

Practices of (Neoliberal) Governmentality: Racial and Gendered Gaze in Jhumpa Lahiri's Fiction

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ABSTRACT

Michel Foucault's notion of neoliberal governmentality is important in the context of the portrayal of the private sphere of the family by diasporic writers. Family, which is generally defined in terms of its functionality, when considering the difficulties of integration into the non-natal culture from the perspective of the uprooted migrants, is often referred to, erroneously, as the locus of privacy, individuality and autonomy. Among the works of the contemporary writers of Indian diaspora experience in America, Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies (1999) has addressed issues of displacement, assimilation and acculturation modifying Indian diaspora individuals and families. This essay analyses two of her short stories "Mrs. Sen's" and "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" to examine the strategies employed to monitor, regulate and (re)form racial and gendered identities within the seemingly private domain of the Indian diaspora families in the process of establishing a socially acceptable congruence of images for the members of the migrant family. Using the personal sphere of the family as an example of constraint that perpetually fixes subjects to their disciplinary apparatuses, Lahiri portrays the capillary functioning of it through various acts of looking. This essay seeks to explore some of the complex dynamics of the gaze in Lahiri's stories with a particular focus on the coercive character of power and the unequal gendering of the (examining) gaze.

Keywords: neoliberalism; governmentality; gaze; homogenization; power

INTRODUCTION: THE PRIVATE IS POLITICAL

Michel Foucault's notion of 'neoliberal governmentality' in his seminar lectures on *Security, Population, Territory* is important in the context of the portrayal of the private sphere of the family by diasporic writers. 'Family', which is generally defined in terms of its functionality,¹ when considering the difficulties of integration into the non-natal culture from the perspective of the uprooted migrants, is often referred to, erroneously, as the locus of privacy, individuality and autonomy. Foucault (2006) however, points to the functioning of the family as a disciplinary apparatus that serves to subjugate human bodies by accentuating their internalization of social regulations. As he states,

[i]t is because there is the family . . . that the obligation to attend school works and children, individuals, these somatic singularities, are fixed and finally individualised within the school system. [...] The first role of the family with regard to disciplinary apparatuses (appareils), therefore, is this kind of pinning of individuals to the disciplinary apparatus (appareil). (p. 81)

Family sphere and its functionality have been the subject matter of many sociological studies. In one attempt to conceptualise and assess family functioning, Sabatelli and Bartle (1995) identified certain generic tasks all family systems must accomplish as goals and focused on the specific methods and procedures each family adopts to execute these tasks. Their study brought into focus the various factors such as the socio-historical context and the

family's class, race and ethnicity that influence these strategies. According to them, “particular strategies recur with regularity and become the governing principles of family life. They define the limits of acceptable and appropriate behavior in the family, reflect the values of the family system, and define the roles of individual family members” (p. 1027). One of the common system tasks that migrant families must likewise fulfil is to promote “a sense of identity both for individual family members and the family as a whole” (p. 1027). The adopted and promoted identities “become organizing principles for family life” and provide both the family unit and the individual members with a “framework of meaning” (Anderson & Sabatelli 1995).

To cast the family sphere as the site of origin, oppression, restriction and/or formative of the old self is commonplace for Asian American literature in which the subject most often ought to liberate itself from that natal family to successfully form a new self, a new framework of meaning. Jhumpa Lahiri is one of the most prominent among the contemporary writers of Indian diaspora experience in America who have addressed issues of displacement, assimilation and acculturation modifying Indian diaspora individuals and families. Lahiri’s Pulitzer-Prize winning debut short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) mainly explores the “psychological trauma faced by the diasporic characters who experience problems like displacement, alienation, feeling of rootlessness, quest for identity and questions of adjustment to the hostland” (Nair 2015, p. 138). This essay analyses two of her short stories *Mrs. Sen’s²* and *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine³* to examine the strategies employed to form, monitor and regulate racial and gendered identities within the seemingly private domain of the Indian diaspora families to establish a socially acceptable congruence of images for the members of the migrant family.

Using the personal sphere of the family as an example of constraint that perpetually fixes subjects to their disciplinary apparatuses, Lahiri portrays the capillary functioning of it through various acts of looking. This essay will explore some of the complex dynamics of the gaze in Lahiri’s stories with a particular focus on the coercive character of power and the unequal gendering of the (examining) gaze. It is noteworthy here that the theoretical justification for the analysis is derived from the idea that “practices and discourses that are linked intimately with sexism on the one hand and with racisms on the other cannot be conceived of separately but must be thought of as interdependent” (Finzsch 2008, p. 2). Hence, the primary focus in this paper is on the fabrication of the homogenised immigrant subjects: their constitution as the “effect and object” of power and knowledge (Foucault 1995, p. 192). Here, the article details the manner society’s normalizing gaze reaches into the private domain of the diaspora family, regulates migrants’ knowledge and conduct and inserts itself into the micro-politics of their everyday lives. For this part, we argue that the formation of the racialised collective subject takes place mostly through the internalization of a disciplinary gaze that constantly produces networks of knowledge and power. In addition, the analysis focuses on the implicit gendering of the gaze in Lahiri’s stories and attempts to map out the manner the sexual politics of the gaze are challenged and parodied when such a disciplinary gaze is resisted by the subjects or fails to operate. Examples of migrant woman’s look that we cite show Lahiri’s rendering the unassimilated woman with the unconventional role of a spectator not as an overt feminist agenda aimed at destabilizing the patriarchy, but more unexpectedly as a set of practices that is normalised and parodied by being represented as provoking, withering and annihilating.

Both of Lahiri’s stories focus closely on familial norms, the boundaries of the private and the public, the local and the global,⁴ the natal and the non-natal/alter-natal,⁵ the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich*,⁶ or the familiar and the alien.⁷ But Lahiri’s more radical experiment with the domestic space has provoked contentious debate among literary scholars. Whereas some acknowledge her for portraying Indian family as the antithetical locality to an American

identity (Bose 2010), others express grave misgivings about the political aspirations of her writings, arguing that the texts “do not carry a radical or transformative political edge” (Lynn 2004, Hai 2012, Srikanth 2012, p. 205). Indeed, Lahiri’s microscopic and homogeneous representation of what is in reality the completely heterogeneous Indian American community is quite in accordance with the acceptable codes of behaviour that the U.S. nation state communicates. The strangers she creates are in reality no strangers, donned merely with “a veneer of difference, a thin surface that is only skin deep” (Srikanth 2012, p. 63) and are assimilable within dominant paradigms. In a similar way, Rajan (2006) charges Lahiri with tackling the diaspora experience “from the safe distance of an acceptable stereotype formulated around the 1960s when South Asians struggled and melted into America, because they were perceived as an ethnic and not as a racial minority” (p. 127). And this is a perfectly justified rationale to Moynihan (2012) that why many audiences read Lahiri’s fiction “without feeling too *threatened* by ethnic *difference* and without feeling any need to engage that difference” (p. 112) [italics our emphasis].

What is notably absent in this scholarship is a study of the seemingly private realm of the family not as a personal entity, but as the famous feminist argument from the 1960’s: “the personal is political,” because the personal has been shaped by the functioning of a power that is exercised on every individual at different levels by various institutions.⁸ In situating Lahiri’s stories within their socio-political context, this article expands upon recent scholarship in diaspora studies and employs Foucault’s notion of (neoliberal) governmentality⁹ to explore the practices of self-discipline that form the backbone of the various and disparate practices that constitute neoliberal political rationalities in the production of a collective subject described as Indian diaspora in the post-1960s America.

Hence, it is noteworthy that even though the United States is from inception an immigrant society, a defining feature of diasporic experience in America resulted from the 1965 passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which engendered radical transformations in individual and social life in the country and (re-)formed the contemporary modes of political governance. In the aftermath of the Cold War and with respect to the growing “cultural anxiety” over the menace of global Communism to national security, “other” cultures were assumed to pose a potential threat to the core ideas of American values such as democracy, selfhood and capitalism. This predominant political paranoia led to the recuperation of an extremer type of the long-established Oriental Other that associated the “non-whites,” including South Asian immigrants, with Communist threat. The correlation allowed the hegemonic state power to exercise new modes of governmentality to normalise any forms of irregularity that were presumed to be a “danger” or “risk” to the security of the nation state (Grewal 2003, 2005, Asl & Abdullah 2017b). In other words, the disciplinary technologies and the ensuing regulating practices permeated both macro-politics and micro-politics of the nation based upon the reconstructed ‘dichotomy of deviance and normalcy,’ and the established “interplay of normativity and visibility” (Asl & Abdullah 2017b); thus they were developed to monitor and police even private conducts which could be taken “as socially abnormal, such as anything which might cause the destabilisation of the family unit, including the individuals’ sexual inclinations” (Asl, Abdullah & Yaapar 2016, p. 139).

The recuperation of Orientalism in the post-1960s America thus coincided with the emergence of a seemingly unrelated socio-political phenomenon, namely neoliberalism, with its individualistic rhetoric that exonerated the state from any kind of *direct* governmentality (subjectification) and made individuals responsible to conduct their own conduct (subjectivation) in order to become certain kinds of subjects (Brady 2014, Hamann 2009, Selmeczi 2015). Together, the Oriental Other and Neoliberal governmentality transformed the realms of the public and the private and the personal and the political at multiple scales.

Neoliberalism gradually blurred the traditional distinctions between the public domain of the society and the private sphere of the home. The private space is the present correlative of a particular exercise of power over the public. Rather than being a locale of independence and autonomy, the private is formulated by methods of governmentality, i.e. of self-supervision and self-regulation. These methods are fashioned by the mainstream through variety of mechanisms and in myriad institutions like schools, hospitals, churches, prisons and factories, among others. The primary goal is to set up an axis of normality and abnormality whereby the production of docile bodies, obedient citizens and homogenised subjects is realised unproblematically.

Under a neoliberal governmentality and with respect to the contemporary state project of “multiculturalism” as a technology for the production of American nationalism,¹⁰ South Asian American family has come to be “identified as an intimate form ideally equipped” to reproduce exemplary neoliberal subjects. Sociologists have tied this view of modern minority family to the immigration of “a large influx of highly educated professionals from India ... to the U.S. for skilled employment” (Social & Trends 2012, p. 44), and have arguably claimed that the secret of their rapid integration into the mainstream is rooted in the importance they give to education, hard work and determination (Ibarrola-Armendariz 2011, p. 163, Portes & Rumbaut 2001). However, Lahiri’s stories suggest that the relevance of model minority family is not merely in the neoliberal-compatible subjects or “human capital” in America (Koshy 2013), but in its ability to produce hierarchies of power that restructured the private space of the family around the normative scripts of the homogenizing mainstream; and thus producing assimilated, docile subjects.¹¹ All the same, unless one appreciates the capillary functioning of the governmental technologies, one would not be able to understand the nature of the established hierarchies, nor would one be able to fully comprehend the intersectionality of the production of racialised and gendered neoliberal subjects.

Foucault (1995) describes governmental technologies as “disciplines” that serve as a “machinery of power” that exceed the public sphere into the private domain and reorganise it so that the subjects will do what the hegemon wishes, operate as the hegemon dictates, “with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency” that it determines. The operating technology of power creates a secure and solid society by homogenizing its subjects—through discourses of gender, race, class and nationalism—and fostering in them invariable adherence to normative principles. He contends that this contentious procedure is realised through the gaze of power, i.e. “examination” and “normalizing judgment.” The former lies at the heart of the mechanisms that formulate the subject “as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge” (p. 192), and thus operates as a vehicle for normalization. Judgements that constitute the subjects are formed based upon the principles that are often rooted in medical guidelines of normality. Hence, depending on the institution, the normative script based on which disciplinary norms are developed may define itself “in the distinction between the sane and the insane (the asylum), between the docile and the recalcitrant (the school), or in distinctions between the industrious and the lazy (the factory), the obedient and the disobedient (the army),” the same and the Other¹² (the society) (Cook 2014, pp. 149-150). Sanity, docility, obedience and homogenization are only some of the norms on which normalizing judgment is centred. The established norms, Foucault maintains, locate people between “a positive pole and a negative pole,” between “the opposed values of good and evil” (1995, p. 304); and in doing so, they also determine the roles, the subjects who should take the roles, the manner each role should be performed and the time it should take to do it. Those who do not adhere to the guidelines are subject to punishment since “the whole, indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable” (Foucault 1995, pp. 178–9).

But the “disciplinary norms” are formed not only to set up homogenizing conducts but also to determine the points of departures by examining the subjects and singling out the

“different” ones. Hence, the power of normalization not only imposes homogeneity but makes it “possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities, and to render differences useful by fitting them one to the other” (Foucault 1995, p. 184). Under the examination, subjects are objectified, judged and punished or rewarded accordingly. Depending on the institution, the subjects thus go through unrelenting gaze of different examiners—such as supervisors, doctors, teachers, police, etc.—that constantly judge and (de)value the subjects. But the gaze that objectifies, that constitutes the subject by ferreting out the deviations, “does so, not primarily through overt physical coercion, but by effecting an internalization of the gaze” (Cook 2014, p. 151). In *The Eye of Power*, Foucault describes this system of surveillance as panopticism in which “[t]here is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself” (1980, p. 155). Hence, as a Foucauldian social apparatus (*dispositif*), the panoptic system structures fields of visibility and invisibility that turns subjects from being “ungovernable” opponents of civil society to being its vehicles, homogenised docile subjects, by coercively enforcing the normative imperatives of civil society. In doing so, the gaze of examiners not only forms the conscience of the individual but generates looking relations and hierarchies among the subjects, between the observer and the observed. It is with the unequal dynamics of the gaze as well as with the governmental technologies in the production of the racialised neoliberal subjects that this essay is concerned with.

The panoptic gaze, nonetheless, is endowed with a constitutive influence upon the subjectivity of individuals insofar as it has normalised the gaze as the privilege of the masculine and relegated the woman to the role of passive spectacle. In other words, the normalizing heterocentric assumptions about the gaze in Western metaphysics have traditionally formed the objectionable dichotomy of a male subject and a female object that subordinates the woman to the concept of masculinity, and objectifies her as the man’s opposite, as the other. The woman is thus the object, the body, whereas the man is endowed with the power of an assertive and a nihilating gaze.

Through a rapprochement of the existing racial and gendered hierarchies of looking, in what follows, we hope to reveal not only the process of neoliberal governmentality and subject formation within diaspora families as portrayed in Lahiri’s stories, but a close affinity between unassimilated woman and monstrosity, the sense in which, the migrant woman’s failure to “regulate boundaries, [to] manage the emotional climate of the family” (Sabatelli & Bartle 1995, p. 1027), her resistance to acculturate and her unconventional taking of the role of observer recognises her similar status with the monster within patriarchal structures of the gaze.¹³ We contend that in Lahiri’s stories these roles and norms are applied prescriptively in that they situate the male and the female in an axis of normality, between a positive pole and a negative pole, between the opposed social codes of normality and abnormality. Among other things, the established “sexist-norms” determine the roles, what to perform, by whom it should be performed and in what manner.

MRS. SEN’S: AB-/NORMALITY OF A FEMALE OBSERVER

Mrs. Sen’s commences with an implicit formation of the behavioural norms in the construction of domesticity, family structures, and in particular, child-raising. Norms are constructed prescriptively, and people are distributed between opposed poles of positive and negative, of good and evil. In presumed contradistinction with Mrs. Sen, who is advertised to be a ‘responsible and kind’ woman, Eliot’s previous baby-sitters, first a university student

named Abby and then an older woman called Mrs. Linden, were both fired by his mother; the former for refusing “to prepare any food for Eliot containing meat,” and the latter for drinking whiskey out of her thermos and deceiving them that it was coffee (Lahiri 1999, p. 123). This preamble sets it clear that for Mrs. Sen to be considered as responsible, caring, safe and trustworthy she must adhere to and assimilate into the existing behavioural norms even within the private space of her home. In doing so, *Mrs. Sen*’s epitomises the capillary functioning of the panoptic gaze that other than disclosing the governmentality of subaltern woman and the systematic nature of her oppression within the hegemonic discourse of American society, it calls attention to the implicit gendering of the gaze within the narrative, where the unassimilated immigrant woman’s assuming the role of observer is parodied and monsterised.

However, the female protagonist’s adherence to an insistently Indian identity,—not least through the recurrent motif of food and Bengali fish¹⁴ that leads to her subsequent “otherness” from the pre-existing social patterns—and her resistance and failure to insure homogeneity not only interrupts the social orderliness constituted by the normative scripts of the hegemon (Deb 2014, Garg & Lahiri 2012, Williams 2007), but also leads to her exclusion from various social structures of power. In other words, that Mrs. Sen defies established patriarchal normalities of domesticity as mainstream culture has formulated it—as imprisoning woman in the home and in the marriage plot (the domestic carceral)—her defiance is undoubtedly perturbing the pre-established social hierarchical relations by which the mainstream asserts its dominance. Unsurprisingly, very soon, the exilic Mrs. Sen becomes situated in the traditional sexual politics of the gaze in which her position as the supervisor bounds her with menacing animal characteristics of a monster and a witch. Thereby, the promise of safety and control to the American little boy within the diaspora family sphere is replaced with the horrifying opposite reality viz the images of the immigrant woman’s negligence and carelessness, a type of behaviour that invokes gothic features: dangers that lurk in and unveil Mrs. Sen’s monstrosity, hysteric temperament, infanticide and sadism.

One illustratively bizarre occasion wherein the description of Mrs. Sen’s behaviour provokes horror is the way her handling of an Indian kitchen blade, one “that curved like the prow of a Viking ship, sailing to battle in distant seas” (Lahiri 1999, p. 126), is portrayed and immediately followed by her agitating questions. Once Eliot is enrolled to the baby-sitter’s protection, every day, he watches her pry “the pimpled yellow fat off chicken parts, then dividing them between thigh and leg...the bones crack[ing] apart over the blade ... exhale[sic] audibly through her nose ... gripping the chicken with both hands, and star[ing] out the window” (Lahiri 1999, p. 128). On one such occasion, while the fat and sinew were still clinging to her fingers, she asks the child what would happen if she would begin to scream right then at the top of her lungs; a question that discloses her pathological temperament. The fact that Mrs. Sen hides the blade from Eliot’s mother by the time she arrives every day to fetch her son and makes “sure all evidence of her chopping was disposed of. [And that] [t]he blade was scrubbed, rinsed, dried, folded, and stowed away in a cupboard” (Lahiri 1999, p. 130), further underscores the ghastly condition of her behaviour.

Even though the infanticide theme is constantly intensified symbolically throughout the story in Mrs. Sen’s hour-long daily ritual of chopping ingredients and weird questions, the sadistic abnormal behaviour reaches its zenith at two epitomic terrifying occasions. At one time, when her husband refused to accompany her to the fish market, she grabbed Eliot by the hand and forcibly,

led him to the bedroom, whose door was normally kept shut. She flung open the drawers of the bureau and the door of the closet She sifted through the drawers, letting saris spill over the edges She tossed the saris one by one from the drawers,

then pried several from their hangers. They landed like a pile of tangled sheets on the bed. The room was filled with an intense smell of mothballs. (Lahiri 1999, p. 136)

Left to the care of such a pathological, sadistic woman, ironically, and apparently, the little boy now lives in much more perilous condition.

Directly and indirectly, therefore, Lahiri conceives a domestic sphere in which the American boy lives in unabating risk and danger by reason of its occupant's failure to adapt to the mainstream culture and of her remaining estranged. How compelling this image was to the writer may be evinced by the tenacity of the infanticide motif in the story's climactic episode—and the second frightening occasion as we discuss here—wherein the female protagonist's rebellious act of driving without a license results in a socially destructive behaviour that endangers not just other, presumably American, drivers on the road, but Eliot. One afternoon, lured by the availability of "some very tasty halibut" (Lahiri 1999, p. 145), and disillusioned by Mr. Sen's not answering his phone, Mrs. Sen decides to unfetter herself from the shackles of patriarchy and drive to the market by herself. The impetuous decision, however, is immediately followed by another symbolic portrayal of Mrs. Sen's hostility, associating it, once again, with the infanticide theme that is amplified in her handling of the kitchen knife. Disappointed of talking to her husband, Mrs. Sen, as we are told, "went to the kitchen and returned to the living room with the blade, an eggplant, and some newspapers ... Eliot took his place on the sofa and watched as she sliced the stems off the eggplant. She divided it into long, slender strips, then into small squares, smaller and smaller, as small as sugar cubes" (Lahiri 1999, p. 145). In Lahiri's chain of associations, this bizarre behaviour of Mrs. Sen is directly associated with her decision to move towards independence from the shackles of patriarchal family structure that culminated in her "extremely careless" driving; a socially destructive behaviour that is eventually regulated by the police, the society's carceral mechanism of power, whose presence, in turn, parodies the female protagonist's vigilant gaze by foregrounding her inability in taking care of herself and the little boy.

It is interesting that considering such callous and heartless conditions to which Eliot is subject in *Mrs. Sen's*, one is struck by the irony that in contradistinction with the adult females—Eliot's mother, Abby, Mrs. Linden, and Mrs. Sen—whose monitoring position is parodied, as a child Eliot is endowed with a kind of masculine power and privileged gaze that in the first place convinces the limited omniscient narrator tell the story from his perspective, and eventually is allowed to be a latchkey child. When Eliot is introduced to Mrs. Sen, his mother emphasises that "he can feed and entertain himself," and she just wants a baby-sitter in the house just in case of an emergency (Lahiri 1999, p. 124). Through this statement, as it may reassure the readers, Lahiri seems to account for her use of the perspective of a little child to tell a diaspora experience. Eliot, however, is not the one who narrates, but is the focaliser, the one who sees. Throughout the story, the narration is constantly correlated with Eliot's voyeuristic gaze. This is most lucidly expressed in: his surveying his mother's "shaved knees and thighs"; his recurrent observations of Mrs. Sen's daily ritual of chopping up ingredients; his watching Mrs. Sen stand before the bathroom mirror and apply scarlet powder; his seeing Mrs. Sen's inordinately hysteric demonstrations and pathologic discontent; his watching Mrs. Sen laugh and chat in a flirtatious way with the fisherman in the market; his solely noticing of a dramatic change in Mrs. Sen's behaviour; his looking through the tiny window in the camera and his photographing Mr. and Mrs. Sen; and his "looking out the kitchen window, at gray waves receding from the shore" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 147) as if the turmoil has been settled.

This connection between the narrator and the observer thus conceives the thematic concern of Lahiri's story and associates the act of observation with a necessarily masculine position. Through Eliot, the story parodically inscribes the dynamics involved in the act of looking, that the woman, as Western culture has constructed it, must not take the role of

spectator or else she would be redefined as a monster or animal. It is Eliot's voyeurism, after all, that on the one hand appropriates the titular character's diasporic experience, and on the other, secures his conventionally domineering role of observer. It is the sober eyes of the little boy and his ability to observe his surroundings that objectifies the woman, recounts her experience and in so doing, protects himself against the threat of the monstrous feminine. Eliot's first encounter with Mrs. Sen, to whose controlling gaze he will be subject to, ironically destabilises the latter's position and arrogates mastery to the former. Upon seeing her, Eliot appropriates Mrs. Sen as an object of minute scrutiny as well as visual pleasure, opining with admiration on her beautiful eyes "with thick, flaring brows and liquid flourishes that extended beyond the natural width of the lids" (Lahiri 1999, p. 124), yet he utters his misgivings and disfavour about her mismatching apparel and unbalanced cosmetics. As we are told, Mrs. Sen, "wore a shimmering white sari patterned with orange paisleys, more suitable for an evening affair than for that quiet, faintly drizzling August afternoon. Her lips were coated in a complementary coral gloss, and a bit of the color had strayed beyond the borders" (pp. 124-5).

Eliot's ambivalence emanates from Mrs. Sen's position as over-looker—both an overseeing woman (in the archaic sense of the word) and someone who fails to see. Whereas the former position asserts Mrs. Sen's existence as a subject, provides her an opportunity to exercise her authority over the little American male child, and portends a state of (feminine) passivity and a threat of castration as well as emasculation for him, the latter promises a subversion of such dynamics. Her remissness, therefore, reassures Eliot that she would act more as a housekeeper than as monitor; that she is herself an object of his observation, a spectacle; that his ability to see and narrate will preserve his male dominance in the dynamics of the gaze. What Lahiri offers in *Mrs. Sen's*, then, is fundamentally antifeminist, since the existing politics of the gaze within the narrative repeats the gynophobic conceptions of the gaze, that are pre-established in Western metaphysics, and that operate at the expense of women.

We have been considering the relation of the exilic female character's gaze with monstrosity in *Mrs. Sen's*. But the story also bounds the gaze inextricably to the domestic carceral mechanisms of power. For the titular character in *Mrs. Sen's*, the American home is a place of essential solitariness and exile: The Sens' detached life is evident from the "drum-shaped lampshades flanking the sofa [that] were still wrapped in the manufacturer's plastic. [From] [t]he TV and the telephone [that] were covered by pieces of yellow fabric with scalloped edges" (Lahiri 1999, p. 124) that Eliot notes upon his first visit to the Sens'. The American apartment, the uprooted woman's domestic carceral, makes an early impression in the story: The building was located on the periphery of the campus, and inside, much of the furniture "were still wrapped in the manufacturer's plastic" (p. 124). Very soon, Eliot perceives that "when Mrs. Sen said home, she meant India, not the apartment where she sat" (p. 128), because, according to her "[e]verything is there" (p. 126). The carceral apartment, however, is situated in opposition to a coexistent private sphere that offers the promise of cleanness, safety and control, and is simultaneously limned as a site of Mrs. Sen's exile and imprisonment in patriarchal duties, marriage plot and surveillance. The American carceral apartment thus becomes, for the uprooted woman, both a spatial and temporal prison, a private sphere distinct from the American society it is adjacent to and the Bengali one it replicates.

If, however, the domestic carceral is visible in *Mrs. Sen's*, the people who incarcerate—i.e. the society's regulating force, e.g. the police—are not. The narrative presents the carceral machinery of the police as camouflaged force operating seemingly at a distance from the rest. That is to say the observable irregularities in the fictional society are left to be tackled, in the first place, by individual citizens both within the private framework

of the family unit and the public sphere of the society. On one occasion, for instance, Mrs. Sen is startled with the apprehensive look of a passenger on the bus and the driver's subsequently interrogation of her. On the way home from the fish market, as we are told,

[A]n old woman on the bus kept watching them, her eyes shifting from Mrs. Sen to Eliot to the blood-lined bag between their feet When they reached the nursing home the woman in the overcoat stood up, said something to the driver, then stepped off the bus. The driver turned his head and glanced back to Mrs. Sen. "What's in the bag?" Mrs. Sen looked up, startled. "Speak English?" The bus began to move again, causing the driver to look at Mrs. Sen and Eliot in his enormous rearview mirror. "Yes, I can speak." "Then what's in the bag?" "A fish," Mrs. Sen replied.

(Lahiri, 1999, pp. 145-6)

These surrogates—the old woman, the bus driver, and Mrs. Eliot, from whom Mrs. Sen conceals the kitchen knife—thus do the policing in the normative texture of the American society, and by promoting a behavioural dyad of normalcy and deviance turn the racially other citizen into a self-monitoring neoliberal subject and produce a mode of self-regulation that Foucault describes as “disciplinary technologies”. In other words, the normalizing judgment of the omnipresent eyes of the American society in *Mrs. Sen's* directly promotes practices of self-surveillance and self-discipline and produces a cultural assumption that certain thoughts and social behaviours are not proper for a prudent constitution of the individual. Mrs. Sen's failure to meet the established social rules and community expectations not only leads to her negative self-evaluation but also cultivates in her the painful feeling of shame. Though this pattern occurs repeatedly throughout the story—on one occasion, for instance, when she fails to switch lanes while she is practicing driving, a car beeps its horn several times, and Mrs. Sen, beeping defiantly in response, parks the car agitatedly, puts her head against the top of the steering wheel and being upset by others' negative evaluation of herself, expresses her hatred of driving—the strong emotion reaches its zenith after the climactic car accident. After the intervention of the police to regulate irregularities, Mrs. Sen, in a symbolic move, “put away the blade that was still on the living room floor and threw the eggplant pieces and the newspaper into the garbage pail went into her bedroom and shut the door ... [and started] crying” (Lahiri 1999, pp. 146-7).

The position being argued for in this analysis is that the exilic Mrs. Sen practices panopticism—with respect to its normalizing and homogenizing systematization—and exercises power over herself within personal and domestic space of her family even as she renounces it, and in so doing, unravels the manner social standards affect family principles and become internalised through multiple scales of neoliberal governmentality. Succeeding to meet the community standards and adhering to the prevailing normativities thus serve as *Mrs. Sen's* behavioural conduct. Any deviations, accordingly, indicate that the regularity and order of the formulated universe is being jeopardised. So, it is when Mrs. Sen no longer acts in the normally expected way—when she fails to adapt to American culture, when she assumes the role of spectator, when she displays sadistic tendencies, when she attempts to be independent of her husband, and last but not least, when she transgresses social law—that she is imprisoned, both literally and figuratively, to ensure social order and stability.

WHEN MR. PIRZADA CAME TO DINE: FEMALE OBSERVER AND THE LOCALIZATION OF THE EYE AS AUTHORITY

“What exactly do they teach you at school? Do you study history? Geography?”
(Lahiri 1999, p. 29)

In terms of the relation between narrative structure and visual acts, unlike *Mrs. Sen's* which is told from the viewpoint of an American little boy, *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* is narrated from a diaspora woman's perspective; the adult Lilia reminiscing as a ten-year old girl who is growing up in a country sheltered from foreign, and at times alien, affairs. We argue that Lilia's distant and hazy recollections typifies Foucault's power-knowledge relation with its systematised *faulty* epistemic perspective and calls attention to the implicit gendering of the observing gaze within the patriarchal society. The narrator's look into personal experiences of the diaspora and into the private domain of their family is inextricably linked to and affected by the interested point of view of the dominant representations, or the official history and memory as recorded and presented by the mainstream via disciplinary apparatuses of various kinds such as school, which is an ideal panoptic “mechanism for the exercise of furtive power in which social deviance could be controlled with minimum force” (Asl, Abdullah & Yaapar 2016, p. 151).¹⁵ In what follows, we will focus on two characteristic examples of such networks of knowledge and power produced by apparatuses of governmentality to disseminate neoliberal technologies that could reconstruct the potentially ungovernable subject as the racial other and secure their governability by providing individuals' undisciplined liberty as the excess freedom of the racialised other. The significance of these examples, however, would not be fully grasped if one does not appreciate how the narrative bounds the biopower aspect of neoliberalism with geopolitics to create the host land as a powerful nation-state.

The narrative entangles the biopower¹⁶ and geopolitics with the disciplinary technologies and apparatuses of governmentality of the nation-state to produce discourses of American nationalism and thus to create (homogenised) neoliberal subjects. This is done through a juxtaposition of the late 1960s America as the ideal notion of civil society in contradistinction to the uncivility of the Subcontinent in the same period that can be subjected to illiberal technologies of power. Offering an almost too illustrative example of such disruption and uncivility in early 1970s, the narrative starts with a gloomy description of the Subcontinent. As we are told, in 1971, “Pakistan was engaged in civil war ... Dacca had been invaded, torched and shelled ... Teachers were dragged onto streets and shot, women dragged into barracks and raped ... three hundred thousand people were said to have died” (Lahiri 1999, p. 25).

The image of rampant uncivility—inherent to the scenes of sporadic violence, disorder and war—in South Asia is important for two particular reasons: First, it is significant to know that in the imminent war between India and Pakistan, “the United States was siding with West Pakistan,” while the Soviet Union was with India (Lahiri 1999, p. 44). Second, within the contemporary dragnet of (post-)Cold War political discourse of population management it allowed the association of any type of disorder and uncivility with a potential threat from Communism to the security of the nation-state. Thus the Easterners, the Muslim Mr. Pirzada, and to a lesser extent¹⁷ the non-Muslim, perhaps Hindu,¹⁸ yet bicultural family of Lilia's, are socially formulated as potential threats on account of their national and ethnic backgrounds to the security of the population of the nation-state. Accordingly, these people, different in nationality, skin colour, and more or less in religion, confront with suspicion and extreme harassment—take for instance the Halloween scene when the neighbours, as Lilia goes trick-or-treating, jokingly comment “that they had never seen an Indian witch before” (Lahiri 1999, p. 43)—on account of their racial visibility and their possible transgression of

the mainstream cultural and political regime that is generally described as “Western secular liberalism” (Sheth 2011, p. 58).

In this manner, the individuals’ crimes is conceived through biopolitical factors as might be their connection, not least the Indian family of Lilia’s, between nationality and political and ideological affiliation with the Soviet Union—as antagonistic to liberal America. In turn, this notion of being potentially dangerous and threatening paves the ground for a disciplinary framework that will control such a potential threat so that it does not overturn the existing hegemony even at the very private space of the family. In other words, this established framework appears to account for the functioning of governmentality in diaspora families not only to manage things to preserve a certain order but also to maintain the hegemonic status. With this in mind, we can now turn to the two prime examples of governmentality that produce networks of knowledge and power in *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*.

One best example in which American state uses a power of regularization and normalization occurs when Lilia is “sent to the school library with [her] friend Dora to learn about the surrender at Yorktown” (Lahiri 1999, p. 36).¹⁹ While in the library, she finds a section at the bond-wood shelves labelled as “Asia” which contains books about China, India, Indonesia and Korea. Eventually, Lilia is allured by “a book titled Pakistan: A Land and Its People” (Lahiri 1999, p. 36). However, as Lilia is leafing through the book, Dora appears in the aisle, warning her that their teacher, Mrs. Kenyon is in the library and she has come to “check up” on them. To cover up the violation and to avoid punishment, Lilia “slam[s] the book shut,” though “too loudly” (Lahiri 1999, p. 37). As we are told, when the teacher emerges and finds out about Lilia’s non-conformity, she lifts “the book by the tip of its spine as if it were a hair clinging” to her sweater and casts an inquiring glance at the cover, then at Lilia,

“Is this book a part of your report, Lilia?”

“No, Mrs. Kenyon.”

“Then I see no reason to consult it,” she said, replacing it in the slim gap on the shelf.

“Do you?”

(Lahiri 1999, p. 37)

This scene is a miniature portrait of how political power in the (fictional) contemporary hegemonic American society has been changed from a central sovereign authority to a diffuse power that is wielded through a variety of institutions, forces and individuals. The institutionalised school and the subsequent regulating force of the *school* teacher, as she reprimands Lilia for wasting her time and compels her to replace the book “in the slim gap on the shelf” (Lahiri 1999, p. 37), thus expose the manner disciplinary power is exercised through the institutions and individuals by means of panopticism. Here, the teacher as the surrogate of the institution forces Lilia to suppress any inclination she may have to learn uncontrolled, uncensored and unnecessary knowledge. She is compelled to read “normally,” to learn “proper” knowledge, and to abide by the assigned curriculum. And it is this adherence to the specified study program that the normalizing disciplinary gaze establishes by manipulating sources of knowledge at multiple scales.

Another illustrative example of such a manipulation, as defined by hegemonic discourses of nationalism and consumer culture, takes place in the contemporary mainstream media representations of the Orient. Immediately after the above cited incident, the news reports of the Civil War in the Subcontinent are pushed to the margin, dissolved in the normalcy of present-day America and omitted by the dominating, hegemonic discourses. As we are told,

[a]s weeks passed it grew more and more rare to see any footage from Dacca on the news. The report came after the first set of commercials, sometimes the second. The press had been censored, removed, restricted, rerouted. Some days, many days, only a death toll was announced, prefaced by a reiteration of the general situation. More poets were executed, more villages set ablaze. In spite of it all, night after night, my parents and Mr. Pirzada enjoyed long, leisurely meals. (Lahiri 1999, p. 37)

Such active oblivion, rather than being accidental, appears to be, in fact, as it is also revealed to us later in the story, foundational and constitutive. According to Lilia, all of these details of the events in the Subcontinent she knows “only now, for they are available to [her] in any history book, in any library. But then it remained, for the most part, a remote mystery with haphazard clues” (Lahiri 1999, pp. 44-5).

Nonetheless, the omission and burial of such historical contents allow us to see, as Foucault writes in *Society Must be Defended* (2003), “the dividing lines in the confrontation and struggles that functional arrangements or systematic organizations are designed to mask” (7). In other words, the systematization and the masking of historical contents enable us to identify various substrata of the prevailing epistemic subjugations and discourses by foregrounding the social struggles that have paved the way for the formation of the existing discourses and institutions, but have been omitted. This approach thus puts practices of remembering and forgetting in the context of power relations, disclosing not only what is presented and erased, but how, by whom and with what socio-political effects. The rich passage that unravels such monopolised knowledge-producing practices of the American institutions that we have been trying to expose, and which is a response to the epigraph of this analysis and accordingly to Lilia’s father’s query about what she learns at school “about the world,” is now worth quoting in full length here:

We learned *American history*, of course, and *American geography*. That year, and every year, it seemed, we began by studying the Revolutionary War. We were taken in school buses on field trips to visit Plymouth Rock, and to walk the Freedom Trail, and to climb to the top of the Bunker Hill Monument. We made dioramas out of colored construction paper depicting George Washington crossing the choppy waters of the Delaware River, and we made puppets of King George wearing white tights and a black bow in his hair. During tests we were given blank maps of the thirteen colonies, and asked to fill in names, dates, capitals. *I could do it with my eyes closed.* [italics our emphasis] (Lahiri 1999, pp. 29-30)

This passage, which appears early in the story, alongside with what we will quote from Lilia’s mother in what follows, not only presages as well as explains the aforementioned regulative and disciplinary status of the institutions in the production of modern racialised and gendered subjects in relation to the context of state power, but it also, in particular, unfolds the relation of such governmentality of the individuals with internalization and the bipolarity of self-disciplining. Lilia had been educated in a way that while she was “unaware of the current situation” of her ancestral country, she could fill in the blank maps of American colonies with her eyes closed. Apparently, there is no history other than the American history that Lilia must be taught, and thus, to read about “the world” outside America—albeit one’s parental homeland—is a “waste of time” and deserves reproof and punishment. Interestingly, the marginalization of such historical knowledges, their rendering as unworthy of epistemic respect, and more importantly, criminalizing and demonizing those who might be interested in their insurrection by the hegemonic state is justified by the author’s surrogate, Lilia’s mother, in a governmental rationality of security. In response to the same question raised by Lilia’s father, her mother opines that, “Lilia has plenty to learn [about the US] at school We live here [in the US] now, she was born here” (Lahiri 1999, p. 29). As we are told by Lilia,

She [Lilia's mother] seemed genuinely proud of the fact, as if it were a reflection of my character. In her estimation, I knew, I was *assured a safe life, an easy life, a fine education, every opportunity*. I would never have to eat rationed food, or obey *curfews*, or watch *riots* from my rooftop, or hide neighbors in water tanks to prevent them from being shot, as she and my father had. "Imagine having to place her in a *decent school*. Imagine her having to read during *power failures* by the light of kerosene lamps. Imagine the pressures, the tutors, the constant exams." [italics our emphasis] (Lahiri 1999, p. 29)

Apparently, the flipside of *riots, curfews, rationed food, pressures*, etc., is thus the security, safety, opportunity, education and happiness that can be felt by subjecting oneself willingly to forms of self-regulation and self-improvement—as suggested by the mother that Lilia has "plenty," in contrast to the unqualified knowledges about India and Pakistan, to learn.

Within this particular context, the media technologies of various kinds, from the brief television news reports to books at the school library, and eventually to Lahiri's own fictive narration, attempt to conceive and maintain the unity of a socio-political knowledge by imposing an interpretation on a shared past, a society of security vs. danger, a discursive regime of civility vs. barbarity, of American vs. non-American, of good vs. evil. Hence, what the American television news coverage, as described in Lahiri's story, brings of the Indian-Pakistani War to domestic sphere is arrant barbarism and unruliness: "tanks rolling through dusty streets, and fallen buildings, and forests of unfamiliar trees into which East Pakistani refugees had fled, seeking safety over the Indian border ... boats with fan-shaped sails floating on wide coffee-colored rivers, a barricaded university, newspaper offices burnt to the ground" (Lahiri 1999, p. 34). This private, American world in the story is nonetheless a fictive one. What is silenced and forgotten in these functional coherences and systematizations is the similar contemporary riots and violence in 1971 America "as Black ghettos burned, police beat anti-war protesters, and students took over buildings on American college campuses" (Caesar 2003, p. 85). With this in mind, it proves to be a credible allegation that the real America of 1971 was not quite as safe and secure as it is limned in Lahiri's narrative.²⁰

By presenting personal memories commensurate with official histories of the mainstream, Lahiri undermines the reliability and the credibility of the female narrator's observations. The multiple deficiencies in the female narrator's reminiscing gaze and the inexorable obliviousness undermine Lilia's feminine position with respect to the conventional position of the masculine spectator. Throughout the story, the panoptic gaze thus situates the woman under patriarchal structures of seeing: obliging her to discipline herself with the eye of the mainstream. In this manner, the subjectivity assigned to the female narrator within the prevailing male-centred hegemonic discourse becomes necessarily tied to the systematization of the look as authority.²¹ Hence, Lilia's self-expression, presumably as the surrogate for diaspora experience, becomes impossible within hegemonic discourse, and her perspective is parodically ironised. This becomes more evident when some moments of the past and the present escape Lilia's narrative gaze, disabling her ability to narrate truthfully: in retrospect, the narrator "knew nothing of the reason" for Mr. Pirzada's visits (Lahiri 1999, p. 26); even now, she has "no memory of his first visit, or of his second or his third" (p. 27); she could not distinguish a Hindu from a Muslim, an Indian from a Pakistani, nor could she differentiate between the Partition and the Independence—it just "made no sense" to her (p. 28); she lies to her father that she is "*aware of the current situation ... Aware of East Pakistan's fight for sovereignty*" (p. 28) [italics our emphasis]; yet, she "could not comprehend" what "a catastrophe" was, nor did she know what "intrigues" they were discussing about; contemporary historical knowledges were concealed from her, remaining "for the most part, a remote mystery with haphazard clues" (p. 45), and now that she has access to them, they are manufactured and de-formed.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Jhumpa Lahiri's *Mrs. Sen's* and *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* incorporate both discursive and non-discursive features as social apparatuses (appareils). Both narratives comprise an optical mechanism, or panopticon, that shapes domains of visibility and invisibility, foregrounding and privileging some objects while bedimming and de-privileging others. In "Mrs. Sen's," the titular immigrant female character's otherness, monstrosity and pathological figure is not merely in her imprudently taking the role of spectator, which is conventionally the privilege of the masculine, but in her failure and refusal to make assimilative compromises into the mainstream. Of the several untoward behaviours of Mrs. Sen that have manifested themselves in the family sphere during her baby-sitting service for an American family are: her careless and secret handling of the blade, her blithe disregard for Eliot's safety, her unrefined musical judgments, her hopeless flirtations with the fisherman, her little effort to adapt to her new environment, her mysterious questions, her continuously reproving of Mr. Sen for her feelings of homesickness, and later, her defiant reactions to other drivers in the street. The point of this abnormality, however, is to systematically formulate a heterosexual ideal of domesticity through practices of neoliberal governmentality. Whereas the private sphere of Mrs. Sen's home is presumed to be a synecdoche for her autonomy and a locus for her personal, social and sexual identities to negotiate, it becomes counterproductive and turns into a site of policing of the subaltern woman. In *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*, it is the foundational and constitutive manipulation of sources of knowledge, not least the systematic distortion of historical contents about "the world," that takes place at multiple scales from macro-politics of the social sphere to the micro-politics of everyday life experiences, from public domain of the school to personal memories and private space of the family. Altogether, the portrayed images of uncivil society, ungovernable(s), unimportant news, unfiltered and unnecessary knowledge, sadistic other, and assertive and mad women serve to subjugate the migrant others and annihilate any that is not regulated (governed) by the hegemon or structured based upon the pre-dominant social scripts. Hence, unlike sovereign power that exerts considerable power on the body of the abnormal other, in Lahiri's diasporic writings, the disciplinary power exercises its influence on the image of abnormality, or to put simply, it aims at penalizing unassimilated lifestyles of the migrants and their families.

ENDNOTES

1 Friedrich Engels (2010) emphasised the significance of the capital in family structure by relating the establishment of the family unit to private property system and suggesting that the growth of a unit with a father, mother and a child or children is stimulated by the common need to set up a clear line of inheritance. For Anthony Giddens (2006), family is "a group of people directly linked by kin connection where the adult members take responsibility for caring for children" (p. 206). But for Sabatelli and Bartle (1995), family is a more complex unit whose structure "consists of an interdependent group of individuals who (a) have a shared sense of history, (b) experience some degree of emotional bonding, and (c) devise strategies for meeting the needs of individual family members and the group as a whole" (p. 1027).

2 "Mrs. Sen's" recounts the story of the isolated, uprooted titular character during her babysitting service for an American family whose son Eliot is left to fend for himself early in childhood without the caring or affection of neither his dejected mother nor his babysitters. Within the new family sphere, Eliot finds himself in a forceful effort for survival against the pathologically unhappy immigrant woman who seems obsessed with the desire to hurt him. The story plays a number of repeated variations on the horrible theme of infanticide and in so doing not only associates the unassimilated female sex with monstrosity but parodies her position as supervisor.

3 "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" is a story preoccupied with both gendered and racial knowledge formations. Set during the 1971 war in the subcontinent, it relates the story of cultural contacts of the Indian

American family of ten-year-old narrator Lilia in the United States. It begins with a brief contextual account that promotes conventional and contemporary binaries of civilised West facing the menace of the disruptive, Communism of the East. Associated with the Communist threat, it becomes strategically vital for Indian American immigrant family and its members as potentially ungovernable subjects to be constantly surveyed and governmentalised.

4 Asl, Abdullah, and Yaapar's (2016) socio-historical reading of Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) explicates the dynamic practices by which neoliberal governmentalities are incorporated in associating the local subject and its individual difference with social deviance and in yoking the integration into global cultural pluralism to compliance with the normative scripts.

5 Ambreen Hai (2012) distinguishes between natal and alternatal family, suggesting that the former refers to "the family and culture into which one is born", whereas the latter is utilised as "inclusive of the dual senses of alternative and newly natal, or giving birth to something new" (p. 182). She claims that Lahiri moves away from previous immigrant writers by redefining notions of family, those of both South Asia and North America, and acknowledges Lahiri for unconventionally depicting not a conflict but a negotiation between these two (de)formative families.

6 Deepika Bahri (2013) situates certain of Lahiri's stories in the socio-cultural context of globalization to examine the challenges of the conventional notions of family. Bahri argues that for the transnational migrant the family "is always a unit composed by its very hauntings, surrogates, and absences" (p. 37).

7 See Asl, M. P., & bt Abdullah, N. F. L. (2017b). Patriarchal regime of the spectacle: Racial and gendered gaze in Jhumpa Lahiri's fiction. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6(2), 221-229.

8 In "Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics", Hamann (2009) offers numerous examples of contemporary everyday life experiences in which the private realm is exposed to the public. According to him, "ubiquitous technologies such as the telephone, home computers with worldwide web access, pagers, mobile phones, GPS and other wireless devices have rendered private space and personal time accessible to the demands of business and, increasingly, the inter-ests of government" (p. 39).

9 We use the term "(neoliberal) governmentality" to emphasise on the interrelatedness of governmentality and neoliberal governmentality. In the formal sense used by Foucault, whereas the former refers to the assemblages, technologies and "dispositifs," the latter emphasises on a series of mechanisms that run from macro-technologies to micro-technologies. In neoliberal governmentality, subjects self-monitor and self-regulate, allowing power to supervise them "at a distance," as they "translate and incorporate the rationalities of political rule into their own methods for conducting themselves" (Binkley, 2009, p. 62). In governmentality, "less emphasis has been placed on the practical, ethical work individuals perform on themselves in their effort to become more agentive, decisionistic, voluntaristic and vital market agents" (Binkley, 2009, p. 62). Foucault defines "governmentality" as an apparatus of administrative power "that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument." See Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*. M. Senellart, F. Ewald, & A. Fontana (Eds.). (G. Burchell, Trans.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 144. Also see Mohammed, Yahya, Kaur, and Mani (2016) for a Foucauldian problematisation of truth and identity formation.

10 Inderpal Grewal have observed that multiculturalism in the US has become a state project "to create racialised and gendered subjects who see themselves as 'American' at some points and as different kinds of Americans at other times and places" (2003, p. 538).

11 In "Circulation of the discourse of American nationalism through allegiance to consumer citizenship in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*," Asl and Abdullah explore the ways macro-politics of economic and political structures affect every life experiences of the Indian immigrants in America to constitute docile and obedient citizens or what they refer to as archetypal consumers.

12 Clare O'Farrell's thesis that Foucault is attempting to describe the relation between the same and the other. See O'Farrell, C. (1989). *Foucault: historian or philosopher?*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

13 Within the unconscious of a patriarchal Western society, the right to look is the privilege of a male subject and the passive female object exists only to be looked at. According to her, "[i]n their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. (Mulvey, 1975, p. 11). Williams (1984) focuses on what happens when the woman looks and refers to Ann Doane's suggestion that "the woman's exercise of an active investigating gaze can only be simultaneous with her own victimization" (p. 563). Thus, Williams maintains, "the woman is punished for looking" and is identified with monstrous "status within patriarchal structure of seeing" (p. 564). For a study on Lahiri's privileging the male with the right to look, see Asl, Hull,

and Abdullah (2016). Nihilation of femininity in the battle of looks: A Sartrean reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's "A Temporary Matter". *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 16(2), 123-139.

14 For a discussion on how metaphor of food works in a typical pattern of the deconstruction of hegemonic discourses, see, Deb, P. (2014). The journey of food from 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine' to 'Mrs. Sen's' in Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. *South Asian Diaspora*, 6(1), 121-135. For a broader political analysis on how food acts as an identity marker to negotiate personal, racial, sexual and social identities of the immigrant subjects, refer to, Garg, S., & Lahiri, R. K. (2012). Interpreting a culinary montage: Food in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. *An International Journal of Asian Literatures, Cultures and Englishes*, 6(1), 73-83. For a similar discussion of how food functions as the means for characters to assert agency and subjectivity, see, Williams, L. A. (2007). Foodways and subjectivity in Jhumpa Lahiri's "Interpreter of Maladies". *Melus*, 32(4), 69-79.

15 For Foucault, panoptic power operates effectively in organizations like schools, factories, and hospital because they can "bring so many people together" (as cited in Mungwini 2012, p. 344). As a regulatory mechanism, the school creates a panoptic social landscape for diaspora individuals that induces in them a feeling of permanent visibility see Asl, Abdullah, and Yaapar (2016).

16 We use the term "biopower" to refer to Foucault's notion of a regulatory technology that functions as a "technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events. This is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers" (Foucault, 2003, p. 249).

17 Foucault asserts that "not all the subjects are equally vulnerable to the dictates of the state". See Smith, C. (2000). The sovereign state v Foucault: law and disciplinary power. *The Sociological Review*, 48(2), 283-306.

18 We use the term non-Muslim since the family's religious background, in contrast to Mr Pirzada who is clearly stated as Muslim, is left unclear.

19 The incident is very similar to Foucault's well-known example in *Discipline and Punish* where a child is forced to sit in a particular seat so that a particular "system of command" can be exercised to make them "docile" pupils (1995, pp. 166-168).

20 On Lahiri's description of the American media coverage of the War in the Subcontinent, Caesar takes a step further and asserts that the American news in 1971 "was devoted almost exclusively to that other cruel and bloody war, the war in Vietnam. The war on the subcontinent had even less of an American reality in "real" life than it does in Lahiri's story—which makes the fictive insights of the story even more 'true'" (2003, p. 85).

21 What effectively systematises those who take the role of spectator is not fidelity to the eye of the authority but deviation from it, or abnormality, because in a system of discipline, as Foucault explicates in a striking passage we will quote below, individualization is exercised "by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference" (1995, p. 193). In such a disciplinary regime, Foucault maintains, "the child is more individualised than the adult, the patient more than the healthy man, the madman and the delinquent more than the normal and the non-delinquent. In each case, it is towards the first of these pairs that all the individualizing mechanisms are turned in our civilization; and when one wishes to individualise the healthy, normal and law-abiding adult, it is always by asking him how much of the child he has in him, what secret madness lies within him, what fundamental crime he has dreamt of committing" (1995, p. 193). For Foucault, therefore, it is the unwholesomeness, the madness and the delinquency, rather than un-menacing "non-delinquent," "normal" that sets the "dividing lines" and distinguishes subjects from each other.

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