority, not the colonized society promises agency and empowerment for the marginalized subjects like Bakha. They have no space to grow and shine in any social structure. None is ready to contain them because they are marginalized groups.

The text is not hopeless regarding the removal of untouchability; instead, it shows some rays of hopes in modern technologies. After the end of Gandhi’s speech, Bakha listens to the discussion of two Indian youths and receive some hopes from their discussion. As young poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar asserts:

Well, we must destroy caste, we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone. The Mahatma didn't say so, but the legal and sociological basis of caste having been broken down by the British-Indian penal court, which recognises the rights of every man before a court, caste is now mainly governed by profession. When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain Untouchables. And they can do that

soon, for the first thing we will do when we accept the machine, will be to introduce the machine which clears dung without anyone having to handle it- the flush system. Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society. (146)

From this speech, readers get some hopes that in the future modern technology can empower untouchables providing with agency. And if this happens, untouchables like Bakha do not need any more mimicry as the text does not show any effectiveness of mimicry rather it shows that mimicry does not empower untouchables, and here the text problematizes Bhabha's idea of mimicry.

Furthermore, this recognition depends on the interests of the colonial authority, and in this consideration of interests, there is no space for untouchables because recognizing them as reformed, the colonial body may not risk losing their position in colonized society angering the aristocrats, high-caste subjects. Therefore, the whole colonial propaganda and its so-called moral foundation becomes a farce and an eyewash. What remains is their moral hollowness and attempts to perpetuate their exploitation in the colonized lands. In *Untouchable*, Bakha does not like his native identity and culture, and he is ready to abandon everything to be a sahib, but he remains unrecognized because his mimicry does not guarantee recognition from the part of his colonial masters.

Untouchable hardly recognizes the effect of mimicry that Bhabha claims. For Bhabha, there is a significant impact of mimicry on colonial authority because mimicry, on the one hand, creates ambivalence for the colonial masters, on the other hand, it is a discourse that helps them to rule creating hegemony over their subjects. So, the colonial masters have a love and hate relations with mimicry. They love it because it serves their purpose; they hate it because it creates

ambivalence. Besides, Bhabha thinks mimicry at the same time “resemblance and menace” because it can work as a camouflage serving the purpose of imitation, on the other hand, it can take another form of “mockery” and act as a menace (Bhabha 127).

In contrast to Bhabha’s claims, *Untouchable* depicts that mimicry has no ‘profound and disturbing’ impact neither on colonial authority nor on his native colonized society, and the idea of ‘resemblance and menace’ inherent in mimicry is a fantasy which has no real existence in *Untouchable*. In *Untouchable*, Bakha’s mimicry does not create any disturbance in any community. Despite his mimicry, he continues to be recognized as an insignificant untouchable both in colonial and colonized society. For example, Colonel Hutchinson’s wife treats him as a low caste untouchable and does not consider him as a human being who deserves minimum respect. Besides, Bakha continues to be abused in his community. Therefore, it can be argued that *Untouchable* does not validate Bhabha’s claim that mimicry has a ‘profound and disturbing’ elements that can subvert colonial authority.

Anand’s *Untouchable* reveals not just the hollowness of mimicry but also the inhumane social structures where marginalized people have no space to grow, shine, and get the agency to change their fates. The text depicts that neither colonial authority nor colonized society thinks about untouchables; instead, both groups try to exploit the untouchables for their interests. The text shows how Hinduism dehumanizes untouchables by creating a false consciousness and social hierarchies based on birth. Although the novel does not show any clear direction how the untouchables can get rid of untouchability – it shows that there is no emancipation for untouchables in colonialism, in Hinduism, in Christianity, and in the political thoughts of Gandhi – it implies that human endeavors and modern technology can uplift the conditions of the untouchables. This reading, however, is significant because it shows that colonial and colonized societies are diverse

and pluralistic that cannot be viewed through a single theoretical lens. Bhabha's theory of mimicry may not be applicable in *Untouchable* because the protagonist's mimicry makes little impact in his community that is analogous to Bhabha's understanding of mimicry. This paper has tried to present an alternative reading of the novel, showing that *Untouchable* is a unique work and Bakha is a unique character. Therefore, the novel deserves considerable attention and extensive reading for understanding untouchables' terrible living experiences.

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David's Sexuality in James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*

ABSTRACT

This article examines sexuality in David portrayed in James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*. Drawing on postcolonial work on ambivalence, it argues that David's queer desire and ingrained white supremacy complicate his sexuality and make him a deeply ambivalent character who cannot find comfort in any sexual identity or gender expression. David, the protagonist of the novel, understands the damaging potential of homophobia and the cultural expectation of white American masculinity. This understanding forces him to comply with heteronormative white masculinity and to compromise his internal queer desire. By considering David's internal contradictions, this article argues that David is a sexually ambivalent character who not only fails to acknowledge his queer sexuality but also continuously attempts—and continuously fails—to reconcile with his own ideal of white imperial masculinity that suppresses his queer desire.

Keywords: Sexuality; ambivalence; consciousness; gay; bisexual; heteronormativity; masculinity.

For years, literary critics have understood David, the narrator and protagonist of James Baldwin's 1956 novel *Giovanni's Room* as a gay man. Some recent critics have challenged those earlier conceptions of David and identified him as bisexual. The earlier critics center their arguments on David's same-sex relations with Joey and Giovanni, and his subsequent struggles to carry out heterosexual relationships with Sue and Hella. The more recent critics focus on David's bisexual engagements. Although both groups seem convincing in their interpretations, they overlook the complexity in David's sexuality apart from his ostensive gay or bisexual tendencies. By engaging in identity based on sexuality to frame David's sexual identity, these critics overlook his sexual ambivalence, which is embedded in his racial and national identities. Therefore, this article focuses on David's ambivalent sexuality by analyzing his repeated actions, speeches, thoughts, and racial background.

My primary goal here is to explore facets of David's characterization that have not gotten as much attention in the established scholarship regarding David's sexuality. The novel shows that David's sexuality is not black and white, and he is also not capable of articulating his sexual preference. As David fails to take a position regarding his sexuality, this paper frames this situation as sexual ambivalence. It defines ambivalence as a troubled state of mind that prevents one from taking any side in the binary oppositions, although one may or may not have a clear moral or ethical position on the matter. To put it another way, it is a split self that resides in in-betweenness on the border and creates a love and hate relations with two sides of the border. For instance, in the novel, on the one hand, the readers find David engaging in both experimental and passionate heterosexual relations with Sue and Hella to pass and enjoy what he feels is his manhood and masculinity. But, on the other hand, they also notice that he is unable to stay in that position and love Sue or Hella. This inability to remain in a specific position, and continue to love somebody

is the ambivalence that prevents David not just to love somebody but to end up in a meaningful sexual relationship with anybody. Moreover, the text presents David as a sexually troubled character who is not just unable to make any firm decision about whom he wants, Hella or Giovanni, or what he wants, heteronormative or nonheteronormative sexual life, but also not able to accept the truth of his complicated sex life in which he has a little control. Furthermore, throughout the text, the readers find him taking refuge in a self-denial position, subverting his natural urges and feelings. Focusing on these aspects of David's sexuality, this paper argues that David is a sexually ambivalent character who neither knows his sexuality nor can recognize other nonheteronormative sexual identities because his white heteronormative socioeconomic apparatus not just builds his sexual consciousness but also teaches him not to yield to different nonheteronormative sexual values which his society does not recognize as the culturally acceptable standard.

The text portrays David as a sexually ambivalent character who is troubled with his sexuality. Although he recalls his first enjoyable sexual encounter with Joey, he finds it shameful that he has ever had sex with a boy. For instance, on the one hand, he acknowledges the fact that he enjoys Joey so much that a lifetime is not long enough to enjoy him making love. On the other hand, after sex with Joey, he changes his mind and terms his sexual activity "monstrous" that must not be repeated because if it gets repeated, he might lose his "manhood" (10). He describes his sexual act with Joey thus: "Odd to remember, for the first time in so long, how good I felt that night, how fond of Joey... I feel in myself now a faint, ... great thirsty heat, would burst. But out of this astounding, intolerable pain came joy; we gave each other joy that night. It seemed, then, that a lifetime would not be long enough for me to act with Joey the act of love" (8- 9). From this description, the readers might feel that David is a gay man, here and throughout, but his

ambivalence begins as soon as he wakes up from sleep, spending the night making love with Joey. As he narrates: “I would have touched him to wake him up but something stopped me. I was suddenly afraid...ashamed...I could have cried, cried for shame and terror, cried for not understanding how this could have happened to me” (10). As David finds his (homo)sexual desire for Joey to be something monstrous, he puts conscious efforts to prevent it so that it cannot rise in him again. This rise and suppression of desire create ambivalence in him that not only persists throughout the novel but also keeps him in a state of in-betweenness from where he cannot come out and set himself free. Meg Wesling rightly points out David’s split self that he cannot confront as she asserts, “David experiences a psychic split in which he cannot, at any cost, confront the social ramifications of his desires” (Wesling 327). This inability to confront his conflicting mind, queer desire versus heteronormative consciousness, makes him sexually ambivalent, and keeps him unstable and restless throughout the novel.

David’s sexual ambivalence begins after his first sexual encounter with his school friend Joey. He not only terms that sexual intercourse with Joey shameful but also keeps himself away from Joey. After completing his high school graduation, he decides not to go to college, not to remain in his father’s house with his father and his aunt Ellen, but to leave his country and find himself somewhere in the world. He convinces his father and leaves home for France to execute his plan; as he says: “I maneuvered my father so well that he actually began to believe that my finding a job and being on my own was the direct result of his advice and a tribute to the way he had raised me. ... I would have stayed at home. But again, I think I knew, at the very bottom of heart, exactly what I was doing when I took the boat for France” (20-22). In France, he starts living in Paris. In his second year of staying in Paris, he meets Giovanni when he and Jacques go for a drink at a gay bar. Although at the first meeting, he considers leaving Giovanni, he visits

Giovanni's room when Giovanni offers. In the room, when Giovanni advances to take David in his arms, David remains ambivalent. His one mind says no, but another mind says yes, as he asserts: "He pulled me against him, putting himself into my arms as though he were giving me himself to carry, and slowly pulled me down with him to that bed. With everything in me screaming *No!* yet the sum of me sighed *Yes*" (61). Later, he moves into Giovanni's room and starts leading a conjugal life with "joy and amazement, which was newborn every day" (71). Soon, however, "anguish" and "fear" pushes him to get out of the room, and he waits for the arrival of his father's money so that he can move out of the room and stay with Hella, his girlfriend, who "Was on her way back from Spain" (72). Although it seems he wants to be with Hella, his psychic conflict begins when he receives a letter from Hella that announces her return from Spain to Paris. Hella's letter was a fatal blow to David as he asserts: "I cannot say that I was frightened. Or, it would be better to say that I did not feel any fear – the way men who are shot do not, I am told, feel any pain for a while" (94). From these two situations, it becomes apparent that David cannot take any side with whom he wants to stay, with whom he belongs to, and with whom he feels to be in love with. He cannot remain with Giovanni because he feels he is losing his masculinity through homosexual coupling with Giovanni. On the other hand, when he learns of Hella's return and considers possible heterosexual coupling with her, David feels only numb.

His unstable sexual desires become further complicated when he finds the same attraction in an unfamiliar boy that he finds in Giovanni and plans to leave Giovanni for Hella. As he asserts: "One day I would not be with Giovanni anymore... With this fearful intimation there opened in me a hatred for Giovanni which was as powerful as my love and which was nourished by the same roots" (79). Besides, the text explicitly shows his ambivalence in many places. For example, in Giovanni's room, although he enjoys doing small household chores, he starts changing his mind:

“But I am not a housewife – men never can be housewives” (83). Although he knows that Giovanni loves him, he finds himself “in a terrible confusion” whether he should stay with Giovanni or not (83). Furthermore, the readers see his ambivalent mind as the text presents: [David is talking to himself] “I will never let him touch me again. Then, when he touched me, I thought, it doesn’t matter, it is only the body, it will soon be over. When it was over, I lay in the dark and listened to his breathing and dreamed of the touch of hands, of Giovanni’s hands, or anybody’s hands, hands which would have the power to crush me and make me whole again” (83). Here, David’s internal struggles to confront heteronormative consciousness and queer desire further complicate his mental condition and create paranoia in his mind that haunts him until the death of Giovanni. I agree with Wesling that “In Giovanni, Baldwin offers a vision of the non-rational quality of desire; his death is a symbolic annihilation of that desire, the mark of its impossibility within the racial state formation of the mid-century” because when Giovanni was alive David could not rationalize his desire for Giovanni and he was struggling to choose between Giovanni and Hella; but after his death, he has been able to articulate the story of his complicated sex life although many readers may find him as an unreliable narrator (Wesling 331).

David’s ambivalent sexuality is not just revealed with Joey and Giovanni but also with Sue and Hella. Because of his strong urge to prove his manhood, he meets Sue, seduces her, has sex with her, and finally leaves her because he does not know what he ultimately wants from Sue. As he explains, “I also approached Sue as though she were a job of work, a job which it was necessary to do in an unforgettable manner. Somewhere, at the bottom of myself, I realized that I was doing something awful to her and it became a matter of my honor not to let this fact become too obvious... it became clearer every instant that what I had been afraid of had nothing to do with my body” (94). After having sexual intercourse with Sue, David is assured he is not gay. But he cannot

continue this heterosexual relationship with Sue because of his troubled state of mind. David seems to be trying to prove to himself that he is not gay by having sex with Sue, rather than an act that he enjoys. Here, he asserts: “I realized that my performance with Sue was succeeding even too well...Then I thought, *The end is coming soon*, her sobs became even higher and harsher... I thought, *Well, let her have it for Christ sake, get it over with*; then it was ending and I hated her and me, then it was over, and the dark, tiny room rushed back. And I wanted only to get out of there” (94). The narration suggests that David knows, at some level, that sex with Sue is merely an attempt to prove something, either to Sue or to himself, that does not seem to succeed.

When he meets Hella “in a bar in Saint-Germain-des-Pres,” he likes her thinking “she would be fun to have fun with,” and within few days of courtship, surprisingly he proposes her marriage although he is not sure whether he loves her genuinely, as he asserts, “I told her that I had loved her once and I made myself believe it. But I wonder if I had” (6). When Hella is in Spain, he keeps on continuing gay relations with Giovanni keeping Hella in darkness. While staying in Giovanni’s room he becomes determined to start a new life with Hella leaving Giovanni, but, after getting Hella, he visits Giovanni and finds Hella less attractive and “stale,” as he narrates:

I don’t know, now, when I first looked at Hella and found her stale, found her body uninteresting, her presence grating... Her underclothes, drying in the bathroom, which I had often thought of as smelling even rather improbably sweet and as being washed much too often, now began to seem unaesthetic and unclean... All that had once delighted me seemed to have turned sour on my stomach. (148)

Finding Hella uninteresting, he seeks to resort to drinking and visits sailors’ gay bar where Hella finds him and decides to discontinue her relationship with him. However, upon examining his moves and his characteristics, it seems he is unable to love anybody because he does not know

what love is, and how to love somebody. The text invites readers to see the ambivalence in David's mental states, and the text keeps him open so that the readers can interpret him entering the deeper states of his mind. In my view, the text cares less whether David loves a man or woman; instead, the text cares more about David's internal conflicts that prevent him from being anything, gay, bisexual, or straight. However, David's psychic split gets worse with time. Horace A. Porter rightly observes: "There is no clear indication that [David] can face his life, his past, with more honesty than before. He is, in one way or another, doomed to repeat himself... David, even as he searches his naked soul on the eve before the morning of Giovanni's execution, does not understand that the past never dies and never goes away" (qtd. in Yasmin 428). At this point, some readers might be wondering whether there are some external factors that form David's heteronormative consciousness. For these readers, this paper intends to discuss David's social upbringing that the article argues to be responsible for David's sexual ambivalence.

David's white heteronormative masculine socioeconomic apparatus forms his psychosexual consciousness that constantly pushes him to accept heteronormative sexuality as the only standard sexual value which ultimately results in his sexual ambivalence as he cannot stay in the other side of the border, queer sexuality. David grows up in a heteronormative white masculine culture that forms his consciousness that he is superior to others because he is white, male, and his ancestors have a glorious history to narrate. David feels good with his appearance, race, and ancestry because of their imperial legacy; as he asserts: "My reflection is tall, perhaps rather like an arrow, my blonde hair gleams. My face is like a face you have seen many times. My ancestors conquered a continent, pushing across death-laden plains, until they came to an ocean which faced away from Europe into a darker past" (5). David is a product of this white heteronormative masculine imperial socioeconomic structure which prevents him from recognizing queer sexual

feelings; and, consequently, he finds himself in in-betweenness of these two types of sexuality, heteronormative and nonheteronormative sexuality. He, on the one hand, cannot accept any nonheteronormative sexual activity because of his in-built heteronormative consciousness that dominates his psychosexual consciousness. For example, after making love with Joey, he asserts: "In Joey's bed...I had decided to allow no room in the universe for something which shamed and frightened me" (21). Instead of exploring and recognizing his queer feelings, he starts repressing because he cannot accept anything which is not masculine and goes against his heteronormative value systems. In short, David's white heteronormative imperial socioeconomic structure has conditioned a consciousness in him that he has to be masculine like his predecessors; and this constructed consciousness prevents him from recognizing other nonheteronormative sexual instincts in him and pushes him to the point of being a sexually ambivalent character who cannot recognize his queer tendencies and fails to be himself and love anybody whoever he is in relationship with. Therefore, to comply with this heteronormative expectation of sexuality, he represses his nonheteronormative sexual desires through his conscious processes.

David is concerned about his manhood, masculinity, gender, and sexual identity. The text reveals that he is more concerned about his gender role in homosexual intercourse with Giovanni than in any other situation in the novel. He cannot accept any nonheteronormative sexual intercourse with anyone where his sexual role is feminine because he fears it may take his masculinity, as he asserts: "Above all, I was suddenly afraid. It was borne in on me: *But Joey is a boy*. I saw suddenly the power in his thighs, in his arms, and in his loosely curled fists. The power and the promise and the mystery of that body made me suddenly afraid. That body suddenly seemed the black opening of a cavern in which I would be tortured till madness came, in which I would lose my manhood" (10). Although he enjoys sex with Joey, he cannot accept the idea that

someone feminizes him and his masculinity get threatened, questioned, and compromised. In his “Immaculate Manhood: *The City and the Pillar*, *Giovanni's Room*, and the Straight-Acting Gay Man,” Harry Thomas terms David as “a straight acting gay man” (606) who indeed enjoys gay intercourse but not in the cost of losing heteronormative masculine identity. Although I am not taking any side whether David is gay or bisexual, I agree with Thomas to this point that David does not want to lose his manhood, and at any cost, he wants to protect it. And here is my argument that David’s heteronormative apparatus does not let him recognize anything which goes against white American heteronormative values. And the influences of this apparatus complicate his sexuality preventing him from recognizing any nonheteronormative sexual practice acceptable and normal. Consequently, he becomes sexually ambivalent, and fails to love anybody, male or female. Furthermore, to keep his manhood protected, he keeps a reasonable distance from the Parisian gay subculture. As he points out:

Most of the people I knew in Paris were, as Parisians sometimes put it, of le milieu [the city's gay subculture] and, while this milieu was certainly anxious enough to claim me, I was intent on proving, to them and to myself, that I was not of their company. I did this by being in their company a great deal and manifesting towards all of them a tolerance which placed me, I believed, above suspicion. (23)

Therefore, it becomes evident that David’s obsession with masculinity, manhood, and gender identity constantly keeps him stressed and ambiguous about his sexuality. As he is a product of his white heteronormative socioeconomic structure, he cannot recognize his instincts because he is afraid of losing his invaluable phallus as he believes any such nonheteronormative move might revoke his manhood and masculinity. Therefore, it can be argued that David’s ambivalent

sexuality marks the inability of the heteronormative white masculinity that has failed to provide a viable alternative space for the nonheteronormative members of the community.

In his "In the Dark Room: Homosexuality and/as Blackness in James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*," Josep M. Armengol argues that in *Giovanni's Room* "race is deflected onto sexuality with the result that whiteness is transvalued as heterosexuality, just as homosexuality becomes associated with blackness, both literally and metaphorically" (673). For Armengol, though, "Whiteness has traditionally been opposed to blackness, and even as heterosexuality has usually been constructed in opposition to homosexuality, *Giovanni's Room* undermines such false oppositions by revealing, as we shall see, their interrelatedness and mutual dependence" (674). I agree with Armengol because in the novel David racializes and fetishizes both Joey and Giovanni and present them as exotic figures, as he describes: "Joey's body was brown, was sweaty, the most beautiful creation I had ever seen till then" (10). Likewise, Joyce and McBride argue that the text sexualizes national identity. As Joyce and McBride assert: "Everywhere in *Giovanni's Room*, for example, national identity is sexualized" (Field 126). I also agree with Joyce and McBride because the text directly supports their argument. In the text, David not just describes Giovanni as "dark and leonine" (39) as well as "black-haired" (82) but also tells Giovanni how the French view the Italians: "the Italians are too fluid, too volatile, have no sense of measure" (50). Therefore, it seems David's racialization and nationalization of sexuality are partly responsible for his sexual ambivalence because this racialization of sexuality distances him from his gay partners and gives him little or no comfort, instead puts him under stress, fear, and shame that most of his lovers are not like him, but racially different.

Some objections to this reading may be that the paper ignores the queer aspects of the novel. This paper excuses itself from the debate of labeling David's sexuality and chooses to focus

on his sexual ambivalence which remains unexplored. David's class consciousness, racial aspects, gender identity, and recognizing normative sexuality as a standard form of sexuality are the direct outcome of his white heteronormative socioeconomic structure that David cannot untie. Therefore, to understand David, we need to pay close attention to his troubled childhood, his father's vision for him, his thoughts, and also his actions because they all are intertwined.

David is a sexually ambivalent character who is not just unable to love anybody but also unable to recognize his sexuality. He is a product of his heteronormative socioeconomic apparatus that not just shapes his moral, ethical, and cultural values but also pushes him not to allow and, to a great extent, to resist any nonheteronormative values because he fears if he gets exposed and mixed to these values, he might lose his cultural purity and be corrupted. The text reveals this cultural tension through his father's letter where his father suggests he should return home because his father thinks, in France, he has nothing to get, and in future, he may regret this. As his father writes to him:

But my guess is you're going to be sorry one of these fine days that you stayed over there... There's nothing over there for you. You're as American as pork and beans, though maybe you don't want to think so anymore... You keep asking me to send you your money... I really don't think I'd be doing you a favor by letting you spend what little money you've got over there and then coming home to nothing. What the hell are you doing? (85)

From his father's letter, it becomes clear that he needs to comply with the expectations of his father if he wants his money. Although David has left home (America), he is very much within the home because he is financially dependent and leads his life in France from the money which he receives from his father. Hence, it becomes impossible for him to recognize any nonheteronormative sexual practices that his father does not recognize as a standard form of sexuality. However, knowing the

reasons for David's sexual ambivalence is significant to foster the LGBT movement because without creating space for the nonheteronormative sexual practices within the community, we cannot expect our future generations will learn to respect gender and sexual fluidity. There is a considerable potential to conduct further research on the postcolonial aspects of the text. A postcolonial reading of *Giovanni's Room* is possible because in France, David behaves like a colonizer who colonizes Giovanni and treats him as a colonized subject. Besides, like the colonizers, he finds exotic beauty in Giovanni that the European orientalist sought in the Orient. Furthermore, he stays in Giovanni's room, spends from the money Giovanni earns, but, surprisingly, like the colonizers, he wants to dominate Giovanni. Therefore, I think future researchers may consider conducting further research in this area because this area is yet unexplored, and any scholarship in this area might enrich our knowledge regarding the text.

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Teaching Literature: Great Professors in the Literature Classroom

ABSTRACT

In the discussion of teaching literature, one controversial issue has been whether professors should remain dispassionately objective to various political and philosophical ideologies in the classroom; or if they should influence their students with their political and philosophical views. On the one hand, some scholars argue that professors of literature cannot remain objective in their classroom because their choices of content, teaching methods, and ways of conducting classes not only reflect their ideologies but also influence their students. On the other hand, some others argue that professors should not influence their students with their political and philosophical views because the literature classroom is not a place for imposing professors' political agendas. Within this context, this paper examines the theories of teaching literature and seeks to answer this issue. Drawing on the works of Himmelfarb, Showalter, and McKeachie, this paper argues that although professors should not impose their political and philosophical views on their students by targeting them as their potential followers, they must influence them to uphold the value of liberal democracy, the value of liberty, and also the value of social justice because these are the fundamental values of Western liberal democratic society.

Keywords: Critical Pedagogy; Teaching; Literature; Professors; Classroom; Ideology; Influence; Objectivity; Engagement.

What is the best method of teaching literature? How can professors of literature make their students critical thinkers? Should professors share their political and philosophical views with their students? In the discussion of teaching literature, one controversial issue has been whether professors should influence their students with their political and philosophical views. On the one hand, some scholars argue that professors should not influence their students with their ideologies because the literature classroom is not a place for imposing a political agenda upon students. On the other hand, critics argue that professors may not be able to avoid influencing their students with their ideologies because their choices of content, teaching methods, and ways of conducting classes not only reflect their ideologies but also impact their students.

Hence, because of scholars' opposing perspectives about teaching literature, some questions emerge that need to be answered to determine the role of the professors as the leaders of the classes. These questions are:

- (1) Can professors of literature avoid influencing their students with their political and philosophical ideologies?
- (2) Should professors act as activists of social change, disseminating political and philosophical ideologies among their students?

My feelings on the issue are mixed. Although I agree with the point that the political and philosophical views of the professors are reflected through their curriculum designs, teaching methods, and class lectures, I do not think that it is a right approach from the part of the professors to impose their views on their students. While professors should not work as political activists and propaganda machines to spread a specific ideology, they have a moral responsibility to share and uphold the values of humanity. In short, professors should not impose their political and philosophical views on their students by targeting them as their potential followers; however, they

must teach them the value of liberal democracy, the value of liberty, and also the value of social justice because these are the fundamental values of Western liberal democracy that the scholars of humanities have been sharing for generations to put the human society forward.

Great professors never impose anything on their students; instead, they work as facilitators and create an environment of learning, opening the world to the students. In the literature classroom, there are some professors who impose and spread their beliefs and ideologies on their students almost in an attempt to create their empire. Although their motives are not necessarily evil, this is (1) very unprofessional and a barrier to high-quality teaching, and (2) similar to the colonizing process wherein professors act like the old colonial masters and treat their students as colonized subjects.

In short, in the classroom, professors hold their students hostage with their ideological obsessions and sometimes, intentionally or not, seek to convert young minds into their ideologies. Professor Gertrude Himmelfarb criticizes this approach of professors and argues that the literature classroom should not be a place of imposing the "professor's agenda upon the student" in a form of identity politics, holding students "Hostage to the professor's preoccupation" (Himmelfarb 88).

For Himmelfarb, this predisposition needs to be questioned because dominating the minds of students and systematically taking advantage of the classroom settings is not a healthy practice. Professors should not impose their ideologies upon their students because this not only shuts the door on debate and discussion, but also makes students feel intimidated about bringing alternative interpretations of the issues being discussed.

This imposition not only discourages students from thinking outside of the box but also hinders their intellectual development. Moreover, this imposition from the part of the professors stops the free flow of ideas, which is vital for a liberal democratic community. Great professors do

not impose their ideologies on their students using their leadership positions in the classrooms; instead, they dispassionately open the world to their students so that they can see, think and learn freely based on their observation and understanding. Students must have absolute autonomy to interpret a literary text without feeling intimidated by the professors' preferred theories. For a vibrant classroom, professors should encourage students to come up with innovative ideas and be equally respectful to various interpretations, although they might have particular preferences for specific ideas.

Great professors not only teach subjects but also teach values. Professors of literature should influence their students in upholding the values of liberal democracy, equality, and social justice because these are the fundamental values of the humanities, and without these values, our civilization will collapse. Professors should influence students to stand against totalitarianism, dictatorship, and social and political tyranny to uphold freedom of speech, rule of law, and civil liberty "Consistent with the values of civility and democratic culture" (Ohmann 93).

Literature professors must uphold these values in the classroom because these are our collective values and the very foundation of our society. For example, I love Sophocles' *Antigone*, and sometimes assign the text. In teaching *Antigone*, I never impose my ideology upon students. Instead, I give them full autonomy to read the text in their own way. However, I point out whether the protagonist Antigone in *Antigone* has agency. Although Antigone's uncle Creon argues that he wants to uphold the dignity of his State and save Antigone from punishment, the real question is whether Creon's ideology makes sense to Antigone or not. However, upholding the idea of equality, democratic values, and social justice is not in any way to be considered as an imposition of personal ideology on students. Instead, it is an essential step to make students aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Although many theorists of teaching literature denounce the idea of influencing students through professors' political and philosophical views, the majority of theorists agree with the notion that professors should not avoid spreading humanistic values among their students. These theorists argue that literature is not a detached discipline from the world; instead, it reflects the world artistically. Therefore, literature professors cannot avoid discussing the real-life issues which are taking place every day in the community. Moreover, as the torchbearers of humanity, they are morally responsible for spreading the values of humanity among their students.

For instance, in her *Teaching Literature*, Elaine Showalter asserts "Our role and our subject are not cleanly detached from the world, but messily entangled with it" (Showalter 140). Literature and the contemporary world are intertwined where literature produces humanistic values and professors of literature disseminate these values among students to make the world a better, safer, and kinder place for all to live in peace. Along the same line, in discussing teachers' roles in teaching literature, Wilbert McKeachie argues, "We can't avoid teaching values... our choices of content, our choices of teaching methods, our very ways of conducting classes reveal our values and influence our students' reactions" (qtd. in Showalter 132). What McKeachie argues here is that the professors of literature should not avoid teaching values; instead, they should engage their students not only in teaching and learning but also in upholding values. And by 'values,' he means humanistic values.

According to Terry Eagleton, literature serves the purpose of religion as it "Works primarily by emotion and experience, and so was admirably well-fitted to carry through the ideological task which religion left off" (Eagleton 51). Although Eagleton criticizes the British colonizers for using English literature as a substitute of religion as religion, Christianity, was failing to serve the community, this idea of replacing religion with literature is significant for me

because I believe literature has potential to replace religion and it can be used for greater good unlike colonizers evil motives. Literature can be used to unite the community and spread positivity across the communities. Therefore, professors of literature have another responsibility to carry out, which is to spread humanistic values with their students. Although I do not believe that professors should impose any political and philosophical ideas on their students, I agree with Showalter and McKeachie that we cannot avoid teaching values because these are essential for establishing a humane, harmonious, and compassionate community. Furthermore, to a great extent, I also agree with Terry Eagleton that because of the failure of religion, literature has duties to fulfill the vacuum because it has to replace the position of religion. Therefore, professors of literature cannot avoid their responsibility to provide the moral leadership to the community.

Some scholars might object that this paper contradicts itself on the grounds that it argues professors should not influence students with their political and philosophical views at the same time that it advocates upholding liberty, democracy, and justice, which are also political and philosophical ideology.

Essentially, even though I am arguing against the wholesale imposition of personal and political ideology, this does not mean that they should avoid encouraging them to uphold the values of democracy. There is a difference between imposing personal and political ideology and upholding human dignity. I strongly hold the idea that professors of literature must uphold the spirit of humanity. A professor might believe in atheism, Marxism, feminism, and/or nihilism because, in a democratic society, everyone has the liberty to believe in whatever she wants. But it becomes a problem when a professor tries to impose her political ideology on her students and objectifies others who do not agree with her views. Professors, therefore, should remain objective and ensure inclusivity, neutrality, and fairness.

Great professors do not act as a propaganda machine to spread a particular ideology; instead, they remain objective to various ideologies and maintain professionalism. They strive to open the world to the students and facilitate them in navigating the world according to their own choices and beliefs. For example, in her personal life, a professor may be a feminist, and she might believe that feminist interpretation is the best perspective through which to read literature. However, she should not impose her idea on her students intending to make them feminists because there are many schools of thought that students need to know thoroughly. Students should have the autonomy to choose what they want to follow.

Professors' responsibilities are to introduce students to the various schools of thought so that they can find what school(s) make sense to them. This paper does not validate or invalidate any school of thought, instead it recommends that professors should introduce all of them to students objectively. While a professor presents a particular ideology to her students, she should present its counter-arguments as well so that her students may know all the viewpoints and can make their own decisions based on their understanding. Now some might argue that since there are many valid interpretations of a literary text, students might struggle to know which interpretation they should follow. My reply to them is please let the students decide what makes sense to them instead of acting like Creon in *Antigone*.

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