

The Biannual Scholarly Journal of Threshold, Volume 14, Number 1

Concessionaire	English Literature Society, SBU
Managing Director	Shahriyar Mansouri (PhD, English Literature)
Editor-in-Chief	Vafa Keshavarzi (PhD student, English Literature)
Editorial Board	
Literature	Saba Sabouri (BA, English Literature) Ensieh Moeinipour (BA, English Literature) Anahit Afjool (BA student, English Literature) Chenour Awlazadeh (MA, English Literature)
TEFL	Musa Nushi (PhD, TEFL)
Cover & Page Layout	Vafa Keshavarzi (Cover Photo: Poorya Tayefeh)
Website Design	Maryam Marandi
Special Thanks to	Dr. Farideh Pourgiv

Contributors

Dr. Farideh Pourgiv	Dawood Naderi	Farshad Jalalsadat
Hooriye Khajooee Dehshib	Sina Farokhi Farkhani	Maryam Siahmansouri
Marzieh Davari Nezhad	Zahra Shokrollahi	Lala Movsesian
Sina Farajzadeh	Ensieh Moeinipour	Fereshte Ghasemi
Negin Sadat Ghaderian	Maryam Ezami	Soheila Eslami
Maryam Bahrami Nejad	Mohammad Reza	Shakiba Es'haghi
Farshad Mafakheri	Ghaemi	Nazanin Gharaeenejad
	Shakila Keyhani	

Advisory Board

Jalal Sokhanvar, Prof., Shahid Beheshti University
Seyyed Abolghassem Fatemi Jahromi, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Kian Soheil, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Shideh Ahmadzadeh Heravi, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Amir Ali Nojournian, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Mohammad Reza Anani Sarab, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Sara C. Ilkhani, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Shahriyar Mansouri, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Musa Nushi, PhD, Shahid Beheshti University
Hossein Mollanazar, PhD, Allameh Tabatabaei University

Publisher Shahid Beheshti University Publishing House

Website <http://www.sbu.ac.ir> Indexed by noormags.com

Address Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University, Evin, Tehran, Iran
Tel.: +982129902486 Email: sbuthreshold@gmail.com

Price 3000 T

Submission Guidelines

- *Threshold* welcomes contributions of original (not previously published) works of interest in the disciplines of English Literature, English Language Teaching, Translation Studies and Comparative Studies along with related reports, news, profiles of eminent scholars, book and movie reviews, and creative writings.

- The contributors are expected to submit their works for the coming issue no later than 1st of Ordibehesht, 1398.

- Prospective authors are invited to submit their materials to the journal E-mail address: sbuthreshold@gmail.com

- The manuscripts are evaluated by editors of each section and at least two referees from the advisory board.

- The editors require the following format styles:

- ③ Informative title

- ③ Abstract (150-200 words)

- ③ Keywords (3-5 words)

- ③ Introduction (500-800 words)

- ③ Background or review of related literature (1500-2000 words)

- ③ Methodology (500-700 words)

- ③ Results and discussion (500-700 words)

- ③ Notes and references

- The name of the author(s) should appear on the first page, with the present affiliation, full address, phone number, and current email address.

- Microsoft word 2016 is preferred, using Times New Roman font and the size of 11 with

Table of Contents

-Editorial	1
Literary Studies	
- Rising Out of the Ashes: A Tale of Existential Awakening in Fahrenheit 451/ Maryam Ezami	3
Cinema and Literature	
-The Zelig Reality Check/ Maryam Ezami	29
-Man Bites Dog from the Perspective of Deleuze's Schizoid World/ Mohammad Reza Ghaemi	41
Interview	
-An Interview with Dr. Farideh Pourgiv, Prof. Emerita of English Literature, Shiraz University	45
TEFL	
-The Effect of Pre-emptive and Reactive FF on Intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' Pronunciation Learning/ Farhad Jalalsadat	50
-Visuawords: A Semantic Web-based Dictionary for Vocabulary Learning/ Fereshte Ghasemi & Soheila Eslami	66
Army of Letters	
-Poem: My Heart/ Farshad Mafakheri	83
-Poem: Lasting Lovers/ Marzieh Davari Nezhad	84

-Poem: The Roads/ Sina Farajzadeh	85
-Poem: A Thousand Ships/ Negin Sadat Ghaderian	88
-Poem: Sinless Rains/ Maryam Bahrami Nejad	89
-Poem: Loneliness/ Hooriye Khajooee dehshib	91
-Poem: Desperation/ Shakila Keyhani	93
-Poem: Starfar/ Shakiba Es'haghi	94
-Short Story: The Silent Case/ Ensieh Moeinipour	96

Creative Writing Challenge

-Sue-understanding/ Lala Movsesian	110
-A Letter for the “dear world”/ Hooriye Khajooee dehshib	113
- A Letter to “my dear teacher” / Mohammad Reza Ghaemi	115
-Room/ Sina Farokhi Farkhani	116
-Why Teaching/ Dawood Naderi	123
-The Instructor/ Zahra Shokrollahi	125

Threshelf

-The Consequences of Modernity/ Nazanin Gharaeenejad	127
--	-----

Translation Challenge

- Kept within bounds I was by the Love again/ Maryam Siahmansouri	137
-Next Issue’s Translation Challenge	139

Editorial

I am pleased to announce that the biannual Scholarly Journal, *Threshold*, has its 14th Volume published. Thanks to God and hail to our editorial board.

In the present issue, we have an interview with the esteemed Dr. Farideh Pourgivi, Prof. Emerita of English Literature, who has contributed a lot to the improvement of the condition of English Literature in our country. Our readers will gain valuable information not only about the professor and her fields of expertise which are numerous, but they also familiarize themselves with the newly established field of Children Studies that Dr. Pourgivi herself has founded it.

This issue was coincided with the Teacher's Day and a writing challenge was announced on the topic which proudly received valuable submissions from different universities.

All in all, this issue is as valuable as the previous ones if not more.

Vafa Keshavarzi
Editor-in- Chief

Threshold 14, Number 1

LITERARY STUDIES

Rising Out of the Ashes: A Tale of Existential Awakening in *Fahrenheit 451*

Maryam Ezami e.maryam96@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper offers a reading of Ray Bradbury's dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451* from an Existentialist point of view. Although many scholars have read this book in light of the context that gave birth to it, there remain certain ambiguities that can be explained by considering its philosophical connotations. Focusing on Jean Paul Sartre's essay *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, one could fill in the gaps and arrive at a wholesome interpretation. After reviewing the work of notable scholars, their readings of the book's genre, theme and context are brought together to appreciate the depth of Bradbury's work, while connecting the dots for the full picture to emerge: a tale of an individual's Existential awakening that leads to rebirth of a nation.

Key Words: Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, Science Fiction, Cold War Novels, Sartre, Existentialism, Dystopia, Re-civilization

"Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! For the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of *struggle* and *flight*,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

-*Dover Beach*

When Ray Bradbury published *Fahrenheit 451* back in 1953, he did not imagine it would become his most prominent work. Even though over the years, this novel has been the subject of many scholarly discussions, it continues to be relevant on a globally socio-political level to this day. There were critics who thought the book was too pretentious and bitter, and did not qualify as a work of science fiction at all. Some readers even accused the novel of being too vulgar and 'unchristian' and ironically asked for it to be censored or banned. Nevertheless, the book was a huge success and ended up being taught in academic

programs, getting adapted into various theatrical and cinematic productions and being generally well-received.

Among the distinguished scholars who have considered *Fahrenheit 451* an important piece of fiction is Harold Bloom. He dedicated a volume in the series *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations* to a collection of essays by different academic figures on this novel. In yet another series of his books, *Bloom's Modern Critical Reviews*, he has published a number of articles on Bradbury's most important works including *Fahrenheit 451*. In his introduction to the former, Bloom categorizes the novel as a period piece considering mainly its historical context, yet admires Bradbury's wit in commending memory as the answer to book-burning. Other scholars, like Jack Zipes and Veronica Hollinger read the book in light of the science fiction genre and whether it is an accurate classification for a story picturing America's future full of contradictions.

In a comparative study with *The Handmaid's Tale*, Diane S. Wood highlights the political aura of the time the novel was published, claiming that authors like Bradbury

and Margaret Atwood wrote to warn the American society of such futures. On another comparative note, Rodney A. Smolla discusses Orwell's *1984* and how the two works differ in the sense that Bradbury was concerned with notions like human thought rather than politics of freedom abridgement. In "Bradbury's Cold War Novels", Kevin Hoskinson addresses the anxiety over a nuclear apocalypse as Bradbury's point of departure, exploring ironies like the idea of 're-civilization', also argued by M Keith Booker in "Post-Holocaust Novels and Films". Robin Anne Reid offers a detailed look on the novel's thematic structure, while other younger scholars like Alina Gerall focus on character analysis in light of the concept of Civil Disobedience. Other prominent views on *Fahrenheit 451* are those of Jonathan R. Eller and William F. Touponce. In "The Simulacrum of Carnival: *Fahrenheit 451*", Eller and Touponce have a Nietzschean reading and talk about ideas of disillusionment and authority, mainly seeing the novel as a commentary on the Modern Man's condition. However, more recent critical pieces focus less on the context or the genre, and more on the essence of the book intended by the author. Michael

LaBrie's analysis of the book goes into detail about the philosophy behind the motifs of the characters and evaluates the author's style to determine his personal signature.

This paper, being in favor of the more recent reviews, is an attempted character study. Reading *Fahrenheit 451* in light of Jean Paul-Sartre's philosophical stand, my attempt is to argue it is a story of a man's Existential awakening. Montag, the protagonist, takes the reader on a spiritual journey with him as he assumes control of his fate, recognizes the freedom of will and takes action. He experiences a sense of disillusionment, revolts against the system and joins the group of saviors, actualizing the belief that a "man is nothing other than what he makes of himself" (Sartre 22). A revision of notable critical interpretations leads us to an almost unanimous one regarding individual thought as the defining human essence. Although the author describes himself as a "passionate" writer rather than an intellectual, the question remains: does Bradbury create an existential hero to advocate an ideology, to prevent one or to put

blind faith in human nature to conquer all vices? Here, the aim is to take a look at what the scholars have to say, what Bradbury himself maintains as his key strategy in writing and how a Sartrean point of view clarifies the ambiguities in between.

Jack Zipes in his essay "Bradbury's Vision of America in *Fahrenheit 451*" presents a meticulous study of the novel's historical context. He considers nearly all possible factors that influenced the creation of such a story: the McCarthy witch hunt, the Cold War, the Korean War, the abuse of media and mass degradation (4). He also mentions the censorship policies that were in play back in the 50s, affecting authors whose writings included topics like socialism or sexuality. He takes into account Bradbury's contemporaries and how he was not the only one criticizing the politics of the age:

Bradbury was writing about the same time as the Angry Young Generation in England and the Beat Generation in America, groups of writers who rejected the affluence and vacuousness of technological innovation in capitalist societies (Zipes 6).

Much like his contemporaries, Bradbury's critique of the system was not limited to generalizations. He creates his memorable teenage character Clarisse, and using her as the mouthpiece tells us about the complete failure of the American educational system:

They run us so ragged by the end of the day we can't do anything but go to bed or head for a Fun Park to bully people around, break windowpanes in the Window Smasher place or wreck cars in the Car Wrecker place with the big steel ball. Or go out in the cars and race on the streets, trying to see how close you can get to lamp-posts, playing 'chicken' and 'knock hub-caps.' I guess I'm everything they say I am, all right. I haven't any friends. That's supposed to prove I'm abnormal. But everyone I know is either shouting or dancing around like wild or beating up one another. (14)

Zipes argues that this attack on the running educational programs is meant to show how the authorities use media and distracting activities to prevent the young generation from thinking and questioning. He maintains that "school is meant to exhaust the young so that they are tame" (7) but at the end of the day they feel all the more frustrated and angry so they try all the "fun" activities which usually lead to extreme violence. Remember this is a society that

makes Clarisse feel utterly alienated and eventually physically eliminates her. A society that is proud to consider the word "intellectual" an insult (Bradbury 28). Zipes points out the relevance of Bradbury's criticism to today's America and considers it an unresolved issue that is well-addressed in the book:

The anti-intellectual strain in America forces most intellectuals to take an outsider position from which it is difficult to influence people. The tendency in America is to drive forward without a humanistic intellectual core (9).

However, Zipes does not find Bradbury's vision of America impeccable. In fact, he sheds light on quite a few contradictions regarding the so-called dystopian picture he paints. Captain Beatty, a major character in the novel and an agent of the authorities, blames the majority of people for the situation and claims it was "technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure" that "carried the trick", not a forced government dictum (28). Zipes sees this as an inconsistency because there is no Individual vs. the State struggle; hence the dystopian vision being broken. He states:

He [cannot] explain or demonstrate from a political perspective—and essentially all utopian and dystopian literature is political—who profits by keeping people enthralled and unconscious of the vested power interests (12).

To say that Bradbury's portrayal of a futuristic America is a failure would not be fair, even if it might seem politically inconsistent. We must remember history is completely distorted in this society, so it is possible that a grand diplomatic scheme went down at some point, but was kept hidden for the profit of the powers that be. Although, Faber, a more reliable character in the narrative does not have faith in people either and believes the majority are happy with the current condition:

So few want to be rebels any more. And out of those few, most, like myself, scare easily. In any event, you're a fool. People are having fun (41).

Regardless of what Beatty or Faber say, a quick look at the characters, who belong in that majority, shows how this "happiness" is superficial and arguably nonexistent. A very clear example is Mildred, Montag's wife. She is a perfect citizen who abides all the rules and is seemingly

happy. Yet we see her suicide attempt—a common issue among the populace- and fight with Montag over her desperate need of technological solace. Another example is Mrs. Phelps who has a moment of identity crisis and distress after she hears a poem for the first time in forever:

Mrs. Phelps was crying. The others in the middle of the desert watched her crying grow very loud as her face squeezed itself out of shape. They sat, not touching her, bewildered by her display. She sobbed uncontrollably. Montag himself was stunned and shaken. (48)

What is obvious is the presence of the "overwhelming powers of state control" that exploit technology to render the members of the society numb and dehumanized. However, that does not stop Bradbury from having Montag "undergo a process of 're-humanization'"; A process that includes revolting against "the influences of the state's monopoly of the consciousness industry" and regaining touch "with his humanistic impulse" (10). What catalyzes this 're-humanization' is meeting Clarisse, Mildred's suicide attempt and slowly becoming disillusioned with his job. An interesting element in the

midst of these events is the 'reveries' that Montag starts to get. These small flashbacks from his childhood spark a sense of curiosity that helps him along the way. For instance, his instinctive affinity for nature is reignited when he has this moment of recollection:

He remembered a farm he had visited when he was very young, one of the rare times he had discovered that somewhere behind the seven veils of unreality, beyond the walls of parlours and beyond the tin moat of the city, cows chewed grass and pigs sat in warm ponds at noon and dogs barked after white sheep on a hill (66).

For Zipes this notion of rebirth is hardly conducive with the grim dystopian label that accompanies the book. One could argue that these 'inadequacies' make up a quality that makes Bradbury's writing unique and remarkable.

For other critics like Veronica Hollinger, these loopholes lose their significance, as she takes a step back and observes the change in science fiction as a genre. In her essay "Future/Present: The End of Science Fiction", she says:

It [science fiction genre] begins to function in the popular imagination more and more as a

metaphorical discourse through which to describe/ construct the present, rather than as an extrapolative exercise through which to imagine the future (218).

The same attitude is present in Diane Wood's reading of the book. She considers works of writers such as Bradbury as a warning against certain policies being enacted that violate human rights. She argues that Bradbury intended to inform the readers of the way "the abridgement of freedom evolved in the United States" (46). So from this perspective, the novel is telling us to distance ourselves from the mechanical, habitual lifestyle that might deprive us from an active intellectual existence. Wood notes media or more specifically the television "concerns itself with the ephemeral present and thus follows the trend toward forgetting the past" which leads the viewer further away from having a normal life (47). Mildred as someone who represents the majority of the society is fully engrossed in the technological gadgets and is therefore extremely detached from her personal life. We see in the novel that her marriage to Montag is barely functioning, and she fails to remember where they first met. Upon being asked why Montag has no children, he replies with

confusion: "Well...my wife, she . . . she just never wanted any children at all." (13)

It is blatantly clear in the conversation between Mildred and her neighbors that marriage and motherhood are no longer valued in their culture. Mrs. Phelps who has children of her own speaks about motherhood in a way that could hardly be called affectionate:

"Caesarians or not, children are ruinous; you're out of your mind," said Mrs. Phelps. "I plunk the children in school nine days out of ten. I put up with them when they come home three days a month; it's not bad at all. You heave them into the 'parlour' and turn the switch. It's like washing clothes; stuff laundry in and slam the lid." Mrs. Bowles tittered. "They'd just as soon kick as kiss me. Thank God, I can kick back!" (Bradbury 46)

In a world where values are irretrievably lost and there are no ideals so to speak, feeling empty and suicidal is inevitable. Seeing the characters as humans who live barren, robotic lives can be incredibly enlightening as it offers a new perspective to the book. In his article, "The Life of the Mind and a Life of Meaning: Reflections on *Fahrenheit 451*", Rodney Smolla proposes a similar

outlook. In a comparative note, he asserts that Bradbury's writing is more concerned with the "essence of humanity" than politics or freedom:

At bottom, the characters, the plot, and the insights of *Fahrenheit 451* are, above all else, about the life of the mind and the essential link between a life of the mind and a life of meaning. (906)

What Smolla means by "life of the mind" is in his own words "that which makes life worth living" (906) which could be interpreted in various ways, but from an Existential angle, what makes existence meaningful is choosing the *struggle* over the *flight*. In other words, characters like Mildred or Mrs. Phelps are living empty lives because they are incredibly passive and lack agency over their own existence. They are in flight from the freedom they have been given as human beings; little do they know that in yielding their will, they are still making a choice.

There are many reasons why an individual would give up control and submit to the system, one of which is anxiety. Kevin Hoskinson points out this anxiety in his interpretation of the novel in light of the Cold War

context. He believes, in creating an apocalyptic vibe in *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury has presented a "microcosm of early Cold War tensions" (138). By having war lurk in the background, Bradbury captures "the anxiety over the atomic bomb and fear of a nuclear apocalypse" (133). Hoskinson also cleverly points out the positive vision towards the nuclear bombing that happens by the end of the book:

One of the great ironies of the period was a peripheral belief that somehow the presence of nuclear arms would, by their very capacity to bring about ultimate destruction to *all* humans, engender a very special sort of cautiousness and cooperative spirit in the world heretofore not experienced. (134)

This misplaced optimism for a better future, or as Hoskinson puts it, this notion of re-civilization was a common underlying belief back in the Cold War era. By having the majority of the populace erased, Bradbury provides a less anxious atmosphere for those who remain to flourish. The novel ends with Montag reciting the Book of Revelation, which gives a religious significance to this optimism. M. Keith Booker in his essay "Post-Holocaust Novels and Films" refers to the same thing:

The nuclear holocaust is pictured as a sort of cleansing that brings the potential of new birth. Indeed, this holocaust clearly figures as an image of the Christian apocalypse, with a new society (to be led by Montag and the book-people) arising from the ashes of the old as a sort of literate New Jerusalem. (83)

The significance of the "cleansing" nuclear effect could also be read in an Existentialist way. Notice that the only survivors of this war are the group of intellectual nomads, Montag and possibly Faber. The only people who are wiped out by this bomb are the ones who chose to obey the authority. By choosing 'fake-faith' and relying on outside forces to make decisions for them, they choose destruction. Montag makes it out alive for the sole reason that he reassumed control of his own life and decided to take action. As Sartre has put it "Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions" (37). Thus, actions or deeds are the only things that count at the end of the day, and the criteria of survival in Montag's world. In fact, in a conversation where they

discuss death, Granger speaks about the loss of his grandfather like the ultimate Existentialist:

When he died, I suddenly realized I wasn't crying for him at all, but for the things he did. I cried because he would never do them again, he would never carve another piece of wood or help us raise doves and pigeons in the back yard or play the violin the way he did, or tell us jokes the way he did. He was part of us and when he died, all the actions stopped dead and there was no one to do them just the way he did. He was individual. He was an important man. I've never gotten over his death. Often I think, what wonderful carvings never came to birth because he died. How many jokes are missing from the world, and how many homing pigeons untouched by his hands. He shaped the world. He did things to the world. The world was bankrupted of ten million fine actions the night he passed on (73).

Therefore, the criterion for being worthy and truly alive is one's actions. The question that arises here is: how does Montag earn this essential quality? After his initial epiphany, he undergoes certain changes and takes certain actions, but if it were easy to break out of the circus, more individuals would do so. In a dramatic representation of the Hero vs. the State, he uses the flamethrower and attacks Beatty. This rebellious act is the last straw that

makes him stand out of the crowd and be separated from the majority. Robin Anne Reid, in her analysis of the book introduces the technique of 'image cluster' in Bradbury's style. After Montag is chased out of the city, he has a peaceful sense of reconnection with nature. He perceives the environment surrounding him in a more comprehensive and mature manner. One instance is where he is floating in the river and is about to walk out:

The river bobbed him along gently. Burning. The sun and every clock on the earth. It all came together and became a single thing in his mind. After a long time of floating on the land and a short time of floating in the river he knew why he must never burn again in his life (65).

This new way of perception is the ultimate step he takes toward a meaningful existence. Reid argues that this wholesome view of the universe "results in Montag's decision to move away from destruction" and toward "preservation". He decides on how to live his life from that point on as he gains a "new consciousness" (Reid 79). Earlier in the story, he has a moment of recognition as he starts to be conscious about the transition he experiences:

He was moving from an unreality that was frightening into a reality that was unreal because it was new (65).

This identity shift from passivity to agency is the most crucial part of gaining consciousness. Alina Gerall, refers to this transition as a result of an act of Civil Disobedience. It goes without saying that the starting point of this journey is when Montag gets tempted to read for the first time. Gerall argues that even though acts of Civil Disobedience are not qualified until they are made public, Montag's actions can be read as public acts in the sense that he includes others; for example, when he reads the poem out loud for Mildred and the other women:

That singular public act, which leads to attention from the authorities, is public enough to justify Montag's later reading (as well as his meeting with Faber and preserving books) as "civil disobedience" rather than simply "law breaking." (19)

His attempts at 'waking up' other members of the society could be best justified as the responsibility he feels towards others. An Existential stance would point us to the direction of Sartre and his remark on the same notion: "When we say that man chooses himself, not only do we mean that each of us must choose himself, but also that in choosing himself, he is choosing for all men" (24). So by choosing to read and disobey the law, Montag is choosing

to change the image of mankind. One could also argue that his acts of rebellion move beyond a personal level when he joins the group of intellectual saviors. In a symbolic scene we see the men work together and create new norms:

He began throwing dust and dirt on the fire. The other men helped, and Montag helped, and there, in the wilderness, the men all moved their hands, putting out the fire together. (72)

Changing the image of mankind in this society means embracing one's individuality while keeping up a team spirit. To replace the old image of all men "made equal", they need to move away from an extremely rationalized civilization toward a more moderate intellectual existence. Jonathan R. Eller and William F. Touponce offer a thematic reading based on the same idea of Modern Man's condition. They believe *Fahrenheit 451* is a diagnosis of modern society's nihilism, the cure to which is revealed to be the value of books and literacy (92). What helps Montag become a survivor is reversing the values previously held and regaining the natural order of things, like the function of fire going from a force of

destruction to a source of warmth. Another instance would be language; first solely used for the purpose of domination, later retrieved by the poetry reading, and eventually fully revived in Granger's conversations with the intellectual group.

No matter which of these interpretations we choose to agree with, Bradbury's own words would be the most accurate. He claimed to be more of a spontaneous writer, rather than an "intellectual" planner, which meant his "characters must plunge ahead" of him to "live the story" (59). Naturally he does not deny the socio-political context that influenced him to create such a novel, but he prefers to see it as an outcome of pure passion:

I did not write *Fahrenheit 451*—it wrote me. There was a cycling of energy off the page, into my eyeballs, and around down through my nervous system and out through my hands. The typewriter and I were Siamese twins, joined at the fingertips. (58)

Bradbury's rather surreal description of his writing process makes it clear that he did not intend to promote an ideology or to hide behind giant philosophical labels. But as readers we are free to decide what we think of the story

and the ideas associated with the text. The tale of Montag's awakening is about being human before anything else. A simple glance of the journey he takes on, resonates Sartre's *Existentialism Is a Humanism* in our minds. What Sartre calls "Existential Humanism" fits perfectly in Bradbury's hero portrayal:

This is humanism, because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself; also because we show that it is not by turning back upon himself, but always by seeking, beyond himself, an aim which is one of liberation or of some particular realization, that man can realize himself as truly human. (53).

What is of obvious significance is that Montag is an accurate representation of what could be called an Existential Humanist hero. In his dissertation, Michael R. LaBrie claims that by mixing the science fiction genre with uncommon elements and blending together different styles of writing, Bradbury has developed his own signature style "Prophetic Existentialist Fiction" (5). Montag as the hero of *Fahrenheit 451* is the prophet who is lost, becomes disillusioned and goes on a quest that is supposed to lead to rebirth of a new generation.

Characters like Clarisse and Faber are true existentialist figures that help Montag find himself and his tribe. The hopeful passage recited at the end prophesies the brighter future, to encapsulate the optimism of a true Existentialist:

And on either side of the river was there a tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (77).

In conclusion, *Fahrenheit 451* is a tale of Existential awakening, intended to both warn and inspire. The historical, social and political undertones which have captured readers' attention ever since the novel's publication were Bradbury's admirable attempt to prevent such bleak futures. And the optimistic ending is a celebration of authenticity and freedom of being fully human in the Sartrean sense of the word. Even though the story ends with the fear of an unknown future, the point is to take responsibility, assume control and resist passivity no matter the cost. Some might not be thrilled to find out Bradbury was a critic of 'political correctness', but the fact that he chose to put 'Author of *Fahrenheit 451*' on his

tombstone should be enough to persuade us to think twice about it.

Works Cited:

Booker, M. Keith. "The Beginning or the End? Post-Holocaust Novels and Films, 1946-1964." *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964*, Greenwood Press, 2001, pp. 65–104.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. Secret Satire Society.PDF.

Bradbury, Ray. "Burning Bright." *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Fahrenheit 451—New Edition*, Infobase Publishing, 2008, pp. 55–62. Bloom's Literary Criticism.

Eller, Jonathan R., and William F. Touponce. "The Simulacrum of Carnival: Fahrenheit 451." *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Fahrenheit 451—New Edition*, Infobase Publishing, 2008, pp. 91–114. Bloom's Literary Criticism.

Gerall, Alina. "'And the Leaves of the Tree Were for the Healing of the Nations': Literature and Civil Disobedience in Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451." *The University of North Carolina at Asheville*, 2008.

Hollinger, Veronica. "Future/Present: The End of Science Fiction." *Imagining Apocalypse, Studies in Cultural Crisis*, edited by David Seed, MACMILLAN PRESS LTD, 2000, pp. 215–229.

Hoskinson, Kevin. "Ray Bradbury's Cold War Novels." *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Ray Bradbury*, Infobase Publishing, 2001, pp. 125–140. Modern Critical Views.

LaBrie, Micheal R. "Now Was Then, Then Is Now: The Paradoxical World of Fahrenheit 451." *Pell Scholars and Senior Theses, Salve Regina University*, Digital Commons, 2010.

Reid, Robin Anne. "Fahrenheit 451 (1953)." *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Fahrenheit 451—New Edition*, Infobase Publishing, 2008, pp. 71–80. Bloom's Literary Criticism.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, et al. *Existentialism Is a Humanism: Including, A Commentary on the Stranger*. Yale University Press, 2007.

Smolla, Rodney A. "The Life of the Mind and a Life of Meaning: Reflections on 'Fahrenheit 451.'" *Michigan Law Review*, vol. 107, no. 6, Apr. 2009, pp. 895–912. *Survey of Books Related to the Law*, www.jstor.org/stable/40379842.

Wood, Diane S. "Bradbury and Atwood: Exile as Rational Decision." *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Fahrenheit 451—New Edition*, Infobase Publishing, 2008, pp. 43–54. Bloom's Literary Criticism.

Zipes, Jack. "Bradbury's Vision of America in Fahrenheit 451." *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Fahrenheit 451—New Edition*, Infobase Publishing, 2008, pp. 3–18. Bloom's Literary Criticism.

Threshold 14, Number 1

***CINEMA AND
LITERATURE***

**The Zelig Reality Check:
Simulation and the Hyperreal in Woody Allen's 1983
Mockumentary**

By Maryam Ezami, MA Student, Kharazmi University

“Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?”

-Westworld

Zelig, a pseudo-documentary about a man who became the sensational oddity of the 1920s, is one of Allen's critically acclaimed films. It tells the story of Leonard Zelig, the chameleon-man, as he rides the roller coaster of fame in the Jazz Age, in America. Highly praised for its technique and marvelous work on special effects, the movie features strong acting, unique structure, and fresh humor. The charming quality that makes this film stand out is that the story is presented in the style of a mockumentary, one of the genres that fascinated Allen and worked well with the comic element he incorporated into his writing. This paper is an attempt to offer an analysis of this movie while entertaining the notion of hyperreality introduced by Jean Baudrillard.

Allen manages to touch upon so many issues in this mockumentary, whether it is philosophical, social, political, etc. After watching *Zelig*, one is left pondering so many questions such as: why did the director choose this style of filmmaking? Why is there such an emphasis on presenting a fictional narrative as a factual event? Is

there a central point of focus to the plethora of issues that are discussed in this movie? On the one hand, by creating a character that is devoid of personality, he conquers the question of race or ethnicity while dipping into new dimensions of conformism and fascism. On the other, he uses such a sensitive subject as mental illness as a tool to criticize the capitalist mentality, the commercial attitude of the age, and the fleeting nature of fame. He explores all the grey areas of media, publicity, and mass culture by showcasing the manipulation that goes on in the industry. While it is impressive how Allen creates a narrative that addresses all these controversial topics, interwoven in the comic front and unique structure, one must admit the movie leaves the viewer somewhat confused.

Britta Feyerabend in her essay “*Zelig*: A Simulated Life” offers a reading of the movie by focusing on the meta-cinematic and referential quality of Allen’s work as a postmodern artist. She discusses *Zelig* in light of Jean Baurillard’s theory of simulacra and goes on to analyze the admirable range of ideas explored in it. The first notion that catches the viewer’s attention while watching the movie is how perfectly Allen captures the “ephemerality of public interest” (Feyerabend 20). Leonard Zelig becomes the phenomena of the age, a celebrated curiosity, and causes quite the commotion worldwide. However, this does not last long and his image is soon eclipsed by his irresponsible, criminal behavior during his episodes as Irving Howe puts it near the ending

of the story, “I mean, he had this curious quirk... this strange characteristic. And for a time, everyone loved him... and then people stopped loving him. Then he did this stunt with the airplane...and then everybody loved him again” (Allen 49).

Allen approaches the concept of publicity in a very comprehensive way, covering both the negative and the positive sides of it. One day the crowd cheers for the chameleon, and the next, a scandal erupts and turns the whole picture upside down. As Feyerabend argues, the reaction of the press and the public after the airplane stunt is particularly revealing because it “shows the thin line between adoration and persecution of individuals as well as the sometimes short-lived nature of fame of celebrities” (23). Of course Allen could be drawing from personal experience considering his complicated history as a celebrity himself.

The Referential quality of Allen’s movies is nothing new to his fans, but the inattentive viewer easily misses the intertextual and meta-cinematic connections written all over the canvas of his art. It is outside the scope of this paper to point out all these references, but further reading on the matter can be done in the collection titled *Referentiality and the Films of Woody Allen*. However, what can actually be discussed here is the obvious literary reference mentioned early on in the movie that serves the purpose of character development. Feyerabend highlights the pivotal point of departure in the story, which is the

party where Zelig is discovered by none other than the famous novelist of the Jazz Age, F. Scott Fitzgerald. She believes it is Allen's intention to invoke the preconceptions we have of Fitzgerald and his undying novel, *The Great Gatsby*. She points out the similarity between the protagonists Jay Gatsby and Leonard, saying "Allen ... presented the literary predecessor to what Zelig is: a man pretending to be something other than what he is. After all, Jay Gatz consciously does exactly what Zelig does unconsciously: he appears to be what he is not" (16).

Even though there are differences between the two figures, one cannot but admit the resemblance is uncanny as far as the identity masks go. Noticing such detailed clues shines a bright light on the life of the characters.

Another controversial yet admirable issue, that is addressed less subtly than the literary references, is the perspective Allen provides on racism. He creates a character with an oddity that transcends all race and ethnicity. Leonard develops the characteristics of any individual he interacts with, regardless of their race, color, or social status. This alone puts him in a position that is beyond such categories and proves the fact that his curious trait does not mean he is "interested in the mainstream notion of acceptability" or appealing to "the majority or the powerful" (18). Feyerabend concludes from this observation that Allen holds a worldview where such attempts to "define racial categories" is vain since it does nothing but "exposes ideologies based on these to be void

of any reality in and of themselves” (25). Thus, Allen denounces racism by way of reducing it to mere construct that is devoid of any meaning outside of the circular logic that defines it. This is not to say that he refuses to acknowledge racism as a real problem in the society, even today. On the contrary, we see the negative reaction of various ethnicities, races, and religions to Zelig’s indifference to such categories.

Moving on to the more technical aspects of the film, one notices the strange aura of authenticity that comes with Allen’s stylistic approach of documenting fictional events as if they were real. It is noticeable that some of the footage used in the movie is actually authentic, mixed with made-up pieces filmed in the same rustic manner. In creating his version of events, Allen “mixes historical real footage with new faux footage, he has real people discuss an unreal person in an entirely serious and therefore, credible manner and thereby, simulates a history and a reality that never was, creating a filmic hyperreality” (Feyerabend 24). Hyperreality, as stated here, comes from the theories of Jean Baudrillard and the rough definition would be “the meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another reproductive medium such as photography” (Wolfreys et al. 52). So what Allen does is that he creates his own version of history, using a clever mixture of authentic and fake footage, a history that has no base in our reality but has its roots in a hyperreality.

In order to construct this reduplicated reality, Allen uses video interviews, authentic and fake documentary footage that are “diegetically interwoven into film sequences”; thus, creating an illusion of “verisimilitude”. This technique is part of the postmodern style of art production and is referred to as “intermediality”. Intermediality “refers to the employment of non-filmic media to carry a significant amount of narrative in a way that is distinctly different from cinema” (Szlezak 4), so it is in a way crossing the borders between different media. *Zelig* is replete with traces of intermediality, implemented intentionally by the director in order for the viewer to welcome his fake-reality and accept the conventions, rules, and historical accuracy of the events.

The obsession with making faux history and presenting the fictional narrative of Leonard’s journey as factual finds its way into the world of the characters as well; for instance, Dr. Fletcher records the “white room sessions” carefully because she intends to “make history”. As Feyerabend notes, “her [Dr. Fletcher’s] expectations, at this early stage in his analysis, are to make history and to have future generations—us, the audience—witness her glorious feat of solving the enigma of *Zelig*, by not only discovering what ails him, but curing him” (21). This attempt at making history goes a step further when the subject is treated as a national sensation. Therefore, the viewer is forced to believe Leonard’s story was much

more than a personal narrative and to accept it as more of a collective one. The story supposedly touched a collective nerve and combined “individual and communal experience” (Feyerabend 26).

A closer look at *Zelig* as the perfect example of mockumentaries, sheds some light on the relationship between the genre and the theory of simulacra by Jean Baudrillard as initially mentioned in this paper. Mockumentaries utilize form to twist the fictional nature of their subject matter and consequently debase the very core of documentaries, aka factual records. Challenging this factual trait alone puts them in a questionable position regarding reality as we know it. According to Feyerabend, mockumentaries “try to reflect a profound reality, yet, simultaneously they mask that reality, the absence of a reality and, in the end, they no longer bear any resemblance to reality and instead, create their own pure simulacrum” (16).

Baudrillard believes we live in the era of simulacra and simulation, in which there are copies of reality that no longer refer to an original one. Simulations blur the lines between “real” and “imaginary”, by representing “images” that function on four levels:

1. reflecting a profound reality
2. masking a profound reality
3. masking the absence of a profound reality

4. having no relation to any reality whatsoever;
becoming its own pure simulacrum (6)

Zelig introduces a simulated world where all four phases of the image are visible. The featured interview footages belong to the first phase since they have not yet lost touch with base reality and contain commentary from actual people. The bits and pieces from the supposed movie *The Changing Man* mask the reality the movie tries to establish since they step away from the “actual” and become a shadow of it; hence, they belong to the second phase. Viewers outside Allen’s constructed reality are aware of its absence, so they experience the third phase of the image whereas the characters inside the documentary experience the simulation first hand and see no relation to any other version of reality; thus, living in the fourth phase.

In order for any simulacrum to function in a wholesome way, it needs to stay “close to the truth” (Baudrillard 15). Allen remains faithful to this principle by linking *Zelig* to actual historical figures and celebrities of the period, claiming that he existed along with them and happened to be neglected and forgotten. Moreover, what makes for a huge turning point in the story is the recording of the white room session. By simulating faithful footage of these private sessions, Allen feeds the audience’s “perverse pleasure of violating someone’s

privacy”; therefore, serving the truth on yet another level (Baudrillard 20).

Media plays an important role in creating the hyperreal we see in *Zelig*. Throughout the story, newspapers, television, radio, and even cinema itself function as “a kind of genetic code that directs the mutation of the real into the hyperreal” by way of providing it with an entertaining and “trustworthy” mouthpiece (Baudrillard 22). This essentially foregrounds the illusion that the story is true to life and needs to be narrated by the means of different forms of media, just like any other historical account. It needs to be reported to the public, just as the events unfold, as if it were an extensive reportage.

However, there is a conflicting detail that challenges the factual report facade. Despite the fact that cameras seem to be present everywhere, following Zelig’s every move, there are no actual footage of the transformations as they happen. The cameras always fail to record what it is supposed to record. Instead, the viewers are asked to imagine the process and accept the finished product they see in blurry photos. As Feyerabend says “while we see pictures of Zelig as Pagliacci, as a Native American, or as a mustachioed Frenchman, we never actually see him change” (21).

This goes to show Allen’s intention for us to be fully immersed in the hyperreal order he presents. If the viewer is able to allow the possibility of the

transformation as part of the simulation, the documentary has successfully served its purpose which is “exactly to prove to us the plausibility of something and not merely to expect our blind acceptance thereof” (Feyerabend 21). So Allen is not in fact asking us to imagine, or to accept the fantastical but to think it possible and allow it actualize as part of life in the hyperreal.

As far as the role of the viewer goes, the simulated life of Leonard Zelig is allowed to exist in its own pure simulacrum. Although this does not mean the critics – whether inside the mockumentary or outside of it- agree on a single interpretation of what it all means. As Feyerabend eloquently states:

Zelig is a mere cypher, an enigma, an empty identity, but his own lack of a personality becomes his gift as he serves as the perfect mirror for his opposites. Being a non-entity actually becoming his strong suit is both comical and tragical: Zelig himself is unable to self-refer, because he appears to be a shifter, a nobody and a somebody simultaneously. (18)

In my opinion, interpretations of a work of art know no limits since each individual is entitled to their own opinion. In the case of *Zelig*, this applies even more so since any attempt at deciphering the movie in one single way is futile. Baudrillard maintains the “impossibility of rediscovering an absolute level of the real” (15), so trying to interpret this film debases its very core quality: Simulacra. Even in the world of the documentary itself, the intellectuals fail to agree on a definite meaning of the symbolism present in the story. Of course this “lack of definitive interpretation” stems from “its lack of reality”. Allen’s Simulacrum “orbits around itself and itself only –it has lost its relation to reality whatsoever and free floats in a mass of symbolic signifiers” (Feyerabend 29).

In conclusion, by presenting Zelig’s odd story as a pseudo-documentary –inside a hyperreal- Allen creates a distance between the viewer’s imagination and the narrative unfolding, and in doing so, allows an indefinite number of orbital significations to exist. *Zelig* poses a series of questions concerning the reality principle and forces us to settle into a world where no definite answers are necessary. To be fair, for a movie that touches upon so many controversial matters all at once, it is a relief to know there are no wrong guesses.

Works Cited:

Allen, Woody. Warner Home Video. *Zelig*. Scripts.com, 1983. PDF.

Baudrillard, Jean. “The Procession of Simulacra.” *Simulacra and Simulation*, translated by Sheila Faria Glaser, 14th ed., University of Michigan Press, 1994, pp. 3–30. *The Body, In Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism*.

Feyerabend, Britta. “Part I: Intermediality and Form, *Zelig: A Simulated Life*.” *Referentiality and the Films of Woody Allen*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 13–30.

Szlezák, Klara Stephanie, and D. E. Wynter. *Introduction. Referentiality and the Films of Woody Allen*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 1–9.

Wolfreys, Julian, Ruth Robbins and Kenneth Womack. *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. PDF.

***Man Bites Dog* from the Perspective of Deleuze's Schizoid World**

Mohammad Reza Ghaemi

Among the many films I've seen, a film always has a different place in the archives of my films, both in terms of name, style of making, type of filming, and in terms of narrative style. *Man Bites Dog* directed by Benoît Poelvoorde, Rémy Belvaux, André Bonzel is a 1992 French production. At first glance, the audience encounters a kind of documentary that has a narrative style, but by watching this work until the end, the audience realizes that the film is about making a documentary about the daily life of a professional killer. Several friends are confronted with a close-up video camera of how to kill and destroy corpses. The interesting thing about this film is that the actors of this film are its directors. The film is shot in black and white and very amateurish (deliberately) to bring the audience closer to the real space. Given that it was produced in 1992, it is one of those films that has no expiration date. In terms of content, the film narrates the contemporary world in the age of consumerism. The world that Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly portrayed for us years ago in the books *Thousands of Plateau* and *Anti-Oedipus*. In the world of these thinkers, the whole universe is a machine for production which produce as much as they want to produce. But what is important is that these machines

reach your nested network for production in the context of society. Humans bite dogs all over the machine to produce a product that produces death. This product is created by a network system called a body without an organ. The organs that capitalist society has gradually separated from the rhizome body. But in Deleuze's world, death is a product, and it is very different from Marx's. In this whole network, all the members, in the form of becoming insane, enter the first network they find on their way in a montage way and reach their product (death). But these assemblies are different in every network and with every murder that occurs in society. The original desire machine (the killer) is very perfectionist, and with the production of any insane product, it becomes ambiguous and chooses a new network. These networks are shown by the directors with a unique decoupage of the scenes. If we consider the society as a machine network, the machines that are brought in rhizomatic arms, whenever they suffer from the amputation of the arms, elsewhere in the society, they weld with another arm and continue their work. The product of postmodern society knows that François Lyotard also believed in him. In fact, Deleuze strangely believes in François Lyotard and his definition of going to a new era called postmodernism. The age when man realized the consequences of mechanization has consequences such as the desire for schizophrenia to consumerism, playing with symbols, and going insane to the production that takes place in the light of capitalism,

which Deleuze and Guattari see as a horse that takes Oedipus with it. But the body without its organs is a rhizome product that has lost its arms. The production of this network is a vague product that Deleuze has named 'no product'. Death in the postmodern world is the same no product that arises from the insane cycle of these systems. But why don't we cycle the process and the machines enter an infinite network in you to reproduce? Is the killer perfectionist or does the context of society is perfectionist? It seems that this infant process is a capitalist society in the specific sense of the word that nurtures machines with schizoid insanity in its bed, a society that greatly praises capital so that in a part of the film the main character says "once I killed a dentist, they wrote in the newspapers for a few days, but it's not important to kill simple workers for the press and the media". This is the world that Deleuze told us about in *Anti-Oedipus*. Eventually, this cycle of production and consumption will continue as long as the products are the machines of the next generation. Otherwise, in today's modern world, our crazy cars will go so far as to bite a dog!



INTERVIEW



Threshold: Dear Dr. Pourgiv, Thank you very much for accepting our invitation for the interview. I think whoever studies English literature in Iran must be familiar with you and your literary efforts which are put into outstanding works. But to follow the formalities, would you please give our readers a general introduction to yourself and your field or I should say fields of your expertise?

Dr. Pourgiv: Thank you for inviting me. I got my BA in English language and Literature from Isfahan University; I was the top student and got a scholarship to study in Austin, Texas. For my PhD I studied at Glasgow University, UK. I taught at Isfahan University for a few years and since 1362, I have been teaching at Shiraz University. I retired in 1394 after almost 38 years of teaching English literature. My PhD dissertation was on George Orwell.

I am a founding member of Shiraz University Children's Literature Center, a member of Hafez Studies since its establishment in Shiraz nearly two decades ago and the editor of *Persian Literary Studies Journal*—the first journal on the Persianate studies in English in Iran. I am also on the advisory board of *Journal of Children's Literature Studies* and *Bookbird*.

I have taught almost all courses in the BA and MA studies, and drama, poetry and mythology for PhD students. I have supervised theses on different aspects of English Literature and comparative studies.

Fiction and poetry are my main interests and I love science fiction!

Threshold: As I personally had the honor to meet you both in the PhD interview session and in the Conference for futurology of English literature and teaching and I listened to your precious ideas on the future of English literature, I would like you to please tell us about the subject to our readers.

Dr. Pourgiv: Reading literature has always been my passion since primary school and I usually tell the students that reading is the most pleasurable activity I can imagine. However, the classic way of teaching literature has gone through many changes. Some departments of English literature abroad have replaced the BA degree in English literature with interdisciplinary subjects. We have fiction generated online with the help of readers, and poetry produced online. The teacher-centered, blackboard oriented, pen and paper style of teaching will go through changes though the simple pure joy of reading poetry, fiction and drama will go on.

In dire times of distress and isolation, a book can bring much needed peace.

Threshold: Among all these years of teaching literature you must have a full pack of memories with students, is there a special memory or piece of advice that you want to share with our readers?

Dr. Pourgiv: I always tell my students jokingly that reading does not kill; it enhances and gives depth to life. It is a pleasure to encounter a book anytime, anywhere.

Threshold: Now, I am aware that it is a very difficult question and if someone asked me the same question, I wouldn't have a ready answer, but I would still like to ask, "Is there any literary figure that you feel more inclined to and think you have something in common with?"

Dr. Pourgiv: I have never identified with a specific writer but I have many favorites for different reasons! Swift, Austen and Byron for their irony, Faulkner, Nabokov and Carter for their complexities. In addition, of course, LeGuin, Asimov and Frank Herbert for the way they see the future.

Threshold: As I noticed you have done a great deal of research on children's literature, my question is, "What the place of this field is in our literature and how it is progressed in our country at the time?"

Dr. Pourgiv: Children's literature has always existed, not as an independent branch of literature but side by side and within the mainstream.

Iranian contemporary children's literature is one of the oldest and most progressive in the region. I think we have highly talented writers of children's literature in Iran now and I am glad that Shiraz University started the academic study of children's literature within an MA program. Some of the graduates of this program are teaching at universities and writing critical papers influencing writers and critics. I think children's literature in Iran has a bright future.

Threshold: Is there any project that you are working on at the moment?

Dr. Pourgiv: I am working on a book on Orwell with notes dating back a decade!

Threshold: Thank you very much for your precious time you devoted to our journal and the information you provided us with answering our questions.

Dr. Pourgiv: Thank you very much for inviting me. Best of luck with your journal.

Threshold: Is there any topic you want to talk about but it was not among the questions that I asked you?

Dr. Pourgiv: I can only say make reading a part of your daily life; the world of literature knows no boundaries.

TEFL

The Effect of Pre-emptive and Reactive FF on Intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' Pronunciation Learning

Farhad Jalalsadat, PhD Candidate in TEFL

Department of English Language, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran

Abstract

The significant contribution of using focus on form (FF) techniques to the development of various aspects of learning a second language is known to both second language researchers and practitioners. However, little is known about the effect of form focused interaction (FFI) on the learner's L2 pronunciation learning. Thus, the present study attempts to find out the impact of pre-emptive (PFF), and reactive focus on form (RFF) on Iranian EFL learner's pronunciation learning. The participants consist of ninety female Iranian EFL students who learn English in a language institute in Qazvin, Iran. The participants were randomly assigned to two experimental groups as well as one control group. One of the experimental groups received PFF; however, the other was instructed using RFF in a period of eight weeks while they were engaged in reading aloud tasks. It has to be mentioned that the control group did not receive any formed focused instruction (FFI) during the period. After collecting the data, they were analyzed using a paired-samples t-test. The results obtained from the t-test revealed that both PFF and RFF had a

significant impact on the learners' pronunciation development. It could, then, be suggested that form-focused instruction be utilized in second language instruction and pronunciation teaching.

Key words: Preemptive FF- Reactive FF-Pronunciation Learning

Introduction and Background

Over the years, the effect of instruction on Second Language Acquisition has been debated in the form of two "camps": on the one hand, the proponents of Non-Transfer Hypothesis have argued against the influence of formal instruction on the acquisition of second language(s) contending that knowledge obtained by learning can never be transformed in the shape of acquired knowledge (Krashen, 1985). On the other hand, the scholars in the Transfer Hypothesis camp (e.g Bialystok, 1994) have stressed the impact of meaningful practice as a significant contribution to second language instruction which can ensure the translation of learned knowledge into acquisition. Nevertheless, it has been claimed that a high dosage of experiential learning which is exclusively based on communicative outcomes and the approach to Second Language Teaching which entails exposing learners in comprehensible input can deny the learners the chance to acquire target language features with a sufficient degree of accuracy. In other words, the either-or view of grammar and comprehensible input as two distinct entities to be emphasized separately in

different settings can by no means ensure the learners' advanced mastery of a second language. Thus, learners could benefit from an integrated view of learning in which the complex processes of second language learning is attended to with the goal of meeting the learners' learning needs (Long, 1991; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Doughty & Williams, 1998). This view has made the development of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) possible which emphasizes on the incorporation of focus on form in a variety of communicative tasks (Long, 1991, 1998).

FFI presupposes that learning should rely on communicative tasks. By the same the proponents of this approach have maintained that task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an ideal setting in which communicative tasks and FF can be integrated. However, as Doughty and Williams (1998) have justifiably warned, it should be mentioned that the term form denotes not only the grammatical forms, but also the functions represented by the forms. Effective communication depends on both attending to grammatical structures in the input along with the meaning-based functions to transform input into intake (Schmidt, 1990).

Nonetheless, a mind-boggling issue raised by the teachers is how to plan FFI. Mackey et al. (2004) believed that there are two forms of Focus on Form (namely, incidental, and planned), and within the realm of incidental FF, there are also two subcategories of pre-emptive and reactive FF (Ellis, 2001).

Pre-emptive FF has been defined by Ellis et al. (2001; 414) as the teacher- or learner-initiated noticing the forms regardless of whether there is indeed a problem in the output. It is worth mentioning, here, that teacher-initiated FF refers to the time when the teacher asks questions or explains about certain language forms by interrupting the learners' second language communication; this is done because the teacher feels that the correct form needs to be attended to, even at the cost of the interruption in communicative activities, in order to prevent future learning problems. On the other hand, learner-initiated FF occurs when learners ask questions on specific language features.

Reactive FF is a term equivalent to corrective feedback (CF), or error correction. In SLA terminology, the term feedback is used to refer to positive evidence or negative evidence in which the positive evidence refers to the teacher's response to the learners' accurate production while negative evidence takes place when the teacher notices incorrect forms in the learners' output. In fact, negative evidence consists of the teacher's attempt to have learners correct themselves (Ellis, 2001). In doing so, the teacher calls the learners' attention to their produced forms and features that lack accuracy or appropriacy.

Since its proposal, FF has gained considerable attention by the scholars in the field of SLA. A bird's-eye view of the literature on second language studies indicates that FFI has been aptly researched in which the bulk of the studies have focused on English as the target language (e.g. Fotos, 1993; Poole & Sheorey, 2002;

Park, 2003; Farrokhi, 2005). Up to the present, a majority of research endeavor has centered on acquiring grammatical features, yet it could be expected that such facets of language as pronunciation and vocabulary, or pragmatics could also be dealt with through FFI.

Ellis et al. (2001) have conducted research on the impact of pre-emptive FF within a 12-hour meaning-based instructional period. The findings suggested that most of the pre-emptive FF were learner-initiated. In the context of Iran, Farrokhi (2005) investigated the potential for the combination of FFI and communicative activities at the level of reactive FF or corrective feedback. It was found that a suitable corrective technique to be used focus on form and focus on meaning is "marked recast."

As for pronunciation, Saito (2012) has investigated the extent to which the teacher's provision of explicit information on second language pronunciation in the initiating period of FFI can enhance the learner's attention to L2 sounds. It was revealed that the participants who received FF with explicit phonetic information could not only enhance their pronunciation skills of the lexical items included in the teaching materials, but they were also able to use the learned data to generalize beyond the pedagogical materials. Additionally, Dłaska and Krekeler (2013) have studied the impact of CF (i.e. reactive FF) on L2 pronunciation. They have found a more significant effect of explicit individual CF on the learners' development of second language pronunciation than listening only activities.

Research Questions

1. Does reactive FF improve Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation learning?
2. Does pre-emptive FF improve Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation learning?
3. Is there any significant difference between the effectiveness of reactive and Pre-emptive FF in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation learning?

Method

Participants

This study was conducted in a language institute in Qazvin, Iran. Three intact classes consisting of 90 learners of English as a second language were considered to be included in the present research. They were all female learners who spoke Persian as their mother tongue. To ensure the homogeneity of the groups, the participants were administered Preliminary English Test (PET). The classes were then randomly assigned to two experimental and one control groups. One of the experimental groups received reactive FF (RFF) while the other group were provided with pre-emptive FF (PFF). The participants in the control group were provided with no FFI (NFF). The treatment period lasted 8 sessions and the classes received 3.5 hours instruction of EFL through the integrated skills approach. It should be mentioned that English was used as a medium of instruction during the class period.

Instruments

In this study, PET test was administered to investigate the homogeneity of the groups. The test has three parts: vocabulary, grammar, and reading. The pre-test consisted of a read-aloud task, in which a list of twenty sentences were prepared: seven sentences contained words, each with a voiced interdental phoneme /ð/, seven sentences contained lexical items containing a voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ and six sentences, each including /w/. The three phonemes are considered to be the most problematic for Iranian ELT learners due to the lack of such phonemes in their native language.

Design

The present research implemented a quasi-experimental design in which the effect of the independent variables (namely, pre-emptive and reactive FF) on the dependent variable, Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation learning, was investigated.

Procedure

After determining the homogeneity of the groups using PET test, the students were given a pre-test which involved a read aloud task. The task consisted of twenty sentences with the following characteristics: seven sentences contained words, each of which there is word with the phoneme /ð/, seven sentences with the phoneme /θ/, and six sentences with words containing /w/. Then the treatments were applied in the two experimental groups (namely, RFF and PFF) within two months in a period of eight sessions. Finally, a parallel task containing twenty sentences with the

mentioned characteristics was administered. It should be mentioned that no FFI of any kind was utilized in the control group (NF). It should be mentioned that 5 points were considered for each correct response on the tests.

Data Analysis

In order to answer the first two research questions pertaining to the role of pre-emptive and reactive FF, two paired samples t-test on the pre-test and posttest scores were utilized.

Results and Discussion

Reactive FF on Pronunciation Learning

The first research question concerns the impact of reactive focus on form on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation leaning. The means of the scores on the pre-test and posttest were compared using paired samples t-test. Table 1 illustrates the results:

***Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and Results of Samples T-Test of Reactive FF and Control Group of Pre-test and Posttest.*

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 RF Pre-test - RF Posttest	-21.3333	12.4521	2.27345	-25.98306	-16.68360	-9.384	29	.000
Pair 2 Control Group Pre-test - Control Group Post Test	.66667	9.62516	1.75731	-2.92743	4.26076	.379	29	.707

As it can be seen, reactive FF could significantly contribute to the learner's development of L2 pronunciation from pre-test to posttest ($t = -9.384$, $p < .05$).

Preemptive FF on Pronunciation Learning

The second research question concerns the impact of pre-emptive focus on form on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' learning of pronunciation. The means of the scores on the pre-test and posttest were compared using paired samples t-test, and the results are summarized in table 2:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Results of Samples T-Test of Pre-emptive FF and Control Group of Pre-test and Posttest.

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 PF Pre-test - PF Posttest	-19.83333	7.59802	1.38720	-22.67048	-16.99619	-14.297	29	.000
Pair 2 Control Group Pre test - Control Group Post Test	.66667	9.62516	1.75731	-2.92743	4.26076	.379	29	.707

As can be seen in Table 2, Pre-emptive FF improved the participants pronunciation learning with a significant difference ($t = -14.2$, $p < .05$).

In the present research, the impact of two types of form-focused instructions (namely, pre-emptive and reactive) to learning second language pronunciation was studied. The findings suggest that both kinds of FFI has

a significant contribution in the Iranian EFL learners' development of pronunciation. Thus, the findings are in accordance with Lightbown and Spada's (1990) claim that "accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative skills are probably best developed through instruction that primarily meaning focused, but in which guidance is provided through form focused activities and correction in context" (p. 443).

One of the challenges facing second language instruction is employing facilitating procedures to enable learners process comprehensible input while allowing them the chance for language awareness. As Bourke (2008) said, in order for language pedagogy to be successful, teachers need to input processing and learning with form-focused instruction. Language awareness involves enhancing the learners' awareness of second language features. Thus, the teacher's role is more "a facilitator" than the owner and conveyor of knowledge.

The findings of the study can also confirm previous feedback research endeavors (e.g. Doughty & Varela, 1998) which contend that corrective feedback facilitates second language acquisition when it aims at language features. The findings are also in line with Schmidt's (1990, 2001) noticing hypothesis which underscores attention to the learners' input. However, the results of the present study are in contrast with the proponents of non-transfer hypothesis (e.g. Krashen, 1982; p.74) who disapproved error correction attempts saying that it should be done only for learned rules of language.

Additionally, the findings of the study support the study carried out by Williams and Evans (1998) in which the group benefited from FF.

Finally, the results confirm a number of studies (e.g. Alcon, 2007; Farrokhi, 2005) that focus on forms provides teachers with a useful option in second language pedagogy.

Conclusion and Implications

The present research was an attempt to find out the efficiency of two forms of FFI on the learners' pronunciation learning. The findings demonstrated that the participants in both FF groups achieved better results than those of the control group. The results pertain to such targets and aspects of form-focused instruction as discovery learning, noticing hypothesis, and awareness raising.

Teachers can also use the findings to understand which approach to teaching pronunciation could be beneficial for learners at the intermediate level. This can, in turn, cause the teachers to seek ways of implementing these approaches in an academic setting. Furthermore, the findings of the present study can help material developers with designing useful tasks to enhance the learner's development of second language pronunciation.

Nonetheless, the present study is not without certain limitations and delimitations: firstly, the participants of the study were at the intermediate level. As a result, further research should be carried out for participants at

such other levels as elementary and upper-intermediate. Secondly, the study is limited to pre-emptive and reactive FFI. To investigate the effect of other instructions procedures, more research is needed. Finally, the participants were Iranian EFL learners and the findings may not be applicable to learners of other nationalities.

References:

- Alcón, E. (2007). Incidental focus on form, noticing and vocabulary learning in the EFL classroom. *International Journal of English Studies*, 7(2), 41-60.
- Bialystok, E. (1994). Analysis and control in the development of second language proficiency. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 16(2), 157-168.
- Bourke, J. M. (2008). *A Rough Guide to Language Awareness*. Paper presented at the English teaching forum.
- Dlaska, A., & Krekeler, C. (2013). The short-term effects of individual corrective feedback on L2 pronunciation. *System*, 41(1), 25-37.
- Doughty, C., & Varela, E. (1998). Communicative focus on form. *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*, 1, 114-138.

- Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2001). Introduction: Investigating form-focused instruction. *Language learning*, 51, 1-46.
- Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Preemptive focus on form in the ESL classroom. *Tesol Quarterly*, 35(3), 407-432.
- Farrokhi, F. (2006). A practical step towards combining focus on form and focus on meaning.
- Fotos, S. S. (1993). Consciousness raising and noticing through focus on form: Grammar task performance versus formal instruction. *Applied linguistics*, 14(4), 385-407.
- Jahangard, A. (2010). Form-focused second language vocabulary learning as the predictor of EFL achievement: A case for translation in a longitudinal study. *MJAL*, 2, 1, 40-76.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (1990). Focus-on-form and corrective feedback in communicative language teaching: Effects on second language learning. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 12(4), 429-448.

- Long, M. H. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective*, 2(1), 39-52.
- Long, M. H. (1998). Focus on form Theory, research, and practice Michael H. Long Peter Robinson. *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*, 15, 15-41.
- Mackey, A., Poole, C., & McDonough, K. (2004). The relationship between experience, education and teachers' use of incidental focus-on-form techniques. *Language Teaching Research*, 8(3), 301-327.
- Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2000). Effectiveness of L2 instruction: A research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis. *Language learning*, 50(3), 417-528.
- Park, E. S. (2003). Constraints of implicit focus on form. *Teachers College Columbia University Working papers in TESOL and Applied Linguistics*, 4(2).
- Poole, A. B., & Sheorey, R. (2002). Sophisticated noticing: Examination of an Indian professional's use of English. *Indian journal of applied linguistics*, 28(2), 121-136.
- Saito, K. (2013). Reexamining effects of form-focused instruction on L2 pronunciation development:

The role of explicit phonetic information. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 35(1), 1-29.

Schmidt, R. W. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied linguistics*, 11(2), 129-158.

Schmidt, R. W. (2001). Attention. *Cognition and Second Language Instruction*, ed. by P. Robinson, 3-32.

Williams, J., & Evans, J. (1998). What kind of focus and on which forms. In C. Doughty & J. William (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 139-154). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Visuwords: A Semantic Web-based Dictionary for Vocabulary Learning

(A Review Article)

By **Fereshte Ghasemi** (MA Student in TEFL, Shahid Beheshti University) and **Soheila Eslami** (MA Student in TEFL, Shahid Beheshti University)

Fereshteghasemi.fgh@gmail.com/dr.solyeslami@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Advances in technology have caused significant changes in many domains of social and individual life. As such, technology has also influenced the education at all levels. Technology not only gives learners the opportunity to control their own learning process, but also provides them with ready access to a vast amount of information over which the teacher has no power or control (Lam & Lawrence, 2002). The fast advances in language technologies in the era of information technology have also brought considerable opportunities for L2 vocabulary learning and teaching. They provide inexhaustible language resources and a huge range of language learning software/applications which greatly facilitate how L2 vocabulary can be acquired.

Considering the vocabulary instruction through technology, many practitioners of the field (e.g. Dodigovic, 2005; Yoshii, 2003) have claimed that vocabulary has been one of the most commonly taught language areas through technology in recent years. Genc (2012), for example, states that the rapid dramatic advancements in computer technologies have been affecting all aspects of language learning in general and vocabulary component in particular for more than two decades. Genc also believes that among the most important L2 learning areas that have been affected by this huge improvement are the reading skill and lexical items. Gorjian, Moosavinia, Ebrahimi and Hydarei (2011) state that vocabulary teachings are in line with the profound changes taking place in other areas of knowledge and advances in network technologies. The researcher further claims that this has resulted in the emergence of virtual worlds designed to facilitate synchronous (online), rather than asynchronous (offline), learning activities and practices among students (Gotjian, et al, 2011). As such, it can be claimed that technology can be employed to help students and teachers learn and teach L2 vocabulary items more effective.

A classic conceptualization of the role of computer technologies is provided by Levy (1997): the computer as a tutor or tool. The tutor-like role of technology,

similar to that of a teacher, can guide and evaluate language learners' learning; These systems evaluate learners' performance and automatically generate vocabulary activities for L2 learners. technology may also serve as a tool to facilitate learners' learning and performance. Their primary role is to help learners obtain meanings for unknown items. the lexical applications are primarily tutors when the learner makes use of websites or mobile apps that are specifically designed for learning vocabulary items intentionally, for example, e-flashcards or interactive /intelligent applications which can evaluate the learner input to a certain degree. Web-based language learning involves using of the Web and contains Web materials, resources, applications or tools (Son, 2007). Web-based activities which designed well allow teachers to practice with their students individually or in small groups (Cited in Bagheri and et al, 2012). This paper narrows the focus down to one web based graphical dictionary and explores the possibilities it can offer for learning vocabularies.

2. Description

Visuwords is an online visual graphical dictionary as well as controlled vocabulary tool. Actually, it provides the visual interface of each word and its respective meaning on the basis of English grammar. This is very

user-friendly for definition of any words from any subjects can be represented in a separate color dashboard. It explores the word synonym, derivation, and antonym to extend the meaning of any facets available in a web-based environment (<https://visuwords.com/library>). Visuword uses Princeton University's WordNet, an opensource database built by University students and language researchers. Combined with a visualization tool and user interface built from a combination of modern web technologies, Visuwords is available as a free resource to all patrons of the web.

To use the applet, you only need to type a word into the search query at the top of the page and press 'Enter'. A network of nodes or 'synsets' will spring out from the word that you entered. A synset is essentially a single concept that is represented by a number of terms or synonyms. Synonyms are words with different spellings that convey the same idea. For example; when you look up "seem", you see that the word is connected to four synsets each represented by a green circle. Green denotes verbs so all of these synsets represent verbs. Two of these synsets have the lone word "seem"; one has two terms: "appear" and "seem"; and the third has three terms: "look", "appear" and "seem". Each of the four synsets has its own definition. Touching a node will reveal all of the synonyms for a given synset as well as its definition. Some synsets will also show a few examples of usage. These synsets link to each other and



- "is an instance of" — **hyponym/hypernym pair**

In these relationships, the hyponym is specific and unique. For example, "Einstein" is an instance of a "physicist".



- "is a member of", "is a part of", "is a substance of" — **meronym/holonym pair**

In these cases, the meronym in some way belongs to the holonym. Examples: "robin" is a member of the "thrushes", a "wheel" is a part of a "wheeled vehicle", "caffeine" is a substance of "coffee"



is a member of



is a part of



is a substance of

- “Derivation “: These relationships represent the process of forming a new word from an existing

word, often by adding a prefix or suffix, such as un- or -ness. For example, "unhappy" and "happiness" derive from the root word "happy".



- “Is a word for”: These relationships denote inclusion within a word or phrase. For example, "wheat is a word for wheat germ"



- “Opposes”: the relationship shows the opposite of the word. for example, “polite” and “impolite”.



- “Is similar to”: this relationship represents what item is similar to the target vocabulary in meaning. For example: “gregarious” and “social”.

“social”.



As it has been showed, Visuwords use color coding extensively, both on its own, to distinguish between synsets in various parts-of-speech, and in combination with shapes for telling different relation types apart. The main goal of visualization is to organize information clearly and effectively through graphical means.

3. Evaluation

Dictionaries and Thesauruses have been around for decades with no noticeable improvements in how they work. Visuwords combines Princeton University's "WordNet" database with a clever flash-driven visualization tool to create a graphical online dictionary visualizing all of the relationships between words. When students form pictures in their minds of what they read, they are better able to remember and understand words and texts (Gambrell and Jawitz, 1993).

Visualization is one way which can empower the students while they encounter with unknown words and can help students successfully achieve comprehension of the text. This is because it is a skill that improves their visual imagery; it is a realistic tool to help them learn vocabulary and comprehend text (Gambrell and Jawitz,1993).

Visuwords is a free resource, and no registration is required. It works wonderfully with a Smart Board as you can move the nodes about and shift things around to help clarify a connection. It is not only a useful tool for language professionals such as writers, journalists, and linguists. If you are even remotely interested in English, Visuwords can help you to expand your language horizon and explore the lexical intricacies of the English language. This is a great idea for those who want to not only expand their vocabulary, but to come to a deeper understanding of the English language as a whole.

Visuwords does a great job of showing the users how interconnected words are and one part to explore is the derivation of vocabulary. The link you are looking for is the dashed line which shows the roots of the word you are exploring. Not quite as good as a full blown etymological dictionary but you can see the connections. There is a clear difference between the various links that are displayed and the graphical key below the map area explains these connections. There are 19 different types of links that may be displayed

Sticking with the results for “style” – you can very easily display how some words in the English language have a broad range of meanings and possible uses. So, in these results teachers could highlight to the students how many different shades of meaning there are for this simple word.

Visuwords uses 4 colors to display the 4 main word groups. Green – verbs, Blue – Nouns, Orange – adjectives and Red – adverbs. This proves to be a very effective visual aid to writing as users can quickly generate adjectives from a search. So, if you punch in “happy” there is displayed a wondrous tangle of synonyms the users could use in their writing (figure 3.1). Of course they can roll over these and see the meaning of the new words if they wish. The combination of data and the way it is presented makes this a very powerful tool to support writing.

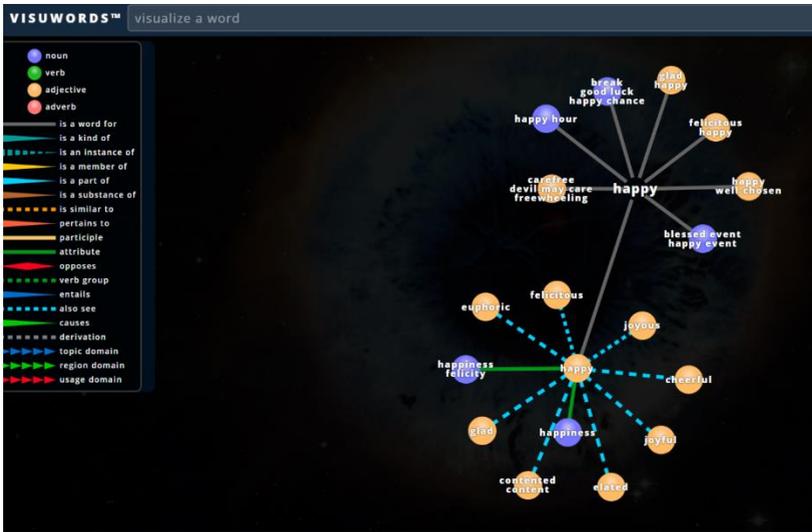


Figure 3.1

The visual key to the side of the visual is also fairly clear, though a bit crowded as there are 23 different symbols with varying colors with small black type beneath each one describing what they mean. The visuals themselves aren't confusing or overbearing, since one could just drag their mouse over the graphic and move to see other far-reaching nodes. Double-clicking on a node is supposed to yield more connections to that specific word/idea and it's also possible to click on and drag the various nodes to move them around the interface. This is useful to organize the various associations into a logical pattern or simply for easier viewing, as the web can get quite convoluted. Although,

not every node that is double-clicked has an extra level of definition to it, which is disappointing. Since the dictionary isn't exhaustive, it's hard to really find it useful, unless one is interested in finding random colloquial terms. It's difficult to gauge how the lists of words are inputted and valued; the interface seems a bit too arbitrary to be seriously considered for academic use, though it is entertaining to play with.

What the Visuwords tool does do right is its clear effort to educate its users and elucidate what the connections mean. In a section at the bottom of the website titled "Understanding the links between Synsets," the connections labeled "is a kind of," "is an instance of," "is a member of," "is a part of," and "is a substance of" are all explained in their technical terms with specific examples to illustrate their meanings. A way to learn about the vocabulary associated with these nodes or synsets, Visuwords does want the user to be educated and to really understand what it means to find connections between words and concepts. In this respect, it succeeds in its pedagogical activity.

The importance of such a visual dictionary is unclear, because of the limitations inherent in its content. However, on a second glance, it may be fruitful to use Visuwords to brainstorm (instead of find definitions)

ideas. Since each word comes with various associations and tangents, if I was perhaps stuck on a concept and needed related words or ideas to strike another idea, this tool would certainly do it. The connections between nodes are sometimes too obvious, while others are ingenious ways of connecting concepts that probably wouldn't be thought of without this tool.

4. Conclusion

Research has shown that most teachers and learners have a positive attitude towards learning vocabulary in English for general and special purposes (Liu & Jiang, 2009; Römer, 2009; Tribble, 2008; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004). Teachers should provide learners with technology-based activities that explicitly teach English vocabulary (Chapelle & Jamieson, 2007). For example, online dictionaries can be used in direct teaching activities. Not only do online dictionaries offer useful information about meaning and parts of speech as in their conventional paper-based versions, but they also allow users to find possible synonyms and antonyms, and obtain translations in other languages. At the interface level, some electronic dictionaries make learning individualized, offering further, more comprehensive ways of searching for words, which promotes user engagement.

Web site Visuwords defines and displays relationships between words in a fast and effective graphical map of meaning. When you first search for a word with

Visuwords, you'll see the word pop up in the center and nodes pop out from there for each meaning of the word. Each of those nodes will spawn their own relational nodes, connected by lines that indicate meaning (for example, a red diamond indicates an antonym), and double-clicking any of those nodes will expand your tree of meaning from that point. Visuwords is a quick visual dictionary-and-thesaurus-in-one tool that offers a fresh and useful way to look at words, understand meanings, and find new ways of saying what you're looking to say.

Visuwords could be a good free alternative to Visual Thesaurus. It gives users an easy-to-use tool for exploring definitions and alternative word choices. By providing a visual that represents the vocabulary word, ELLs are given more opportunities to interact with vocabulary and understand its meaning (Sibold, 2011). The visual exposure provided by visuwords increased vocabulary awareness and development.

References

- Bagheri, E. & Roohani, A. & Nejad Ansari, D. (2012). Effect of CALL-based and Non-CALL Based Methods of Teaching on L2 Vocabulary Learning. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(4). pp. 744-752, July 2012.
- Chappelle, C., & Jamieson, J. (2007). *Tips for teaching with CALL: Practical approaches to computer-assisted language learning*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Dodigovic, C. (2005). "Computer-assisted Language Vocabulary Learning in a Pairedassociate Paradigm: A Critical Investigation of Flashcard Software." *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24, no. 1: 17–38.
DOI:10.1080/09588221.2010.520675
- Genc, B. (2012). Successful learning of frequent vocabulary through CALL also benefits reading comprehension and speed. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 17(5), 473-495.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0958822042000319674>
- Gorjian, B., Moosavinia, S.R., Ebrahimi Kavari, K., Asgari, P., & Hydarei, A. (2011). The impact of asynchronous computer-assisted language learning approaches on English as a foreign language high and low achievers' vocabulary

retention and recall. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(5), 383-391.

Lam, Y., & Lawrence, G. (2002). Teacher-student role redefinition during a computer-based second language project: Are computers catalysts for empowering change? *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 15(3), 295-315.

Levy, Michael. (1997). *Computer-assisted Language Learning: Context and Conceptualization*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Liu, D., & Jiang, P. (2009). Using a corpus-based lexico grammatical approach to vocabulary instruction in EFL and ESL contexts. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, 61–78.

Römer, U. (2009). Corpus research and practice: What help do teachers need and what can we offer? In K. Aijmer (Ed.), *Corpora and language teaching* (pp. 83–98). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Sibold, C. (2011). Building English language learners' academic vocabulary: Strategies & tips. *Linguistically Diverse Students & Their Families*. 24-28.

Son, M. M. (2007). Enhancing web-based language learning through self-monitoring. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 23, 187–196.

- Army of Letters* Tribble, C. (2008). Corpora in ELT: Preliminary results from an Internet survey. Paper presented at the TALC 8, Lisbon.
- Yoon, H., & Hirvela, A. (2004). ESL student attitudes toward corpus use in L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 257–83.
- Yooshi, H. (2003). “Effects of Captioning on Video Comprehension and Incidental Vocabulary Learning.” *Language Lear*

Threshold 14, Number 1

ARMY OF LETTERS

My Heart

When my tender heart, heavy and restless, aches for You;

When my soul is summoned to the heavens,

Whereas no wings i own to flap!

Every single cell of mine turns ablaze with helplessness,

My broken heart is ignited.

My love is like

A volcano erupting,

A stream overflowing,

A spring cloud crying everywhere,

And a desperate mother looking forward to hearing
from her son at the front.

O love! How incapable i am of recounting my heart for You!

I shed tears spelling out these words!

Alas, in my dreams i fly high with You.

O thee, my goddess! O my Heart!

Call me; with You i possess the shining moon and the
starry heavens, in You and only you my heart craves love.

Farshad Mafakheri. BA English Translation, Azad University,
Sanandaj branch

Lasting Lovers

I felt inadequate through the grandeur of the traverse,

Passing along the splendor of universe.

I was busy writing a dedicated verse,

But nothing came out to the sense.

I was feeling an infinite harm in my heart,

Felt like losing thee in the coldest night.

Wish I could drown in your mind

To see what was going on the right.

Darkness came with a strange arctic whirlwind.

We were talking under the gray sheet of stars;

I kept dreaming, trying to hold your hands.

The shivering storm was rolling through the phantom of the leaves;

I was shouting at the world from bottom of the hell.

Never did I feel this way, were you ever this far away, so close!

Marzieh Davari Nezhad

BA English Language and Literature, Payam Noor University,
Varamin Branch

The Roads

This poem is the poet's conversation with his friend on the roads, dedicated to Poorya Tayefeh.

I, too, love plenty of roads with all my heart.

The roads taken and the not taken ones.

And this fondness can be expressed, in part,

With hyperbole, metaphor, and also puns.

Such sublime thrilling brutes are not rare, for

The roads are snakes coiling around the world;

On whose belly they never cease to explore,

Sometimes straight, and sometimes curled.

Gazing at the roads is a great hobby of mine,

As the sun accompanies me in the daytime

Or as the moon is up and the weather is fine;

While I stroll or when from a mountain I climb,

And by chance see such magnificent beauties
That distract me from the senseless absurd pains
Which arise from my endless thoughts or duties;
The very same things that put my life in chains.

Roads are surely in various lovely dazzling looks!
Some offer trees, some flowers, and some beasts.

They have tales you cannot find in the books;
Of hatred, of love, of proud pagans or pious priests
Whose chronicles are not narrated in the stories.

Roads, in addition, are of course, significant far more;
For no one is certain about their vast territories,
And so a road represents life in its essential core,
Since the end of our untrodden path is unclear;
Just as vague is the end of some roads to us. Indeed,

Life and roads are very similar, we all shall adhere.
In both, occasionally, we shall pass by a fast speed;
And sometimes, move slowly and enjoy the scenes;
Since life, like some roads, can be too brief! Too short!
Go ahead then! Do not stare at the bright screens!
Stick to wandering in the nature, instead, as your sport.

Sina Farajzadeh

MA English Literature, University of Tabriz

A Thousand Ships

After a thousand ships have sailed,
and many have departed,
the anvil in my heart drops unassailed
with no warning
to the depths.

From the collision,
a few drops fall unbidden
down my cheeks blurring my vision;
and my unassuming sailor
waves at me from the deck.

Negin Sadat Ghaderian

BA Software Engineering, Shahid Beheshti University

Sinless Rains

Coming down like little sinless rains,
Turn into oceans of lordliness,
Rage and rein.
One carries a leaking candle,
The other a dagger;
One a gory love,
Another a heart of lies.
Each has a road to take;
Each has a home to reach.
Out of breath at times,
Shimmer at nights,
Or sing forbidden love songs
To coax the defiant wounds
Who reaches home,
Who strays from road to road,

Threshold 14, Number 1

God not cares.

Of the massive little lords,

Death will sort all out.

Maryam Bahrami Nejad

MA English Literature, Shahid Beheshti University

Loneliness

Find myself in darkness,
When I struggle to find happiness;
And my wishes disappear in a twinkle,
When I touch and see my wrinkle.
I thought it is serendipity.
But they call, it is stupidity.
Considering my grave a cozy little room,
Where I can see stars and the moon.
Who knows where I am what I want?!
While my passion is hunt,
I felt myself hobbled by my feeling.
They don't know, there is no healing.
There is not a shadow of hope,
When I'm ill and cannot cope,

Cannot cope with this dismal world,

Where our souls are easily sold.

Its harsh slap gives me pain;

I'm still in pain when I wait for it in vain.

What a weird world we are in,

When what we want cannot be seen.

Hooriye Khajooee Dehshib

BA English language and literature, Payam Noor University,
Varamin branch

Desperation

You live in every falling leaf,
I catch in the palm of my hand.
You live in the breath of the ocean,
The gentle lap of water against the sand.

I have nowhere to hide my heart;
You are everywhere I go.
Even the careless caress of the wind
whispers things it shouldn't know.

Something's changed in my blood,
In what keeps me rooted to the ground;
I close my eyes and there you are.
Your memory lives all around.

Shakila Keyhani

BA English Translation, University of Isfahan

Starfar

Miles away?
Stars away?
How far is it to you?—

a mended pair of shoes
 a thousand tired steps
 and a thousand more;
if I stop walking.
and the earth spins in my favor
will I ever get to you?

every constellation
 every shade of blue
 I searched every planet
how many more eclipses
from me to you?

lost my way back home
losing your direction too
getting lost among the stars
to find a sign of you

how far is it to you?
 miles away,
 and a thousand more?
am spinning arOundround,

and the earth is toO

tell me how far

how many inches of blue?

stars away if you are,

all I need a shooting star;

a wish long overdue.

Shakiba Es'haghi

BA English Translation, University of Isfahan

The Silent Case

The papers came out on Thursday, exactly five days, fourteen hours and thirty-two minutes after it happened. There was nothing left to soothe any one; it was so sudden and shocking that brought the whole town to an emotional crisis. Now everyone has something to share, but no one is brave enough to confess their own part in it. That is certain! We all played our role there. Look at my collection of the justifications.

Scrich St., Rose Block, Apartment No.1919, Roommate,
23 YO, MSc Pure Chemistry Student:

"She was not like us, not that she was unique but, you know, in a bitter way; she was not even similar to anybody in the world. I can say **that** with certainty. She always seemed to be much older than she pretended to be, for example. Or_ you know_ she was harsh and bitter, aggressive, angry; and to every sane person's surprise in the universe

she liked being called so! How do you see that? Really? I mean it! Or if you ask, that precise night, to be more accurate I have to say that specific **day** was not the only such day in her lifetime. That was her routine for all autumns and winters. She was, like, exhausted; she was now nagging, now moaning. I told her to sleep; I recommended what sanity would suggest then. I went to her bedside; she was stretched all over her floral bed _ really!? Who uses floral blanket in that age? Huh_ in her down mood doing something, I don't know what, with her smart phone. I caressed her forearm and said: 'Don't think about it darling... Have some rest for now ... we'll have dinner together afterwards ... then you can rest more ... have some sleep ... really ... nothing matters that much...' and I was about to continue soothing her but she stubbornly expressed that she would go out instead! And you won't believe that a few seconds before, she was complaining that she can go nowhere! Well, I told you she was weird. Let me give you another example, once she criticized my

boyfriend's relationship with me bitterly and harshly_ not the relationship itself, on that point she never expressed a single clear word_ she said if she had a boyfriend she would go with him to cafes, never anywhere else! And she laughed at us going to park, to cinema, shopping, and even walking. You see? She was bitter. All the while she was getting ready, putting on make-up, throwing her stuff into her black shoulder bag and so on; I, as sanity would do, tried to convince her to stay home, but you know what? It was all in vain. She wanted to go to a CAFÉ!! You see!? She was an old weird creature, wasn't she? She said good-bye and was about to leave, then I wished her a nice time _ and not surprisingly at all _I got no reply. She went out, and she had her favorite black high heels on. She slammed the door shut and I heard her walking to the staircase; we have three elevators in this doomed building and she went to the stairs! You see? She was not normal. She was never reliable. **Yes**, I'm telling you the truth, believe me now."

Scrich St., Rose Block, Apartment No.1921, Neighbor,
 Divorced Lady, 41 YO, Local Library Code. 9.1
 Librarian:

“O, dear me! I have seen her, and I’ve seen a lot
 of her. She came to us every other day. O, dear me!
 I can’t believe how it all could’ve happened to her.
No way! How dare you ask such a thing, and
 especially now?! O, dear me! I c..a..n’t talk. O,
 de...ar me!”

Scrich St., Rose Block, Morning Shift Security Guard,
 30YO:

"Oh, Y..y..yess, I remember her in that d..d..day.
 She had a r..r..red scarf on, her black hair
 sp..p..pread about her pale white fface; oh it was
 not for si..si..ickness I'm sure, it was for her make-
 upp; I know. She was s..striding to the doorway
 a..a..almost quickly; as always. Re-spreading o..or
 better to say re-o..o..organizing her hair she passed

by. There was nothing unusual about her, she was in the semi-rush as always, she strode briskly as always, she even winked to the security camera round the right-hand corner like she always did. I say there was nothing unusual. Not about the time she went out, nor her appearance, not even her manners; she was always like this. Why she might have ever done that? No, **NO.**"

Strich Bus Station No.149, Bus No.1619, Bus Driver,
46YO:

"Hmm, she had a ring on! I noticed her left hand ring finger when she passed by to get off the bus hurriedly. She seemed scowling sideways! I don't, I mean; sorry, didn't know her; it was my first week, I only saw her two times. But, hmm, she took off the bus at the same station both times but I'm quite certain she was waiting for the bus at different stations. Pardon me, I don't mean to; eh, it's just my photographic memory. **Yes.** I say I

don't know her but, hmm, you can count on my yes. Anyone may do it at some point, look at my own cousin for example."

Smug Crossroad, Florist 19YO, S:

"Well, she was not a kind lady. You know. I'm being honest; she was wealthy, but she only bought a small bouquet. I don't know for whom but it must not have been for her husband, well, such a small bouquet is a definite sign of a wife's infidelity. I have seen many such cases. You know. She had a noticeably expensive wedding ring, but she was not loyal. Well, you know I bet she was to pay a visit on the sly! I wish I knew her unfortunate husband, I wish I knew her name so I could reveal all the truth, well, these women are poison. You know. Well, yes; for sure. Well, why are you asking about her sir?"

Smug BRT Station No.0/03, Driver 64YO:

"Who? When was it? Let me think _ she was in a hurry. She was lucky to win a vacant seat. Let me think_ she got down at the station No.30/0. She was worried. Let me think_ I don't know_ let me think. I can't help; I don't know her. Let me think_ she bought a fortune-telling card from a small kid and she insisted on buying it like she called the boy a few times, but she didn't open it in my bus. Let me think_ no, I don't know more. I can't answer your question."

Dovelorn Sq., Godot Café, Waitress LSB, 26YO:

"She entered at 05:57 p.m. She was attractive with that bloody lipstick, sure. She took a look round the tables in the yard then went inside our café. She had a nice bouquet in her hand. She came back and sat on a table at this corner; yes, this one: inner left-hand corner. She chose a table for two and sat. I thought she is waiting for someone; sure, she had a ring on. But after a few minutes, she took off her overcoat _ Oh how adorable she was_ and put it on the other chair, also her bag. How she could be

waiting for someone, I wondered then; sure she was not. She took a pair of eyeglasses out of her bag, put it on. Then, a pocket-sized book came out of her bag. She started reading. She, sure, was alone. Sure. **Yes**, why not! We all can be!"

Dovelorn Sq., Godot Café, Head-waitress, Married,
25YO:

"She ordered a double espresso with certainty and a piece of chocolate cake with doubt. I wanted to ask whether she is alone or not but she so confidently emphasized A cup and A piece that I didn't dare ask any such thing. She was reading a book when I went to her to serve her orders; we were busy that night so I served her personally. It was 'I Never Promised You a Rose Garden', I don't know if this helps but she was on page 8 then. She made a smiling face on her cake plate, left a generous tip and left at 18:46:32; I checked the CCTV for that. That's all I know with certainty. But with doubt I tell you she didn't seem alone.

She was so pretty that she couldn't be alone.
Regarding your question, though I have nothing to
say."

Her Possibly **Important** Personal Property List by the
Local Police from the Papers' Report:

- An English translation of Anna Karenina by Joel Carmichael (She was probably reading it, her book-marker was on page 484)
- A Cactus (She pretended that it was a gift, liked it so much, and gave it a name; Serendipity)
- Six different photographs of a group of men (It seems she had downloaded and printed them on her own, but we are not sure why)
- A Coffee mug ('I wait for you when the night begins to fall' is part of its design)

Termination ... Her Termination was bitter. I knew her best of all. She was alone. She was fragile. I was with her all the time. I was in the café that night. I saw the ring I've

given her; she had it on her left hand ring finger. I loved her. I was there. She shouldn't have done it. **I was there.** I would always, **ALWAYS** stay with her. I can't believe what I have seen with my own very eyes. It was less than 30 seconds. He came, she asked me to leave them for a few seconds, and in the blink of an eye I heard him scritch. I ran back to her room. She was swimming in a black lake; I could only hear her murmuring to me "Je t'Adore", then her shining eyes were shut_ and I will never believe_ **forever!** I still love her, but I don't ... I don't have her anymore. I must find him! I will take her revenge. I will take **our** revenge. She was mine since I_ alone_ heard her then.

Ensieh Moeinipour

BA English Language and Literature, Shahid Beheshti University

CREATIVE WRITING

CHALLENGE

Sue-understanding

There was a monster under my bed.

I slept with terror every night.

It wanted me dead,

And only feared the light.

I went to school one day,

My teacher greeted me with a smile;

She asked if I'm ok,

And that's when I began to cry.

"What's wrong Sue? Tell me my child."

She said and wiped my tears;

"There's a monster under my bed Ms. White!"

And I told her about my fears.

"So it fears the light?" She said.

I nodded my head twice.

"Knowledge enlightens every man's way."

Her words caught me by surprise.

I spent the rest of my life,

Studying every night and day,

Reading every book I could find,

So they would enlighten my way.

After my fifth degree,

I thought I knew enough;

I was ready to be free.

I planned to sleep with the lights off.

The monster disturbed my peace,

Its long talons grabbed my hand,

"How did you not notice

That you're not a man?"

Remember kids, the moral of this story.

Teachers often give the wisest words;

Listen carefully and follow literally,

Or learn the meaning of a metaphor.

Lala Movsesian

BA Animal Biology, Shahid Beheshti University

Dear world,

I have missed my silence since I could speak. When I was a child of ten, so excited I was that I have completely forgotten how silence can save my soul, passing everyday with my voice which was whirling in my head.

My words were considered to be the right words for my speech, but my insensate eyes did not see their teeth. They bit, broke and hurt everything. They seem to have forgotten me, their lord who made everything for them. My feeling, which was a little gray, was taking me everywhere. My poor body, which was really fatigued, could not tolerate these heavy words and difficult though it was, I was forced to hug them.

Eight years passed and I was roaming with my torn bag. All I have said were with me in my bag. I was carrying them to find a good place to bury them, and I was wondering if I could eat them. I was not so voracious and I had to listen to some of them. I thought to be the best creator, but they kept asking for freedom.

In short dear world, you took my hands and showed me how frightening my words can be. Since then, I sacrificed my words for silence.

Yours ever,

Hooriye Khajooee Dehshib,

BA English literature, Payam Noor University, Varamin branch.

Threshold 14, Number 1

My dear teacher,

Today's world is not like what you reminded me.

Regards,

Mohammad Reza Ghaemi

July 20th, 2046

Mohammad Reza Ghaemi

MA English Literature, Islamic Azad University, Tehran Central
branch

Room

Welcome to my room!

This is the first teacher I have.

Inside a large house, the corridors that led to each other were full of black places with no space and no end.

I was trapped inside. I was. I may still be; I don't know.

My cell had four walls and an iron window. Each of the walls had a painting of the future, past or present. But I know they were talking. Everyone had a history.

Everyone was tired and depressed on the walls.

Everyone was disturbed. It was as if someone wrote them down that they had nothing to lose. It was interesting for me, whatever it was.

Why was I there?

Who was I there? What was I doing there?

The only thing that was clear to me from the outside was the black-and-white images of the people coming and going over my head; everything was pure black and white. The only things I saw were fruit shops, coffins and a church.

Each of the gray bipeds was very interested in apples. The coffin maker did a very good job on Fridays. He watched his work on Sundays as he leaned against the wall of his shop and smoked his cigarette, smiling at the width of the coffins as all the mourners passed by.

The most interesting thing about these gray bipeds was that after praying, they used to buy apples again, as if there was a need and they would die without apples.

These were the people who entered church every Sunday for worship.

Who did they worship? What is the worship for? Who did they complain from or thank?

Probably I didn't see anything because I was black in the dark underworld. My cell was level with the sidewalk.

The sun, the sun rose every day with a gray face and was more lifeless and tired than the day before to show that another gray day had begun, and was giving way again to the moon; the moon that was not just a faint, infertile gaze that was blue. You could not recognize him.

Every day was more disappointing than yesterday and the day before. I even had forgotten my name. I could

only recognize Sundays. Every day inside me was waiting for something .Waiting for what? I don't know... The day before yesterday was Sunday, I was holding the bars of the window and watching the gray bipeds, suddenly the usual rain began to fall. He washed everything. He washed the colors, the good and the bad things ... he washed everything.

In the thrill of escaping the grays, something red passed through my vision. The red umbrella was in someone's hands. That passing created a question.

The question sprouted in my mind and grew ...

The buds inside my brain got bigger the next day, bigger the next week and then so much bigger that two days after Sunday something came out of my brain. He scored. I could feel its roots inside my body. I could feel the roots of his body in my heart and lungs, which I did not feel. I could not feel anything when I was breathing, but my breath smelled like fresh sprouts. He had filled the cell. It got bigger every day, more beautiful every day. Sundays passed, and the gray feet became more and more colorful every day. It rains and takes on colors. Days passed, but the red umbrella was no longer visible.

Something inside me was melting. The buds spilled. My leaves turned black. My branches were darker than mine. I watered with my questions every day; there was no answer for them.

Last Sunday was cloudy, it started to rain.

He washed the last colors of the sky. I saw the last red drops of anemone that went away by the atmosphere with my own eyes ... I saw the last escape of colors from the hearts of swallows. I saw the last leaves of the trees fall. I heard the last songs of the immigrant swallows. It was there that I felt the last beats of my heart, the last beat of his songs, the last poems of my heart for my soul. I could feel the last love songs he could make himself with the tears in his eyes. It was the most beautiful and saddest voice one could hear.

My head was down and I was listening warmly when something noticed me. Something warm and intimate. It was the umbrella again.

But this time he stood in front of the church door and leaned a little toward the apple boxes, wearing a green dress, a pink scarf, and two small ladybugs. They were the neighbors of her white shoelaces. The combination

of all these colors together was very painful for me, and at the same time it had an innate passion. It was as if I had inherited it from childhood.

I could not wait any longer. Something inside me started to run away. Something strange and young and fresh ran from my heart to my lungs and then scratched my throat, opened my mouth and closed my eyes. And he shouted:

...

I do not know what he said. It was very hard to hear, even for me. After that, nothing changed and the grays started running again.

The little girl was gone; I did not even realize she was leaving. She was gone, but my tree blossomed.

I picked one up and set it up.

It tasted bitter.

Every day my job was to chew the fruits of my mind.

It was Sunday when heavy rain began to fall.

I was in front of the window again, seeing the eternal damn rain. It had been raining several times and there was no news of the girl. I was disappointed with the bars.

The tree above my head did not allow me to pass

through the bars. He was so big that he would not let me do anything; I could not even carry myself anymore. Its roots protruded from my legs and entered the cell floor, and I was now part of the tree and part of my cell. I was the main trunk of the tree of my mind. I fed on its fruits and its watering was with me. I felt like I had become a tree trunk and my skin was getting harder... . This time I heard something. It was weird. Someone was calling me. Someone I heard. Someone I owned. When I raised my head, the little girl reached out and pulled me out. My roots, my leaves, my branches, none of which allowed me to get out of the cell.

Pulled ...

Pulled ...

The girl's voice came: "Natalie ... Natalie! Do you know me? Do you remember me?"

I was in a strange state of confusion as if I were in absolute metamorphosis.

With my head I just shook no ...

"I'm you, Natalie. I'm you, Natalie..."

When the girl came out, I felt like I was out, out of those four walls. It was there that I saw the ruins of my prison.

The colorful brown sign inside read: Natalie's solitary confinement.

...

Hello!

I am Natalie. Inside a large nested house; the corridors that led to each other...

Sina Farokhi Farkhani,
BA English Language and Literature, University of Gonabad

Why Teaching?

I ventured to rhyme a verse
To disturb the anxious universe
By teaching what is future tense,
The past perfect is not so intense
And subject opens a sentence.
Yes, I could count the uncountables
Teach what is and is not dispensable
Nail them to the books and tables
Dictate agreements, parallels and
Instructions to reduce to participles
Yet of all the rules one could tell
I dared to whisper only one spell
That the rules of this universe
Help us take a leap of faith
To contribute just another verse
And capture a glimpse of existence

In a sentence full of insignificance.

Dawood Naderi

MA ELT, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

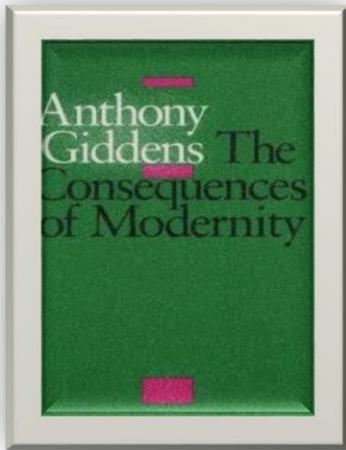
The Instructor

“The instructor featured nothing but all:
One who acquainted with students supremely,
Has expressed the lessons perfectly,
Possesses the exceptional ability to build caring
relationships with students;
Aware of all the definite and indefinite,
The One and Only
Who is strongly aware of a qualified opportune test
administration,
One who has been denied by none but failures.”

Zahra Shokrollahi

BA English Language and Literature, Gonbad Kavous University

THRESHELF



The Consequences of Modernity. By Anthony Giddens. Copyright 1990 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. Originating publisher, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.



Anthony Giddens (1938), Anthony Giddens, a British sociologist. He was born January 18, 1938, and also he completed his Bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology at the University of Hull in 1959, his

Master's degree at the London School of Economics, and his Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge. He is known for his interdisciplinary approach, involving sociology, anthropology, archeology, psychology, philosophy, history, linguistics, economics, social work, and political science. He is evaluated to be one of the most noticeable modern sociologists and the author of at least 34 books, in fact published in at least 29 languages. He was mentioned as the great author of books in the humanities. He has also centralized dynamic issues of social structure. Giddens also has various attitudes in his realm. Especially he entirely refers to "Reflexivity", which is the idea that both individuals and society are defined not just by themselves, but also in relation to each other. On the other side he discussed about "Globalization", Giddens' argues that globalization is

the natural consequence of modernity and will lead to the reconstruction of modern institutions. Finally, he elaborated how people are not entirely free to choose their own actions, and their knowledge is limited, but they are potential to reproduce the social structures and eventually lead to social changes. Giddens' political philosophy that aims to redefine social democracy for a post-Cold War and globalization era.

Giddens' "*The Consequences of Modernity*" indicates how we should elaborate advantages and disadvantages of modernity. Giddens considers his major statement through his work. He explains that 'modernity' refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. Giddens believed that we are moving

into a period of "high modernity" instead of "post-modernity" in which the consequences of modernity are becoming more radicalized and universalized than before, also he has totally rejected post-modern age. According to Giddens a post-modern social universe may ultimately occur, but this as yet comes on the other side of the forms of social and cultural organization that now control universe. The author concentrates on the themes of security versus danger and of trust versus risk. According to Giddens' book, he believes that Modernity is a double-edged phenomenon. Giddens asserts: the "opportunity side" of modernity was emphasized most powerfully by the classical founders of sociology. Giddens mentions to this point that these classical founders such as Marx, weber, Durkheim explain and attention to negative parts of modernity. Marx and

Durkheim both saw the modern era as a troubled one. Eventually he unlike classical thinkers of sociology attentions to aspects of modernity in positive and negative way. Although Giddens considers the development of modern social institutions has produced hugely superior opportunities for human beings to enjoy a secure and satisfying existence than in any type of pre-modern system. On the other hand, modernity also has a dismal side that has become very important in the present century, such as the frequently degrading nature of modern industrial work, the growth of totalitarianism, the threat of environmental destruction, and the alarming development of military power and weaponry. So unlike the postmodern system, modernity defines the security and danger, trust and risk and time and space. These consequences also signify how knowledge plays role in

the process of transition to modernity. As Giddens says that to live in the universe of high modernity is to live in an environment of chance and risk.

Parts of the book:

As a first approximation, let us simply say the following:

"modernity" refers to modes of social life or organization

which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth

century onwards and which subsequently became more

or less worldwide in their influence. This links

modernity with a time period and with an initial

geographical location, but for the moment leaves its

major characteristics safely stowed away in a black box.

Today, in the late twentieth century, it is argued by

many, we stand at the opening of a new era, to which the

social sciences must respond and which is taking us beyond modernity itself. (page1)

On the whole, the "opportunity side" of modernity was stressed most strongly by the classical founders of sociology. Marx and Durkheim both saw the modern era as a troubled one. But each believed that the beneficent possibilities opened up by the modern era outweighed its negative characteristics. Marx saw class struggle as the source of fundamental schisms in the capitalistic order, but at the same time envisaged the emergence of a more humane social system. Durkheim believed the further expansion of industrialism would establish a harmonious and fulfilling social life, integrated through a combination of the division of labour and moral individualism. Max Weber was the most pessimistic

among the three founding fathers, seeing the modern world as a paradoxical one in which material progress was obtained only at the cost of an expansion of bureaucracy that crushed individual creativity and autonomy. Yet even he did not fully anticipate how extensive the darker side of modernity would turn out to be. (Page 7)

References:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/anthony-giddens-3026484>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Giddens

<https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=2664>

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/46412.The_Consequences_of_Modernity

Giddens, Antony(1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*, Originating publisher, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Threshold 14, Number 1

TRANSLATION

CHALLENGE

عشق او باز اندر آوردم به بند
کوشش بیهوده نآمد سودمند

عشق دریایی، کرانه ناپدید
کی توان کردن شنا ای هوشمند

عشق را خواهی که تا پایان بری
بس که بیسندید باید ناپسند

زشت باید دید و انگارید خوب
زهر باید خورد و پندارید قند

توسنی کردم ندانستم همی
کز کشیدن تنگ تر گردد کمند

Kept within bounds I was by the Love again

In vain was my constant endeavor

How the sober swims there

In the sea of Love, notorious for its foggy seaboard

Embrace the vicissitudes as blessings and receive them
all

If you are reaching for the end of the Love road

The most unpleasant to be the pleasant; make it appear

Sweet, not poison; imagine it to be

Rebellious I was before the Love, I was unaware

The more you pull the rein, the tighter you are bound by
it

Translated by Maryam Siahmansouri

NEXT ISSUE'S TRANSLATION CHALLENGE

خواجوی کرمانی

بگذر ای خواجه و بگذار مرا مست اینجا
که برون شد دل سرمست من از دست اینجا
چون توانم شد از اینجا که غمش موی کشان
دلم آورد و به زنجیر فرو بست اینجا
تا نگوئی که من اینجا ز چه مست افتادم
هیچ هشیار نیامد که نشد مست اینجا
کیست این فتنه نوخاسته کز مهر رخس
این دل شیفته حال آمد و بنشست اینجا
دل مسکین مرا نیست در اینجا قدری
زانک صد دل چو دل خسته من هست اینجا
دوش کز ساغر دل خون جگر میخوردم
شیشه نا گه بشد از دستم و بشکست اینجا
نام خواجه مبر ای خواجه درین ورطه که هست
صد چو آن خسته دلسوخته در شست اینجا

The Pulley

BY George Herbert

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
“Let us,” said he, “pour on him all we can.
Let the world’s riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.”

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

“For if I should,” said he,
“Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,

And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

“Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.”

دو فصلنامه علمی تخصصی آستانه سال دوازدهم، شماره ی دوم

انجمن علمی گروه زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی دانشگاه شهید بهشتی دکتر شهریار منصوری وفا کشاورزی (دانشجوی دکتری زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی)	صاحب امتیاز مدیر مسئول سردبیر
انسپه معینی پور (دانشجوی کارشناسی زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی) آناهیتا افژول (دانشجوی کارشناسی زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی) صبا صبوری (دانشجوی کارشناسی زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی) چنور اولی زاده (دانشجوی کارشناسی ارشد زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی)	هیات تحریریه ادبیات انگلیسی
دکتر موسی نوشی	آموزش زبان انگلیسی
وفا کشاورزی (عکس روی جلد: پوریا طایفه) مریم مرندی	طرح جلد و صفحه آرایی طراحی سایت
دکتر فریده پورگیو	با سپاس ویژه از
داوود نادری سینا فرخی فرخانی	دکتر فریده پورگیو حوریه خاجویی دهشیب
مریم بهرامی نژاد سهیلا اسلامی فرشته قاسمی پوریا طایفه	مرضیه داوری نژاد سینا فرج زاده نگین سادات قادریان
محمدرضا قائمی شکیلا کیهانی	انسپه معینی پور فرشاد مفاخری
شکیبا اشاقی لالا موسسیان	
نازنین قرائی نژاد	

مریم سیاه‌منصوری فرشاد جلال سادات

هیات مشاور

دکتر جلال سخنور، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر سید ابولقاسم فاطمی جهرمی، دانشگاه شهید

بهشتی

دکتر کیان سهیل، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر شیده احمدزاده، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر محمدرضا عنانی سراب، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر سارا کاترین ایلخانی، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر شهریار منصوری، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر موسی نوشی، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

دکتر حسین ملانظر، دانشگاه علامه طباطبایی

چاپ انتشارات دانشگاه شهید بهشتی

انجمن علمی گروه زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی- تحت

حمایت معاونت فرهنگی (با نظارت کمیته ناظر بر

نشریات دانشجویی) نمایه شده در پایگاه مجلات

تخصصی نورمگز

قیمت 3000 تومان

نشانی مجله: تهران. اوین، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی،

دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی، گروه زبان و

ادبیات انگلیسی.

تلفن: 22902486

ایمیل: subthreshold@gmail.com