

<p><b>W.H. Auden’s Poem “Say the City Has Ten Million Souls,” A Discourse of Displacement</b></p>			<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Literature</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> place, displacement, refugee, literature.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p>			
<p style="text-align: center;">Analysis of Auden's (1939) poem, "Say This city Has Ten Million Souls" provides the opportunity for connecting the social precepts of place and displacement offered by Aschcroft et al (1989) for explaining the plight of the refugee as marginalized by the host society in different eras of human history. In doing so, the poem becomes a lens for understanding the use of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis Model for assessing the three dimensions of literature. The outcome of the following academic discussion provides a tapestry of the psychological, emotional, and social, challenges of the human as the refugee expressed in this poem and universality of the same even in the recent literature.</p>			

**1. Introduction**

Power games of the national and international power stake-holders have lead to civil, regional and international wars which created large scale displacement. Forced displacement often creates a lot of problems for the displaced. Communication of the experiences of the displaced people lies at the heart of the discourse of displacement ((Ashcroft, Bill et al 1994). Auden's poem "Say the City Has Ten Million Souls" from a conceptual framework of place and displacement looks at the effect of dispossession, dislocation, and exile on the lives of the refugees who are forcibly displaced from their homeland and are unwelcomed wherever they try to seek refuge.

I will analyze the poem as a discourse of displacement using Ashcroft et al (1997) view of disenfranchised refugees, applying Fairclough's (1995) Model of Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough's three dimensional model of CDA focuses on (1) the linguistic features of the text, (2) processes relating to the production and consumption of the text, i.e. text as a discursive practice; and (3) the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (Louise & Marianne, 2002) . Review of literature shows the effect of World Wars I, II and other wars waged by the world power stakeholders' and their impact on macro and micro level life of displaced populations as well as comparisons with most recent literature such as Shamsie's "Burnt Shadows," Hamid's "The Reluctant Fundamentalist," and Hossaini's, "The Kite Runner" to see the universality of sufferings of the poor victims irrespective of time, place, class and creed.

**2. Literature Review**

*2.1. Auden's "Say the City Has Ten Million Souls"*

Cohen (2011) reminds how the late president Franklin D. Roosevelt's wife Eleanor told the world, "A new type of political refugee is appearing," she observed from Europe in January 1946, "people who have been against the present governments and if they stay at home or go home will probably be killed (p. 3)." This idea, underpins the message of the German, and other Eastern European Jews as described by the narrator in Auden's poem, "Say the City Has Ten Million Souls" on the fate of the Jew and others escaping Hitler's terror as refugees. Such forcibly displaced people have a realization that they remain unwelcome, without a recognized identity, a people without a home as described in Aschcroft et al (1989) becoming separated from all they ever identified with as belonging to some place (De La Cadena & Starn, 2007; Hollenbach, 2010).

Prakash (2012) says one of the most important consequences of civil war is forced migration, he believes that lack of political freedom and rule of law causes forced migration and the states that do not respect human rights produce more forced migrants than those that do. Prakash (2012) is of the opinion that the physical threat to life is the strongest factor that causes displacement. Limit, boundary, frontiers are frequently repeated words in Auden's poetry, especially the word 'frontier' has been used in almost all the poems of his first two volumes either literally or figuratively (Arana, 2009). The couple in the poem 'Say the City of Ten Million Souls' had to emigrate to avoid the risk of incarceration (Oppenheimer, 2012). With Hitler's categorical decree to banish German Jews from the map of the world, the world turned into a hell for them where they did not find any place to live in peace and security. Oppenheimer (2012) quotes Michaltscheff "the Germans had suddenly become second—or third class humans..." banished and displaced from their homeland Germany and unwelcomed elsewhere.

Shaw (2013) says that the expulsion of the Germans concluded the Second World War, he goes on elaborating that it was a direct continuation of policies developed during the war and first implemented during the Soviet advances in its final stages. Hitler's rule of Germany was devastating for the Germans in many ways, even before WW II they were among the most scattered of all the European nationalities. (Shaw 2013). It was Hitler who provided the backbone of his new racial empire, but then after the demise of the racial empire they were the Germans who were the main losers. They were shunted often murderously into the occupied rump Germany (Shaw 2013). The Western Allies, in a way, helped and ratified implementing this campaign by not providing refuge to a large number of displaced Germans. Shaw (2013) says that the result of the war was a victory of one set of genocidal policies and actors over another, not of anti-genocide over genocide. Strangely enough, "... the forced removal of Germans made no direct impact on the debates leading to Convention" (Shaw 2013). The defeat of the Nazi empire in Germany was taken as the defeat of the German people, who were not entitled to the full protection of the new norms—the absence of the expulsion of the Germans from the genocide debate in 1948 convention, was striking and speaks volumes about the double standards of the so-called international organizations. The proposal that the forced removal of populations should be considered did not receive much attention under the plea that it had been a common practice. Schabas notes (2000:196, quoted abbreviated in original), "There is no doubt that the drafters of the convention quite deliberately resisted attempts to encompass the phenomenon of ethnic cleansing within the punishable acts. According to the comments accompanying the Secretariat draft, the proposed definition excluded "Certain acts which may result in the total or partial destruction of a group of human beings... namely... mass displacement of population. (Knowledge4africa.com)

The poem 'Say the City Has Ten Million Souls' was written just six months before the outbreak of Second World War, it portrays a German Jews couple struggling to seek asylum. They were forcibly displaced from their homeland, could not go back to get their passport renewed and the unwelcoming attitude of the country where they were trying to seek refuge filled them with despair. The poem contains repetition and is written like a sad blues song which was made popular by the African Americans at about the same time. The refrain at the end of each stanza echoes melancholy tone.

Place and displacement are mental constructs. Smith (2007) explains, "Displacement occurs not just in the physical world, but in the head, in the very language one has to learn again (p. 190)." At the same time, the reference to place, according to Harris' (2005) view of Aschcroft et al (1989) explanation, "Importantly they emphasise the fact that the term place is not merely synonymous with landscape (p. 71)." [Sic] Aschcroft et al (1989) describes this idea of place putting the refugee into a marginalized condition "constructed by the posited relation to a privileged centre, and directed by the ... authority (p. 104)." This is the heart of the feelings articulated in Auden's poem with the marginalization the refugee experiences set forth by the host society.

The refugee's cultural identity of self and community desperately attempts creating a lifeline memory to "home" but also, the outcome as expressed by the narrator in the poem is one of either unconscious or conscious oppression of the indigenous personality according to the view of nations toward their origins (Tunstall, 2006). The relocation of people, from their culture, their identity as Auden's poem aptly expresses proves the possibility of alienation becoming the refugees' self-image (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 9). Clearly, Auden (1939) provides the example of social alienation in the line, "The consul banged the table and said, 'If you've got no passport you're officially dead': But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive (p. 29)." As an example of contemporary poetry, Auden's "Say..." show the universal application of the demographic and physical displacements of people of modern history who become refugees as immigrants with no choice. Such displacements as described in spirit of the poem look at the Russian Jews of Russia during WWI and again in Germany WWII, as well as the millions of Armenian refugees from Turkey, leaving 40 million exiles filling Europe (Cohen, 2011; Israel, 2014) and the list goes on and on.

The poem of the exile in general creates the metaphoric conditions of the displacement of humans as a state of being. As a poem of displacement, therefore, Auden's "Say..." according to Smith (2007) exemplifies poetry of displacement in seeking "to make accommodations with its predicament, forging manageable, if provisional, identities from the shifting allegiances of a globalised culture, where no claims on loyalty and allegiance can be seen as absolute (p. 9)." [Sic]Consequently, Smith (2007) explains that, "Displacement, then, is not simply an external, geopolitical phenomenon." Rather, it remains an internal process where (as exemplified in Auden's "Say...") the refugee or exile finds his/her humanity cast out from its own sense of culture and history, even at times, from the very language "in which it has been constituted (p. 10)." Markedly, according to Hollenbach (2010), "The fact that so many people ... (seek) to move across borders for many reasons has led to a growing resistance to admitting them (Hollenbach, 2010, p. 2)." The 21<sup>st</sup> century continues this resistance in fact, and with those admitted to other nations as refuge, the resistance continues within the borders. It is especially true of the people from those nations and states which are made the battle ground for the world power stake-holders.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Fairclough's Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Incorporating Fairclough's Model of CDA frames on the social interaction of texts relating to the strength of using the following dimensions for analyzing Auden's poem "Say..." aligned to society. This looks at the different dimensions of this process in researching the depth and meaning of the piece of literature (Henderson, 2005; Mirzaee & Hamidi, 2012). Discourse as a social practice, according to Fairclough(1995), is both constitutive and constituted. It is understood as a kind of language used within a specified field which gives meanings to experience from a particular perspective(Louise &Marianne, 2002).

Taken from this angle Auden's ' Say the City has Ten Million Souls' is a discourse of displacement for it contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning. Fairclough's model of discourse draws on Halliday's multifunctional approach to language having three functions: an identity function, a relational function and an ideational function. While analyzing this poem as a discourse of displacement I will look at both dimensions of this discourse that are the communicative event and the order of discourse. Discourse in itself is a discursive practice (Louise &Marianne, 2002), many things go in its making and in turn it provides the basis for many future activities and discourses.

Fairclough's three dimensional model of CDA focuses on (1) the linguistic features of the text, (2) processes relating to the production and consumption of the text, i.e. text as a discursive practice; and (3) the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (social practice) (Louise & Marianne, 2002).

Analysis of the linguistic features of the text inevitably involve analysis of the discursive practice and vice versa (Fairclough 1992). So while analyzing Auden's poem, "Say..." in broader spectrum my focus is on place and displacement of the humans as a result of power games of the power stake-holders in accordance with the Fairclough's Model of CDA, which requires going beyond the visual and verbal textual signs. Therefore, in following the narrative perspective of the poem the reader focuses on the historical intention of place and displacement. Textually, the poem succeeds in placing the narrator somewhere different from his roots. In doing so, the displacement emerges.

#### 4. Analysis

##### 4.1. Textual Analysis

In "Say This City Has Ten Million Souls" Auden (1939) depicts a refugee who has lost his home and the homeland...the country of his/her birth and is trying to seek refuge in some big city... 'the city of ten million souls'. The very word 'say' in the title and its repetition in the opening line is to impress the point that it is a huge city having range of abodes from 'mansions' to 'holes'. Despite having such a vast range the narrator tells his/her companion it does not have a 'place' for 'us'. The pronoun 'my dear' used for the spokesperson's companion refers to their close association and similarity of the problem they are facing. The very reference to the word 'place' evokes the image of displacement of the narrator and his/her companion. The expression 'Yet there is no place for us' is repeated to convey the acute sense of despair and helplessness. The present 'displacement' of the narrator makes him/her nostalgic by making him/her mention 'Once we had a country' and while living there they 'thought it fair' and this fact that 'Once we had a country'... a place from where they had been displaced can be confirmed by looking at 'atlas' to 'find it there'. The place is there but they had been displaced and the power and the fear behind this forced displacement is such that they 'cannot go there now'. With the same sense of loss the displaced narrator feels their utter misery and worthlessness and inferiority in comparison to different elements of nature even the 'old yew' will blossom in a new spring but their 'old passports' cannot be renewed for after their forced expulsion they cannot go back to their native land to get them renewed. The counsel they went to seek help for 'banged the table' and told them 'If you've got no passport you're officially dead'. But the physical reality is different; they are still alive and need a place to live in. So they went to another committee that was not apparently harsh. But there also they were politely asked to come again 'next year' without realizing the dire need of the 'displaced' so the problem 'Where should we go to-day?' remained unresolved. While wondering around they listened to a politician...the public speaker who was instigating the people against them by saying 'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread'. The poor displaced seeking refuge got the obvious hint to 'them'. Even the thunder in the sky makes them feel as if 'It was Hitler over Europe' pronouncing 'They must die'. The very sight of the poodle wearing a jacket and a door opened to let in the cat make them realize the superiority of the pet animals to German Jews. They went down to 'the harbour' and 'stood upon the quay' from where they saw the fish swimming freely just 'ten feet away' from where they were standing as 'displaced'. Similarly the very sight of the birds singing at their ease in the trees in the wood made them feel their helplessness and the superiority of the world of nature for having no politicians to indulge in power games to usurp human freedom. Even the dream the displaced dreamt was of a building with a 'thousand floors, A thousand windows and a thousand doors' but the fear of stark reality haunted him even there...no floor, no window, no door was theirs. In this misery of living death, they were exposed to the harshness of weather 'the falling snow' even there in the valley of death they were haunted by ten thousand soldiers marching 'to and fro'

to pull them out from where they were already exposed, homeless, shelterless, resourceless and friendless made to fall much below the human status.

The textual verbal analysis looks at the manner the poem provides the dichotomy between knowing and not knowing and thus, reinforces questions relating to the place and displacement underpinnings of the poem. This also, according to Henderson (2005) provides an example of Fairclough's CDA approach of textual analysis aligned to social theory (p. 6) connecting with placement and displacement of humans (Ashcroft et al, 1989).

#### 4.2. Context

Auden, himself was a displaced person, though in his displacement the choice was his own. But the fact remains that he had a firsthand knowledge how it feels like to be a 'displaced'. Similarly his visit to Germany also provided him an insight of the sufferings and exploitations of the Germans in that dictatorial regime. He helped rescue a woman by marrying her so that she might get the British nationality. The poem was written six months before the Second World War, the most destructive and fatal of all the wars waged on the planet earth. It was a time when the Allies nations were planning to defeat the Axis of Evil for the crimes it had been committing against humanity, but what happened as a consequence of this tag of war among the world power stake-holders was a series of unending sufferings for those who had got nothing to do with the power tactics like the forced displacement of the German Jews, like the collateral unimaginable destruction caused by the dropping of the atomic bomb, like the constant, unending war against terrorism and its impacts on micro and macro level life. (knolg4africa.com)

Fairclough's method for processing analysis of interpretation of literature (in this case) looks at production and reception influences based upon contextual factors. From the context of the placement of the narrator (et al) at present, Auden employing narration shows the displacement he intends by providing a first person perspective. Thus, allowing the reader's interpretation that the narrator's displacement results in context to the current location away from his historical roots (Fairclough, 1995). Auden (1939): "Went to a committee; they offered me a chair; Asked me politely to return next year: But where shall we go to-day, my dear, but where shall we go to-day? (p. 29)." This clearly puts the displacement issue in context with the placement of the refugees to the committee.

Use of the CDA model explains the use of language connected to social practice and the link to historical contexts. This provides the means for taking existing social relations in the poem as the placement of the narrator and at the same time serves the interests of the displacement aspect as expressed from the point of view of Jewish refugees explained in the poem. The literary power of the poem from the perspective of the CDA model links to the narrative character of the text enabling the reader to connect to the emotional language intended by Auden thus, positioning the reader in the place of the narrator's psychological and emotional context of place and supplanting as a refugee. Auden (1939) writes, "Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky; It was Hitler over Europe, saying, 'They must die': O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind (p. 29)."

In turn this discourse of displacement can be taken as a discursive practice, it is not the sad tale of the forced displacement of one couple narrated in the poem, but it is a mode of resistance against all the crimes committed against humanity be they the forced exile, racial discrimination, ethnic cleansing, war off terror or the sort and in turns Auden's discourse of displacement can be linked to the discourse of displaced written in the twenty first century. The interdiscursivity of Auden's, "Say the City of Ten Million Souls can be seen by seeing its connection with some other texts.

#### 4.3. Auden's, "Say... ", Connection to Other Works

Loomba (1998) is of the opinion that social and historical developments are very textual and they can be taken out of their literary representation. For her displacement also occurs in time, not only in geography and the type of literature that reflects variety of displacement provides historic visions, which are real and vibrant as compared to the more encompassing present (Loomba, 1998).

##### 4.3.1. "Burnt Shadows"

Kamila Shamsie's "Burnt Shadows" connects to Auden's poem "Say..." showing the extremes of multiple race, culture, and homeland effect on the protagonists' identify of self as a causal factor of the environment. The message the novel links to the poem shows profound challenges for the people finding their place in a new society amid the transposition of this activity having everything to do with reclaiming, or rebuilding their lost identify resulting from this unwanted but necessary life condition (See, 2009; Jaggi, 2009). Displacement has become a major theme in Shamsie's novels and there are usually two or more places which they revere in their narratives (Kahf, 1999), i.e. Karachi and Nagasaki in Hiroko's case. In *Burnt Shadows*, Shamsie reveals a prisoner's story. Its prologue said: "How did it come to this?" through the voice of a naked prisoner. He thought he would be "wearing an orange jumpsuit" when in truth, he was actually dressed. It depicts the popularly distributed images of Guantanamo Bay with less imagery but with greater context of this Western incarceration (Stanford, 2008). Shamsie's novel unfolds the story of a series of place and displacement of the prisoner, his mother and his father from the colonized and Harry and his mother from the colonizers side. The novel is ambitious in scope ranging from the geographic and chronological breadth; it leads the audience from Japan's momentous World War II landscape unto the independence and partition of India and Pakistan amidst the local military regime and the US intervention (Shamsie, 2002). Shamsie based the moral foundation of the novel with Hiroko Tanaka-Ashraf, a survivor of the atomic explosion, serves as a formidable reminder of the unprecedented violence caused by the dropping of Atom Bomb in World War II. It is through her moving insights that *Burnt Shadows* reveals its didactic view on the weakness of the new, nation-state. Shamsie has shown how the crisis of identity is affected by the tragic national events between Imperial Japan and England, the post colonial India and Pakistan, a neo-colonial U.S.A., and a Talibanized Afghanistan are all indicted as perpetrators of injustice and violence (Lowe, 2002). What is common in both Auden's poem and Shamsie's fiction is the discourse of displacement and the misery and sufferings of the displaced lot.

##### 4.3.2. "The Reluctant Fundamentalist"

Comparing the story of "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" to the intentions of Auden's poem as an example of what the refugee faces as already explained – a marginalized existence -looks at the underlying message of the author Hamid (2007) using the narrative perspective telling how one person connects with the emotions of being an outsider – American nonetheless always the outsider. The narrator examines his Americanization from the perspective of a Middle Eastern person in a Western setting before and after September 11 (Winthrow, 2006; Olssen, 2007; Anthony, 2012).

Adam Hodge(2011 )writes in the introduction to his book, *The 'War on Terror' Narratives: Discourse and Intertextuality in the Construction of Soiciopolitical Reality*, that 9/11 merely happens to be one narrative about the world on that particular day .He further adds that in order to break down its dominance one needs to go beyond the picture propagated by the USA government and the media. What Hodge(2011) aims at is to illuminate the connection between micro level discursive action and macro level cultural understanding. The protagonist of the novel is stranded between two worlds not knowing where he stands—displaced in both cultures he tries to create an alternative discourse to articulate his experience of transculturality.

#### 4.3.3. "The Kite Runner"

From an entirely subjective point of view, this heart-wrenching novel "The Kite Runner" by Hosseini (2003) juxtaposes the reader into the same emotional and spiritual effects of Auden's (1939) poem in terms of identity. It is more difficult for the older immigrant as unwillingly moved from the tradition and comfort of cultural roots into the alien new home where language differences, ideology, and worldview become barriers. There is a consciousness of identities and the awareness of its loss on this micro level and on the macro level what is going on is presented by Noam Chomsky (2005) in terms of "The Imperial Grand Strategy"(11) devised by the USA foreign policy makers to enforce their hegemonic order at the cost of the subject masses, both within and outside the USA.

Kamila Shamsie in *Burnt Shadows*, Khalid Hossieni in *The Kite Runner* and Mohsin Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* displayed this inter discursivity in actions, reactions and their presentation in the narrative form while Auden had done the same years back in his poem, "Say the City Has Ten Million Souls".

### 5. Conclusion

As proposed in the introduction this academic investigation using Auden's (1939) poem "Say the City Has Ten Million Souls" from a conceptual framework of place and displacement ascribed by Ashcroft et al (1989) looked at the impact of dispossession, dislocation, and exile.

Globalization, international organizations for the assurance of the world peace, multiculturalism now as symbolic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as technology remains embedded in prejudicial realities. No remedy exists to banish prejudices and minimize sufferings of those who have nothing to do with the power games. Displacement and state of homeless is still very much there. "As long as there are wars, injustices, oppression, poverty and harsh environments, there will be refugees seeking a better and safer life for themselves and their families ("Refugees Need Help, Not," 2013)."I would like to conclude in Li Po' s words, the famous eighth century Chinese poet, who says that in some sense, the human condition is fraught with exile .He goes on "How great are the sorrow of exile?", "More in number" he concluded, "than the pearls in the sea" .Despite all hue and cry about human rights the world has yet to set up such institutions and such rules and regulations where humans will be regarded equal irrespective of their cast, colour, nationality and creed.

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