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2010

Othering The Minority

A Study of Some Writing and
Visual Discourses in Which The
Minority Community of
Bangladesh and East Pakistan is
Presented as The marginalized

(Dissertation paper for M.A. In English)

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Dedication

- This paper is dedicated to the people who love to think.



Acknowledgement

Dr. Kaisar Haque, for whom I dared to choose this topic; Mr. Hasan Al Zaed for providing the film Matir Moyna and for his thoughtful suggestion regarding the main idea of the work; Advocate Nazmunnaheer Dolly for providing the novel Lajja; Mr. Shamsujjaman Tapan for providing the film Ontorjatra; Mr. Kazi Ahsanul Hoque for hinting out the sources; Ms. Shaima Shuhda Boby for providing the book The Post-Colonial Studies Reader; Mr. Zahid Shikdar for his desperate attempt to find out my primary sources; Ms. Naila Islam for suggesting a source during the search for material to choose the topic; East West University Lab where I did all the internet search; and I acknowledge my debt to everyone who somehow contributed but my sight failed to detect it.



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Abstract:

To Michel Foucault, truth does not have an absolute existence; rather truth is a construction which assumes its shape by the power practice through different discourses. Contemporary representation of the minority community in Bangladeshi films and novels seems to indicate an attempt to construct an unintended 'truth' which seems to inspire the process of othering the minority.

Some films and novels created both after and before 1971, tend to present the misery of the minority community of this zone with sympathetic affection. The process seems to resist the othering or at least tries to create a sensibility against this othering among the audience or readers. While doing so, the process itself paradoxically contains the possibility of encouraging that very othering. This dissertation tries to investigate whether the presentation of the minority community of Bangladesh and East Pakistan in written and visual discourses resist the othering of the minority or becomes part of the 'regime' of representation that treats the minority community as other. When a film or a novel tries to sympathize with the minority community, it has to re-create the othering the community faces in real life situation. Repetition of this re-creation in different discourses produces the unintended construction of the 'truth' which establishes the real life situation to be 'natural' to the audience. The effect a film or a novel creates gets included in the entire integration of similar experiences of the audience. The othering of the minority community can not avoid the possibility of assuming the shape of 'reality' through cross references to the same 'fact'. It is to be investigated whether the cross references betray their intended purpose.

Chapter 1 (Introduction):

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971. But, the association of the concept of minority with Hindu, in this zone, dates back to 1947's partition of the sub-continent. The partition was held on the basis of religion. The border was open for migration. After the partition, the minority community both in India and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) faced unprecedented persecution by the majority. Most shockingly, Bangladeshi Hindus had to go through a number of traumas because of the rage that grew among the Bangladeshi Muslims in reaction to some communal terrorism by the Hindus in India. These experiences of Hindus are similar to those of the colonized community while under imperial hegemony. The treatment of the minority by the majority assumes an inherited shape. This reality is possibly the outcome of the age old association with the practice of imperial oppression. It is said that Bangladeshi Hindus are doubly oppressed in contrast to Indian Muslims as minority, and there is historical evidence in support of this statement. India, after partition, has been a free state, while East Pakistan has to go through the period of West Pakistani hegemony. Between 1946 (East Bengal) and 1992 (Bangladesh), there were a number of incidents of communal violence which resulted in deaths and encouraged migration. Communal riots wrecked the traditional secular image of Bengal, on the eve of the 'second partition'¹ of Bengal in 1947. The Communal violence is often blamed onto the British colonialists, which tore the silence in otherwise quiet Bengal. Hindus and Muslims were killed in Calcutta, Noakhali and Comilla. Peace-loving Hindus and Muslims had little or nothing to do with the riots (Samad). During this period, the Indian Hindus and Muslims were involved in riots, but in this zone, the Hindus were just the victim of the raging anguish of the

¹ In fact, Bengal has been divided three times; first time in 1905 (Samad)

Muslims. This zone did not see evidence of much riots; rather it was persecution, one sided. During the liberation war in 1971, the Hindus were oppressed more than the Muslims, because the West Pakistani military force were brain-washed into believing that the Hindus were Indian agents bent on breaking up Pakistan. Even after liberation, the two-nation theory did work sufficiently in the mass consciousness. It has been a general practice that the majority reminds the minority that the community is a mismatch in this land. Moreover, the state itself has played this role of reminder as the eighth amendment of the constitution proclaimed Islam as the religion of the state.

Some Bangladeshi and West Pakistani discourses tend to present the misery of the minority community of the state with sympathetic affection. The process seems to resist the othering or at least tries to create a sensibility against this othering among the audience or readers.

To investigate whether the cross references betray their intended purpose, the paper involves a set of theories pre-printed by Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak and Stuart Hall. Spivak coined the idea of 'othering'-the process by which the imperial power treats the native as subaltern. This process can also be applied to the minority situation. To Michel Foucault, truth is not an individual existence; rather truth is a construction which assumes its shape by the power practice through different discourses. The process of the presentation of the minority community of Bangladesh and East Pakistan in films and novels contain the possibility to construct an unintended 'truth' which seems to inspire the process of othering the minority. Stuart Hall maintains that, the meaning of language (he uses 'language' in a universal sense) is created through the 'active interpretation' of the receiver. So, the presentation of the existing reality in discourses, along with the makers' intention, must be interpreted through the same process. Here, Hall intends to assert that, whatever the encoder intends to imply, the meaning will emerge and

assume shape through the authorship of the decoder. So, from these considerations, the presentation of the Hindus can shift its meaning.

Methodology:

This is a library research. The attitude of the paper is investigating. The materials are collected from books and internet.

Extent of Studies:

Primary Sources: Lajja – Taslima Nasrin (Novel).

“Ekti Tulsi Gacher Kahini” - Sayad Waliullah (Short Story).

Matir Moyna (The Clay Bird) (Film) - Directed by Tareq and Catherine Masud.

Ontorjatra (Literally means ‘Inner Journey’) (Film) - Direct by Tareque and Catherine Masud.

Chitra Nadir Pare (Quiet Flows The River Chitra²) (Film) - Directed by Tanvir Mokammel.

Secondary Sources: “Can the Subaltern Speak?” - Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Essay).

“The Work of Representation” – Stuart Hall (Essay).

Design of the Paper:

The paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter has inaugurated the idea of the argument, along with the methodology, extent of studies and the design of the paper. The second chapter will meditate on the theories and ideas to be applied later. This chapter also will try to

² This English title is already provided on the cover of the dvd.

provide a relevant explanation of the ideas. The third chapter will locate the necessary segments of the primary sources and analyze the segments from a critical point of view, bearing in mind the theories and ideas to be applied. The fourth chapter will go for an argument. This chapter will try to assimilate the ideas and theories with the selected sections of primary sources. The fifth chapter will summarize the entire paper, and at the same time provide the researcher's subjective point of view regarding the handling of the investigation.



Chapter 2 (Othering, Regime of truth, Power):

To Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the process of othering is rooted in the process of subject construction. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she describes the process through which colonial subject is placed in the position of other. However, she adheres to the Lacanian distinction between 'Other' and 'other. In Lacan's theory, the other-with the small 'o'-designates the other who resembles the self, which the child discovers when it looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being. When the child, which is an uncoordinated mass of limbs and feelings sees its image in the mirror, that image must bear sufficient resemblance to the child to be recognized, but it must also be separate enough to ground the child's hope for an 'anticipated mastery'; this fiction of mastery becomes the basis of the 'ego'. This other is important in defining the identity of the subject. In postcolonial theory, it can refer to the colonized others who are marginalized by imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the centre and, perhaps crucially, become the focus of anticipated mastery by the imperial 'ego'. The Other – with the capital 'O' – has been called the *grande-autre* by Lacan, the great Other, in whose gaze the subject gains identity (Ashcroft 172). The Symbolic Other is not a real interlocutor but can be embodied in other subjects such as the mother or father that may represent it. The Symbolic Other is a 'transcendent or absolute pole of address, summoned each time that subject speaks to another subject'. Thus the Other can refer to the mother whose separation from the subject locates her as the first focus of desire. It can refer to the father whose Otherness locates the subject in the Symbolic order. And, this Other can be compared to the imperial centre, imperial discourse, or the empire itself, in two ways: firstly, it provides the terms in which the colonized subject gains a sense of his or her identity as somehow 'other', dependent; secondly, it becomes

the 'absolute pole of address', the ideological framework in which the colonized subject may come to understand the world.

Spivak claims, "The much publicized critique of the sovereign subject actually... inaugurates a Subject" (Spivak 24). And apart from the colonial situation, in an independent land, the majority assumes the shape of that Subject, and the members of minority find themselves occupying the place of the other through the inter-textual practice of difference. Michel Foucault locates the dominant group, who drive the state authority, practising 'epistemic violence', as the politics of difference is demonstrated not only through ideological and scientific productions, but also through the institution of the law. This 'epistemic violence' is the outcome of the power practice of the dominant group which establishes the minority as a distinct alien one in a seemingly very much 'natural' way, for the concept of 'natural' is also constructed by the dominant group. To Foucault, "Truth isn't outside power... Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned...the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Hall 49). According to Foucault, the question of truth is related to knowledge which is linked to power. Knowledge not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in this sense at least, 'becomes true'. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practices. Thus, "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (Hall 49). Knowledge is to put to work, through certain technologies and

strategies of application, in specific situations, historical contexts and institutional regimes. Foucault calls these means of disseminating knowledge 'discourse'.

So, the truth knowledge establishes can not avoid the problem of representation, as it must go through discursive formation. At the same time, a counter discourse also faces the same problem. In this case, the counter discourse itself becomes part of the signifying practice that has already established an intentional or unintentional truth. To recall Spivak here, the much exposure of the critique of the sovereign subject inaugurates a Subject. That is, it does not matter whether a discourse intends to establish or resist a truth; the textual practice of that truth provides the existing truth much more authenticity which seemingly naturalizes the truth among the audience.

To Stuart Hall, if meaning changes, and is never finally fixed, then it follows that 'taking the meaning' must involve an active process of interpretation. Meaning has to be actively 'read' or 'interpreted'. Consequently, there is a necessary and inevitable imprecision about language; language in a universal sense, as Hall calls every sign a language after Foucault. "The meaning we take as viewers, readers and audience, is never exactly the meaning which speaker or writer or by other viewers. And since, in order to say something meaningful, we have to enter language, where all sorts of older meanings which pre-date us, are already stored from previous eras, we can never cleanse language completely, screening out all the other hidden meanings which might modify or distort what we want to say" (Hall 33).





Chapter 3 (Minority of This Zone in Discourse):

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This chapter will locate and interpret the selected segments of the target discourses. This section reads the segments those seem to re-create the treatment to the Hindus by the Muslims in East Pakistan and Bangladesh. The segments are taken from textual and visual discourses. While interpreting the segments, the chapter will not only look at the characters' treatment but also the author's attitude to the Hindus. And finally it will try to predict the segments' effort on the receivers.

L (Shame):

Taslima Nasrin's novel Lajja takes in the distress that spread among the Bangladeshi Hindus, following the pulling down of a 1000 year old Indian masque 'Babri Masjid' by Indian Hindus, resulting in a deadly riot that broke out between the Indian Hindus and Muslims in 1992-93. The entire novel moves around a Bangladeshi Hindu family which has been a victim of communal hostility. The family consists of four members; Suranjan Datta, is an unemployed graduate; his father Sudhamay Datta, a retired assistant professor of a medical college, remaining unable to gain a promotion even being eligible; his mother Kiranmoyee Datta, a housewife who has received college education; and his younger sister Nilanjana Datta, still a college student. The family lives in Dhaka in a rented house. It possessed a house of its own in Mymensing, but had to flee out of the horror produced by the local residents, and sold the house for a negligible price and move to Dhaka. On December 08, 1992, the family shakes with fear and feels the need to find a safe shelter as the Hindus are being tormented throughout the country, especially in Dhaka as a reaction to the wiping out of 'Babri Masjid' by the Indian Hindus the previous noon. Totally unprepared to face such a situation, Suranjan remains unmoved as he cannot decide what to do.

For the first time he happens to think in a way he has ever been reluctant to. He feels himself, as well as his family, insecure in this land and gets astonished to question himself where one is secure if not in homeland. Suranjan finds himself absorbed into a spell of thought which associates himself to a world completely alien to his land. At the same time, lying on the bed, the aching father relates the violence to his similar experiences gathered in '47, '52, '62, '64, '66, '68, '69, '71, '89, and '90. He recalls the '71 violence when he, for the first time, realized that their being Hindu caused them much suffering in contrast to that of the Muslim families. The father recollects his past memory and finds himself reluctant to leave this land while a considerable number of Hindus set out for India during both the liberation war in 1971 and the partition in 1947, and tries to justify his decision of not leaving this land. By this time, the sister Nilanjana gets out of the house in search of a shelter. The family, taking its evening snacks, comes to hear abusive slogans against Hindus outside the door. This slogan reminds Suranjan the slogans echoed in '90 when innumerable shops belonging to Hindus were set on fire. He is hesitant to call the 90's incident riot. To him, riot cannot be one sided. He would rather call it persecute.

Among the friends of Suranjan, the Muslims are more in number. Even, during an emergency, when Suranjan's father had to be admitted to Sohrawardi hospital, he was assisted with most care by one of his Muslim friends. He fell in love with a Muslim girl Pervin, though the love did not end with a happy consequence. In fact, Suranjan has lost the interest of marriage. But at the same time he recollects one of his school days when he was rebuked by one of his Muslim classmates Khaled. At a stage of quarrel, Khaled uttered 'hindu' as slang. The readers come to be aware that, Suranjan, just like his father, has always been unwilling to leave this land as been suggested to. Nilanjana, recalling her school days, finds herself outside the class in 'Islamiat' period. In this connection, the reader is introduced to the father's own recommendation regarding

the involvement of religion as an obligatory subject of curriculum. He dreams a secular adaptation of religion which is suitable for students of all religion.

Then the narrative moves to the present situation. Suranjan gets out of his house aimlessly. And he faces a mob with those abusive slogans as soon as he gets out. He recognizes the faces that appear with a new face that day. Suranjan receives affectionately uttered worried caution from every one he meets on his way. But, somehow he finds a guardianship in those speeches. An ambiguous uneasiness eclipses him. He invents subtle means in the alerts he receives. The affections seem to start undermining him. In a moment he feels a detachment with the year old known faces; with the community he has been in touch with nourishing a secular attitude free from communal narrowness. That day Suranjan does not go to his Muslim friends' residences; rather he gets to one of his Hindu friends who is comparatively less intimate to him. The family is not sure whether they can stay in this land. Suranjan visits few more Hindu relatives and returns home where the father's health suddenly deteriorates to paralysis. Suranjan learns that no one has come to see them. The after happenings occur in a rush. The sister comes to see the father. Suranjan once again gets out to find consolation to a newly known female Hindu friend. As he returns, the house was looted and the sister was abducted. Suranjan begs help to Haydar, a man in position in the locality and a friend of him. Nilanjana does not return. Suranjan borrows money from one of his Hindu friends whom he visited earlier on that day. His father's condition continues deteriorating. Suranjan sets his books on fire. He seizes a prostitute and abuses her in his room with a wild pleasure of tormenting a Muslim. News of increasing rage around everywhere starts gathering. One morning, after having a dreadful dream, Suranjan finds his father awakening him. The image includes one or two rays of light coming through the holes in window. The father proposes the son to set out for India.



The novel portrays two generations' cyclic journey towards the same destination. This is the story of losing faith. The son echoes the father in the question of leaving the land. But in the end, both get resolute to what they were against of. In fact, the father is resolute earlier. But the son discovers it later. For the first time, when the son feels a sort of responsibility to the family, as the father gets paralyzed, he realizes that he ought to be careful about his father who has gradually lost faith from the world around him. At this point, the son steps forward the resolution of his father he is going to echo once again. The process of this losing of faith both by the father and the son is to be looked at closely, for this process possesses two fold potentials; one - the narrative intends to do and another to be investigated. The author herself takes part in the novel, though she does not assume any character. Here, her treatment to the minority community also to be observed, because the operation of the novel's intended purpose receives its most powerful vigour here.

The family, representing the minority community of Bangladesh, reveals a fact that, the majority, at times, reminds them that they are the minority. But, this reminder comes from the state as well. In this case, this reminder emerges in two ways. Firstly, occasionally the state attempts to some changes in textual levels, and these changes themselves appear to be that very reminder. Secondly, the reminder is caught through a critical view analyzing the statistical reality regarding the recruitment of the minority in high positions of government. The characters discover the cue of the reminder demonstrated by the majority while relating the existing changing reality to the stock image inherited from past experience. Again, the author presents some statistics that speaks for that very reminder by the state.

One thing is noteworthy that the characters do not take the presumptions to be granted until they assimilate those with reality. Even, the reality does not shape a truth until it is repeated. The

agitation of the father should have started from the very partition as he is of the evidencing generation of partition. And to him the basis of the partition does not seem to be a justified one as he finds solidarity with Abul Kalam Azad's writing.

It is one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest the religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different. It is true that Islam sought to establish a society which transcends racial, linguistic, economic and political frontiers. History has however proved that after the first few decades or at the most after the first century, Islam was not able to unite all the Muslim countries on the basis of Islam alone. (Nasrin 18)

And Sudhamay Datta believes that a man is Panjabi or Bengali before he is Hindu or Muslim, because they share a common history, language, culture and economy; and so the partition will cause endless bloodshed and trouble. Yet Mr. Datta is unwilling to leave the land. On the other hand, Suranjan does not evidence partition, but finds his birth land distressed as soon as he opens his eyes on earth. The father was involved in politics and does not mind the son's political orientation. Both the father and the son hold a belief in their own ideology during their young age struggle. The belief starts deteriorating in course of time. In fact, this loss of trust is merely a symptom of the entire disillusionment gradually eclipses them. The father finds repetitions of the violence he evidences during partition. He relates his religious identity to his failure in getting a promotion in job. The son discovers new faces of his year old known faces. He can no more trust his Muslim friends during the '92's agitation. Both the father and the son try to hold and remain their affection for motherland, but at a stage, the long cherished affection appears to be a betrayal to both.

Adding of statistical data by the author is suggestive. While describing the grief of Sudhamay Datta because of his failure in getting a promotion in job, the author presents a statistical picture of the recruitment of Hindus in high positions of government. The process immediately transforms the mood of the narrative from a fiction to reality. Here lies the effort of the intended purpose of the author. The statistics presented here tries to convince the reader that the fiction is just the rendering of an existing inequity. Afterwards she presents another picture of decrease of the number of Hindus in this zone from 1901 to 1992. Again the narrative refers to the eighth amendment of constitution which establishes Islam as the religion of the state. These additions speak for the minority community on behalf of the author. These suggestions by the author make the author's attitude to the minority community more explicit. The author tries to sympathize with the minority in her novel.

“Ekti Tulsi Gacher Kahini” (The Story of a Tulsi Plant):

“Ekti Tulsi Gacher Kahini” is a short story by Sayad Waliullah. This story renders the partition of 1947 to a short extent. Immediately after the partition, a group of homeless people from Calcutta occupy an abandoned house in Dhaka. They find a hope of new start as they start living there. One day, all on a sudden, a Tulsi plant is discovered among the weeds. This plant alone discloses the fact that this house did belong to a Hindu family. One of the present dwellers asks to uproot the plant arguing that no sign of Hinduism will be tolerated from now on. The plant, as well as the statement, forms a hesitation among the group. However, the plant remains standing. It is found that someone is taking care of the plant. One day they are driven away by police as a demonstration of government order. The plant, along with the weeds, remains alone once again, and gets dried in need of water.

The author speaks in this narrative as well. When the plant is asked to be uprooted, the narrator says that they are not well accustomed with the Hindu rituals, but they have heard that Tulsi plant is associated with Hindu rituals; that every evening the housewife offers worship to the plant lighting a lamp close to it. The narrator continues saying that perhaps the family has had festivals, rainy days; perhaps someone has passed away, or someone has arrived, but this worship has not stopped for a single day. One of the characters imagines the housewife still having her journey in search of a shelter, or she has got shelter to some relatives. Wherever she is, as the sun sets, surely her eyes get wet recalling the plant.

The night following the day the plant is discovered gets acrimonious with talks. The talks centre the communal hostility between Hindus and Muslims. Hindus made the partition. Another side is weak as only one voice who was a communist speaks on this side. The narrator interprets that the group intends to avoid the hesitation, formed due to the discovering of the plant, by over speaking.

In that abandoned house, the plant alone speaks on behalf of the fugitives of the house. That it remains unwounded by the mercy of the group, implicitly echoes the treatment of the majority to the minority in this land. It calls back the basis of partition into question.

Matir Moyna (The Clay Bird):

It is a film by Tareq and Catherine Masud. The film renders the Muslim society of this zone during 1971's liberation war. The film moves round a family consisted of the father, a devout Muslim figure; the mother, a housewife who revolts against the rigidity of the family manners next to the end; their son who is sent to 'madrassa'; their daughter who dies in want of treatment as the father does not allow her to take medicine during her fever, and the younger brother of the

father, a progressive young figure. The subject matter of the film does not concern the present content, rather some segments are useful here.

One of those segments appears near the beginning of the film. The son is found to have gone to observe a Hindu ritual with his uncle. The father rebukes the mother for allowing him to go out, because he does not like these kinds of Hindu rituals. He astonishes why a boy like his son should go to observe Hindu rituals. He alleges that the mother and the uncle are leading the son astray.

The next segment follows this occurrence. And this is a shocking one. The father waits angrily for the son to return. The son returns with some nick-nacks from the festival. The father snatches the things and throws out of the door exclaiming with disapproval how such degenerated things came in that house.

The son is sent to 'madrasa'. On the first day at there, the barber, while cutting hair, is astonished to see long hair of a boy. He explains that that sort of long hair is found in Hindu saints; and some Muslim saints are now doing that imitating those; the little boy should not go for such nasty acts.

In a segment, the Imam explains how to establish Islam. He says that mere praying and sacrificing are not enough. He urges the Muslims to be proactive against the unacceptable activities going on in the name of secularism. He calls upon the Muslims to be prepared for even a crusade if needed.

There are two 'hujurs' those direct the 'madrasa'. One day, the assistant 'hujur' and the care taker come to a conversation. The care taker asks the assistant 'hujur' to comment on the



'hujur's last preaching. The assistant 'hujur' opposes some points of the 'hujur's speech. He states that, militant implementation of power can never be a way of establishing Islam. He adds that, politics and Islam are not to be blurred. The care taker argues that, now a days, Islam can not stand alone without its political orientation, because it has been a challenge to save Pakistan. The assistant 'hujur' again opposes saying that, it is a false idea that Pakistan is to be saved to save Islam, because Pakistan has not established Islam in this zone; rather it has established hegemony. He finishes urging that our little boys, who are sent here to learn Islam, should not be used politically.

Of course, these segments are employed in the film to present the conservative situation of then Muslim society of this zone. The segments do not necessarily intend to disseminate any typical assumption about Hindus. The segments seem to render the socio picturesque trying to be authentic. And in some cases the film's attitude is to protest the assumptions readily acquired. But still, the segments somehow hold the power to shape the Muslim attitude to Hindus. When the father blames the mother for letting the son go to observe a Hindu event, or he throws the nick-nacks out of the door, the scene tries to present the existing communal intolerance, and at the same time it contains the possibility to inspire the existing reality. And when the 'hujur' urges the proactive movement by the Muslims to save Islam, and even to be prepared for the crusade, the audience should not find any reason to think against it; it does not matter what the makers intend to imply. There are some progressive operations in the film. The conservative father is protested by the desperate attempts of the mother next to the ending when she abandon the house and sets out with his son leaving the father alone in home. Again the uncle, along with his friend circle, operates a progressive movement during the entire film. The 'hujur's rigidity is virtually confronted by the assistant 'hujur' as the later one thinks rationally. But, these progressive

representations do not assure their fruitfulness. Because both sides do exist in reality and to re-create existing reality one must present both which makes the makers' intention ambiguous.

Itorjatra (Literally means 'Inner Journey'):

It is a film directed by Tareque and Catherine Masud. This is a film on the complex issue of dislocation and identity in a diasporic world. A divorced mother and her son return to Bangladesh after 15 years in London, prompted by the ex-husband's sudden death and funeral. The story follows the transforming experience of mother and her son as they, in very different ways, try to come to terms with this loss. But once again the storyline is not useful here.

In fact, this film has a very much tiny room to be relevant here. As the mother and the son return to Bangladesh, they stay in one of their relatives the very first day. It was a house of a Hindu family abandoned during the partition. The care taker of the house is the same person who served the earlier dwellers. And the servant is a Hindu.

This section does not have much to do with presentation of minority. Yet, if looked at critically, the positioning of the only Hindu character can be suggestive. It may reveal the makers' intention to show that, the position of a Hindu in Bangladesh is comparatively lower. The event recalls the partition, and thus, it can stand for calling the after effect of the partition into question. But, once again this film can not avoid the possibility of disseminating the opposite meaning. The positioning of a Hindu presented here holds enough strength to naturalize the picturesque. So, it would not be surprising if the intention is to create a sensibility among the audience to think critically regarding the existing reality, and the segment betrays the intention disseminating the opposite meaning.

ra Nadir Pare (Quiet Flows The River Chitra³):

This is a film directed by Tanvir Mokammel. The film tells the story of a Hindu family during the time between the partition and liberation war. After the partition of India in 1947, Shashikanta Sengupta's family, like millions of other Hindu families of East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh), faces the dilemma whether to migrate from the land their forefathers of to stay put. Shashikanta, a lawyer in profession, stubbornly refuses to leave his motherland. Widower Shashikanta has two children, Minoti and Bidyut. The family has two more members; the widow mother of Shashikanta and her daughter Basanti. They have a Muslim neighbour who has a son named Badal. The children grow up together. Minoti's childhood experiences include some unintentional offences by her companion. One day, one of their Hindu neighbours has left the land. And the friend also expresses that Minoti and her family will also leave, because they are Hindu. Bidyut also receives abusive words like 'malaun' from around. Bidyut seems to be unhappy here as he is much eagerly to go to Calcutta. He is sent for study to his aunty in Calcutta. The children grow up. Badal gets admitted to Dhaka University. He joins the movement against the marshal law imposed by Ayub Khan. One day he joins a procession and police fires at the procession. Badal breaths his last. During the 1964 riots, Basanti is raped. Basanti commits suicide by drowning herself in the Chitra River. This series of incidents around affects Shashikanta's falling health. One day he passes away beside the Chitra. News of migration gradually gets increased throughout the film. The violence of the riot takes a horrific shape. Innumerable Hindu houses and shops are being looted, set into fire and

community is facing an unprecedented torment. Minoti and her aunty Anuprava finally leave the border en route to Calcutta.

This film almost repeats the incidents sketched in Lajja. Here, once again the viewer finds agitation of the minority community; their stubborn effort to steak to motherland and at last the s of faith. The same critical attitude can be shown to this discourse as to Lajja. Once again, e, the characters do not take the presumptions to be granted until they assimilate those with lity. Even, the reality does not shape a truth until it is repeated. Here also the agitation of the ner should have started from the very partition. Here, also the majority reminds the minority t they belong to the minority community. And so, the effect of this film can be almost the same Lajja. Here, also, there is possibility that the intended purpose get disrupted, for the meaning is ated through the “active interpretation” of the audience.

It seems that this dissertation work could have managed itself without including this course, as this discourse has nothing new to say. Yet, this entry can create an effect of ‘regime’. s film repeats the events which have been put earlier. And the earlier events occur in a different re. This entry, along with the earlier ones, attempts to create the effect just like a viewer comes receive the same message through cross discourses.

Chapter 4 (Minority is Equal to Other):

If today the people belonging to the minority community of Bangladesh do not feel that they are suitable for this land, the reason is rooted in the partition of the sub-continent on basis of religion. Their sufferings are tried to be rendered in different discourses. The presentation of minority community of Bangladesh in films and writings faces the problem of representation. The discourses try to render the mishaps of the community. But, doing so, the discourses themselves serve the purpose they do not intend to.

Bangladesh or East Bengal is a historical reality. In 1971 it has been curved out of political boundaries of what was East Pakistan after a bloody civil war by the nationalists, and of course the secular forces. The reign of terror unleashed in 1971, and the consequent persecution of the Bangalee masses in the name of defending Islam and the Islamic bond between the two provinces of Pakistan had already made the future of Islam as a basis of state-policy uncertain in the new state brought into being by the secular forces in the teeth of the fiercest fascist and fascist-scurantist forces. The birth of Pakistan. Muslim League was born in early 20th century at Dhaka, leaders from Bengal proposed the controversial two nations theory, separate homeland for Indian Muslims. All India Muslim League adopted the Lahore Resolution, 1940 that the Muslims are majority in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states" shall be "autonomous and sovereign" (Samad). Instead only one Muslim nation was born as a conspiracy of the British imperialist. Pakistan, born in 1947 from the concept of the leaders from Bengal tore the Bangalee communities apart.

The two-nation theory, which created Pakistan, the homeland of the Muslim communities in with strings of religion and racism. The inter migration was productive for some but for r who were the overwhelming majority on both sides, it turned out to be a disaster. e's was discriminated despite being the majority in Pakistan, doubly discriminate were the ies in East Pakistan (Shaha, Prof. Dr. S.S, 22 July 1998. Manabodhikar O' Bangladeshier alogudier Shamasya, Dainik Ittefaq, Dhaka. pp. 5-As Samad quotes). The political elites ed Bangla, as a language of the Hindus. Therefore, the state language of Pakistan was made which was violently protested in 1952 by the nationalists who favoured the state language t Pakistan should be Bangla.

It seems that the state itself has been trying to discriminate the minority since the two-theory has been put into implementation. The British principle of 'divide and rule', in fact, rfectly been implemented in this zone.

Between 1982 and 1990, Hossain Mohammad Ershad made systematic efforts to continue sation culminating in the disputable Eighth amendment to the Constitution declaring "Islam" ate religion. Earlier short-lived government of Mustaque Ahmed (August 1975 - November brought to power at a behest of young military officers, declared Peoples Republic of adesh as "Islamic Republic of Bangladesh" over the state radio, which however fetched ition of Saudi Arabia, Libya and China (Samad).

So, the minority community of Bangladesh identifies the mismatch of itself with the ty not only for people are accustomed to the implementation of the readily acquired ptions, but also for the state has attempted to remind the difference.

The discourses that attempt to sympathize with the misery of the minority can not stay from the problem of representation. The discourses try to imitate the existing reality in texts, visual works and works of other sorts. The sections selected here try to show this phenomenon.

To recall Hall, if meaning changes, and is never finally fixed, then it follows that 'taking meaning' must involve an active process of interpretation. Meaning has to be actively 'read' or 'interpreted'. Consequently, there is a necessary and inevitable imprecision about language; language is never in a universal sense, as Hall calls every sign a language after Foucault. "The meaning we as viewers, readers and audience, is never exactly the meaning which has been given by the author or writer or by other viewers. And since, in order to say something meaningful, we have to use a language, where all sorts of older meanings which pre-date us, are already stored from previous eras, we can never cleanse language completely, screening out all the other hidden meanings which might modify or distort what we want to say" (Hall 33).

So, if the discourses betray the makers' intended purpose, the convincing explanation is readily available in Hall and Foucault. Hall asserts that shared meaning creates culture. The shared meaning and common experiences of Hindus, Lajja presents, can provide the readers a 'natural' picture of the culture which is consisted of a common culture and shared meaning. "Ekti Tulsi Gacher Kahini" contains the possibility to convince a reader to grant the abandoning of houses to be true and normalizes the harsh reality. And the reader associates the house in the story with that of the house named after 'enemy property'. This naming in reality and the process of occupying the house in story, jointly can have the strength to make the reader treat the minority community as a distinguished mismatch. As the father, in Matir Moyna, throws the nick-nacks, rebukes the mother

allowing the son to observe Hindu festival, a Muslim viewer can take the acts as her model; if she is not of this sort, she can get inspiration to be like this; if she is of that sort, she can feel a moral support. When Ontorjatra projects the only Hindu character as the care taker, a Hindu viewer of that economic category can take this positioning as an inevitably natural picturesque. At the end of Chitra Nadir Pare, just like Lajja, the hopeless protagonist decides to leave the land. This decision might help establishing the presumption that this land is not for Hindus.

We can imagine a film having a Bangladeshi Hindu family strongly ignoring the Muslim majority just like the father does in the film. It is also a reality. In this case the minority is othering the majority. But this kind of projection is usually not found in discourses. To predict the after effect of this imaginary film, we can find that this film is creating a violent reaction among the Bangladeshi Muslims. It implies that, the rejection of minority by the majority has become a fact to be granted, because the inverse situation seems to create more problems.

Thus, the discourses that attempt to resist the othering of the minority in real life situation cannot avoid the possibility of being part of the regime of representation which treats the minority community as other.



Chapter 5 (Conclusion):

The traumatic journey of the minority community of this land is marked from the partition of this sub-continent in 1947. The community continues the trauma even after the agitating realm of partition. The mutual interaction with the majority has assumed the shape of communal hostility over time. It has happened not for the two communities are predominantly hostile to one another, but for the immediate suggestion of the moment has operated a violent rage among the majority. The suggestion has emerged from the tension usually arose from the communal riots in the neighbouring country. The writing and visual discourses have tried to hold the agony and faced the problem of representation so far. It seems that the re-creation of the reality the community has been facing in real life situation somehow lacks drawing enough consciousness of the receivers. The reality the discourses oppose, tends to become more real. That is, the discourses emerge as a fiction to the reality and paradoxically serve the continuity, and at the same time the reality gets natural through the cross references the discourses present.

Thus the existing reality of the traumatic experience of the Bangladeshi Hindus and the re-created reality in writing and visual discourses come to be complementary to each other. The recursive manner of formulating truth is even proactive when a discourse tries to oppose that very truth. The historical journey of the suffering of the minority community of Bangladesh receives an affectionate approach at times as it is projected in writings and films. That the writings and discourses serve the formation of the truth that, the year old treatment to the minority is a natural and picturesque, is helpless to the problem of representation. That is, if the minority community of Bangladesh feels the emergence of finding a new way to express their suffering and fail, it is not a problem of their own only.

In this connection, a question arises then; what is the purpose of being critical while reading or watching such kind of discourses? The answer can be: the purposes of being critical are going through the discourses bearing in mind that the meaning the receiver is producing might not be intended by the author. But it does not mean that the intended meaning is the only possible one. This critical awareness does not tend to confine the receiver's attitude; rather it allows (though the word 'allows' sounds arrogant) the same attitude just along with a tolerance to other possible attitudes.

As the present problem has not received any convincing intellectual solution so far, it seems that an author or the makers possibly have nothing to do with the dissemination of the intended purpose. Then, there may be something to be done from the receivers' side. In this case, a receiver can help the makers by remaining critical to receive. Otherwise there is possibility that the receiver considers her own version of meaning to be the only reliable one.

To be more direct, a receiver, who is reading a narrative or watching a film of this kind, should no more be rigid in determining the meaning. It is true that meaning is produced through the receiver's interpretation of the receiver. But when one finds the year old scenario, which treats the minority community as a mismatch, in a discourse, she must not be certain about her stance; rather she can help herself, as well as the maker, by assuming a wide range possibility of meanings to be allowed. This attitude of the receiver can be one way of reducing the problem which has so far been very much challenging to face by an author or a film maker.



Bahar, 28/28

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