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"They turned my wishes to death": Strategies of Legitimization through Spatial Proximization in War Poetry of Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

This article explicates the strategies of legitimization through spatial proximization. Although, there is a spike of interest in war poetry in recent years, proximization and legitimization aspects of war poetry still need to be explored. Thus, it is important to investigate war poetry from such perspectives because "poetry occupies a critical place in the war resistance literary tradition" (Metres (2007, p. 5). In this article, we grapple with the ways in which legitimization strategies are operated at the level of spatial proximization. Cap argues that (2013), "spatial proximization always forces the vision of a physically destructive character of the ODCs' impact" (p.74). This article draws attention to rhetorical interplay between legitimization strategies and spatial proximization: one leads to the other. War poetry of Afghanistan uses spatial proximization as an instrument for legitimization purposes. In order to critically analyze the poetics of war, we have adopted Cap's (2012) model of proximization which contains spatial, temporal and axiological proximization. However, we have utilized only spatial proximization aspect of the model because it suits with my study. Our findings show that legitimization strategies are manifested in war poetry of Afghanistan for achieving certain political goals. This study is important because it provides critical insights to the readers concerning the rhetorical and political nature of war poetry.

Introduction

This paper aims at exploring legitimization strategies through spatial proximization in war poetry of Afghanistan. Spatial proximization brings near the physical catastrophes caused by the foreign enemy. It deals with the physical movement of the enemy into the land of the political speaker and the lethal consequences caused by such physical movement of the enemy. The political speakers utilize many ways to prepare the ground for legitimization of political agenda. One such mechanism is spatial proximization that aims at highlighting the destructive nature of the enemy. We contend that the political speakers/poets use strategy of spatial proximization to pave way for the implementation of political agenda against the enemy. The end goal of spatial proximization is legitimization where the political speaker aims at convincing the audience, through rhetoric, to take action against the enemy who has physically invaded their land. Therefore, legitimization gives the speaker license to exercise his social behavior (Reyes, 2011). As a result, the notion of legitimization through axiological proximization needs to be investigated because it is legitimization that gives a license to the political speakers to exercise political behavior. We should bear in mind that legitimization process takes place at the level of language. Therefore, language plays a vital role in implantation of

legitimization and justification of political action. Moreover, we should bear in mind that the purpose of legitimization is linked with de-legitimization as well. In other words, if a political speaker legitimizes his/her political agenda through legitimization strategies, he/she also de-legitimizes the political ideologies or invasion of the enemy. We can see that in war poetry of Afghanistan, the political speaker/poet aims to legitimize the political agenda and at the same time delegitimize the invasion of the enemy.

Literature Review

Researchers have tried to locate the notion of legitimization and de-legitimization in multiple ways. The counterpart of legitimization is de-legitimization (Chilton 2004). In this sense, legitimization and de-legitimization go in a parallel way; the political speaker operates at two levels: legitimization and de-legitimization. as a result, the political speakers legitimizes the "self" and de-legitimizes the "other" (Cap, 2013. p. 3). The purpose of political legitimization is to mobilize the audience and get political support from the audience. In order to carry out the process of political legitimization, language plays a vital role in incorporating legitimization strategies. The same argument is substantiated by Berger and Luckmann (1966) who argue that the concatenation between language and legitimization takes place as soon as a linguistic system of objectification of human experience is transmitted (p.112). Thus, the connection between language and legitimization strategies cannot be ignored.

Concerning legitimization strategies, Van Leeuwen (2008) has conducted a study to critically investigate how the process of legitimization is operated in political discourses. His findings reveal that political texts are representation of legitimization discourse where the political speakers aim to legitimize certain political agenda. After a critical study of the political texts, he suggests multiple ways through which legitimization strategies are achieved. For instances, authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization and mythopoesis are the ways through which legitimization is operated. He concludes that political texts use the above strategies in order to carry out process of legitimization.

Moreover, Wodak and Chilton (2005, p.131) have also worked on the concept of legitimization and they it works. They have located legitimization strategies in European Union (EU) discourse regarding establishing European identity in political texts. Their study critically analyzed European Union (EU) discourse and identity construction and concludes that discourse of European Union (EU) achieves legitimization through: 1, the idea of culture, history and identity; 2, legitimization through procedure of democracy; 3, legitimization via standardization and humanistic discourse. However, their study too does not pay attention to legitimization via axiological proximization.

Cap (2013) has also worked on the concept of legitimization strategies regarding political discourses. Cap argues that political discourses are replete with legitimization strategies. He has located legitimization in the interventionist discourse. For that matter, he has analyzed interventionist discourse of Bush's Administration and finds out that Bush used legitimization strategies in his political speeches against Iraq and Afghanistan to legitimize political agenda of waging war. He concludes that Bush's Administration has successfully incorporated legitimization strategies in political speeches in order to legitimize war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Silkin (1998) has also analyzed war poetry from multiple perspectives including legitimization strategies. Silkin (1998) outlines categories of war poetry in his book, *Out of Battle.* He proposes 4 categories in which war poetry is divided: chauvinistic nationalism, resistance, compassion and the last category is about change for social system. He argues

that war poetry carries out legitimization strategies through resistance where the political speakers show resistance against the enemy. Secondly, it establishes legitimization strategies through radical nationalism. Thirdly, legitimization strategies are reflected in war poetry through compassion and lastly, strategies of legitimization are operated at the level of requiring social change. We can see that all the above research works have tried to locate legitimization strategies in multiple political discourse but they did not pay ample of attention to legitimization strategies in war poetry. My study fills this gap in war poetry which needs to be investigated because war poetry is equally political like any other political discourse.

Theoretical framework: Cap's (2013) Model of Proximization

In order to investigate the poetic fabric of war texts, I have used Cap's (2013) model of proximization because "proximization is worth building a theory around" (Cap, 2013). The rationale for the selection of Cap's model lays in the fact that proximization as a theory and methodological tool suits well in political discourses (Cap, 2015). War poetry of Afghanistan is as political as any other discourse because it reflects all the elements required for a political discourse. Secondly, it is political in nature because it promotes certain ideological purposes. Therefore, in this study, we critically investigate war poetry from proximization strategies especially legitimization through spatial proximization.

Cap's (2013) model of proximization consists of three frameworks: spatial, temporal and axiological. As I have discoursed earlier that spatial proximization is engaged in presenting the outside-deictic-center (henceforth ODC) entities physically encroaching upon the territory of the inside-deictic-center (henceforward IDC). Similarly, temporal proximization is engaged in presenting the enemy as invading upon the land and people of the IDC in terms of time. Finally, axiological proximization elucidates ideological clash between the IDC and ODC that eventually leads to the physical conflict.

Spatial proximization strategies work in the following ways to attain legitimization of political agenda:

- Threat construal through the ODC portrayal
- Threat construal through the ODC Impact Promptness
- Threat construction via the ODC impact consequences

In this study, we have selected the first framework that is spatial proximization. We have used spatial proximization as an apt tool for legitimization because spatial proximization is naturally geared towards legitimization. The rationale for the selection of spatial proximization is that war poetry from Afghanistan show the ways U.S (United States) and its allies NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) have invaded Afghanistan. As a result, the physical invasion of the enemy and the physical devastation caused by the U.S military is reflected in war poetry of Afghanistan.

Furthermore, we have tested Cap's (2013) model of proximization in this study particularly spatial proximization because proximization model has been used in political discourse but not in war poetry. We have addressed the deeper methodological question: how legitimization strategies can be studied through the framework of spatial proximization in war poetry? By doing so, the model of (spatial) proximization does not merely elucidate the critical discussion concerning legitimization strategies but also advances an interesting research avenue regarding war poetry and its political nature.

Material and Methods

This study is Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) in nature which studies legitimization strategies through spatial proximization in war poetry of Afghanistan. This study is further based upon conceptualization of constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Choosing a research paradigm is pivotal because research paradigm points to different reasons for conducting research (Willis, 2007, p.139). Constructivist-interpretive paradigm argues that qualitative interpretations are based on constructed realities (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 55, 2011). This approach implies that the researcher becomes an interpreter of reality and also constructs reality in the domain of interpretation.

Moreover, we have delimited this study war poetry from Afghanistan which is political in nature. The designated poetic work is: *Poetry of the Taliban* (2012), published by Oxford University Press. This poetic anthology consists of 200 poems.

Results and Discussion

This section is based upon the poetic analysis and discussion of the war text from Afghanistan. We have proposed spatial proximization framework to investigate legitimization strategies. We have presented texts concerning spatial proximization in a table in order to make it reader-friendly. The most important words, phrases and sentences concerning spatial proximization are registered in the form of a table. From each war poetic text, we have selected poems. In this regard, we have designated 20 poems from war poetry Afghanistan concerning the theme of spatial proximization perspective. Then we interpreted the poetic date qualitatively. Additionally, we have used brackets and inverted commas in each category of spatial proximization to distinct each poetic textual example from the rest.

Table 1
Essential Linguistic items of the spatial proximization framework in war poetry of Afghanistan

Category	Key Items
1. . (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements of the deictic center of the DS (IDCs))	{"my beloved" , "this earth", , "Afghanistan", " our beloved country", "Afghans" , ", " our blood", "heirs of our *Malalai*". " the Parliament", " our heroes", " our dignity and chastity", "innocent women" , "my entire world" , "our homeland", "homeland of beauty", " good worshippers"}
2. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements outside the deictic center of the DS (ODCs))	" the foreigners", " western colonialism", "adultery and wine-drinking", "enemies of our homeland", " black-faced bearers", "black snake" , " Satan's puppet", " *Nimrod* of its time", " Abraha's army", " arrogance of the West", " America" " the wolves" , " big snakes" , "Englishmen", " Israeli hawks", "Cold war", "ominous thoughts", "enemies of our village", " the army of the crazed crusaders", " Europe", "NATO", " the Crusader world", "black calamity" , {"tiny Gods", " the dragon", " wolf-like

		humans", " dogs in human clothes", " scorpions of this world", " Satan", "frauds of the cheaters",}
3.	(Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality construed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center	"" (*the ODC*) want to slaughter some more (*the IDC*) with the knife", " (*the ODC*) want to leave a firm affront to our history (*against the IDC*)", (*the ODC*) are taking out the roots of Islam (*the IDC*), " (*the ODC*) are sitting at pharaoh's throne with arrogance (*against the IDC*), " (*the ODC*) want to eat humans (*the IDC*), " (*the ODC*) want depravity, and goodness isn't expected of them (*against the IDC*), " (*the ODC*) want someone's daughter (*of the IDC*), " (*the ODC*) want to put our houses (*of the IDC*) in hell", "invite people to convert to Christianity", " look for an opportunity for conversion (*of the IDC*)"," interfere in our country (*of the IDC*), {(*the ODC*) are seeking your life in our black walls (*of the IDC*)", "(*the ODC*) are taking advantage of the poor (*the IDC*)", " (*ODC*) are seeking your life in their hearts (*of the IDC*) for a few dollars",}
4.	(Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	("destroyed the mountains after you (*the IDC*)", " breaks the bangles of our girls (*of the IDC*) ", " break their water pots (*of the IDC*)", "smash the foreheads of our people without guilt", "unclothed all the elders of your village (*of the IDC*)", "destroyed all our places (*of the IDC*)", "left the destroyed afghan valleys (*of the IDC*) behind them", "are shooting *Kabul* cruelly", "tore my unspoiled country onto pieces", {" burned your *Qur'an* (*of the IDC*), "destroyed the mosque in your village (*of the IDC*), "cut the tongue that sang the *Azan* from the *Mullah* (*the IDC*)", }
5.	(Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	(" tumult", " gunpowder", " blood/red blood" {" a black evening", "mourning", " crying", " sorrow" "danger", "bombs" , " bullets/red bullets", }
6.	(Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	{"different tragedy", " war", " tension" , "murder", " killings" , " "killings", "fights", "darkness", "genocide", "homicide" " cruelty", " martyrdom", " colonialism" , " killing of innocents", " inaccurate bombing", "calamity" , " slavery of strangers",}

All the above textual poetic examples are taken from war poetry of Afghanistan which is political in nature. The reason for placing all these qualitative textual instances in a table is that such an approach makes the study reader-friendly. However, our study is not quantitative. Now let us analyze and discuss the above table regarding spatial proximization and the ways spatial proximization leads to legitimization of the political agenda.

We can see that category one and two are engaged in initiation of the territory of the political speakers (Afghanis) by the enemy (U.S/NATO) and therefore shows the ODC (enemy) as negative entities. The third, fourth and fifth categories are grounded in showing the fastness of the negative impact of the enemy (U.S/NATO) over the political speakers/poets (Afghanis). Finally, the devastating impact of the ODC/enemy is depicted in category sixth. The negative impact of the ODC upon the IDC has a function to perform and that is aiming for legitimization of political agenda. Moreover, the overall function of spatial proximization is to create the element of fear in order to persuade the audience to take a pre-emptive action against the enemy. As a result, spreading the element of fear is a fundamental function of spatial proximization (Cap, 2013, p. 6).

The first two categories are grounded in showing two opposite poles: positive representation of the "self" and negative representation of the "other". Therefore, category first associates positive qualities with the IDC (Afghanis/Afghanistan) and their land. For instance, {"my beloved", "this earth", "Afghanistan", "our beloved country", "Afghans", ", "our blood"}. All these phrases reveal the positive associations associated with Afghanistan and its people. But when we move to the second category, we see that all these positive qualities of the IDC are ruined by the ODC. That is why category second represents the negative qualities of the ODC/enemy who is responsible for ruining the positive qualities of the IDC because of the invasion of their land. For instance, {the foreigners", " western colonialism", "adultery and wine-drinking", "enemies of our homeland", " black-faced bearers", "black snake"}. All these phrases from the above table represent the negative character of the ODC upon the IDC. Category number three shows the actual negative impact of the ODC upon the IDC. In this case, the negative impact of the NATO forces upon the people of Afghanistan. Moreover, the third category in the above table explicates the negative intention of the ODC and their actual negative impact of such intentions because these intentions become the practical action from the enemy. The devastation caused by the ODC/enemy is physical. For instance, (*the ODC*) want to slaughter some more (*the IDC*) with the knife", "(*the ODC*) want to leave a firm affront to our history (*against the IDC*)", (*the ODC*) are taking out the roots of Islam (*the IDC*. There are many instances in category number three but I took only few here as an evidence. All these sentences from category three reveal the actual physical negative impact of the ODC upon the IDC. Category four and five together depict the fastness and consequences of the negative impact of the ODC upon the IDC. These two categories are demarcated from the other categories because in these two categories the threat becomes more physical and concrete. For instance, {"destroyed the mountains after you (*the IDC*)", "breaks the bangles of our girls (of the IDC)", "break their water pots (of the IDC)", "smash the foreheads of our people without guilt". All these quoted sentences from category 4 and five show the actual concreteness of the action of the enemy which is physical invasion of Afghanistan and hurting the people of Afghanistan in many ways. Such a way of representation of the enemy/ODC functions to create fear in the mind of the audience/readers in order to prepare them for taking political action. The physical devastation and its negative impact are represented by spatial proximization. Let us move towards the last category which shows the result of such physical devastation. In other words, the ODC/enemy has caused the physical catastrophe in Afghanistan in the form of war on terror. Such a physical devastation has resulted in {"different tragedy", " war", " tension" , "murder", " killings"

, " "killings", "fights", "darkness", "genocide", "homicide" " cruelty", " martyrdom"}. All these phrases/words from the last category show the lethal physical consequences of the ODC and its invasion of Afghanistan. All these words/phrases represent the ways U.S/NATO forces have physically brought devastation of multiple forms. Spatial proximization operates at many levels as we have seen in the above 6 categories in the table. Spatial proximization, overall, creates fear in order to go for legitimization of the political agenda of the IDC/Afghanis.

However, we should remember that such legitimization through spatial proximization takes place at the level of language. Moreover, the political speakers/poets from Afghanistan aim for legitimization of certain political agenda which results in de-legitimization of the other/enemy. In this case, the legitimization strategies through spatial proximization aim at de-legitimization of the U.S/NATO physical existence in Afghanistan and their invasion of the land of Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to expose the ideological and political patterns which govern the poetic text of war from Afghanistan. This study helps to understand the ways legitimization is incorporated in poetic text of war and how it is enacted through spatial proximization. Thus, the study enhances the understanding of the readers regarding the nature of war poetry. Model of spatial proximization can be used as a capable tool to study war poetry as a political discourse. This study helps fills the gap as well because Cap's (2013) model of proximization is only confined to political discourse in the form of prose like speeches. However, we have proposed that proximization model in general and spatial proximization in particular should be explored in war poetry as well because such texts are not aesthetic but political in nature which holds certain political ideology.

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