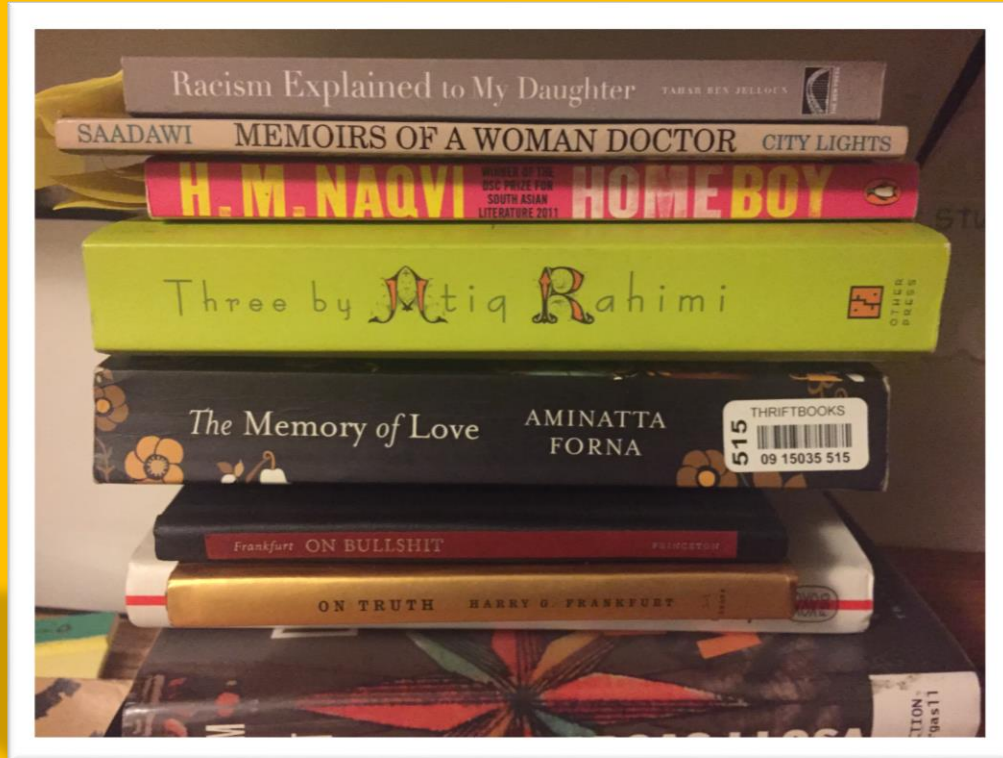


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Major Twentieth Century Writers

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**Journey Through Global Literature in Summer of 2016**



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*Preface:*

As I grew up, I believed that problems like disease outbreak, climate issues or traumatizing accidents, would cause changes in peoples' lives, in unfavorable ways. I used to think that these factors were the only significant ones that would cause changes in the way a person lives, without his or her will or expectation. However, I was proven wrong by an extension of my own thoughts! As I studied and learned about **racism** and **terrorism** I discovered a scarier aspect that changed people. Perhaps, racism and terrorism align with traumatizing accidents as it comes with such strong psychological effects. Racism or terrorism individually can be bad, but it gets worse when both are combined together and we can see that today with discrimination or oppression towards Muslims. Important issues such as a nation's poor socio economic conditions or discrimination in employment is shaped by racism. For instance, war prone countries like Afghanistan, Syria, etcetera, are suffering from several economic and infrastructural problems, along with which, education is being hampered. Future of these countries are growing to be unproductive and endangered. Again, regarding discrimination in job market or unfair treatment at work, we can consider examples like, Muslims being fired from work for 'praying'. Therefore, racism and terrorism seem to shape the world we live in today, just like **colonialism** did before, and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Colonialism showed how controlling people, implied discrimination and eventually changed people. Especially,

Colonialism history showed how privileged people or society, would get exempted from oppression or discrimination. Either due to some "give and take" policy or "win-win" deal between the colonizers and the privileged members such as royal families and government officials, or due to some other inside strategy. Similarly, today, the wealthy and privileged people, and the politically well-connected, in most cases do not have to face discrimination due

to racism or terrorism. Such scenarios make me believe on the effect of racism, terrorism and especially colonialism.

I am a Muslim female, however, I do not recall any experience in my life where I was oppressed due to racism or terrorism, and I believe my lifestyle or family background plays a major role in this. I come from a more or less well-known, wealthy and politically well-connected family of Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh is a small country, and often ignored in terms of being influential. As I was born and partly raised in the United States and have high quality education, I get that extra privilege that usually ensured that I don't face discrimination. A cherry on top of such privilege, has been the fact that I do not wear 'hijab'. This just always made sure that I don't have to go through an extra set of security checks at the airport. Hence, I feel like I have been exempted from the simplest form of discrimination due to the privileges, I got in life. This belief was justified by my journey with global literature. As I read books by authors from different parts of the world, like Nawal El Saadawi's *Memoirs of a Female Doctor*, Taher Ben Jelloun's *Racism Explained to My Daughter* or Barbara Kingsolver's, *The Poisonwood Bible*. Reading such authors gave me the chance to reflect on my own ideas and experience, to somehow find a deeper meaning. I probably wouldn't have understood the connection between privilege and discrimination, if I would not have verified it through global literature. Indeed, global literature is a great tool to understand the changes in the world through different levels - psychological, biological, philosophical and political.

### **Introduction:**

The course Major 20<sup>th</sup> Century has introduced several amazing books to me over the Summer of

2016, allowing me to explore the themes racism, colonialism and terrorism. The books being from authors from all around the world, gave me the best opportunity to read and understand the three themes from a global literature perspective. The books that I have read in this course include: *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, *Racism Explained to my Daughter* by Taher ben Jelloun, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison in Resources, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver, *Memoirs of a Female Doctor* by Nawal el Saadawi, *The Patience Stone* by Atiq Rahimi and *Home Boy* by H.M. Naqvi. From these books I have learned about the different perceptions on racism, colonialism and terrorism based on the personal backgrounds of the authors and the culture contexts of the books. The best part about this learning experience was relating my own life experience with the contents of the book, which helped me to validate the impact of the themes.

Among the three themes, racism, colonialism and terrorism, I felt that racism was the key theme as it branched out to the other two. Racism is a significant form of discrimination and we are surrounded by different forms of it. In my opinion, racism is like energy – it does not get destroyed, but it changes from one form to another. Therefore, in this paper, I will refer to the books and my experiences to show how racism has evolved over time and my final take on it.

### **Analyzing literary style and devices:**

The authors I read this semester definitely had their significant styles of writing. Despite their individuality in expression, there were certain features that were common between the authors, such as tone, use of examples, etcetera. For instance, when I read the books *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, *Racism Explained to my Daughter* by Taher ben Jelloun. The differences in these books were in terms of the tone, format, use of figurative language and reference to historical account. I felt that Coates had a more rebellious tone than Baldwin, when it came to expressing grief or imposing demands for right. Baldwin on the other hand, had a politer tone, for expressing the almost same feelings. Although, Jelloun also had a polite tone, it varied from that of Baldwin, due to the format of content, which implies to the second difference. In other words, as Jelloun used a question answer format his tone seemed more explanatory and as Baldwin used the form of poetry for expression, his tone was more whimsical. Additionally, Coates piece followed the format of a letter, that seemed to be more through and commanding. Therefore, the rebelliousness in the tone of Coates and Baldwin was reflects by their form of expression – letter and poetry- that was very directive to their target audience. In terms of the figurative language, both Coates and Baldwin seemed to use more figurative language than Jelloun. The reason for this difference, probably aligns with the format of the content. As Jelloun follows a direct question answer and fragmented format with simplified words and explanations, his style does not seem clearly poetic. The three books, refer to some interesting historical accounts that differ from one another. They probably vary due to year when the book was written or published, or due to the author's background, such as nationality or religion. These differences show how the three authors with same point of view on racism, express their opinions in different ways.

Similarly, when I read *Racism Explained to my Daughter* by Taher ben Jelloun, *Memoirs of a Female*

*Doctor* by Nawal el Saadawi and *The Patience Stone* by Atiq Rahimi, I realized another group of resemblances. I realized that books that have been translated tend to have a simpler flow compared to those written in English originally. The three books seem to be poetic in a very different way. The poetic sense develops from the authors background rather than conventional poeticisms like, alliteration, simile, etcetera. They use these figurative languages integrated with terms that reflect that background. I have also learned how frankness in a book's content can be politically accepted, depending on the location a book is published. For instance, Saadawi uses several medical terminology as metaphors in her passages. Although, Saadawi's book was published much earlier than the other two, it seemed to share more contemporary ideas than Rahimi or Jelloun. Saadawi's experiences and explanations are more frank, artistically poetic due to use of medical terminology and show intellect.

Style of narration was another important aspect of the books read in this course. Each book followed a different form of narration. For instance, considering the style **narration**, the book *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver, which had 5 narrating voices from the five female characters. Not only did this give 5 different perceptions, but it helped picture all 5 characters along with the story, Especially, as the author was a female, she added the smallest feminine details in the book, to give a feminine feel from different age groups. The tone of each narrated segment was written in such a way was that it completely reflected the nature, thoughts and looks of each character without any overlap in language. Another interesting fact was that each character's narration somehow touched on some concept from the Bible. Despite varying tones and using figurative language elements, the author maintained the use of simple English throughout the book. This seemed very interesting to me, as I expected the book to be more poetic or have more intricate sentences, because its title contained "Bible". In terms of terminology and expression, the book made several references to darkness as a metaphor for the

native people of Congo, which made me think about the expressions in *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. In terms of text and figurative language, both Achebe and Conrad used a lot of figurative language, especially when describing the physical and living conditions of the African tribes/clans. However, Conrad uses a more direct narration compared to Achebe, who seemed more poetic. Although Conrad's use of language made the message of the story clear and helped build critical thoughts about people (society and race), Achebe's work had was better at helping me visualize the whole story.

Rahimi on the other hand seemed to have a very bold approach towards narration. He is definitely one of the boldest writers I have read in this course. His expressions were short, strong, frank and poetic, but in a very modern way. Considering his background, he has done a remarkable work in challenging the taboos by explicitly talking about them. His use of vulgarity in the book reminded me about a lot of modern music that we listen today, where we do hear a lot of vulgar words, but we overlook it to embrace the main meaning / purpose or theme of the song. I find grief, pain, power and humor mixed in the expressions he makes in the book. He uses a sequence of statements and gestures throughout the book and these mix of words are clearly displayed in the language used. Rahimi definitely, shares traits with most of the authors we have read so far due to his discussions of social issues and believes, cultural settings, historical accounts and religion. His is worldly and so are his words. Rahimi's conversational tone and use of simple language in expressing Islamic content, reminded me of Taher Ben Jelloun's work, *Racism Explained to My Daughter*. Both Jelloun's and Rahimi's style of writing seemed very direct and artistic. However, compared to other authors I have read in this course, Rahimi was definitely one of the boldest and frank writers. I felt this has been challenging for Rahimi and to some extent life threatening considering the fact that he comes from a Muslim

background. A great example of his boldness can be seen by the following enlightening passage: “For men like him, to fuck or rape a whore is not an achievement. Putting his filth into a hole that has already served hundreds before him does not engender the slightest masculine pride. Isn’t that right, my sang-e saboor? You should know. Men like him are afraid of whores. And do you know why? I’ll tell you, my sang-e saboor: when you fuck a whore, you don’t dominate her body. It’s a matter of exchange. You give her money, and she gives you pleasure. And I can tell you that often she’s the dominant one. It’s she who is fucking you.” The woman calms down. Her voice serene, she continues, “So, raping a whore is not rape. But raping a young girl’s virginity, a woman’s honor! Now that’s your creed!”

Indeed, Rahimi’s poetic style of writing is artistic, as he plays with terms to give deeper meaning. Rahimi, from the beginning till the end (as far as I can recall) the author refers to the main female character as “the woman” and uses pronouns for “the women” rather than giving a name to the character. The use of “the woman” shows both a sense of generalization to woman with similar lives and the fact that a poor Muslim woman’s name and identity is insignificant or unimportant in the society. Using the voice of “the woman”, the author uses several expressions such as “I was simply a piece of meat...” or mentions the role of a “servant” to indicate to woman were objectified for sex and domestic work. Lack of identity meant the lack of need for feelings towards a woman. Therefore, Rahimi clearly showed how this lack of identity lead to ignorance about a woman’s desires, especially sexual desires. Along with this fact, as Rahimi sets this novel in a war prone country and culture, he also shows how obsession with war, irradiates the ability and need to understand love. Therefore, Rahimi mentions, “Men make war when they don’t know how to make love.”



Another unique approach in using figurative language was reflected in H.M. Naqvi's overly detailed book, *Home Boy*. Starting from the description of the characters, direct examples like to do lists, snippets of newspapers, to cultural elements of both New York City and Karachi, Pakistan, the author included small to big details in the book. Although some details were unnecessary, the author made a good use of them to express the thoughts and experience of Shehzad. As a Muslim New Yorker, I felt like this book was too real to be fiction (in a positive way of course!). Due to all these multi-cultural elements in the details, the poetic sections and figurative language in the book was a clear mixture of English and Urdu words. He uses metaphors mixed in two languages - English and Urdu like "pudy fingertips smooting vinyl like it was chapati", lines from a rap song, lines from an Islamic prayer and mentions top notch Manhattan locations to the crowded Jackson Heights (Queens) food places. He perfectly describes New York City and its people.

The best part about *Home Boy* was its summary apparently yet artistically placed in a conversation in chapter 18. As Naqvi shows a conversation between Shehzad and his mother, he manages to summaries the novels plot, inside meanings and feelings.

Again, unlike the books *The Patience Stone* and *Memoirs of a Female Doctor*, *Home Boy* was based out of the perception and character of a male. In other words, it was a male oriented book. I was amazed by the witty yet respectful perceptions displayed towards woman in this book. Although at times woman were described as sexual symbol, it seemed to be polite appraisal of beauty rather than lust. For instance, the Naqvi used the words "ornaments" when describing the assets of a girl's body, while Saadawi used terms like "piece of meat", "lump" or just "body".

Such terms, expressions or conversations in the book, totally justified the perception of a proper and practical Muslim man. Indeed, the terminologies and expressions used in this book are wittier, comical, friendly and passionate compared to the other two books. *Home Boy* being on the of the most modern and cosmopolitan book was less frank compared to *The Patience Stone* or *Memoirs of a Female Doctor*. The book did not seem to give off any direct message, it simply kept on moving with day to day experiences or as Naqvi mentioned in Shehzad's thoughts "episodes". It did bring out diplomatic, cultural and religious topics through conversations and experiences, but it did not persistently display a pro-Muslim Anti- Terrorist or race discrimination stigma. Therefore, despite the concrete pragmatic details, this book served as a great fiction.

As the course required us to read different writers from the 20th century, I believe it was a treat in reading them and understanding the differences in their writing style. As *Home Boy* was the last book I read for this semester, I felt like I got a good lesson on differentiating the book's based on the writer's style of writing, which indeed is determined by the writer's background - nationality, age, profession, etcetera. Naqvi and all the authors 20th century writers seemed to be very fervent about their life yet confidently concerned about the world we live in.

The following table, is something I prepared to help in my book analysis during the course:

<u>Book Tittle</u>	<u>Year of Publication</u>	<u>Author's Name</u>	<u>Author's Nationality</u>
Between the World and Me	2015	Ta-Nehisi Coates	American
The Fire Next Time	1963	James Baldwin	American

Racism Explained to my Daughter	1998	Taher ben Jelloun	Moroccan
The Bluest Eye	1970	Toni Morrison	American
Heart of Darkness	1899	Joseph Conrad	Polish-British
Things Fall Apart	1958	Chinua Achebe	Nigerian
Poisonwood Bible	1998	Barbara Kingsolver	American
Memoirs of a Female Doctor	1958	Nawal el Saadawi	Egyptian
The Patience Stone	2008	Atiq Rahimi	Afghani
Home Boy	2009	H.M. Naqvi	Pakistani

Below are some of my favorite passages that I had marked up during the semester:

**Passage from Racism Explained to My Daughter by Taher Ben Jelloun:**

***“But you told me once that the Koran was against racism.***

*That’s right, the Koran is opposed to racism, just like the Torah and the Bible; all sacred books are opposed to racism. The Koran says that men are equal before God and different only in intensity of their faith. The Torah says, “If a stranger visits you, don’t harm him, he will be for you as one of your countrymen...and you will love him as you love yourself.” The Bible stresses loving your neighbor, your brother, or a foreigner. The New Testament says: “I command you to love one another,” and “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” All religions preach peace among men.*

***What if you don’t believe in God?***

*If you don't have faith, religious people may look down on you. The most fanatical may even consider you an enemy.*

***The other day when some people were killed, the journalist on TV blamed Islam. Do you think he's a racist?***

*No, He's not racist; he's ignorant and incompetent. The journalist was confusing religion and politics. Some politicians use Islam to fight their battles. They're called fundamentalists.*

***Are they racist?***

*Fundamentalists are fanatics. Fanatics think they're the only ones who know the truth.*

*Fanaticism and religion often go hand in hand. Fundamentalists exist in most religions. They believe they're following divine inspiration. They're blind passionate, and want to impose their beliefs on everyone else. They're dangerous, because they don't value the lives of others. They're dangerous, because they don't value the lives of others. They're ready to kill and even to die for their God; many of them controlled by a leader, Yes, they're racist.”*

[ The passage is a great representation of the book as it reflects the main style, tone, content and context. It uses the question answer format in a polite and educational tone, to show how Jelloun clarifies the confusion people generally have in terms of understanding racism or identifying true racists. The tone and style of the book definitely makes it uniquely poetic. This passage is rich in vital content as it mentions quotes from holy books and also makes some political references. Therefore, the passage conveys vital information. Accounts such as “Islam” belief in “God” where author write God with capital “G”, shows the author's faith and the context of the book.

The book being translated, is written with very simple English, however, it uses rich vocabulary when explaining important terms and ideas. This can be seen in this passage, as Jelloun explains the meaning of racists, fundamentalists, fanatics and so on. Since the theme of the book implied explaining to a child and followed a question answer format, it did not use a lot of metaphors to exemplify ideas. ]

**Passage from Between the World & Me by Ta Nehisi Coates:**

*“But race is the child of racism, not the father. And the process of naming “the people” has never been a matter of genealogy and physiognomy so much as one of hierarchy. Difference in hue and hair is old. But the belief in the preeminence of hue and hair, the notion that these factors can correctly organize a society and that they signify deeper attributes, which are indelible—this is the new idea at the heart of these new people who have been brought up hopelessly, tragically, deceitfully, to believe that they are white.”*

[The passage tends to show the derivation of the discrimination towards African Americans. As the sentences in this passage show the different forms of negative actions, it helps visualize the sufferings of the victims of racism. As Coates breaks down the meaning of racism, as he mentions, “Racism— the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them— inevitably follows from this inalterable condition”. His terminology clearly defines why racism has been a negative issue in many forms. When Coates quotes, “But race is the child of racism, not the father”, he shows how racism is the idea that divides people. This quote helped me understand my imagination, as it is racism that created “Blacks” to group people for oppression. Race or skin color does not generate racism, but racism generates the

negative viewpoint for categorizing people for the wrong reasons. The sentences show how racism generates the grouping for bad. Therefore, African Americans have been the victims of this idea.

Human nature that desires superiority has always been a key factor for competition, discrimination and therefore racism. When Coates explains America's belief on race, he clearly shows how American's desire for superiority and fear of equality has boosted the idea of racism. The passage shows how racism has been a significant part of America's culture.]

**Passage from The Patience Stone by Atiq Rahimi:**

*“How strange this all is! I've never felt as close to you as I do right now. We've been married ten years. Ten years! And it's only these last three weeks that I'm finally sharing something with you. Her hand strokes the man's hair.*

*I can touch you... You never let me touch you, never!” She moves toward the man's mouth.*

*“I have never kissed you.” She kisses him.*

*“The first time I went to kiss you on the lips, you pushed me away. I wanted it to be like in those Indian films. Perhaps you were scared – is that it?” she asks, looking amused.*

*“Yes. You were scared because you didn't know how to kiss a girl.” Her lips brush against the bushy beard.*

*“Now I can do anything I want with you!” She lifts her head, to get a better look at her vacant-eyed man. Stares at him a long time, close up. “I can talk to you about anything, without being interrupted or blamed!” She nuzzles her head into his shoulder. “After I left, yesterday, I was filled with such a strange, indefinable feeling. I felt both sad and relieved, both happy and unhappy.” She stares into the thickness of his beard. “Yes, a strange relief. I couldn't*

*understand how, as well as feeling upset horribly and guilty, I could also feel relieved, as if a burden had been lifted. I wasn't sure if it was because of ...” She stops. As always, it is difficult to know whether she is blocking out her thoughts, or groping for the right words.”*

[Throughout the passage the writer maintains a constant style in showing what the woman said and did. As one sentence indicates a speech or what the woman says, the next sentence shows the female's physical gesture based on what she is/was saying. The sentences use a conversational tone, clearly showing expressions of “the woman”. This passage is an important part of the whole story as it indicates the thoughts and feelings behind the woman's confessions. As the sentences in this passage indicate the female's physical gesture as she talks to her comatose husband it helps in visualizing “the woman” and the relevant scenes. The style of this passage helps retain the cinematic sense of the passage and is key because it is an important part of the way the novel was written. Although other parts of the novel include materials such as black beads, prayer mat, etcetera to set the scene, this passage only uses gestures and no materials to help visualize only the main characters and their relationship. The passage is rich in terms of conveying emotions or passion as it expresses, humiliations, sexual desires, achievement or courage through the confessions. Therefore, like the book, this passage is frank and poetic.]

**Passage from Memoirs of a Female Doctor by Nawal El Saadawi:**

*“This was my first encounter with a naked man, and in the course of it men lost their dread power and illusory greatness in my eyes. A man had fallen from his throne and lay on a dissecting table next to a woman. Why had my mother made all these tremendous distinctions*

*between me and my brother, and portrayed man as a god whom I would have to serve in the kitchen all my life? Why had society always tried to convince me that manhood was a distinction and an honor, and womanhood a weakness and disgrace? Would my mother ever believe that I'd stood with a naked man in front of me and a knife in my hand, and opened up his stomach and his head? I hadn't imagined that life would prove my mother wrong so soon, or give me my revenge in this way over that miserable man who'd looked at my breasts one day and not seen anything else of me besides them. Here I was slinging his arrows straight back into his chest. Here I was looking at his naked body and feeling nauseated, tearing him to shreds with my scalpel. Was this a man's body, the outside covered with hair and the inside full of decaying stinking organs, his brain floating in a sticky white fluid and his heart in thick red blood? How ugly man was, both inside and out... as ugly as could be!"*

[In the passage above the author Nawal El Saadawi uses a sequence of questions in a form that ends up giving a poetic sense. With the aid of several medical terminologies, Saadawi does not only manage to give metaphors but also help us visualize her gestures. The sentences in this passage show a mixture of her intellect and feelings. A topic sentence that explains how men seemed nothing special to Saadawi. The sentences of this passage is very direct about Saadawi's opinion and what she is seeing. Interesting use of metaphors like "throne" and "dissecting table" have been creatively used by Saadawi to explain the shift in power of men in her circle of life. The passage has a lot of questions expressing Saadawi's complain and confusion towards her mother's perception, but in a criticizing sense. Saadawi used questions to express her eagerness to understand the society's reasoning behind making distinctions and discrimination between gender and society's ignorance towards the capabilities of woman or more precisely towards a



woman's ability to have control over a man's body. Saadawi claims in the form of a question expressing achievement in proving the mother wrong.

Elements such as "naked man in front of me and a knife in my hand" helped visualize Saadawi standing in front of the man, with a sigh or smile of gratified relief. The passage also shows that Saadawi did not care about the society anymore and mocked the society in terms of their upbringing and mentality. Saadawi clearly shows that she does not only blame men for male dominated society, but also the "ineffectual" women. Sentence explaining the gesture of applying pain on a man's body. Therefore, the expressions in this passage shows how she felt powerful about having the chance to apply pain on a man's body as a revenge for all the times that men looked at her with lust and made her feel uncomfortable.]

**Passage from Home Boy by H.M. Naqvi:**

*"'You know, Shehzad beta,' he said, squinting philosophically, 'you feel like you are doing God's work, making Heaven on earth. This has always been my jihad.' I nodded vigorously, as if I understood exactly what he was trying to say, but didn't quite get it. It didn't jell with the modern connotation of jihad that had entered discourse with a bang: wagging war against errant Muslims and non-Muslims alike. 'You have to be productive in life,' he continued. 'You have to struggle against yourself. 'Old Man Khan reminded me that the term translates to 'struggle', particularly the struggle within: to remain moral and charitable, acquire knowledge, and so on. While I mulled what my jihad should be, Amo passed the dish of biriyani. "You must try it, she insisted. 'It's Begum's recipe. 'Although stuffed, I took the casserole because Amo had such delicate wrists, I was afraid they would snap right off. 'It's not delicious,' I said shoving a spoonful in my mouth. It's out of the world.' Amo beamed again. She had a winning smile.*

*During dinner, I caught her stealing glances at me. In turn, I smiled rightly, politely, pulling my chin in to hide the lump in my throat. There was no doubt that Amo was beautiful, vivacious, a firecracker in hijab, but she was off limits, not only because she was my pal's sister but because she was Old Man Khan's daughter. If something untoward happened, he would make boti out of me. Besides, I figured, Amo and I were not on the same page anyway. The hijab weirded me out. Donning the thing was a matter of interpretation, faulty interpretation; Ma, a paragon of virtue and grace and sensibility, never wore one. Like most Muslims, I read the Koran once circa age ten, and like some, had combed through it afterward. There were issues in the Holy Book that indisputable, like eating pork, but the directives concerning liquor could easily be interpreted either way. You should not, for instance, pray when hammered. As for hijab, the Koran mentions that women should cover their 'ornaments', and any way you look at it, that means breasts and beyond. Men are exempt because they do not possess ornaments. Moreover, unlike Amo, I did not care to wear my identity on my sleeve."*

[The passage shows Shehzad's thoughts and conversation in a dinner table. The passage consists of several elements that discuss Islamic values, some common Pakistani traditions and some typical Muslim behaviors. Naqvi discusses controversial issues such as "jihad" and "hijab" as the sentences express Shehzad's experience or perception on these Islamic elements. Sentences show Shehzad's bewilderment towards the word "jihad" and also a sense of enlightenment when Khan Saheb mentions it to him. This bewilderment actually shows how our society is usually confused between the true meaning of an Islamic term versus the mainstream meaning put up by the media. The passage ends with a symbolic sentence concluding Shehzad's thoughts on "hijab" – a popular symbolic element of Islamic attire for women. It shows how Shehzad did not believe

in symbols expressing religious belief or identity, Naqvi shows how Shehzad compares his mother who does not wear hijab with those who do or with the concept of hijab. As Shehzad praises his mother, he makes it clear that wearing hijab has nothing to do with values, virtue, sensibility or grace. Thus, he justifies his opinion with this comparison. The sentences reflect how Shehzad's religious belief and experience to provide background to his contradictory opinion on Islamic elements. These sentences are important part of the book because, in many other parts as Naqvi makes several references to how Shehzad does not use or believe in any religious symbol.

The passage shows certain Muslim and Pakistani traits as it refers to traditional dishes like the "biriyani" or expresses the polite flirting between Shehzad and Amo. The sentences that show the polite flirting express nervousness, delicateness and indirect appraisals.

The passage includes a popular contradictory sentence about why Muslims are not encouraged to drink alcohol which the author mentions as "hammered". Because Muslims need to offer prayer five times a day, drinking would prevent them to pray. Therefore, all Muslims who find pleasure in drinking and also believe in God or practice Islam are usually confused or intimidated about this sentence. Also the author makes a slightly humorous effect with this sentence, the sentence and the metaphor would be unclear to most readers from non-Islamic background

Naqvi makes interesting use of figurative language in the passage as he refers to certain idioms like "same page" to show how Shehzad consents his own decision or "combed through", to explain how often Muslims forget what they read in the Koran. The use of metaphors in this passage and also the book is very creatively done as it gives a multicultural sense. As he refers to "firecracker in hijab", he uses a Pakistani metaphor in English that indicates "looking hot". Again as he uses a Pakistani metaphor in English, "make boti out of me", where Boti is kebabs

cut to the smallest shape, therefore, when he mentions “make boti out of me”, he means “chop me off into small pieces”. The passage is definitely poetic in a unique way.]

### **Identifying myself through the literary devices and ideas:**

My journey through global literature was education, thought provoking and emotional. I believe, the reason I was able to gain so much from this journey was because of the different ways I could relate to most of the books. Considering the fact that I am Muslim, it is true that I could relate more to the books showcasing Islamic backgrounds, but there were certain significant parts of the other books too, that I could relate to.

I could indeed reflect on Saadawi’s quote “*I felt that emotion was sharper-witted than reason*”, as I realized that I was inclined towards those books, content, ideas in these course, that I could closely relate to. I realized that despite, the presence of strong, impressive and interesting, ideas or logic, the best way to understand something’s value is by relating to it. Similar to Saadawi’s case where her Scientific perception goes through a turning point. Despite the fact that, her scientific knowledge was her strength and she was not content in life. It was until that one day, when she realized how emotions were also a strong part of perception. Her perception on life and how she made decisions changed. For instance, in the last three chapter of the book, she often referred to “eyes” or “his eyes” when she had to explain her feelings. While referring to “eyes” she did not use her medical metaphors or biological terms, like arteries, etcetera, unlike the rest of the book. However, soon after her change in perception she had been deceived by a man and the society she served. She realized how emotions could be so mischievous. Indeed, emotions were “eye-opening”.

This phrase also applied to the books from the Racism theme, as the authors show their emotions involved in their experience and their writing. Racism from the perception of victims is quite different from that of the observers. Although I read or watched about racism in the form of news or article or, have studied about it in American History, it all seemed very different to me when I studied in depth about Martin Luther King Jr. There is a key difference between reading explanations of experiences or historical accounts, and reading something written by the victim of racism. I noticed this difference first when I read Letter from Birmingham Jail. The content and style of the letter had a personal touch that just made racism so vivid. Such style of writing has its own specialty in conveying important messages and that is what I have found reading James Baldwin and Toni Morrison. As both of them had their fair share of experience in the early eras of African American racism, they integrated their experience into their writing, but in unique forms. While James Baldwin presented his experience and message in the form of a poem, Morrison's work was a fictional novel. These styles, somehow resembled Dr. King's, as they used several symbolic metaphors to represent actions, expressions and events.

Considering the themes, we are studying in the course – Racism, Colonialism and Terrorism, I feel that emotions definitely plays as prominent role in understanding them. I have definitely changed over the semester. The books made me come across such important and fascinating information that I am starting to feel worldly. I started noticing how people write, rather than just the content and this has been enlightening to me in so many ways. As I read – I thought I walking through The Met or MoMA, gazing at the unique pieces of art. This course was my first experience in global reading. I have travelled a lot physically, but taking this course

taught me how to travel mentally. Reading the books, I could travel in my mind, whether it be New York City or Congo.

I have learned about how racial and gender discrimination resides in different cultures, irrespective of the differences in religious or national traditions. I used to think that perceptions change with time, usually for the good! However, the books I have read this summer changed my perception on that. Time period does have an effect on shaping things like social thoughts and behaviors, but not by itself. Multiple factors such as education, politics, etcetera contribute to a time period or culture in shaping their status of Racism, Colonialism or Terrorism. For instance, a female's experience in Rahimi's book was more dreadful compared to that experience in Saadawi's book, despite the time period of the contexts, where Saadawi's book was older than Rahimi's.

Several of Rahimi's ideas were actually very relatable to my personal life. As Rahimi shows how a "woman" feels guilty about her achievement and sexual desires, due to the social or cultural stigma she is surrounded by, I could think of the issues about discussing "sex", which is considered a "taboo" in the Muslim society or even among Muslim girls. When Rahimi shows the "woman" confessing, making bold movement or feeling happy about a good sexual encounter, he shows how the "woman" also feels like she is doing something wrong and is possessed by devil. The "woman" ignores facts about equality such as, if the man can do something wrong to meet desire, she can too. She ignores her rights and questions her faith. This highlighted a strong integration between religion and lifestyle. Whenever the woman felt happy about her confession she felt guilty too. She would search for the Quran and try to relieve herself by asking for forgiveness from God. I could relate to that, as I had a similar feeling of being possessed and acted insane for forgiveness. I drank alcohol twice in my life, and both times I felt

very guilty and terrified. I questioned my boldness and asked for forgiveness from God. I still feel that, I would be worried for such forbidden acts, despite being aware of any relevant reasoning. I feel, my experience was something very similar to the expressions of the woman.

Sexuality related topics such as virginity and intercourse were also touched upon by Rahimi. These are key to both the Islam and the developing and undeveloped countries. As a 22-year-old virgin, I can completely understand the part of the novel about the mother-in-law guarding the woman's virginity. In the novel, virginity was related to a man's dignity, very similar to case that generate honor killing. According to my knowledge rural parts of South Asia, conducts honor killing when a female, when she rejects an arranged marriage, has sex outside marriage or is a victim of rape. Basically anything that affects virginity. However, in my case I was raised to believe that it was integral to religion and the family's integrity, but not to such an extreme extent. The different reasoning behind the same act among Muslims, can be seen from Rahimi's example, of the "woman's" father sexually trading her older sister to a man for the money he owed. This part made me realize that financial circumstances, education and ethics all shape how a Muslim woman has to be raised, kept or judged. If it's a rich family, a girl has to abide to the restrictions for the sake of the family's dignity. On the other hand if it's a poor family a woman has to sell her body to provide for the family!

Rahimi also shows how, religion is always thought of or bought into the conversation of a woman's lifestyle. When the commander approached the woman and insulted her for claiming to sell her body, he also referred to religion. He questioned "Are you a Muslim?" and then expressed his shameful grief, because she mentioned an impure act. These accounts that Rahimi showcased, are issues regularly faced by most Muslim women in the poor and modern society. I could clearly relate to this, as I was asked by a Muslim New York City cab driver, "Sister are

you Muslim?”, a few other questions related to nationality and occupation, then swiftly followed by the question, “Do you go to nightclubs on weekends?”. I was not surprised by the double standard nature of the cab driver, but by his boldness in a cosmopolitan city like New York. As a Muslim girl, who felt uncomfortable at that point, I had to lie. My best answer was, “No!”. He kept on talking about how disgraced he was by Muslim girls free mixing with men and going to clubs, etcetera. He told “Sister, you are Muslim, and you are special to eyes of God, please make sure you maintain that specialty. Don’t go out!” I had to bring this to a stop and so I made my bold move. It’s always good to say people what they want to hear, so I lied again, “Yes you are right, but I go out sometimes. I go with my “husband”. He asked if my husband was Muslim. As I said yes, all his questions came to an end with a smile of relief on his face.

Considering religion and its controversies, there were several thought provoking topics in this course that I could relate to. My favorite idea was from Kingsolver’s *The Poisonwood Bible*. In the book, Orleanna’s confusion, Nathan’s blind faith and other instances that expressed perception towards religion were very generic expressions. Such expressions reside among many religious and non-religious people till today. If I consider my case, I believe in God as I consider Islam as my religion, but then again I am not the perfect Muslim, as I do not practice Islam in the right way. There are parts of it that I accept and follow and parts of it that do not make sense to me and I do not follow. I was surprised when I found the quote, “God doesn’t need to punish us. He just grants us a long enough life to punish ourselves.” In the book, as I strongly believe in this notion. Although I am seventy percent religious, I do not believe in hell and heaven, but I believe in karma. In my opinion and from my observation / experience, if one does bad, he/she gets punished in this world. Hence, when I read the quote I was surprised by its coherence with my thoughts. At times I feel I am right in my own world, but then again I end up doubting my



perception. I question myself, “Am I doing the right thing?”, “What if I go to hell?”. As I meet more knowledgeable people, it gets more complicated, especially in college where you meet people from so many different beliefs and so many contradictory or positive views. Then I have my family, thinking about whom I feel I should ignore the world and just believe in God, because I love them and they believe in God. Therefore, reading *The Poisonwood Bible* just kept on making me think about this dilemma.

Religion and terminology being a core part of certain books in this course seemed to remind me of how I was named. I was named after the Saudi Arabian city Medina; therefore, my name is a holy Arabic word. I was named so because my grandfather, who was very religious, used to always hum religious songs containing the word ‘Medina’. Also, as my mother’s name is Monwara, a popular Arabic phrase being Medina Monwara, made my family finalize my name. Now that I think of it, I understand how backgrounds and feelings can make a simple thing like a name so poetic. Whenever any Muslim hears my name, they get very delighted, which amazes me. In my culture they say that, name reflects personality, but I always had a contradictory opinion regarding that. As Naqvi mentioned “*I did not care to wear my identity on my sleeve*”, I don’t explicitly portray my beliefs on religion. I like to keep my religious thoughts to myself and practice those parts that makes sense to me. Therefore, I feel like, my name reflects my thoughts more than my personality.



A picture of me and my grandfather. My grandfather is holding a Tasbeeh in his hands. It is like a sacred bead necklace, that Muslims use to recite short phrases of prayer – Usually the names of Allah, just as Rahimi wrote in *The Patience Stone*. In this picture my grandfather is using the Tasbeeh to pray and bless me.

Apart from gender and religion based issues, there was another idea in this course that I found very relatable due to my ethnic background, and that is Language. The book *Heart of Darkness* by Chinua Achebe and the poem *Languages* by Carl Sandburg, from the Major 20<sup>th</sup> Poems collection, touch on those relatable ideas.

The idea was within an important aspect that was addressed by Achebe in the book *Heart of Darkness*, was the innate differences between the Whites and the Africans that prevented the Whites to proficiently understand the Africans. As Achebe mentioned, “How can he when he does not even speak our tongue?”, he made this innate difference very clear. This difference in language pointed out / quoted by Achebe was crucial for me as I could relate to it from my ethnic background. As I am ethnically from Bangladesh, I could relate to the “Language Movement” – a protest against Dominion of Pakistan that took place in 1948 and resulted in a war and independence of Bangladesh. This event was very significant in terms of depicting the importance mother language and its relevance with culture.

Similarly, the poem *Languages* by Carl Sandburg, I could find the elements to reflect on. The

poem is one of the best metaphorical representation of language. The description of how language originates, travels, changes and gets over, is beautifully done by the form and functions of a river. Bengali which is the main language of Bangladesh, is a descendant of Sanskrit. Therefore, when Sandburg uses “river” as a metaphor and mentions how languages changes “Moving to valleys And from nation to nation Crossing borders and mixing”. I could relate to the derivation of the language Bengali, as it is used in parts of India and has got recognition in Bangladesh after the separation of Pakistan from India, then from Pakistan to Bangladesh as a result of the Language Movement. Moreover, as Bangladesh is known to be the land of rivers, the personification and metaphors used in this poem, reflects the significance of mother language in Bangladesh and its spread throughout the country in the form of dialects.

Speaking of language, in the document Major 20 poems:

*Languages*

Carl Sandburg, 1878 – 1967

There are no handles upon a language

Whereby men take hold of it

And mark it with signs for its remembrance.

It is a river, this language,

Once in a thousand years

Breaking a new course

Changing its way to the ocean.

It is mountain effluvia

Moving to valleys

And from nation to nation

Crossing borders and mixing.

Languages die like rivers.

Words wrapped round your tongue today

And broken to shape of thought

Between your teeth and lips speaking

Now and today

Shall be faded hieroglyphics

Ten thousand years from now.

Sing—and singing—remember

Your song dies and changes

And is not here to-morrow

Any more than the wind

Blowing ten thousand years ago.

Acquainted with the Night

The picture on the left shows a graphic for Language Movement and the one the right shows how it is celebrated every year on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February in Dhaka:





This picture is from Shahbag movement I participated in Dhaka, Bangladesh in the year 2013. Although my high-school was a catholic school, it took us to this political movement to fight for justice of war victims. This picture is a good example of modern day protests in Bangladesh.

Again, as Sandburg mentions, “Sing—and singing—remember Your song dies and changes And is not here to-morrow”, it reflects how language is changed by Internet users and users and modern day digital devices. This made me think of the use of short forms and its impact on communication and eventually language. For good or for bad, this trend has made a strong impact in English language, starting from written English to spoken English, such as “LOL” or “OMG”. Before such words would only appear in personal communication platform such as text messages, but nowadays such words appear in several news articles too. Therefore, Sandburg’s poem gives an extensive explanation of the journey that any language goes through. As I often write content for websites or social media pages, I participate in this change too, to satisfy the target audience. I am not fond of this approach, but there is much I can do, as I need to gel with my surroundings.

Dilemmas for peacefully surviving in a society is never ending. Expected or unexpected, there are so many complications that one has to go through. For instance, living in New York City can be considered as a weird complication. At least in my case, I have mixed feelings for the city. I love the crowded streets, mixed culture, shops, books and the opportunity to walk. However, I hate the unrealistic expenses, certain rough people and rats. Despite all these feelings, I bring my opinion to a conclusion on a relatable fact: as New York streets have big trash bags placed on the side walk, it makes me imagine that New York city does not hide its dirty parts. New York city is not scared to hide its flaws, which is something this city has in common with me, because I don't like to hide my flaws either!

Some pictures of me in New York from when I was born, on campus, on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and my friends:





This is one of my favorite captures in New York City. I took this picture on West 4<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, because it reminded me of the ideas from Jacob Riis's, *How The Other Half Lives*. It shows how New York holds riches and poverty beautifully.

I was born in Brooklyn and I never got the chance to live in this city after birth. I lived in multiple parts of the world through my life, but circle of life got me back to this city. I felt like living and working at New York City and I transferred to NYU after finishing half of my Junior Year at Carnegie Mellon. Some force was simply calling me to the city. Now I live in the East Village, and as I walk to work and class every day, I get amazed at my own life. But this semester, I was ever more amazed when I read the book *Home Boy* by H M Naqvi. I used to love watching shows based in New York city, like *Mad Men*, *Sex and The City* and *Empire*, to look at the different New York City lifestyles. But *Home Boy*, was a on completely different level. Some parts made me feel like, I am reading about myself. The Muslim characters and the contextual setting of New York, made me delighted. I was so moved, that I wrote an email to the author and was lucky enough to get a response from him.

The Email I wrote to H M Naqvi on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 2016:

*Hello,*

*I am writing to express my thoughts on Home Boy. I am a little nervous, writing this email now, as I am well aware of your strong background with English Language, but unaware of my silly errors. Home Boy is captivating, provocative and absolutely pragmatic. It's a fiction, but so close to experiences of people like me, that it hard for me to believe that I don't know someone like Shehzad or Khan Saheb. I am a Muslim, ethnically from Bangladesh. I was born in Brooklyn, NY but soon taken to Atlanta and then Bangladesh, where I was raised until college. As I grew up in Bangladesh, I*

*was very close to the Pakistani and Indian culture. I had a good number of Pakistani and Indian friends too. However, relations with Indian and Pakistani in New York was different. I moved to New York for college, living in Union Square, Manhattan, often making sitting at Washington Square Park and making trips to Jackson Heights for Kebab King meals. I could literally relate to your "boulevardier" and "desi" characters, just with less complications in life. New York made my relation with Pakistanis and Indians even more special, it laid the reality down on me as it always does. It made me realize that we all are the same, in different yet vague ways. But Home Boy, just came as a hard copy version of the proof that we all are same. The experience and specially the dilemma on doing what we want to do, on not carrying identity on our sleeves (that notion about hijab), double meaning of Islamic terms, "Ma", Khan Saheb, living in the edge yet retaining respect for the respectful - it was all so relatable.*

*The part where Shehzad answer's Duck with a question, "Do you snort coke in front of your parents"- all the things non-Muslims and Muslims overlook, the hypocrisies, the identity crisis, Home Boy just put it out there. May be there were many amusing words, but the feeling was clearly explained. The feeling of not being scared about being in danger yourself, but being*



*scared about hurting the people you love - that admiration that desi kids cannot avoid, it was all there. The ending of the book could not have been any better. I could relate so much to that act, that I do not know how to express. Its like, despite every disobedient phase of life, you feel that there is no harm in turning to Allah to pray for someone else.*

*I was pretty privileged to not go through any problem related to 9/11, however, I was always hurt when something wrong happened to any innocent. This book just made me feel like I was a part of it.*

*I loved the book! This book is listed in the syllabus of an NYU course - Major 20th Century Writers, We had to select three books on the Theme Terrorism, so I chose Home Boy along with two others (The Patience Stone by Atiq Rahimi and Memoirs of a Female Doctor by Nawal El Saadawi). We have read more books this semester, but by far this was the best book, I have read this whole season. This book was a gem and I believe I will be quoting this book often. If you ever get a chance to visit NYU, make sure to meet students like me. I am not a reading person (more of a tech geek), but I was moved! Thank you for writing Home Boy!*

*Regards,*

*Medina*

Reply from H M Naqvi on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2016:

*Greetings, Medina.*

*Thank you so much for your note, your praise (and the syllabus). You made my day.*

*New York is wonderful, strange, frenetic city that can arguably alters one's DNA. Although I have back in Karachi for about a decade, I carry bits of that city, your city, our city.*

*But the world is vast. I would love to explore Port Moresby or Bahia or Axum for that matter. I hope I have the time.*

*You might interested to know that my father spent his childhood in the Chittagong. As a result, he often regaled me with stories about the hill tracks when I was a child. Perhaps I will make it there one of these days.*

*Let me know how the class progresses.*

*Warmly,*

*HM*

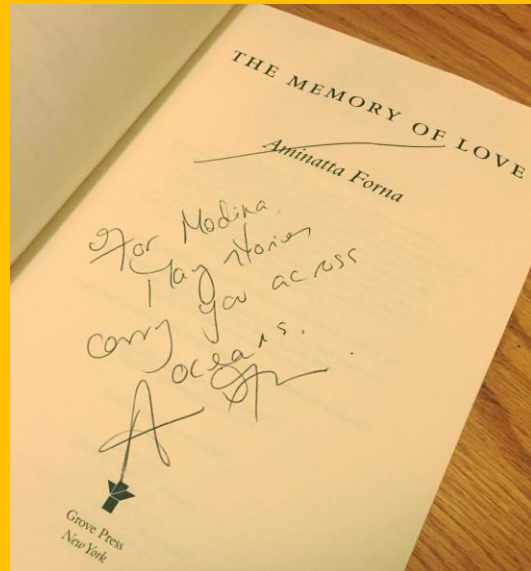
Some pictures from Jackson Heights, that relate to the venture details mentioned in Naqvi's *Home Boy*.



A few more pictures that resemble the details from Naqvi's book *Home Boy* and Email conversation. On the left, the picture shows the traditional dish Biryani and on the right the picture shows my house in Chittagong, the port city of Bangladesh, where I spent my childhood.



*Home Boy* was the last book I read for this course, and definitely a special one. The back of the book mention, 'In a city where origins matter less than the talent for self-invention', which I believe completely applies to my experience with this course. Not only did I get the chance to represent myself through my experiences but I also got to know exceptional class mates with interesting backgrounds. I am true believer of the quote 'All's well that ends well', for which I am glad that I read *Home Boy* at the end. Not only did I get to enjoy the content, or interact with the author but also, bring all my thoughts together.



Some pictures I took during Ramadan this year, I.e, during the time the course was being offered. On the left is a picture of something sweet displayed by a Church near midtown and on the right is an autograph from author Aminatta Forna, that I received from the book reading session at NYU SPS, that I attended with Professor Keefer.

Throughout summer, I was astonished by the intertwining facts between this course and my life.

My background, the time this course was being offered, the content – it all seemed to blend in.

The course started off, just a few days before Ramadan. Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad according to Islamic belief. This year it took place from the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 till the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2016, which was during the time of the course. As a Muslim, I felt great in connecting the traditions, values and certain unpleasant event with the content of this course.

This year four terrorism attacks took place back to back this summer, during the month of Ramadan in 4 Islamic countries: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iraq and Bangladesh. While all these incidents were in the news, several postings or news appeared simultaneously on the social media about the discrimination in display of solidarity towards these countries. Several news

articles in social media discussed how social media users expressed more solidarity towards countries like France and Germany for similar attacks that took place in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iraq and Bangladesh. An example of discrimination was the use of Facebook Profile Picture filter that had a pray for Paris or Pray for Germany theme, but not for those 4 countries. People who addressed this discrimination were people from the 4 countries, and they created their customized their own pictures to show solidarity. Such propaganda in the online world that display intense global events, discrimination and disagreements are great concepts that relate to the themes discussed in this course – racism, colonialism and terrorism.

Some pictures from Eid 2014 (end of Ramadan celebration) in Atlanta, Georgia. The pictures are special to me as they show how boundaries regarding race and religion are overlooked. On the left is a picture of me with a beautiful baby in the Mosque and on the right is a picture of a Church next to the Mosque. Since the Mosque's parking was full on the day of Eid, the Church opened its gates to allow Muslims to park their cars.



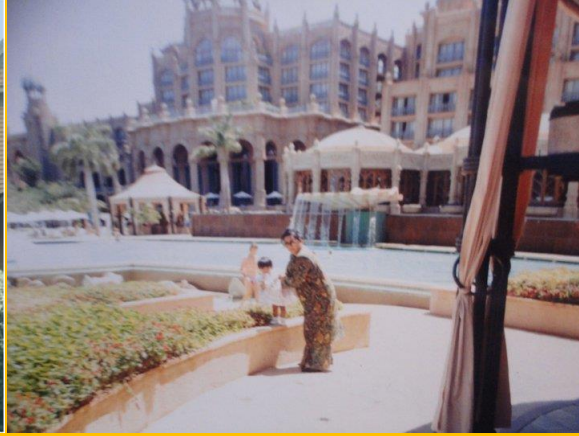
The course taught me these themes beyond what travelling did. As my parents are in the hospitality and tourism industry, I travelled a lot as a child. I visited 31 countries by the time I reached high school. I have visited several countries in the Middle East like – Syria, Jordan,

Qatar, Dubai and Israel too. (People get surprised when they hear that I have travelled to Israel as I am a Muslim. having an American passport enabled me to visit Israel – it was an achievement for me!) . I have also visited countries near my ethnical origin Bangladesh, like India, Pakistan, Indonesia, etcetera and other exotic countries like Egypt and South Africa. Several of the countries I have been to are somehow involved with colonialism, racism and terrorism. However, visiting those countries, did not give me that deep understanding of the themes, mostly due to lack of time and focus. It was a little different, when I lived in middle east, while studying at the Qatar campus of Carnegie Mellon. Living there gave me a better chance to understand the issues and culture, but coming back to settle in the US was even better. Living in the US finally made me compare the three different worlds I have lived in and how the themes impact the three parts – South Asia, Middle East and North America. Especially due to New York’s cosmopolitan culture, NYU’s diverse student body and enlightening courses. Studying courses like Critical Thinking and Major 20<sup>th</sup> Century Writers, definitely gave me a better opportunity to understand these issues and reflect on them through writing. I feel like thinking that comes with writing is very different from just thinking. As I wrote for this course, I got to think in a deeper level and also participate in the themes.

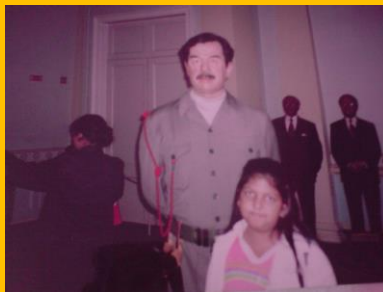
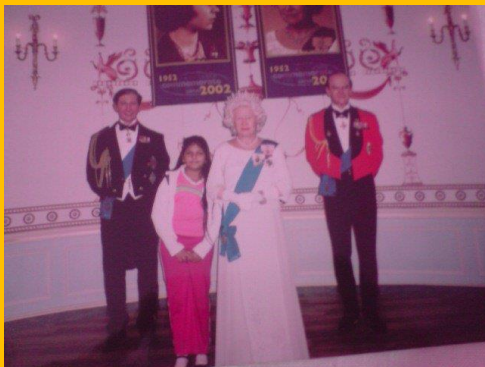
Some pictures from Qatar:



Some pictures of my travelling experience. Starting from the left to right: Martin Luther King Jr.'s house in Atlanta, Sun City – South Africa, Cairo – Egypt, Hoover Dam – Arizona.



Some interesting pictures from Madame Tusauds London, that somehow resemble personalities associated with colonialism, racism and terrorism. I was amazed by the coincidence:



Being privileged in many ways, did not give me a chance to personally experience any oppression from people of other race, but it has definitely changed the way I carry myself. I was having a conversation with a Muslim friend, who told me that when she had a discussion with her non- Muslim roommate regarding issues like cleaning room and objecting her from allowing her boyfriend to stay over, the issue got out of hand. The roommate went to the RA, telling that she felt threatened by the discussion, because my friend was Muslim. Such ridiculous opinions, just make it difficult for Muslims to feel free to put their thoughts out. It's like bringing thoughts out is like, getting out on a battle. You may lose your life or image on expressing your opinion. Similar to the case where they asked Muslim passengers to get off the plane for using simple words like "In sha Allah" which means God willing or doing "math" which was misunderstood to be terrorist code. Such cases definitely show how Muslims are being compelled to change their originality. Therefore, racism along with terrorism is definitely impacting life of Muslims, whether they are in Syria or in America. This course has definitely verified my thoughts on colonialism, terrorism and racism's power in shaping lives of people.

A favorite picture of mine that somehow sums up my feels towards the themes and the changing world:





### Final Thoughts:

This course somehow got deeply engraved in my mind, effecting the way I think. It was only because I could understand and related to the content of the books, that were presented so creatively. I realized how presentation of information plays such an important role in conveying the message or knowledge across. Presentation is what shows the beauty. As they say, beauty comes in all shapes, sizes and colors, the books I read in this course did too. Each of them had their beauty presented in different ways that touched me and attracted me!

I feel truly fortunate for studying this course!

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