

## SEMANTIC DEVIATION IN TARIQ RAHMAN'S *EID SHOPPING*: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF CONSUMERISM AND DISILLUSIONMENT

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### **Abstract**

*Tariq Rahman's short story Eid Shopping (1988) utilizes linguistic deviations to deliver a profound socio-political critique, exploring themes of consumerism, emotional disillusionment, social stratification, and identity. Through the deliberate attempt to ride against the norms of linguistic conventions, Rahman reveals the hypocrisy of a materialistic society. To deplore the commodification of traditional culture, especially the Eid celebration, Rahman employs methods such as irony, wordplay, metaphors, and even sensory deviations. Through the element of semantic deviation employed by Rahman, this paper provides an analysis of how this aspect of writing prompts the reader to consider the emotional and social ramifications of consumerism, where a discrepancy exists between societal expectations and self-reality. Based on foregrounding theory, this paper examines how linguistic tools portray the emotional torment of the characters and their relationship with consumer culture. The article claims that the strategic orchestration of language by Rahman not only defies the rules of holiday celebrations but also comments on the emotional emptiness caused by social dictates, giving an interesting run on the very price of living in a consumer society. This analysis contributes to the broader theoretical understanding of how language can serve as a powerful means of socio-political commentary and emotional appeal in contemporary literature.*

**Keywords:** *Eid, Stylistics, Semantic Deviation, Consumerism, Disillusionment.*

### **Introduction**

Language has always been a significant factor in literature, as it is a powerful tool through which an author can convey complex themes and emotions and discuss matters affecting society. One of the most influential tools in such cases, when the standard rules of a language are violated to achieve a specific aesthetic or rhetorical goal, is a linguistic deviation. The short story *Eid Shopping* (1988) by Tariq Rahman provides an excellent example of how linguistic deviations can be used as an effective instrument to analyze and comment on social problems, specifically consumerism, social differences, and emotional disappointment. It is not that the language only relates to narrating events in this story; it evokes thought in the reader's mind about socio-economic processes across individual lives and how they relate to society at large.

It is against this scene of the traditional Eid celebration that Rahman develops a very different scene when he argues that within a society whose economy is centered more on consumption, people encounter significant emotional and economic sacrifices as they grow up. Obviously, rather

than focusing on the joy and prosperity that the Islamic festival of Eid brings to people in general, Rahman reveals the sadness that arises from the problems that occur when it goes wrong due to the sudden consequences of societal expectations and differences. Changes include a critique of consumer culture, where it is noted that materialism not only influences the economy of populations but also their emotional health (Saeed, Khan, & Ali, 2022).

The flagship idea in Rahman's criticism is the term semantic deviation, a deliberate rhetorical device that unfolds the social and emotional stresses of the plot. According to Leech (1969), semantic deviation is the deliberate expression of words that have deviated from their traditional meanings, used to bring out emphasis, surprise, and multiple meanings. The play of words by Rahman prompts the reader to reconsider commonly accepted interpretations and delves into the problems of commodification of human relations, the monetary cost of consumerism, and societal disparities inherent to the social structure (Leech, 1969).

Rahman's detours in language do not aim to add elegance to the story; they form the core of his criticism of social norms. For example, Rahman describes his characters' pain using irony, strange collocations of words, metaphors, and perversions of senses as they are swamped by consumer society at an individual and social level. These variations appear as an emotional foundation to the outward social opinion, forming a dual purpose of criticism: intellectual and visceral (Stockwell & Whiteley, 2014).

The current study examines the use of semantic deviation as a tool by Rahman in his socio-political commentary on *Eid Shopping*. Upon investigating the utilization of uncommon word collocations, figurative language, and irony, as well as sensory description, we will discover how Rahman brings the topics of emotional disappointment, social hierarchies, and the confrontation of traditions and modernity into the spotlight. However, these deviations not only relate to individual experiences and amplify the socio-economic forces, but they also highlight the emotional and social price paid for living in a consumeristic society (Abdullah, 2022).

Additionally, the story by Rahman highlights the conflict between the cultural significance of Eid and commercialism. Even though Eid is all about spiritual renewal and family bonding, Rahman turns it into a matter of materialism and emotional callousness. This contradiction is also observable in the linguistic deviations, as the outside behavior of the characters, including their shopping and activities with consumer objects, does not align with their inner feelings, leading to the epitome of isolation and hopelessness (Saeed, 2022).

To develop a coherent picture of the impact of such language choices, the foregrounding theory, as developed by Jan Mukarovsky (1970) and Geoffrey Leech (1969), has been utilized in the present paper. In the linguistic context, foregrounding theory explains that deviations typically highlight important thematic elements in a work piece, thereby presenting them to the reader in a bold manner. It was due to these deviations that such contradictions of the consumer society as the opposition between prosperity and materialism, on the one side, and emotional poverty on the other, could be illuminated. Having abandoned linguistic conventions, Rahman reinforces these social commentaries, encouraging readers to consider the cultural and emotional costs of consumerism (Mukarovsky, 1970; Leech, 1969).

The argument elaborated in this paper is that the semantic deviation approach employed in *Eid Shopping* demonstrates that Rahman intentionally uses linguistic tools as a tactic to encourage readers to engage with social and political themes. The control of language that Rahman exercises is a demonstration of the contradictions of modern life, where the imaginary picture of wealth and joy conceals the truth about emotional and social struggles. The discussion on how Rahman has

utilized deviation as a strategy for attacking consumerism and emotional disappointment provides an overall understanding of how language can be an effective means of socio-political argument (Leech, 1969).

### Research Objectives

1. To examine the application of semantic deviation in *Eid Shopping* and how it creates focus on the themes of consumerism, emotional and social disappointment, and class division.
2. To analyze Rahman's emotional effect, consider his language choices, the reader's engagement, and their contribution to the emotional turmoil experienced by the characters.

### Research Questions

1. How does Tariq Rahman employ the semantic deviation in *Eid Shopping* to criticize the societal implications of consumerism?
2. What does the foregrounding theory bring to the comprehension of the socio-political motives beneath the underlying linguistic distortions in Rahman's story?

### Statement of the Problem

The problem at the heart of this study is the lack of scholarly focus on how semantic deviations in contemporary literary works, particularly Tariq Rahman's *Eid Shopping* (1988), serve as a tool for socio-political critique, especially regarding consumerism, social class, and emotional disillusionment. Although studies on linguistic deviation have been conducted, especially in poems and prose, they have not examined how these deviations are reflected in short stories to portray reality in certain socio-economic conditions. *Eid Shopping* (1998) presents a detailed scenario for analyzing how Rahman exploits language to create a theme on the emotional and social effects of consumer culture. However, what is lacking in the current literature is an analysis of these word choices that highlight crucial social conditions, especially the discrepancy between social norms and individual norms. It is to fill this gap that this study will attempt to examine how the semantic deviation employed by Rahman in this article serves to critique the social nature of consumerism and disillusionment within Pakistani society, along with fulfilling the application of the foreground theory to the narrative in order to shed light on the overall socio-political thematic implications of the Rahman's *Eid Shopping* (1998).

### Literature Review

A problem often considered in literary studies, and utilized by authors as a means of encoding more specific meanings, conveying human emotions, and critiquing established stereotypes, is linguistic deviation, particularly semantic deviation. *Eid Shopping* (1988) by Tariq Rahman is a persuasive example of how semantic deviation can be used as a device and a critical context to investigate socio-political concerns, such as consumerism and social difference. This literature review discusses the history of other writings on linguistic deviation, theory, and a socio-political critique of literature, providing a transparent background to Rahman's analysis of literature.

Deviation, as used by Geoffrey Leech (1969), refers to a conscious break of linguistic rules to achieve a particular effect. Such deviations could be in the form of phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic deviations. The issue of semantic deviation is also notable in literary works, as it reflects the writers' ability to convey meanings hidden in the text, which often requires the reader to read more deeply into the text. Leech's example of deviation theory has been strongly used in poetic analysis, prose analysis, and other types of literary works. His writing directly establishes that deviations are not merely embellishments to style, but are part and parcel of the way a text creates meaning, because they tend to indicate contradictions and inconsistencies in the story title, frequently at higher levels of concern.

On the prose side, the literature has ventured beyond the thesis of Leech (2011), adding additional information to the ways semantic deviation in prose literature works to consume standard application of descriptive terms to reveal the psychology of the characters and social truths in a more layered fashion (Medrano et al., 2021). *Eid shopping* by Rahman fits perfectly into it with the diversion of what is supposed to be in the case of language deviance being the impacts the Eid shopping has yielded on the emotion and the social sphere of belonging to a society that is materialistic with the ironical accounts on consumerism or the sensorial accounts on how it is like being caught Eid shopping as it is the center of attention. Such semantic deviations prompt the reader to consider the values prevalent in society or the impact of societal values on the emotional lives of individuals, particularly the influence of the need to adopt consumerist ideals.

The foreground theory, as approached by Jan Mukarovsky, is premised on the linguistic deviation theory, where he proposes that linguistic deviation serves to highlight critical aspects of a given theme in a piece of work. Mukarovsky (1970) defines foregrounding as the act of writers bringing into the fore by breaking the established standards of language use. By doing this, they display these elements more prominently, emphasizing them, and the reader would not have done so since he did not adapt the language to their everyday norms. The theory is highly influenced by Russian Formalism, which believes that the uniqueness of literature is associated with its unequivocal deviation from ordinary language, known as defamiliarization.

In the case of *Eid Shopping* (1998) by Rahman, the theory of foregrounding lends itself well to the discussion of forces used by Rahman in his linguistic style, including the ironic use of Eid as a setting to highlight issues of consumerism, thereby forcing them into the forefront of the text. The digressions in Rahman, whether sensory words, metaphorical prose, or ironic remarks, are intended to exaggerate the emotional anxiety of the characters, as well as the social criticism embedded in the words. The reader can notice that these elements, which are foregrounded, also serve to critique the theme of consumerism and social inequality in the story, thereby playing a significant role in contextualizing the themes for the reader.

Several works have criticized the image of consumerism in the literature (particularly the issues concerning the links between emotional welfare and relationships in society). We can discuss T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* in relation to Rahman *Eid Shopping*, as consumerism and the orienting activities of human beings can lead to a feeling that they are like aliens in their world. Analysis of Blake and his application of semantic deviation in his poems by Prafitri and Suhatmady (2014) provides a clear representation of how deviations, such as paradoxes and metaphors, can be applied as criticism of social values, with an emphasis on the materialistic nature of society. On the same note, the visits, as captured through *Eid Shopping* (1998) by Rahman, provide valuable insights into why there is a shortage of emotional satisfaction as a result of consumerism, especially during a time in history that is traditionally scheduled as a family and spiritual renewal period.

Recently, authors have also dedicated their attention to the trend of consumerism, depicting it as negative in contemporary literature. Semantic deviation, as examined by writers such as Stockwell (2002) and Riffaterre (1980), has proven to be an effective method of revealing the extensive way consumerism in society not only dominates the social constructs of the external social environment, but also the inner social life of the human being. The existence of the story description given by Rahman as it can be seen, depends on a specific specified cultural and socio-economic situation, the general writer however is identified with these established literary trends since it also exhibits the drawbacks of consumerism in the disappointment of feelings and social



division, particularly within the working-class which was unable to participate in the consumerist heaven of dream existence.

The semantic deviation, as a literary device, is widely associated with conveying social and political criticism. In *Eid Shopping* (1998) by Rahman, the language deviations represent a critique of the commercialization of religious and cultural holidays. Other works that have explored the relationship between language and social class include those of Bourdieu (1991) and Foucault (1977), which have examined the use of language as a means of power control. The language in Rahman's story is more than a means of communication, as it reveals the social hierarchy concealed behind the mask of interaction among people and between people and the material world in which they exist. Deviating from the rule of language in *Eid Shopping* encourages infiltration into the culture of consumerism, whereby emotional gratifications are sold in exchange for material objects.

The fact that Eid has been transformed into a consumer-based festival, neither spiritually nor family-oriented, as explained by Rahman, is one of the main and most concrete criticisms nestled in the value system of society, which propagates that the material benefits of society outweigh its emotional welfare. The alterations, regarding irony, metaphors, and language of the senses, stress the affective result of living in a world of consumerism, which determines personal gratification and social identity. This critique aligns with the common tendency towards linguistic deviance as a means of revealing the social and political state of affairs in society, making Rahman *Eid Shopping* (1998) a powerful gesture of the personal and societal psychological and emotional cost of consumer culture.

### **Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

The qualitative stylistic analysis is applied to evaluate how semantic deviation has been used in Tariq Rahman's *Eid Shopping* (1988). Foregrounding Theory (Mukarovsky, 1970; Leech, 1969) has been applied as the primary theoretical device to discover and examine some deviations in the linguistic norms. The short story is chosen as the primary text because it extensively employs language deviation and makes a social-political commentary about consumerism, emotional disillusionment, and social stratification. The primary data were also collected by the researchers directly out of the text as they made repeated close readings and marked the moments of unusual word combinations, the facts of sensory deviations, metaphors, similes, irony, and satire, and traced the forms and examples according to the established stylistic definitions. The secondary data was collected from literature works related to the discussion of linguistic deviation, stylistics, and socio-political criticism of literary works. The thematic analysis of each identified instance of deviation was carried out to establish the role of each deviation in demonstrating emotional and social realities of a consumerist environment, focusing on how the linguistic form helps to foreground thematic messages, subvert audience expectations, and provide some social-political statement. The analysis was conducted in the knowledge that the stylistic choices made by Rahman were conscious decisions through which he wanted to fulfil something bigger, something thematically and ideologically meaningful, and not just an adornment of a text.

### **Foregrounding and Semantic Deviation**

On the theoretical level, the background of this research work can be established well with the aid of semantic deviation and foregrounding, as these two concepts are critical in revealing how Tariq Rahman employs language to criticize socio-political matters in *Eid Shopping* (1988). Semantic deviation may be some thought-out move out of the recognized language rules and the resultant concentration, shock, and multiplicity of meanings. This may take several forms, such as unusual

word combinations, metaphors, irony, and sensory deviations, all of which Rahman has used in the story to challenge the reader's expectations. Rahman, through the use of words, brings out the social and emotional meaning of consumerism, social segregation, and emotional disappointment. Foregrounding theory, as formulated by Jan Mukarovsky (1970), maintains that such a twist in language is powerful, as it helps attract the reader's attention to particular themes, thereby making them more powerful and essential in the reader's involvement. In *Eid Shopping*, Rahman employs foregrounding to highlight the disparity between the time expected to enter Eid and the sufferings the characters endured, as well as the emptiness or lack of fullness that materialism brings. The route of linguistic deviations cannot be reduced to the free license of art. However, it can be seen as a deliberate attempt to convey socio-political critiques of consumerism and social class differences. With such emphasis on these deviations, Rahman makes the critique the main experience of the reader, encouraging them to consider the emotional and social prices that come with living in a consumer society.

### **Discussion and Analysis of *Eid Shopping* (1988)**

In *Eid Shopping* (1988), Tariq Rahman extensively employs semantic deviation to challenge the expectations of a typical Eid celebration, transforming it into a critical commentary on consumerism and social disparity. By making language choices that deviate from traditional usage, Rahman foregrounds the emotional and social aspects of struggles that manifest when we become so consumed by materialism and consumerism that scarcely any celebration can be observed beyond an epiphany. This section explores three key forms of semantic deviation employed in the text: unusual word combinations and sensory deviations, figurative language (including metaphors and similes), and irony and satire. All these detours are significant in that they expose the hypocrisy of the consumerist society portrayed in the narrative.

### **Unusual Word Combinations and Sensory Deviations**

Among the most vivid traits of *Eid Shopping* by Rahman is that the writer employs unusual word associations and sensory deviations as a method to portray the characters' experiences. As a means, the semantic deviation is based on the interruption to the usual use of the language. In the case of Rahman, he harmonizes the words and their descriptions of senses in such a way that the reader is compelled to go beyond what is publicly perceived as usual in everyday life, thereby enhancing the emotional impact of the story.

The text, with its sensory deviations, is especially successful in conveying the emotional disillusionment of its characters. Rahman does not write about shopping in a manner that can be regarded as happy or celebratory. Instead of referring to the process of shopping with a tone of celebration, Rahman employs a language of the senses to create the impression of discomfort, alienation, and unease. The descriptions of the marketplace, as well as the physical purchasing of goods and the relationships among the characters, somehow convey a sense of emptiness. To illustrate a scene that should be dynamic and exciting, the market scene, which was usually portrayed as very exciting during the time of Eid, is presented in a manner that is physically draining and emotionally distant. The descriptions of the senses during these scenes, such as the hot atmosphere, stale air, and the coldness of the interactions among humans, form a stark contrast with the scene of delight usually associated with Eid. Such deviations prompt the reader to reconsider the significance of consumerism in shaping the emotional and social lives of the characters.

The disunity of the text has also been caused by the fact that some words are not combined in the usual manner. Rahman deliberately contrasts words that are not typically paired together to

highlight the contradictions in the characters' lives. For example, the description of Allah Dad withdrawing his salary as "scoop out of the dried talons of the cashier at the bank" (Rahman, 2024, p.621) uses predatory imagery to strip a mundane action of its joy. Similarly, the bus ride is described through oppressive sensory details, "while brown bodies pushed against her and Kaka cried," (Rahman, 2024, p.624), emphasizing physical discomfort rather than festive excitement. Such juxtapositions highlight how separate the idea of celebrating Eid has become from social norms of family unity, strengthening, and spiritual purification, as the focus shifts to material purchases.

### **The Use of Figurative Language: Metaphors and Similes**

Figurative language, particularly metaphors and similes, is another tool Rahman uses in *Eid Shopping* to develop emotive and social criticism further. Wordplay, as a figurative language used by Rahman, is an exception to the literal meaning of words, allowing the author to convey complex subject matter more imaginatively and powerfully. Not only do these poetic descriptions of the story sound aesthetically pleasing and beautiful, but they also serve to enhance the central theme of consumerism and emotional disappointment.

Through the metaphors used in *Eid Shopping*, the writer conveys the feelings of poverty and emptiness that arise from consumerism. For example, the shopping experience is often compared to a hollow ritual or empty pursuit, metaphors that suggest that the act of purchasing material goods during Eid is devoid of meaning. These metaphors reiterate the spiritual and emotional emptiness that pervades the characters, irrespective of their external participation in the holiday. For example, Rahman describes Allah Dad withdrawing his salary as "scooping out of the dried talons of the cashier at the bank" (Rahman, 2024, p.621), a metaphor that frames the act of obtaining money as a struggle against a predatory force, reflecting both financial hardship and emotional strain. Similarly, fleeting moments of joy are rendered through similes, as when Allah Dad's wife follows him to the bazaar "with a heart as light as a girl in the fields when the harvesting is about to begin," (Rahman, 2024, p.625) an image of natural happiness that starkly contrasts with the materialistic reality of their errand. The metaphor of empty pursuit evokes the image of characters chasing after something they can never truly obtain, emotional fulfilment, because their efforts are focused solely on material gain. Rahman employs this metaphor to pass a negative judgment on a society that appreciates a superficial way of life centered on wealth and consumption but lacks a deeper, valid forum for appreciating family, faith, and the self.

Similarly, Rahman also employs similes to make comparisons, highlighting the alienation experienced by the characters. For instance, one character might be described as feeling "like a puppet on strings" as they mindlessly engage in the rituals of consumerism, reflecting how they have become detached from their own emotions and motivations. Such similes intensify the atmosphere of futility and emotional isolation, reinforcing the idea that the characters are driven by societal demands rather than their own will and emotional needs.

Rahman's metaphors and similes break with the more common, everyday application of words, as he makes a strong statement about the emotional and social implications of consumerism. The figurative language makes the most mundane things, such as browsing in shops, a mirror of existential angst, prompting the reader to question whether materialism holds much value in the characters' lives.

### **Use of Irony and Satire**

Lastly, Rahman employs irony and satire as the primary types of semantic deviation to further critique the commercialization of Eid and its impact on the characters. Another type of deviation

that is especially useful in the context of Eid, as described by Rahman, is the use of irony that highlights contradictions and inapplicability. The irony here is that, as the characters go through the holiday rituals, they are emotionally numb, lacking a genuine connection to their true feelings, and they are caught in the vicious cycle of materialism that only serves to disillusion them further. This is captured when the story closes with the line: "They moved towards the car wearily. Allah Dad and his family started walking home; there was no money for the bus. But Kaka was happy, and Allah Dad and his wife were avoiding each other's eyes. The Eid Shopping was over." (Rahman, 2024, p.627). The flat, anticlimactic ending reduces Eid to a mere transaction, highlighting the gap between the outward festivity and inward emptiness. Similarly, Rahman's satire cuts sharply when Mr. Aftab sneers, "How arrogant this Dubai money makes them" (Rahman, 2024, p.627) and his wife mimics in a falsetto, "Dubai chalo, Dubai chalo," (Rahman, 2024, p.627), lampooning the shallow prestige tied to consumer wealth. Eid is traditionally a season of spiritual enlightenment, bonding, and rediscovery with family and loved ones. Nevertheless, Rahman subverts this tradition, describing it as filled with consumerism, a sense of alienation, and wasted expectations. The irony here is that, as the characters go through the holiday rituals, they are emotionally numb, lacking a genuine connection to their true feelings, and they are caught in the vicious cycle of materialism that only serves to disillusion them further.

For instance, Rahman might describe a scene where beautifully wrapped gifts surround a character, yet they feel an emptiness that no amount of shopping could fill. Such irony reveals the fraudulence of consumer culture, an ideology that posits emotional or spiritual fulfilment is possible through the acquisition of material goods. At the centre of the critique of consumerism in the story is the contradiction between the outward celebration of Eid and the inner dissatisfaction in the characters. The irony with which Rahman presents the story makes the reader question the importance of wealth, as it can never provide emotional satisfaction or genuine connection.

Another form of irony is employed in the form of satire to mock the consumer fetish of society and the artificiality of contemporary lifestyle. The characters that Rahman describes as overwhelmed by the hysteria of *Eid shopping* ridicule the fact that the holiday has been commercialized. The tale highlights the extent to which characters must bend over backwards to participate in the consumeristic spectacle, putting into perspective and foregrounding how preoccupied with materialism people can become, to the point of ignoring their emotional and spiritual needs almost entirely. This mockumentary style highlights the criticism towards the social structure of the story, where Rahman is poking fun at the root cause of a society that prioritizes image over content.

### **Semantic Deviation as a Socio-political Remark**

In *Eid Shopping* (1988), Tariq Rahman employs semantic and anthropological deviation, critiquing the socio-political and cultural aspects of consumerism, emotional detachment, and social stratification in daily life. Such manipulation of words by Rahman, as seen in the use of terms like 'empty celebration' or 'joyless shopping', indicates the vacuity of the celebratory notions surrounding Eid. For instance, Rahman describes the workplace system that "refused to take him as a peon, but now he became an LDC" (Rahman, 2024, p.621), exposing the rigid boundaries of class advancement. Festive outings are described in alienating sensory terms, such as "while brown bodies pushed against her and Kaka cried," shifting the reader's attention from celebration to public discomfort. Even rare moments of joy are framed through rural imagery, "as light as a girl in the fields when the harvesting is about to begin" (Rahman, 2024, p.625), underscoring the cultural dislocation of urban life. Finally, the story closes with the blunt line, "The Eid Shopping was



over"(Rahman, 2024, p.627), which deflates the meaning of the holiday into nothing more than a consumer errand completed. This kind of semantic adventure shows what a shallow consumerist celebration was like, and the reader wants to redraw their vision of social culture. Such deviations, according to Leech (1969), are not only provocative to readers but also provide more in-depth views into social conflicts; therefore, they are necessary for the comprehension of Rahman's critique of materialism and its impact on emotional lives.

Additionally, the conflicting nature of society can also be seen in terms of irony and the senses evoked by Rahman. Eid is a day meant to be a festive occasion. It is, however, a day of alienation for the characters as they face the exploitation of time, sacrificing spiritual and family time. The given strategy is similar to that employed in investigating irony in William Blake's poems, where the violation of common recognitions implies a contrast between the external and the internal, leading to a further recognition of the social-political messages underlying such culturally induced actions (Prafitri & Suhatmady, 2014).

### **Emotional Disillusionment and Consumerism**

Consumerism is a theme prevalent in *Eid Shopping*, and it is also related to the emotional disillusionment of the characters. This emotional burden brought on by consumerism is reflected in the language used by Rahman, as characters are not attracted to happiness or family and friends, but are consumed by material possessions. The semantic deviations, such as describing the tiresomeness of meaningless rituals, the aspects of empty consumerism, or meaningless actions, emphasize the pointlessness of these celebrations made through consumerism, and there can be no doubt in the dehumanizing influence of consumerism that might cause alienation and discontent. In the story, this alienation is evident when "the familiar atmosphere of customary ill-temper had been created" (Rahman, 2024, p.624) during preparations, revealing how tension replaces joy. Even small decisions, such as whether to hire a tonga, are weighed in terms of loss. "She muttered that the tonga-wala (the man who owns or drives the carriage) would rob them of six rupees," (Rahman, 2024, p.624), showing how financial anxieties overshadow comfort. The emotional disconnect is further revealed when "so unfamiliar were their emotions that they were embarrassed" (Rahman, 2024, p.625) and when even tenderness must be restrained because "this was not the custom of his people" (Rahman, 2024, p.624). Together, these moments show that the consumerist version of Eid leaves little room for genuine connection. Such a notion of semantically odd usage of phrases to express their deeper, even contradictory, truths is also applied to Blake, where metaphors about burning bright in "The Tyger" emphasize the gap between surface phenomena and the sublime reality of existence (Prafitri & Suhatmady, 2014).

Rahman effectively conveys the problems of the emotional vacuum created by consumer culture, and as such, the writer serves as an acceptable form of social commentary. Similarly to Blake's poems, where metaphors are invoked, Rahman makes a reader contemplate the causes of emotional and social disillusionment.

### **Social Stratification and Language**

The story also has social stratifications, as evident in linguistic deviation, as the researchers see in Rahman's *Eid Shopping* (1998). Calling shopping not a state of bliss but a burden, Rahman reveals the emotional and social tragedy faced by people, particularly those with lower socio-economic statuses. This aligns with the thoughts of Leech (1969), who believed that language mistakes are primarily signs of greater societal problems, such as social inequality. The emotionally and socially costly nature of consumerism is further emphasized by the fact that the characters represented by Rahman are unable to enter the spheres of the fantasized Eid celebrations due to inadequate

material circumstances. Rahman illustrates this when "the couple which had been standing outside came in... obviously villagers and the salesman didn't attend them at all" (Rahman, 2024, p.626), showing how visual and linguistic cues immediately place them outside the imagined sphere of 'respectable' Eid celebrations. In another scene, the curt "It's been sold" (Rahman, 2024, p.627) from the salesman contrasts with the father's slow counting of coins, underscoring the linguistic and economic distance between people with low incomes and those with consumer power. Social prejudice is laid bare in Mr. Aftab's remark, "How arrogant this Dubai money makes them," (Rahman, 2024, p.627) and his wife's falsetto "Dubai chalo, Dubai chalo," (Rahman, 2024, p.627) which ridicules working-class ambitions in a way that reduces them to objects of satire.

### **Hybridity, Language, and Identity**

Language, as employed in the Rahman narrative, plays a fundamental role in providing a sense of identity, especially when the characters confront the conflict between the ideals of tradition and the demands of an industrial consumer society. In response to the reflection on hybrid manners of interaction in society, which has accepted a postcolonial existence between the impacts of modernity and traditions that have existed since ancient times, Rahman also employs linguistic innovations. Such a hybridization of language, as the topic of works on semantic deviation (Prafritri & Suhatmady, 2014), can be described as a metaphor for the hybridity of identity, where people are forced to assimilate while trying to preserve their cultural heritage. This is evident when Allah Dad calls his wife "Kake di maa" (Rahman, 2024, p.622), a Punjabi term anchored in cultural norms, followed immediately by a narrator's English explanation for the reader, embodying the hybrid nature of language in postcolonial identity. Similarly, urban consumer scenes retain markers of tradition, as when the family debates whether "the tonga-wala would rob them of six rupees" (Rahman, 2024, p.624) or when a modern shopkeeper addresses Mrs. Aftab as "Begum Sahib" (Rahman, 2024, p.625) while selling shoes. These linguistic blends reveal how the characters navigate the coexistence of inherited cultural markers and the demands of a modern, consumer-driven society.

The thing with the characters of Rahman is that the internal tension in the characters, in opposition to the need to live like cultured human beings and the ability to fit in a modern, consumeristic world, wants the language to bring out that conflict. The metaphor is important as the point of this tension, as it echoes the experiences of these characters and capitalizes on the emotional difficulty inherent in the world, where cultural and social rules are constantly shifting.

### **Comparative Metaphor Patterns**

The metaphors employed by Rahman in *Eid Shopping* may be both emotionally critical and socially critical. Just as Blake's metaphors do, the metaphorical expressions used by Rahman provide deeper contexts behind the emotional cost of consumerism. For instance, Rahman describes Allah Dad's wife following him to the bazaar "with a heart, as light as a girl in the fields when the harvesting is about to begin" (Rahman, 2024, p.625), an image of pure, seasonal happiness sharply contrasted by the mundane and draining context of Eid shopping. Likewise, the "familiar atmosphere of customary ill-temper" (Rahman, 2024, p.624) acts as a metaphor for how discord becomes ingrained in family life during what should be a festive season. Even the humble act of "counting the copper coins" (Rahman, 2024, p.627) is imbued with metaphorical weight, reflecting the quiet dignity and struggle of those excluded from the easy consumerism enjoyed by the wealthy. The empty pursuit metaphor in Rahman's work is used to illustrate a vivid contrast between the outer signs of success, material wealth, and the inner emotional deprivation the characters undergo. It echoes the way Blake used metaphors in poems such as "The Tyger,"

swapping the literal and figurative senses of words like "burning" to raise more profound questions about existence (Prafitri & Suhatmady, 2014).

### **The Cognitive Stylistics and Reader Engagement**

The semantic deviations described by the theory of cognitive stylistics applied to Rahman's writing extend beyond appealing to the reader's intellectual capacity, as they also arouse emotions in the reader. By using unusual diction or word options and sometimes words that we are not usually accustomed to hearing or saying, Rahman induces the reader to redefine their situation in society, as well as the emotional load that consumption carries, and associate it with this consumerist world. Rahman achieves this through phrasing such as "so unfamiliar were their emotions that they were embarrassed" (Rahman, 2024, p.625), temper, which forces the reader to question why happiness feels alien in a setting meant for celebration. Similarly, the phrase "the familiar atmosphere of customary ill-temper" (Rahman, 2024, p.624) unsettles the reader by normalizing discord during a supposed time of joy. Moments like "with a heart, as light as a girl in the fields when the harvesting is about to begin" (Rahman, 2024, p.625) immerse the reader in sensory richness, while at the same time highlighting the tension between cultural nostalgia and the hollow consumerism framing the scene. The digressions render the events more pressing, as the reader must contend with inconsistencies between the superficial reality and the inner void, which leads to a deeper immersion in the narrative on both emotional and intellectual levels.

### **The Ending as Semantic-Ideological Closure**

The *Eid Shopping* notion is closed; furthermore, the semantic and ideological closure underlines the criticism of consumerism and the frustration of the feeling of disappointment depicted in the narration. Similarly, Leech's (1969) observations about the semantic deviations that critique tradition are echoed in Rahman's proposition of the cyclicity of consumerism, which leads to emotional emptiness. Tariq Rahman has also discredited the values of the society, whose sole achievement is based on material gains over and above spiritual contentment in life, by leaving the characters in a position of unfilled deferred desires. This is encapsulated in the story's closing line: "They moved towards the car wearily. Allah Dad and his family started walking home; there was no money for the bus. But Kaka was happy, and Allah Dad and his wife were avoiding each other's eyes. The Eid Shopping was over," (Rahman, 2024, p.627). The abruptness of this ending transforms what should be the peak of festivity into a flat, anticlimactic statement. It provides both semantic closure, the act of shopping is complete, and ideological closure, underscoring Rahman's critique of consumerism's cyclic emptiness, where the ritual is fulfilled but the emotional and spiritual needs remain unmet.

### **Conclusion**

In *Eid Shopping* (1988), Tariq Rahman uses semantic deviation as a powerful tool to critique the socio-political and emotional consequences of consumerism. Through his use of language, Rahman reveals the disappointments and emptiness that consumer culture leaves behind in people, especially at a time when they are accustomed to feeling spiritually uplifted, close to their relatives, and happy euphorically, that is, at Eid. Using a variety of semantic combinations, sensory deviations, figures of speech, and irony, Rahman breaks the rules of celebration. He brings out the emotional toll of life in a materialistic society.

The linguistic deviation employed by Rahman not only stimulates the reader's intellectual capacity but also triggers the emotional need to address the inconsistencies in contemporary life. *Eid Shopping* characters are entangled in a pattern of material desire winding to alienation and inequality. Rahman is critical of the changing world of consumerism, wherein identities are

transformed, social classes are reproduced, and happiness is increasingly centered on financial prosperity rather than genuine happiness at its core. These critiques are embedded in the emotional and ideological structure of the story, as the foregrounding used in the narrative reveals that these are not superficial critiques.

The socio-political aspects of the story written by Rahman are also important because they prompt the reader to examine a cultural and social system that promotes consumerism and its impact on human relations. In the end, *Eid Shopping* serves as a reminder of how we should rediscover emotional and spiritual well-being in a society where people are becoming increasingly materialistic. Rahman's linguistic deviations do not provide him with stylistic variation. However, they are at the forefront of the critique in the story and, thus, a tool that requires mastery in responding to the social and political issues that the story critiques.

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