

**A SPACE TO TELL:
WRITING POETRY IN A SECOND LANGUAGE**

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**A submission presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the University of
Salford for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled ‘A Space to Tell: Writing Poetry in a Second Language’, submitted by me to School of Media and Art, University of Salford in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor Philosophy, is my original work carried out under the supervision of Dr Ursula Hurley and Dr Scott Thurston. I further declare that this thesis neither full or in part ever been submitted for award or any other degree of either this university or other university.

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ABSTRACT

Distinct from the increasing interest in Research on L2 creative writing in a pedagogical context, this practice-based PhD research attempts to situate the process of writing poetry in a second language as a creative practice in its own right. This enquiry focuses not only on the outcome of my creative practice, which is memory poetry: poetry of remembrance, in a second language, but also reaches through the process and methodology towards opening the way to developing artistic practice, of writing poetry in a second language as the production of knowledge in action and as a genre, of finding my voices, of my transformation from a reader, a language learner into a writer and of contributing insights toward the definition of a second language poetry. Self-reflection and critical investigation of Women poets of Asian background, namely: Kamala Das, Eunice De Souza, and Jennifer Wong, facilitate cultural learning; a valuable source of authentic materials that makes me able to reflect my own identities and to write my own memory poetry. By combining autobiography, memory and second language creative writing, I develop a collection of poetry consisting of 70 poems within five thematic issues: Memories of Mother and Daughter in an Islamic and Matrilineal Society, Memories of Diabetes Heritage, Study Abroad Setting, Motherhood PhD and The Making of a Second Language Poetry. The poems narrate my personal history, exploring the religious-cultural convergence of being a mother as well as a daughter and investigating the different aspects of being a student mother in learning a language and pursuing a degree in a study abroad setting. 10 of the 70 pieces are self-translated poems signifying the creativity in the translational process of “self” while handling the meaning both in my first and second language.

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ORGANISATION OF THESIS

The work that combines memory, autobiography and second language poetry writing in the collection demonstrates some critical aspects of second language creative writing as research. The complementary resources which are critical and reflective writings, synthesise and explain progression, choices and reflection resulting in my writerly identity; from a language learner into a learner writer.

Following the collection of poetry, the reflective statement in chapter 2 accentuates the reading and reflective investigation of the poetry of Women poets of Asian background which is aimed at elevating my sense of the multiple selves attached to me as a Moslem, a Minang woman, mother and daughter. This chapter explores the aspects of memory, mother and daughter in which I tease out differences and similarities between the poems of these Women poets of Asian background and my poems. Post-colonial theory interrogates the construct of “woman” in Southeast Asian Patriarchal culture that positions the female heir as subordinate - this provokes me to reflect back to my matrilineal society which over-values the existence of a daughter in a family.

Chapter 3 chronicles the fusion of writing in the first language with the act of self-translation as a creative practice which links to the aspect of autobiography and identity. Self-translation in the second language is one form of creativity where the language learner strives to practise handling the meaning in both his/her first and second languages. Through the practice of self-translation, I also strengthen some elements of my first and second language and self-translation becomes an essential part of transforming my journey from a learner writer into a writer.

Chapter 4 highlights the reading and the analysis of poetry by Jennifer Wong to investigate aspects of identity when learning a second language in a study abroad setting. The reading of *Summer Cicadas*, Wong’s first collection, helps me to delineate some cultural issues occurring in the collection with my “study abroad setting” poems. Again, I pick out illuminating differences and highlight similar aspects of identity in Wong’s poetry.

Chapter 5 is a short essay about my most recent autobiographical setting as a Mama PhD, giving some insights into my struggle for being a student mama as triggered when writing second language poetry. The essay chronicles episodes of living abroad as a student Mom, emphasising my struggles to raise children in the west and in multicultural Manchester. The moment when I should confront demanding and challenging attitudes from my boys, the “three canaries”, inspires me more to write poetry about my maternal experiences.

Chapter 6 describes my meaningful experience of writing poetry in a second language focusing on some strengths, challenges and obstacles that hinder and colour my literary journey as a learner writer. This section lies at the heart of my practice-based research which documents my literary voyage from a language learner into a learner writer. It also focuses on how I emphasise the development of my progression point as a second language learner. This chapter also accentuates my transformation to move further to explore language.

Chapter 7 summarises the insights of my PhD writing, explaining the final contribution of my research to the academic world. The relevant points of my study offer opportunities for future research on writing poetry in a second language as a creative practice in its own right.

Poetry Collection in a Second Language

PREFACE

This is a collection of 70 poems in my second language, providing insights into the process of writing poetry in a second language. The five thematic episodes draw on autobiographical material, and start from 19 pieces of memory about a mother-daughter relationship in an Islamic-Matrilineal society. The second part is 10 pieces of remembrance about diabetes heritage in my life story containing some moments of loss and struggles against diabetes. The third layer of my autobiography is 12 poems on the study abroad setting which narrate some episodes of being a student who is caught in the sense of otherness among difficult days of language and cultural learning. The fourth episode comprising 17 pieces of poetry celebrates the complexity of being a Mama PhD, the underpinning moments of love and madness when raising three small boys. Finally lying at the heart of my practice-based research, 11 poems chronicle the comic and ironic but meaningful experience of writing memory and my life story in the process of making second language poetry.

Annotated with the time of composition at the end of every poem, the collection not only reflects deliberate choices and an improvement in English writing but it is also a document of process from which I will draw critical insights in the second part of the thesis. These poems can be claimed as a finished product of writing poetry in a second language, resulting in the discovery of my writerly identity; from a second language learner into a learner writer.

**A. MEMORY OF A MOTHER-DAUGHTER IN A
MATRILINEAL SOCIETY**

On the Birth of Twin Daughters

1.

We were two eggs,
in a warm platter
carried by a five foot two inches young mother.

But they said,
she held a sack to the university
where she learned about women, the baby boom and mortality.

We grew too large,
slipped free from the cracked shell,
a bleeding thigh in a clamorous classroom, she, let out a wail.

The hospital ceilings
were cluttered with the echoes of her three small boys,
giggling at their jokes of possessing two new toys.

For the untold truth,
the doctor whispered to a blissful father
who rose from the long bench, tottered
out of the cold chamber,
approaching the prayer room.
His eyes were bright,
peered into the departing gloom.

We are the survivors
of family history.
Winning two acres of rice fields
as life royalty.
Now, we fail
to grow the eggs in the same barn,
And a scornful smile radiates from the clan.

(December 2015)

The Loss of a Female Foetus

2.

The rain water wipes cassava leaves, the drying soil leans on the guava tree. I hide beneath the green shadow, for the unborn foetus, poured out of the darkness. Mother tears her last Songket, the false hope haunts the dying hours.

Little nieces hold their kingdom, for the acres of paddy fields sketch a buffalo head with pride. The greedy aunty smiles cunningly, her days ahead kick off the victory.

The three canaries rose to ask a question, for the anonymous story forced them to leave their own Nagari.

(November 2015)

3. Ibu tanpa Anak Perempuan

Tengadah tangan seribu pinta
Lafaz hidup gumam kan rindu
Pada benih cinta perisai takdir
Terbayang lara tersemai dihari tua

Lalu, lupakah dinda pada sebuah legenda?
Rumah gadang Sembilan pintu,
bilik kosong menjelma rumah hantu
Nak budjang lari memboyong perawan,
tinggalkan debu dikelambu, Jeritan hati Sosok si Ibu ,
menggeliat diranum bahagia sang Menantu

Apa yang dilantun dalam gurindam malam
Kata bijak bertuah sesal,
padi menguning, bulir dituai hampa
Tak berkawan sampai ajal menyapa

(December 2015)

4. A Daughterless Mother (Self-Translated Version)

The palm opened by silent prayer,
life yearns for a daughter.
The seed of love manifests a destiny:
Are old days a picture framed by agony?

But my dear! Have you heard the stories?
Of a big house with its nine doors?
The bride escaped with the bridegroom,
Leaving a pristine valance in the maid's room!

The old saying bears her pain.
The wise words end in vain.
The grown seed is now out and gone:
Death comes closer when she is lonesome.

(January 2017)

To the Memory of June 5

5.

I said farewell to her -
such an intimate celebration.
I weep for losing the beloved soul.

I bathe her dead body,
this time without the wheel chair.
The trail of laughter replaced by solemnity.

I prickle the last Wudhu,
the blue bruise of Insulin;
discover the new apparition on my arm.

I wrap her
from sole to crown
in a Kafan, ready to meet the ground.

I watch her lying
in the cold cradle
will blow heaven's verses to warm the bed.

I name the red roses
without thorns -
good company when visiting the swelling soil.

I trace the childhood memory,
find the broken attic
silenced by the dust from old photographs.

And I ... I dig the buried path -
fear for the story of replacement :
a mother by a daughter, an absence.

(June 2015)

I Used to Live.... in A Door Way between Two Unlocked Rooms

6.

The first room had a promising door to heaven,
away from the smell of the abyss.
She knelt at the door,
holding it with her dry hand and said Come!
You would be free from this ... a karma... Oik Nak kanduang!
I examined what was inside the room,
the windows illuminated
the long and dark hours of devotion and tradition.

*

The other room had a wide open door,
to a place I once heard in a lullaby.
The taste of toast occupied and roasted the rice steam.
You, conquer it!
Be the emperor of your own fortunes!
The dark angel whispered to the west wind,
blowing away the last defence.
I looked through its provoking wall
and discovered bad women escaped from the bars.

*

I weighed the two sides of the coin,
not knowing which one to choose.
Roamed back and forth
ended up again in the doorway .
Traced back the line of Pusako Gadang
echoing the life after death.
Yet, the wheels of my carriage stopped
remained swinging...
In a door way between the two unlocked rooms.

(February 2015)

The Day I Leave You Lonely

7.

Epigraph: A rumah gadang serves as a residence, a hall for family meetings, and for ceremonial activities. In the Minangkabau society, the rumah gadang is owned by the women of the family who live there; ownership is passed from mother to daughter

The day I leave you lonely,
with tears and agitation.
Remorse fills up my throat and lungs,
for not being able to expel the anguish.
I fear God's punishment,
denying a wife's obligation.
I am your daughter
but I am also a wife and a mother.
As if only God understands that life
should not be divided.
There is not a wall,
a red line between love and devotion,
yet to cross the boundary from hell to heaven,
I have to depart

The day I leave you lonely,
you watch the TV screen,
eyes emptied and mouth dried
by silent prayers.
I have paid the karma, you said,
once leaving your grandma.
So go! Your world is no longer mine,
your absence is near to my darkness!
Like a pilgrim on her holy mission,
I rush for an unknown destination
and find the boat sailing

away from home.

The day I leave you lonely,
you give me the ring with a dragon's head
folded by pearl and silver.
I am numbed by the offering.
Imagining in the next twenty years,
that I should hand it back to a daughter,
to any young woman, seeding in my womb.
But for the absence, I see the ring flickers,
the colour fades, it will be degraded
by the passage of time.

On the day I leave you lonely,
the wind chills, breaking
my last pouring cry.
My hand grips
the iron fence of Rumah Gadang.
Looking down the long path of the diverged road
I knew, I would come back.
Later, on the day when you leave me lonely...

(August 2015)

In the Dialysis Unit

8.

If I had not made you stay
alone, in your sunless room, Mother!
I would not have heard your sharp breath,
dragging me in to the madness.

If I had served you with plenty of breakfast earlier,
a cup of hot tea and a plate of rice,
as your last wish,
I would not have recalled the moment when
your agitated hands rejected a gulp and a spoon.

If I had prevented them from taking you
into the theatre, witnessing the knife,
flat against your flesh,
I would not have watched you in my dream,
shedding tears of pain.

If I had stopped the machine from operating,
squeezing the last drop of your blood,
I would not have stared at the pale moon as your face.

Forgive me Mother, the walls remain silent...
I track the trail of the flashing white shadow,
and find the past echoed.

(May 2016)

9. Puisi Untuk Ibunda

Kuselipkan doa disetiap sujud malamku
Allah maha tau
betapa aku merindu
Senyuman hangat ,
petuah bijak
ditingkahi senandung kecil untuk si cucu

Kembali kutelusuri
jejak masa lalu
Aroma kasih
dan pekatnya bau insulin..
Adalah serpihan kenangan,
yang terangkum pilu dalam ruang batinku

Dibalik dingin yang merasuk raga dan sukma
Kutatap nanar
dedaunan kering pohon Oak
Menguning, jatuh
ditimpali buliran es yang membeku,
lenyap disapu angin musim dingin

Dan gamang
kuretas hari ke depan tanpamu, Ibunda
Layaknya perahu kertas

10. Poem for Ibunda (Self-Translated Version)

I send you a prayer
in my night worship.
Heaven knows!
How much I long for
the warm smile
gentle expression
and the lullaby to the grandson

As I trace the memory,
back to the old days
the scent of love
and the stink of Insulin
are the fragmented recollections
sadly awake in my heart and soul

Through the frosty hours,
I contemplate the dry leaves,
falling from the oak tree,
the yellow layer of life
descended and
demonised by the cold.

The fear crawls, within me.
For the days to come,
without you
Like a paper ship, adrift.

berlayar tanpa nahkoda
Namun kan kubangun bahtera
atas nama **layar kasih**
yang kau wariskan,
Kukayuh ...tak henti
dalam alunan Al-Fatihah
Untukmu Ibunda,segenap cinta dan doa.....

(December 2014)

and row the boat
Never stop.
For you... Ibunda!
This heavenly verse
Al-Fatihah

(December 2016)

A Cup of Tea without Sugar in One Rainy Afternoon

11.

A cup of tea minus sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, one rainy afternoon. You set your amputated toes lower, to the white tile of my new home. Lying down on the floor, my hand reached your ankle, and up to the wrinkled calf, giving them both firm and soft massages. When it comes to your thigh, I usually get up and here we go! The same old story flows! An elegy, of how the grand nanny lost her precious knee. Mother thought she was lucky.

A cup of tea except sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, one rainy afternoon. We moved to the front terrace of my tiny house so you could view the colour of the clouds beneath the pouring rain. My mind shuttled for a while, you did not want to be lifted. Let this four-legged stick carry me! I look through the slender figure of the palm which was once caked with chalk powder. You brought them home, and when I remind you of the little episode, here we go! The same old story flows! A success story of a woman, crossing academic duty bordered by domestic demand. Mother thought she was progressive.

A cup of tea in the absence of sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava one rainy afternoon. I always loved these intimate minutes when my chin pressed against the armchair. You leaned your head back and stroked my hair. What we talk about when we did not talk about food, the toddlers, and insulin in the refrigerator. The rain stopped, but we did not toast your health. Mother thought she was fine.

A cup of tea with no added sugar, two pieces of oat biscuits and one pack of potato crisps in one snowy afternoon. My eyes are staring at the cotton drop while counting the invisible curtain of space between us.

A cup of tea without you, Mother!

(December 2016)

After the Funeral

12.

A wooden box, old furnished,
these trembling fingers
unwillingly open the lid.

Beneath the twinkling silver earrings
I catch sight of it;
The golden dragon head ring.

Sudden chill comes over me
pictures framed by vanishing lineage,
holding back, I withdraw.

(April 2014)

The Memory of Songket Shawl

13.

1.

In her last days

Mother murmured

words I could not comprehend.

Lying quietly

she wept.

Her tears

resemble dew drops;

undetectable and odourless.

I touched the tip of her *hijab*

and discovered clamminess.

The dialogues between us

often evaporated.

I knew she would not tell me

how it felt,

to ease two portions of pain;

pain of loss and pain of loneliness,

but I can name them now,

clearly and bluntly.

2.

Three months earlier

we had a serious conversation.

With a deep look

upon my eyes

and my belly.

“Maso tuo sanang dek baranak padusi.”

I did not respond, but I
listened to her echoing urge.
I fear failure,
I knew she would tell me
how to react
when the midwives
giggled the tortured lines
under the bleeding sheet,
“batambah anak laki-laki nan ka maninggaan nagari..”

3. Afterwards,
we stopped trying,
and the door has closed.
It's no use crying over spilt milk
Mother took off the golden dragon head ring
and folded her *Songket* shawl,
she spoke about
disconnection and desolation.
The explosion of despair.
She did not ask,
but I knew she would let me
lay the shawl
over her dead body.

(March 2017)

That Time of the Year

14.

That time of the year

I left her unassisted.

Was an irritated child

so much ignorance.

What shall we have for the Iftar?

She hoped to change

the eating pattern

baked fish and boiling cassava leaves.

It is too late

The regret congeals

Ramadhan commemorates

my darkest soul.

(June 2017)

To the Unfinished Lines

15.

It came from nowhere,
the vocalization of memory.
The strings splay and work themselves
to the very bone of a wicked soul.
Summer, winter, autumn and spring
whittled every layer of the old frame.
So now raise
some lines of the past that were sunk.
Mother, forgive me!
This journey seems bewildered
but I shall come back
to the unfinished lines
of my collection.

(July 2017)

My Mother in the Dialysis Unit

16.

The voice I heard was your silence
The only fragrance was yours, odourless

I stood on my feet to see you fall

Quite forgot how it felt
when the nails penetrated your skin.
Darkling, I counted every second of
prayers I sent, but words
could not name the pull

I recede
over my capacity to embrace
the torture and transfer it to mine...

I was watching you Mother

through the silhouette that shudders...

(July 2017)

In the Aubergine Field

One dry afternoon
Mother spoke the words,
she grasped for hope through
the green violet shade of the
aubergine field. Far away down,
her eyes glared and was erupted
“ It had been our battle ground, ”
“ a place to nurture your identity,”
“we pick daughter’s names and legality
in harvest times.“ Instead, I chose not
to transform the words, that sort of
private conversation evaporating
in the air, Mother forgive me,
I am now living in the world
of anonymity.

(July 2017)

Post Card from Heaven

19.

“You are home.”

Mother greeted me in the dark
the bed light was not even on.

A few months before

I sent her a postcard of
a mother and her little girl in a boat,
floating above the green water of Toba lake.

The prettiest part of the picture was
the nakedness ,in Sarongs,
half soaking, the lake water enlivening
the curves of their hips and breasts.

“ I do not fancy the figures ,“

Mother spoke to me on the phone.

“We did not use a boat to fish
or to wash the clothes.”

Arguing was a shame for any daughter,
I took the postcard back.

Two days after the funeral,

I sighted the brown edges of a photograph

A little girl and the mother,
both figures veiled

dancing under the sunburn,
and the splash of dirty mud.

Soon I recognize the most melancholic part
of the picture; things that form
the backdrop of the old portrait;
buffalo heads and rice paddy fields.

Shivering alone in the room;

I light the fluorescent bulb.

(September 2017)

B. DIABETES HERITAGE

The Legend of a Wand

20.

She was brought from hospital,
six months after I was born.
Mother took me
to the edge of her dark chamber

close to the haunted bathroom.
She gave me a quick smile, sneaking beyond her fairy tale
leg amputated, her life and her dream too.

Take this wand and make me your alluring witch!
Her voice howled helplessly
demanding the stolen haunch.
Trembling,
I hid among her vacant sewing machines
the light was dim,
I made my escape in the dusk..

Grandma whisper the chants,
these are my legacy! Not the curse! The footsteps you must follow!
Scatter the seeds of your own rice paddy's fields,
and raise your children with them.
You cannot go far, and cranes
will return to their breeding ground!

I fought for the wand and won the battle,
a lottery ticket in my pocket to sail away,
but in return
I was drowned in my mother's tears,
who cried aloud, for the lost wand.

(April 2015)

Drink the Elixir of Life

21.

Drink the elixir of life. Lollypop squeezed, little girls with red ribbons laughed in the bubbling mind. An air balloon rose up above the azure world. Stinky insulin withdrew, vanishing among the whispered nursery rhymes with ABCDEF and G. The H is hard to curve in the tongue.

Drink the elixir of life. The juvenile delinquency rode the lingering sweet, twisting a young woman's tail of fortune. Appetizing insulin appeared, cunningly offered Barbie's world, a creation of every young man's intention. Chew the last drop of honey bee.

Drink the elixir of life. Making love is a mountain explosion. The timid dove and the howling wolf, the roller coaster hangs and sways, suck the pipe of hunger and thirst. The beauty of falsehood and immaturity crawl a note in the doctor's room. Ravishing insulin nigh, glorious in its frequent visits and sailing across the sea, found the harbour where life is ephemeral.

Drink the elixir of life. The light is dim, and I ask for directions from so many soulless creatures. A widely opened gate, reeking insulin joins the parade.

(May 2015)

My Dear Diabetes 1

22.

You have come, visiting us,
Grand mother, Mom and you
fly to me secretly.

What's the use of your visit?
Licking my bones, lungs and heart?
Or simply re-building our shattered dream?

My dear Diabetes:
I have slammed the door
and closed all the windows
for your aroma
no longer occupies the dining room.

I have made friends
with the bitter taste of your enemy
make love with the chemical insulin
sleep well, tight.
Woken up by the sweet humming of my canaries.

(November 2014)

My Dear Diabetes 2

23.

SWEET
Lingering thought of hunger...

SWEAT
Fulfilling the sense of thirst...

SLEEPY
Dreaming of life without limitation...

SO FINALLY FATIGUE
Lying and digging your own grave

(November 2014)

My Dear Diabetes 3 (Just a silly thought after the visit of my dear damn diabetes)

24.

Hulla!

Long-time no see!

My most cunning enemy

the devil is with you,

to come along before the morning dew.

Hiii!

No need to hurry, stay close to me,

stick to my blood, feast upon my misery.

I will show you

my last defence, the ruining courage,

then win the trophy,

preserving my family's legacy and heritage

Hurrah!

After, the victory,

are you going to depart? Just go on,

with your latent adventure within my heart?

We're adrift in the boat

of lingering sweetness

and end up in an eternal harbour entitled RIP.

Damn It!

You thought you had won this everlasting battle

raped the insulin and folded me into the cold cradle

My dear loving foe!

Must I say farewell to you?

(December 2014)

December Poem

25.

What should be drowned under the sea of memory?
Except for the shortness of life
indulging family legacy.
What must be trodden into pieces of broken hopes?
Traversing the hazy border
of lingering sweet.
What shall be impeded by the shattered dream?
an absolute freedom

This is a destiny or a soft whisper from the invisible evil
Happiness emerging.... Yet, sometimes vanishing....
I am a warrior against this damn diabetes
A heroine with three sharp defending bullets: my canaries

(August 2015)

An Ode to Insulin

26.

Last night

was tremendous,

I made love

with the super penis !

Parted the defence of thick blood,
seized the bruised belly.

You are my guardian angel.
You melt the frozen heart.
For the odour of your sperm

releases me from the smell of the abyss.

(September 2015)

From the old photograph (After Margaret Atwood)

27.

One dark chamber,
diminished light.
The scent of black coffee
dominates the sleeping room.
Someone might put it
right behind the bed.

But if you stayed
a bit longer here
in this gloomy space,
the earthiness of Arabica
would fade away.
Soon you'd sniff

the story of gangrene
the diabetic heritage.

Anyway, that is not the point!
Come closer, can you see it?
The long smear of one object, almost two feet.
Lift your finger up a bit!
Examine the two dots!
Yes, the twin little girls
holding each other's hands,
shivering and
hiding behind
the prosthetic leg.

(April 2017)

After the Telephone Conversation

28.

Blood glucose is another name for memory
awakes an institution that manages the rhetoric
of a silent killer
it can contort facts
the smooth skin the regular beat of the heart and a piece of mind.
It can plunge them into the well of the ossuary
the artefact of recurrent tales
a voracious appetite for sweetness.

I swing over past and present but then
I dread my future
I seek it in the old cupboard, discover the list.
Some names along genetic hierarchy
memory strips off the old scars,
and I celebrate the bleeding .
I dress my heart in motley forces
to delude,
to tag me in the name of another label.
Just as I might break the curse of my surname,
I fight the lifetime battle yet
like solid molecules it remains.

(June 2017)

My Dear Beans

29.

My dear beans
What you think of me?

Spitting in my vigour,
testing my durability.
You latently infected
my resiliency.

Autumn waves goodbye
Winter mocks me
Still,
I have to find the remedy
for the sake of my three beans.

(October 2017)

C. STUDY ABROAD SETTING

Surat Untuk Seorang Sahabat (Kunjungan Pertama ke Cambridge)

Diantara gemelutuk ibu jari, ku menjemput pagi di Heathrow. Sapaan manja klakson si merah, gagah mengajakku menuju London, lalu kau suguhkan nikmatnya secangkir Costa, membunuh beku, diamku, dinginku, sembari berujar “santai pren”, dia tidak singgah kekotamu

Menyusuri “Hills road” yang sepi, Cambridge seolah tak berpenghuni. Gemerincing roda travel bagku, temani bunyi lonceng sang gereja tua. “Fish and Chip”, “university store”, “thick English”, kau penuh genderang telingaku dengan biasanya frase2 yang tak kupahami.

Tidak kah kau rindu kawan ujarmu, pada nyanyian “raven” yang memecah malam, rasakan lagi hembusan angin musim panas ditingkahi gerimis mengundang. Bau-i aroma “Thai food” yang malu2

The First Visit to Cambridge (*Self Translated Version*)

I clutched my frozen thumbs,
and witnessed the morning dew
hugging Heathrow softly,
heading to London,
the old red blew its horn.
A cup of hot Costa,

the melting cold and silence,
while you smiled and said,
Calm down ‘Pren’,
Cambridge is in another direction!

invading the quiet Hills street,
I captured unoccupied Cambridge.
Listen!

The broken wheel of my suitcase,
accompanied the jingling bell from an old church.
Thick English, Fish and chips and University store,
were too foreign in my ears,
sweetly squeezing my tongue.

My dear old Friend!
Do not you miss the song of raven,
in peaceful lonesome nights
Do not you long for the aroma of Thai Food,

menyeruak di “market place”, Menatap angkuhnya “King college” dari tepian sungai Cambridge, “ayuhkan sauhmu “! jelangi mimpi itu sekali lagi! Teriakan mu menghujam sampai ke uluhati., merengsek asa yang sudah mati.

Kawan, kan kutenggarai gelap jiwaku, sempurnakan pertahanan hidupku

Lalu..

(December 2014)

stealing your attention along the market place
and staring at the arrogant King’s college
from the river bank?
Come!
Seize the dream once again!

*My dear old friend!
I will set myself free,
unchain my death spirit!
Then...I...*

(December 2016)

**The Only Pressure I feel is The Pressure I Put on My Self
After Frank O' Hara**

32.

It is Friday the twenty seventh
Ten days overdue for submission, yes!
It is 2015
and I am far away from the place where I belong
because at six,
confusion has to be resolute,
Then light the dark kitchen
with the fragrance of rice steaming.
I know,
the three canaries will set their wings to fly,
to their school time,
boisterous about their new tongue.

As I walk out of the comfort zone and find,
the only pressure I feel is the pressure I put on my self.
Find the best toast with SUITABLE FOR VEGETARIAN,
Ok, let me deal with the cheese only and work with 190 DEGREE CELSIUS.
Pass FISH AND CHIPS for lunch and stick with SUGAR FREE.
While for the racist neighbours, I care for their NEXT delivery,
drop in our door just embolden myself with TESCO.
Grin toward PRIMARK , drown in REDUCTION without grief!
Take a deep breath, just glance *at* DEBENHAMS
Close my eyes and arrive at 135 the bus stop.
So, how is the poem after all? I am sitting,
then wandering around,
STILL THE ONLY PRESSURE I FEEL IS THE PRESSURE I PUT ON MY SELF

(March 2015)

At 135 Piccadilly Bus Stop

33.

i.

Two young ladies,
in the aroma of curry,
speak in their hyphenated language.
Boasting about the fertility,
of planting words,
bridging the gap
between worlds.
But Vanity is a great excuse.
Then Mahatma Gandhi appears
to revolve the bullet
of nation and dignity
right at the dark gleaming hairs.

ii.

A homeless
Mancunian man shivers,
among his scattered elements.
Cigarette butts, bottles of Cola,
And two cups of last night's Starbucks.
Behind the dirty blankets,
he perhaps ejaculates
the coldness,
and his nothingness.
People know his story,
Once, wishing for a better future ,
He chose to exit.

iii

The street musicians
in the garden
play the music of their hearts.
White-haired man and woman
sitting on a wooden bench
who have lived long
in a solitary place,
requesting a heavenly tune,
As soon as
the musicians blow the saxophone
they restrain
the heavy breath

and terrible coughing

iv.

As the bus wheels
up to Cheetham Hill,
I button my jacket.
This country turns grey.
All the way,
out of the bus window,
faces, eyes and ears
re searching,
figuring out
capturing smells and sounds
covering each other
and seen from all perspectives,
I catch one particular sound
of three birds
chirping and yelling.
My poetry terminates
in its luminous stop
and finds its way back
home.

(December 2016)

WHAT IF

34.

What if
the second language
can push me away
from life's complexity and bigotry?

I do not deny
(dima tanah dipijak, disitu langik dijunjuang)
But the soils are swept
my feet are others
And I need more solidity
to stay firm on the new ground

What if
the second language
takes me to
the gate of security and tranquillity

still I confess
*(Hujan ameh nigari urang, hujan batu nigari kito, kampong
halaman takana juo)*
Yet the golden rain hurts
the longing soul
And I will not omit the fidelity;
distinct sound that speaks
the truth of homecoming.

(March 2017)

BEAR IN MIND

35.

Bear in mind that life is not only
a matter of an afternoon tea with a pack
of half price crisps from a spring Sale, but it is also the issue of a morning
errand with two bags of groceries from the Halal market nearby. Bear in mind that
life is not a matter of evening spelling practice with mainstream fairy tales to read, but it
is also an issue of night lullabies to some husky boys with the same old songs. Bear in mind
that life is not only a matter of readings and writing, reflecting has also been a tough part.
Remember that life is not only a matter of learning English but fitting the language into the
home's needs is a separate section. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of desiring and longing
with a sudden burst of tears falling, the struggle to wipe the tears away is another sad chronicle.
Bear in mind that life is not a matter of experiencing the ecstasy of the first snow, but it contains
some episodes of life surviving in the winter cold. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of taking
two tablets of Metformin, but it is also a matter of resisting lingering sweetness. Remember that life
is not only a matter of counting the autumn leaves but also about leaving all the yellowish memory
behind. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of catching a 135 bus at Smedley Lane on one early
dramatic morning but also coping with the feeling of horror when missing the late evening bus back
home. Bear in mind that life is not about adopting, adapting but also taking some risk of
disintegrating native values. Keep in mind that life is not a matter of losing
weight but also gaining it through some big midnight meals. Bear in
mind that life is not an issue of parental
TV guide but also refers to any supervisory
routine toward latent Youtube Vlogs.
Bear in mind that
life is not a
matter of
successfully
executing a
receipt for fish
and chips but also
conjuring up British
kale into the flavor of
curry Cassava leaves. And
bear in mind that life is not
a matter of making hopes and
prayers but sustaining them till
the end of this journey. Bear it in
mind, bear them in mind, Bear
Bear Be... ar... ar ..argh
argghh....

(April, 2017)

36. Satu Hari Di Stasiun Victoria

Seorang perempuan setengah baya duduk disudut peron nomor lima. Tangan kanannya menggenggam secangkir kopi Costa dan sebungkus roti isi keju dan telur dari toko gerai ternama.

Entah apa yang dikulumnya hari ini yang pasti bukan senyum, dia mengulum bara, yang siap diludahinya. Tak sama dengan hari kemaren, Mata birunya tajam menikik tepat digaris mataku garis yang mulai membatasi antara dinding lawan dan teman.

Kepala Northern rail menuju Liverpool sudah mulai menyembul, wanita, laki-laki lalu lalang tak peduli, bergegas. Mereka ingin menghindari hujan musim panas, konon kabarnya mereka tak menyukai rintiknyatetesnya tak akan membuat beku seperti hari-hari dipenghujung tahun.

Aku ingin menangkap tatapan liar perempuan itu, memasukkannya disaku ransel berwarna biru, atau menyembunyikannya persis dibalik lipatan hijabku berwarna abu. Ingin rasanya kubacakan sebaib puisi elegi untuknya,

Apa dia yang kehilangan sang buah hati? teman sejawat? atau sang mantan pacar? Perempuan itu memutuskan meludahi bara dimulutnya, tapi dalam wujud yang berbeda, Mulutnya mulai menarik simpul ceria membentuk senyum yang kufikir palsu. Ya, seperti dugaan ku sebelumnya. Dia mulai memuntahkan peluru, amunisi kata-kata persis didepanku, tepat disasaran, pada garis antara harapanku dan ketakutanku.

Suatu sore di Stasiun Victoria

(June 2017)

37. One Fine Day at Victoria (Self-Translated)

A middle-aged woman sat in the corner of Platform 5. In her right hand, she held a cup of Costa. A cheese and egg sandwich was in her left hand.

It was not like the other days. She retained her smile and I noticed that she wanted to burst into fire.

She had penetrating blue eyes, racing through my defence line, between friends and foes, I might combine.

Northern Rail to Liverpool is on the right schedule. Man and woman hustled. They avoid the summer rain, because they hate the drops that fail to freeze, unlike those that used to fall in the closing days of the year.

I wanted to catch the furies in her eyes, keep them in my blue flowery backpack or hide them on the flounce of my gray hijab. And I would love to read her the elegy.

Is it she who lost her beloved baby? Her colleague or her former boyfriend? I came toward her silently, but soon she spat out the fire in her mouth. This time in a different mode.

It begins with a smile sneaking behind her face, it is a fake. Then she gusts bullets in the right position. Toward me. Words are swords, stabbing me, killing the line that stands between my hope and my fear.

One fine afternoon at Victoria.

(July 2017)

38. Senja di Adelphy

Penyair perempuan itu sudah mati, mungkin dia sudah membangun prasasti diliaing lahatnya sendiri, lalu kenapa kau masih disini,? terpekur, mengukur zaman dengan umpatan , mengatai kata –kata kias yang tak bermakna dalam sajaknya?

Entah sudah berapa kali kau lecutkan cemeti rencana mengumpulkan kepingan-kepingan asa. Lalu bagaimana dengan syair mu? Bukankah sudah kau tulis dalam Bahasa kedua? Tak kah kau mencium bau arang, seseorang sudah membakar identitasnya sebagai perempuan yang pernah jaya dalam lubuknya sendiri?

Atau kau memang harus bergegas. Basuh muka mu dulu dengan gerimis musim panas. Letakkan penamu, bangku kayu di taman kampus sudah tak berpenghuni. Senja temaram...laki-laki separuh baya, anak muda bersepeda dan gadis bermata biru.... Pulanglah, tiga kenari sudah menanti....

(July 2017)

39. When the Dusk Breaks in Adelphi (Self-Translated Version)

The woman poet! She died long ago, she might have craved the grave under. And you! Why are you here? Withered, measuring the time that has passed, swearing over her lyrics and failing to attach yourself in the world of metaphysics.

Do you count? How many times have you whipped the speed of your frame, collecting the fragmented hopes. How is the unfinished line of your second language poem, does it win the deadline? Wait! I sniff the burning scent, somebody has put the fire in to the distinctiveness, destroy it! Where has she gone, the other woman who once owned the fame in her land?

Hurry, scrub your hand with the summer drops. Cast them away. The wooden bench is now vacant. The dusk comes; man in disguise, young boys with some lies and girls with the blue eyes. Just leave, listen ! Far away home, the three canaries are watching miniseries. .

(August 2017)

Poetry of Biography

40.

I come from a territory
where we cannot distinguish
people from sunrise.
So many beauties by the rice paddies
and river flow.

I grew up in a city
where mothers and daughters
are the only queens and servants,
in their own kingdom
they steer tradition and legacy.

I lived in a house
where memory remained quiet.
The house never had its own remedy
to break the chain
of diabetes heritage.

I used to labour myself
through the art of my second language
in an urban place
where boys and girls learn,
how to pronounce love and laugh.

I might have travelled
to the unknown countries
where I envision the anchorless refugees,
smell their breath
and their wounded anima

I settle in the corner of the world
where poetry subjugates breast milk
and midnight kisses,
my children dine from the menu
of symbols and imageries.

(May 2017)

The Autumn Leaves

41.

S E P I		P E T R I C O H	
Ceracau	Pagi	membraui	aroma
lalu	kabut	dia	menjauh
Menutupi	bangku	seolah	enggan
Taman.	Musim gugur	menyatu	dengan
Menghampiri,	kugengam	musi.	dan angin
dedaunan	merupa	menguntit	langkah
	jingga		sang senja

(October 2016)

D. MOTHERHOOD PHD

My Three Canaries

42.

Watching them
in their deep sleep,

The wounded wings
engraved by my frequent absences.

Some fragile furs
spread the perfume of heaven

Whilst king of the cage
provides them with plenty of foods.

But the tapping of their tiny feet
complicates my turning world.

After all, their boisterous beaks
give voice, calling me home.

(December 2015)

When Buyungs Have Their Circumcision

43.

They said it is gonna be Armageddon. Some days ahead turn weary. Head is cut, the body alerts for the heat and sensation. An anaesthetic treatment results in a shocking wail.

They said it is too painful to be a decent grown up man, for they are locked in the cage, wrapped by antiseptic creams and drowned by the ecstasy of Paracetamol. An obligation is paid in the midst of fear and pain, through some anguished nights.

In return, I said it is not secure to have the restless humming birds, in spite of the maternal chores and massive subsidy. Their drone defeats the taunting lines and classroom invitation...circumcising my body of works.

(May 2016)

44. Kepada Almarhumah Kenari Kecilku

Sekelabat bayangan akan cantiknya lekuk tubuhmu
terdengar kicauan mu, lirik menyentak sesalku
tak ku renda sangkar cinta untukmu
fikirku, asa yang kurajut akan sirna karna hadirmu,

Ampuni daku, wahai kenari
Pada paruh mu yang kulukai
Pada cangkangmu yang ku nodai
Pada kepek sayapmu yang patah,sebelum arungi langit azuri

Sebelum pagi ku jelang
ku titip pada rindu pada malaikat kecil penghuni surga
Setiap denyut nadi, kulantunkan nyanyian jiwa

(December 2014)

45. To My Late Female Canary (Extract) (Self-Translated Version)

To the figure of my late canary, I shall think of your beauty, your first cry and your first humour. But regret awakes. I failed to wrap the lace of love and protection around your fragile cage. I am now being punished for my vanity and blindness to glittering life.

Forgive me dear love, for your cracked shell, for your crippled beak and for your broken wings, you failed to spread them high to the azure world.

Before the dawn, I will crave this longing, compose you a song of divinity, and send it through your guardian angel, seven stairs up to heaven.

(February 2017)

The Story of Resistance

46.

Once Mrs Rogers found it hard
to tell me the truth,
about his denying tongue,
absorbing the thick English.
With a and the double ee,
he asked, “what can you see”.
The double oo matches “kangaroo in the zoo”.
He resisted the blending sounds,
then I pointed to the autumn leaves,
and added aubergine.
But he had his sort of song,
aubergine is purple without exception, Bunda!
Confusing words with tender voice,
I was told, they laughed at him at dinner time,
Mocked him to return to reception.
Not even a cry, but his silent frown
Should not we refuse the first tongue?
Now, I feel guilty
I wish I pointed home that day.
I am not a fertile mother,
unable to provide him with double tongues.

(November 2016)

Summer Distractions

47.

Can you skip July to September?
Tape them in the calendar blacklist
So the 60 days never exist.

Would you dare to stop?
The musical sound of beds cracking,
sheet and movement by a dozen feet.

Do you have enough energy?
To shut the frog prince's throat,
Croaking behind the kitchen cupboard.

Can you conjure yourself daily?
To be a narrow eyes Chinese waitress,
Preparing the rice steam and baked fish.

Are you willing to be?
A ten year old friendly girl next door?
Who is good at playing X Box and PS 4?

Or should you speak about it out loud?
The story of the haunted laptop
which the bad spirit tangled on its monitor

Or be the witch
with her magic broomstick,
your charms could make them fall asleep.

Otherwise, play your antagonist part!
Slap them on the back
and make them all regret.

And when summer ends, invite
the blowing wind and yellow leaves
to build the fence in the school back yard

After all, can you survive
against the distractions?
to alter and to revise

(November 2016)

Motherhood Ph.D.'s seasons

48.

Spring is a gift.

A marriage proposal
with promises

to bear and to endure.

The spirit glows.

I am a flourishing hibiscus,
self-cultivated in the foreign ground

Summer gives me opportunity

to inhale Petrichor,

to witness the cactus growing

in my kitchen window

The solitude of dryness:

out pours my vitality

Autumn allows me

to crave the leaves

on the yellowing surfaces.

I gather every inch of courage

to fight the blowing wind

and yell at the noisy sweeper

Like the last petals of magnolia

The winter, behold

its magic of cold

It ruins the defence

and I got drenched

In the stream of uncertainty

and distrust

I restrain and subside.

(March 2017)

Motherhood PhD's life binary

49.

Speaking of Feminism

I shall ignore the moaning sounds of burning bread from the second hand toaster triggering morning arguments. Skip the routine episodes of onion and tears, milk and whimper, potatoes and slash, rice and simmering; neglect the garishness of a brand new apron as last year's anniversary gift.

Speaking of Devotion

I shall disregard the yawning noise of the old printing machine reverberating as far away as the end of the backyard. Abandon the regular ritual of book and enlightenment, poem and revision, journal and reflection, deadline and divine; stay away from emails and classroom invitations as they are the permanent illusions.

Speaking of life in between

A LINE DRAWN

BALANCE

VISION

RESILIENCE

YET

GOES DOWN SLOWLY

BINARY

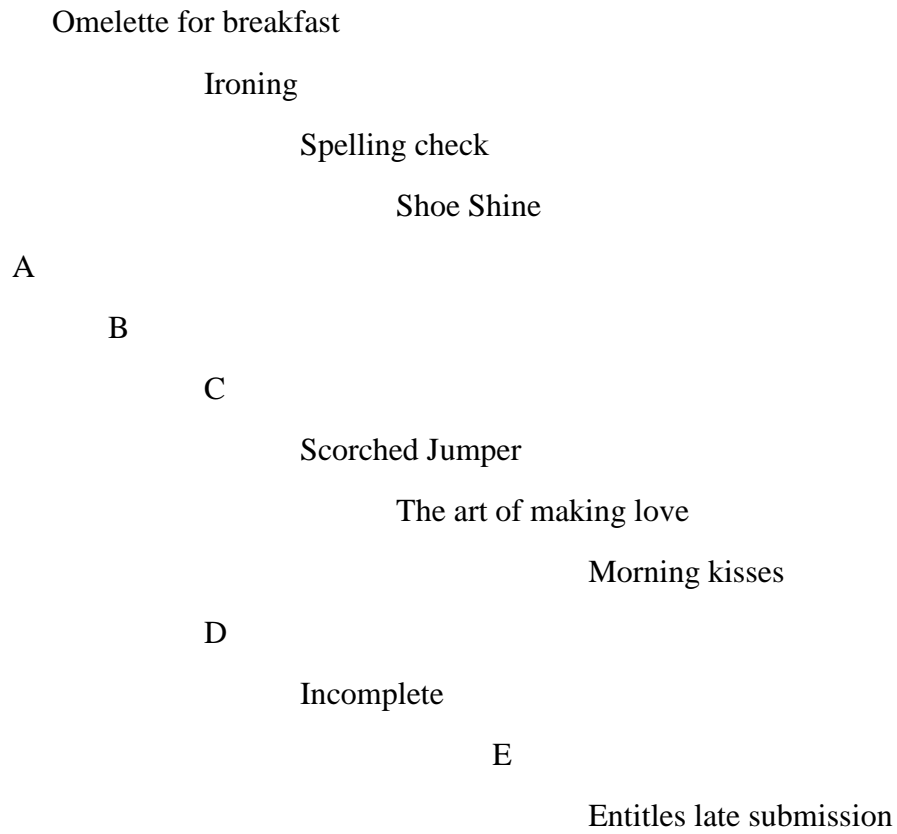
&

MISSCONCEPTION

(April 2017)

Motherhood PhD Graph

50.



(December 2016)

Motherhood PhD's life Depiction

51.

ALLAH is the perfection

Angels are awake

Prophet's life is everyday guidance

Mother is a printed memory Three canaries are all for conversation

Twin sister is the self portrait

Husband is a picture of devotion and rebellion

Kitchen door is a wall between domesticity and radicalism

I reach the end

concede

that poetry fools me!

(May 2017)

52. Mimpi Buruk Seorang Mama PhD

Ditenggarai malam, ia menapaki jejak langkah sang bulan
Berharap, kabut menyelimuti tabir gelap hatinya
Sang pendosa mengendap menyisiri titian rambut kusut dibelah
tujuh. Nun dibawah sana ,batu cadas, riang melebarkan lingkaran
lengannya Tarian iblis nakal melecutkan bara raksasa

Dialunan sepi, sang pendosa memejamkan mata
Teringat akan kunci keseimbangan hidup; antara hitam dan putih;;;
Memenangkan laju perahu kecil dalam murkanya gelombang laut
Menghentakkan sauh diantara kapal-kapal yang telah mulai menepi
Sang pendosa, mulai menarik simpul helai titian rambut yang kusut

Titian rambut menjelma rupa pematang sawah
Ada asa, lirik bergumam mnyentuh tulinya daun telinga

Ditingkahi beningnya nyanyian dua kenari menanti diujung
pematang

Tuk menyantap mentah bilur padi kehidupan

Pinangan embun ...rangkulan subuh kan mengantarnya kesana....

(November 2014)

53. Motherhood PhD's Switch of Nightmare Self-Translated Version

Under the moonlight, a sinner traces the path to paradise. The
darkness is in her soul. The stealthy step leads her to a junction. Far
away dawn is the cliff of fire; satanic dance sparks the flames of
hell.

Eyes are closed; the sinner looks back to the days bygone. Life
balance between black and white, steer the wind and downstream,
the small boat is thrown off, grabbing the last anchor, and the sinner
casts it to reach the final destination.

Feet are firm as the sinner passes the path. The straight path over
hell which is thinner than her hair is a bridge separating fearfulness
and hope. Suddenly awakened by the sound of three canaries
chattering on the tree across the rice field, As-sirat vanishes, and the
road seems wider for her . . .

(March 2017)

A Note in my third canary's reading book

54.

His message

S

L

I

P

S

through with a pattern of

rage and dismay

“You missed my dancing rehearsal”

He is sitting mute

I, bent under the weight of promises

to fix and to pay back.

(May, 2017)

A Letter to My First Canary

55.

I sail into the world of men, and I am eager to learn:

Your first arousal

Your first Love

Your first fear

Your first Loss

Your first sacrifice

Your first Heartbreaks

Your first agony

Your first epiphany

And Your first Serendipity

And I have thought so much about the girl

Her radiant smile

Her energetic soul

Her perky breast

Her childish whining

The vision of her dark lingerie

Her seductive eyelid

Her wicked moves

Toward you, testing my civility

A hunch comes over

My mythic configuration exists

Atrocity greets me

Animosity deepens

I would say No... to the Missy; your life catastrophe

I sail into your world and be your lifetime directory!

(April 2017)

Ramadhan Venture

56.

Take a promenade!

When the sun rises;
boys are bees,
husband is a statue
and I am a hen.
School gate entails freedom
running away from the buzzing,
the bees beg to feast and sip.
Heat complicates the waiting,
rain enforces the commitment.
Afterschool can jeopardize the entire mission.
To anticipate, I negotiate.
X-box is an excellent remedy
much better than having a nap.
I am willing to take a risk,
one poem to sacrifice.

When the sun sets;

boys are chicks
husband is a comedian
playing his innocent part,
I am now as white as a cucumber.
And find few words to mutter.

(June 2017)

57.

My Second Canary and His Denying Tongues

As if I want to explode, my mountain rage

He stood on the corner, unpronounced sin

“ I swear to God, I did not do it!”

“ Bunda, sumpah , demi Allah!”

And he is again sticking his other tongue out

“Wal – la-hi qasam!”

Words separate worlds, and too many tongues

cannot even conquer a single truth

(February 2018)

To My Dear and Loving Husband (After Ann Bradstreet)

58.

If ever one speaks broken but beautiful English, it is you

boys subject to ridicule,

“ pries the chip when the snow down”

If ever a wife hates winter, it is me

Cause it is the time for you to leave again

boys subject to cordial half-native conversation

“I’ll be back in May moon, No pight boys!”

16 hours in the air, you will again lose your spring.

That is when your routine midnight call is a support, unabated

Then while I become captivated

House chores and the laundry

Keep my feet in paternal territory.

(January 2018)

E. THE MAKING OF A SECOND LANGUAGE POETRY

The Making of a Second Language Poem 1

59.

My first three lines
are savourless,
I mix one salty word
from my native ground.
In vain,
they turn out sour.
Then I catch the glimpse
of delicacy in the next stanzas,
sweet and strong,
but the smeary
sounds artificial.
It is rain and dark,
and my poetry
is almost soak.

(December 2016)

The Making of a Second Language Poetry 2

60.

The poems are not dead
They exist in my left fallopian tube,
They are mute in solitude
The vicious fluid is stranded inactive
To ruin my time frame.

Some were born prematurely
Orphaned even on their first day
Ambiguous genetic variation
Distinctiveness is paralyzed
By double citizenship.

In the end, when they survive
The poems are condemned to death
Words spat in a mother's face
Triggering a senseless bickering
Over family and subjectivity.

(December 2016)

The Making of a Second Language Poetry 3

61.

Inaccuracy, the turmoil of inconsistency;
Foreignness works to cover impotence
my heart blushes
embarrassment occupies,
and it turns grey
epitomizing fear

and fragility.

Scepticism is good company
disproportion between
shape and sense.
My eyes blink
they draw a panic attack
the devil works in the unrestful mind.

Turbulence, when paper and pen collide:
Crossing border, zone transit, vacuum space.
My head blows up
it burns identity and uniqueness.

I am now anonymous...

(April 2017)

Late Afternoon at Adelphi

62.

Had I examined other poems,
I would seize different textures,
flavour and tune.
The rhyme matches the pulse
Clarity forbids drowsiness
I have climbed all the seven stairs
and turned off the sounds
that might awake ... fallacy
ear closed but cold fastens
memory installation.

I curve the body of poetry
This time, the batter conjures
white-like, mimic mode on
as if my darling betrays.
He hides behind the corpse
of my second language identity.

(June 2017)

From the Collection

63.

The words popped out

The abstract dances alone

Echoic garbled thought

Languorously distracted

The poem churns out of its boundary

(June 2017)

On Being an Inactive Learner Writer 1

64.

If I could trust enough
To stop at the winter tree
I found myself staring at the dry leaves
thin and frozen; the perished hope.

If it is the speed that matters
I fear the cold wind that would speak.

.

(October 2017)

On Being an Inactive Learner Writer 2

65.

I have been counting them;
The poems in the collection,

I crawl under the dining table
My hands are full of seedless jars
with no added sugar.

Doctor's prescriptions
I recite them then

whisper the words of the Lord.
It is December.
I ask, no one knows
how this journey ends.

Only a genuine poet reaches the completion.

(November 2017)

66.

Upon the Word Shoes

The children in their border land
put on the midget shoes
unknown British shoes,
a latent destruction
of their shoelaces, the shoes of origin
for reaching out shoe's sky.

The children in a faraway land
roam back and forth,
without Cinderella shoes.
Echoing shoes sweat, race shoes
shoes torn and shoe's status,

The children in a grey land
Step into confusion,
of choosing and sacrifice.
Between west shoes and east shoes,
Shoes of Cassava and shoes of cheese,
Shoes Bread and shoes Ric.
Still, they murmur, in their dream state of pursuit!
Shoes bacon... shoes salmon...smart shoes, shoes privilege
They are freezing
On their shoes snow, shoes of their foes, shoes of their woes.

and their Elizabeth shoes
sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh
silence in the tap of the shoes.

\

(November 2016)

67. Tengah Malam di Salford

Perempuan itu bersajak

diantara riak gelombang zaman.

cemeti waktu seolah tak mau menunggu.

Sebuah Jalan yg tak berkawan ,

dingin dan diam

mencumbu malam.

(January 2018)

68. Midnight at Salford (Self-Translated)

A woman

a piece of poesy, unwilling to tarry.

A lonely road,

Night cuddles stillness

and the word's secrecy.

(January 2018)

Look at Me

69.

Look at me,

I am a half writer.

A language learner

to her own four line poems.

highlighting indecision and hesitation.

Words hung in the air

broken off from the planet of

authenticity and originality.

Look at me!

(September 2017)

COMPLEMENTARY DISCOURSES

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

As I step into the world of academia, there is an immediate vigour inside me to think about obtaining a research qualification in English poetry for an academic career. I feel like I have to develop my professional identity as a second language instructor. Apart from the academic choice, writing poetry in English has long been my passion. I write many poems and choose memoir as their content. Life history, memory and autobiographical exploration interest me more than any other kind of poetry because it is easier to talk about myself rather than other topics in a second language. This genre also enables me to explore diverse emotional experiences of my own life.

Writing poetry in a language I did not grow up with is both a challenging and arduous task. There were times I was not convinced about the accuracy and the ‘Englishness’ of my language. The fear is, I thought that I was unable to take full control of English as the target language. The creative process has been constrained by the lack of vocabulary and grammatical mistakes. Furthermore, I often stumbled when discovering that I had written some words, which were odd in English, for example when I used the word “Holly” instead of “Holy”, and misplaced the meaning in my poem, thus the sense of failure often reoccurs and influences the creative process. A further pressure comes when I am aware that I might never fully achieve what is identified as the voice of a poetry writer; my identity as a writer, when I am unable to express myself properly in my second language; have I accurately represented the sense of myself as a second language poet?

Once in my poetry class, one of my students kept saying to me, “How could you write an English poem if you cannot sense and express your authentic inner feeling unless you wrote in your native language?”, “How can the reader recognize you through your poem if you do not write your story in your language?”, then he closed our conversation by asking me a final question which was hard to answer, “can we write a good poem in English in the state that we are only a learner ?” Yes, for so many years I have been teaching English poetry at undergraduate level and motivating my students to empower themselves to write their English poems. The question of beauty in second language creative writing then turns out to be a burden if the assessment I make toward their poems is valued in terms of stylistic and Standard English. Yet, the questions which have been asked by my students are intriguing, which then led me into both observing and developing my practical skills in writing poetry in a second language. Since then I started to focus on new vocabularies and grammatical improvement every time I wrote my English poems. By doing so, I thought I would be able to answer these intriguing questions. My efforts did not successfully answer the questions.

Ever since, I spent more time examining my English poetry and practising to write more. And the experience of writing memory poems as a second language learner has long been another story and has added an extra dimension to my career as a second language learner, writer and educator. Hanauer in his book *Poetry as Research, Exploring Second Language Poetry Writing* (2010), confirms that there are three kinds of critical conditions for meaningful writings to take place:

1. The personal motivation to write triggered by the promise of self-discovery
2. Activating memory and autobiographical exploration
3. Experimenting with writing language itself, often through direction (p. 85-86).

Hanauer's statements enlighten me to reach out towards the ultimate purposes of writing in a second language, **finding the emerging form of second language poetry which is distinctively my own**. Starting to gain self-awareness, I start to build a mental picture that there is not any useless effort in focusing on writing poetry in my second language. I embark upon the journey of writing memory poetry in a second language with the three premises Hanauer has revealed. And in April 2014, I enrolled in a PhD programme in English Literature, finding some opportunities to upgrade my knowledge as an English Literature lecturer, to improve English as my second language as well as to give my creative writing in poetry a serious try.

Hanauer in Disney (2014) convinces us that the second language learner (L2) should be encouraged to explore a new language and new ways to explore their experience. And when I was introduced to some poetry written by women poets of Asian background, I started to find another new way to develop my writing by recognizing that reading from the works of women poets gives me a strong insight into how I define and improve myself as a second language learner writer. The cultural context, memory and the autobiographical context existing in their poems offer some choices to reflect back into my creative process.

Thus, the goal to finding the distinctiveness, voices in second language poetry has been on the way emerging for me as a second language learner writer. Embarking on synthesising the creative practice of writing memory poetry in a second language and reflective analysis of other Asian women poets, I firmly believe that they are significant as the departing points of my research.

1.2. Summary of Research

1.2.1. Aims

Comprising a poetry collection exploring memory in a second language, together with reflective and critical works, this research aims to illuminate creative practice in a second language. It also seeks to define the insights in to a second language poetry which emerge from the process. Additionally, it explores cultural notions in the poetry of Women poets of Asian background and to make the connection between their poems and my cultural-religious world, and finally to document cultural-religious experience dealing with memories of mother-daughter relationships and motherhood in different spaces and times.

1.2.2. Research Questions

1. Through poetic practice, how might I construct and develop a second language identity? And what insights into second language poetry emerge from this process?
2. How can I develop my poetic identity by drawing on the multiple-selves attached to me as a Moslem and Minangkabau woman, daughter, wife and mother in my second language writing?
3. Can second language poetry be repositioned as a creative practice in its own right rather than viewed as a tool for teaching?
4. What role might self-translation play in developing second language writing?
5. How far do the readings and analysis of the poetry of Women poets of Asian background enable my practice as a second language poet?

1.3. Research Framework

This research is conceptualised within the theoretical frameworks of second language poetry and creative writing, autobiographical memory, heteroglossia, post-colonial theory and translation studies. Each frame grounds my critical and reflective work as well as contributing to creating my artistic practice, which is writing memory poetry in a second language

1.3.1 Second Language Creative Writing

There is not much research on writing poetry as a second language. However, my research moves beyond Hanauer's works on exploring second language poetry writing (2010, 2012). Unlike his pedagogical intervention in a second language creative writing classroom, my research focuses on my own journey as a learner-writer. Both of our research enquiries intend to define second language poetry. While Hanauer presents insights drawn from pedagogical research, my object is to produce a collection of second language poetry.

Implementing poetry writing as the methodology, Hanauer affirms that second language writing is beautiful, aesthetically pleasing, and innovative and designed to surprise (2012). In line with this, Disney (2014) also asserts the importance of creative writing in a second language. In the introduction of *Exploring Second Language Creative Writing* (2014), he states:

As we globalise - or glocalize – the language learner seems to continue exploring new and novel ways to customise language and literary production as one way the local becomes global, and the canon of English is loaded with L2 writers (Nabokov, Conrad, the self-translating Brodsky among many others,) (p.1).

In the light of this assertion, I am writing my memory poems in English; recalling past moments while drawing on the elements of Islamic and Minangkabau cultural values to construct my identity. I am certain that by exploring some new ways to write poems in English, I, therefore, move toward promoting the “glocalize” in globalize as well as towards finding my second language identity.

Finding a second language identity is one of the most critical aspects of writing in a second language. For second language learners (L2), their identities are in the process of reconstruction when they learn a new language, migrate or take a new course (Ivanic, 1998 and Hanauer, 2010). Personally, I have been in the process of transforming myself from a language learner to a working poet who is now living in a new country and completing my doctoral degree. These conditions have liberated me to find my second language identity.

1.3.2. Second Language Poetry

The question around the features of second language poetry lies at the heart of this practice-based research. What is meant by the term “second language poetry”? Am I categorised as a second language learner who can write this kind of literary artefact?

Hanauer (2010) in his research about exploring second language poetry has formulated some characteristics of second language poetry. By investigating the poetry of adult second language learners in his class over the years, Hanauer defines second language poetry as a short text that describes personal experiences in a self-reflective and emotional manner (p. 51). He further states that it is a short text that uses simple, high-frequency vocabulary. Hanauer offers the following example of a second language poem:

Study Abroad

Before study abroad,

The color of image is

Yellow, Orange, Pink, Sky blue.

But in fact

The color changed into

Sorrow Gray, Dark Black, Regret Purple Blood Red.

Nervous, Tough, Cry, Shock

I just remember these words. (From *Poetry as Research: Exploring Second*

Language Poetry Writing, 2010, P. 95)

The average length of this text is ten lines with an average of 5 words per line and consisting of 2 stanzas. The latter definition would seem to explain writing skill for the intermediate level of a second language learner. I assume advanced language learners can write a more complex poem rather than use simple and high-frequency vocabulary. However, I might agree with Hanauer as he emphasises second language poetry as describing a personal experience in a self-reflective and emotional manner. When I started to write English poetry, I decided to describe my own experience rather than writing about other topics. Hall (2003) convinces us that literature offers learners the opportunity to consider and discuss a foreign language issue of greater moment or profundity (Death, life, love etc.). In line with Hall's statement, I find there is always a pressure for someone to write about topics of interest and for the language learner it is much easier for them to express themselves in a second language when they talk about things they like or know about.

In relation to the ability to advance language learners' capacity to write in a self-reflective and emotional manner, Hanauer again adds that advanced L2 writers were capable and did indeed use poetic-literary categories to express and explore their personal experiences. The poetic literary types include imageries and sound devices. This is perhaps valid since the advanced learners have more experiences and opportunities to challenge themselves to create poetry.

The question of whether a second language learner can deal with the literature of the first language is answered by Kim in Hanauer (2010). She responds to this question by underlining that second language learners can be personally and emotionally involved in literature. This argument is supported by Wanner (2017), who thinks that the fact of composing poetry in a non-native language or multiple languages is not as rare as one may think. This is about learning language and poetry itself is sometimes rare for the first language writer, and

how cannot we learn from the rarity of language? Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) stresses that writing in a second language has traditionally been a superb way of playing with, practising, and appropriating a second language.

1.3.3. Islamic and Matrilineal; The Religious-Cultural values as Memory and Autobiographical Content

I was born, and I grew up in West Sumatera; a small province located in the Western part of Sumatera Island. My cultural background has been shaped and coloured significantly by Islamic and Minangkabau local values. I have been accustomed to the saying “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah” which means: tradition based on Islam, Islam based on the book of Allah, The Qur’an. The matrilineal kinship of Minangkabau and Islamic values have been part of my identity as an Asian Moslem Woman. Values stand side by side and uniquely support everyday life. However, I sometimes find that they contradict each other. Blackwood (2001) asserts that the practice of matrilineal kinship and inheritance in Minangkabau values sometimes conflicts with Islamic law. The assertion is valid for I also experienced this cultural-religious convergence when I became a mother, a wife, a daughter, and a woman who works in academia. The multi-selves attached to me not only as a Minangkabau woman and daughter but also as Moslem wife and mother trying to negotiate conflicting values provide rich materials for my memory poetry, and resonate with similar feminine experiences, like conflicting mother-daughter relationships in the Indian community and Catholic upbringing in families I have learned from the poetry of Women poets of Asian background.

The two potentially opposing values I have inherited - Islam and Minangkabau local values - illustrate the divide of the multi-selves attached to me as a mother and daughter. The division between cultural and religious values is an interesting autobiographical account to explore in my poetry. Hanauer (2010) identifies several advantages of working in the genre of poetry and autobiography. He emphasizes the benefit of working on these genres is to promote

“the experience, concept, and understanding of human diversity” (p. 71). And further states that autobiographical poetic practices “present a subjective reworking of the individual’s biographical concept and thus allows the researcher insight into the hidden conceptual and emotional world of the Individual” (p. 78).

By way of illustration, a study conducted by Park, entitled “Autobiographical Poetic Rendition, An inquiry into dehumanizing our teacher scholarship” (2013), highlights four distinct but interconnected areas of her personal history. In her study, Park refers to the four interconnected areas as autobiographical poetic waves which are layered by the complex underpinning of racial, linguistic, gendered, classed and professional identity politics that continue to not only liberate but subjugate her at all times (p.6). The four waves are: 1) immigration and the emergence of hyphenated identities, 2) legitimisation of hyphenated identities in higher education, 3) epistemological and ontological revolution and 4) perceptions of Mama PhD. Mama PhD is another conflicted value I discover from reading Park’s article. It is a reference to the academic women who choose to embrace the body and the brain, to find themselves caught between the demands of their families and the demands of the academy (Evans and Grant, 2008, p.xx). In this case, Park’s autobiographical waves help me to identify the multiplicities in my creative works. However, cultural-religious approaches enable my work to move beyond Park’s study. I emphasise more the convergence between my Matrilineal-Minangkabau and Islamic values as well as the study abroad context and being a Mama PhD.

1.3.4. Heteroglossia and Post-Colonial theory

Another choice I have made as a working poet, and a language learner is to explore Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia in my creative practice. Bakhtin in Evans (1998) defines dialogized heteroglossia as “a mixture of two social languages within the limit of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses

separated by one another's epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (p. 405). The quotation is more about social language rather than two literally different languages. Referring to my practice, the existence of Arab and Minangkabau words/phrases between the dominant English is not simply literally two languages. There are different social realities carried by these words. The simultaneous presence of the words is more than their simple existence, the different realities being represented by these different languages. I speak about the realities of the past and the realities of the present. I am aware of the multiplicity of the language I speak as a daughter who was raised in a Matrilineal-Islamic cultural background as well as a mother who is being educated in a study abroad setting. This potentially conflicting consciousness constructs the heteroglossia in my creative practice.

Also, Disney highlights the pedagogy of creative writing which lays its principles on the fusion of language learning with reading and writing activities that promote heteroglossic creative practice (2014, p. 1). In my practice-based research, I also implement this kind of practice. My reading of poetry written by Women poets of Asian background enables me to engage in my creative practice, writing in a second language context involving the experimentation of using my mother tongue. Therefore, I move towards cultivating linguistic invention while experimenting with multilingual content. This multi linguistic consciousness strongly reflects my cultural position as an Asian woman.

For post-colonial writers and readers, the dialogized heteroglossia provides multiple layers "of interpretation and intentionality that create a completely cultural context, both past and present, and also ensure the transgression from the state of colonialism to that of post-colonialism" (Emilia, 2007, p. 173). In the light of this theory, Paul-Foret (2013) has conducted a critical analysis of Merlinda Bobby's poetry, a Philippine-Australian woman poet. In his analysis, entitled "Linguistic hybridity and a Multilingual Australia in Merlinda Bobby's Poetry", he discovers how Bobby's intermingling of 'Tagalog', the Philippines National

Language, and English within the same poem destabilises the monopoly of English in Australia. This is described in the following poem:

Siesta
take me not
in mid-winter,
 only to thaw the frost
of your old bones,
imagining how stallions rear
in the outback,
hooves raised to this august light,

kakaibang liwanag,
kasimputla't kasinglamig
ng hubad na peers.

(From *Summer was a fast train without terminal: Merlinda Carullo Bobies* , 1998 p.13)

Bobby's intention to interpose non-standard English in her poetry also reveals notions of transgression from the state of colonialism to that of post-colonialism. Also, the localised form of the English language in Bobby's poetry, in this case, Tagalog, enables the identity of the speakers to be affirmed and assumed. At the end of the poem, the readers are engaged with "other English" since the speaker has moved beyond what Standard English can articulate. The expression in Tagalog seems to convey the emotion of the speaker more authentically rather than if Bobby had attempted to articulate it in English. For the reader who does not understand Tagalog, the final words put them in a place of strangeness evoked by sound rather than words and meaning. By drawing on Bobby's work, I also experience the multiple layers of interpretation and intentionality that create a cultural tension. This has been illustrated in the preceding poems. I use the words from my Minang mother tongue and words taken from Holy Quran and leave them untranslated, but at the end of the thesis, I enclose a short glossary for the untranslated words or phrases to indicate their cultural distinctiveness. However, my intention is not to destabilize English, since I am working in a second language context; a

language learner who is trying to communicate, my world, my reality to the readers. Experimenting with the multiple voices and languages liberates the creative process of working in my second language. As Spiro highlights, inventing poems, brings L2 learners to the brink of self-invention (2010).

I have considered and been aware of the multilingual artistic consciousness to be developed and deployed as an essential component of my creative works. I believe that multilingual consciousness helps me to develop a kind of poetry that is distinctly my own. Kelbert (2015), in her comprehensive study on Eugene Jolas, *A Poet of Multilingualism*, synthesizes the view that this kind of experiment in multilingual poetics is creating a world where any words can enter into any relationship (p.50). I am working in English, my second language. I do not only deal with Standard English, but my practice itself also depends much on creating ways to play with the language. And to establish my second language, a voice, a writerly identity, I need to seek for some ways to acquire it. Dialogized heteroglossia works in my poetry by introducing elements of my first language directly into English without any translation at all, opening up the dialogue between the languages, integrating my first language in a second language culture and clearly elucidates my creative practice in a way in which the exploitation of cultural material endeavours to introduce novelty in my poems. The heteroglossia can also be more complicated than the literal mixing of different languages, and this will be explored later.

“All uses of language are creative in the sense that [they] can draw on linguistic resources to express different perceptions of reality” (Widdowson, 2003, p. 42). This statement encourages me to use multilingual expression to communicate my perception of reality to my reader. Chamrasti (2009) emphasizes, “what mastery means is, English, like any other vital language, continually being renewed to suit its surroundings”. The shift from a language learner to a writer targets the sense of “mastery” in the acquired language. Mastery in English

not only means improving the ‘Englishness’ of my creative skills but also discovering new meanings and new knowledge which occur in the process of writing creatively in a second language. Mastery is also about my being able to play with “Englishness”, to generate humour, or to delineate tensions in a knowing and skilled way. That is how I develop throughout the creative practice.

1.3.5. The Practice of Self-Translation

The supporting theory which also foregrounds my practice-based research of writing second language poetry is the practice of self-translation. Self-translating Indonesian poetry to my second language poems helped me thrive into the practice of writing a second language poem. As defined by some translation theorists, self-translation is the translation of an original work into another language by the author himself (Kippur 2015). I have translated ten poems written in my first language into my second language. Initially, the intention was to improve my English such as English syntax, grammar and other stylistic consideration. However, the practice creates chances for me not only to develop my second language literacy but also to become an integral part of the creation of my second language poetic identity.

In addition to these, theories on the importance of self-translation contribute to my practice-based research since the ten among sixty poems in my collection are drawn from practicing a different and self-context of self- translating which means not only I have practised translating my poems from the first language to my second language but also I experience my own cultural space and time. Self-translated poems in my practice-based research prove to be effective (see chapter 3). It was a choice and a progress point which brings pedagogical aim to bring about a more “English” result. Self-translated poems I wrote contributed to my transformation from a language learner into a writer. Also, translation practice is quite significant if it relates to translation as creative writing process. As Loffredo and Parthega

mention that the creative turn in Translation Studies emancipates language learners, who are ultimately able to appropriate and assimilate an L2 through processes of play, experimentation and innovation (p.65). This is in line with my self-translation process which demands creativity and experimentation. Even though my ten self-translated poems offer a different process (see chapter 3 in the complementary resources), but they resulted from the creativity and the experimentation by a second language learner.

Not only the process has undergone a different way' but also the alteration I made during the learning of the second language was unique. I started from the rigid translation emphasizing on the aspect of form rather than meaning; it was more about the sentence structures, grammatical error and other mechanic aspect of language in order to sound like poetry. As I gained a control over my second language I then deal with "foreignization" to communicate between cultures, to confront choices and to make decision. So that at the end of this practice of self translation I found that self -translation poems are parallel to their text source. The key to the process is to consider the practice as a re-creation that produces a "second original" (Hokenson and Munson in Stocco, p. 207). The process of self-translating my Indonesian poems into English highlighted new experiment of retaining, losing and re-creating. I even changed the lay out of my Indonesian poem to enable translation and to make poems sounds more English but at the end, as I gained controlled over my English, I retain some words in native to educate my Anglophone readers.

1.4. Methodology: Practice-Based Research on Writing Poetry in a Second Language

Hanauer (2010) and Disney (2014) are the two current proponents of second language poetry writing who work mainly on creative writing pedagogy. Their theories provide a useful account of how second language poetry writing is becoming an increasingly important area in applied

linguistics. Whereas, Hanauer's research tends to be more qualitative in the traditional sense, my research employs *practice as research* as the methodology. Barrett and Bolt (2010, p.10) state that this method is the knowledge-producing potential of practice. In this context, this research involves the production of memory poetry through critical and reflective investigation of Asian background women's poetry. My research does not involve pedagogical investigation for the instruction of language learners in classroom-based research. In my case, the practice and the process of poetry writing produces knowledge in the field of second language identity and poetic practice. What is more emphasized in my research is how the knowledge of writing creatively in a second language is revealed by the action (experience the ongoing process and challenge of writing) and the reflection (the acquired knowledge by learning from the practice and the readings of other Women poets of Asian background). Thus, these two key points of my practice-based research enable me to address my research questions.

However, Hanauer (2010) agrees that second language poetry writing enshrines practice based research. In his book, *Poetry as Research*, Hanauer introduces a research method to explore how poetry writing can be used as an approach for the exploration of questions relating to second language learners (p. 3). Further he states:

Broadly, the aim here is to investigate the characteristics of poetry writing by using a range of methodologies and then use the insights derived from the knowledge acquired to develop an approach to using poetry writing as an integral part of a qualitative, arts-based, research method. I do not assume that this is the only way to conduct arts-based investigations; but this may be valuable as it provides an informed basis upon which poetry writing can be used for research and validates the usage of arts-based inquiries within a qualitative framework for a variety of disciplines, researchers and research questions (3).

Hanauer combines art-based inquiry and qualitative frameworks by relying on the data in his classroom instructions to discover the quality and characteristics of second language poetry writing. My practice based research will explore how the process of reading and writing in a second language generates new knowledge of poetic practice and identities.

Perry, in his doctoral thesis entitled *Water's edge*, (Barrett and Bolt 2010) affirms that in the act of creative writing, personal empowerment which is gained through creative writing processes can effect change in his life (p. 35). He further mentions the power of the writing to effect change in the writer's self and wider community (p.45). This is what I address as another significant aspect of writing in a second language, as a means of gaining personal empowerment. Yet, the personal empowerment is not the final goal, although it helps me to develop my poetic practice and enables me to address my research question; my final goal is to find my voice in a second language; a distinctiveness in L2.

Similarly, Yan (2014) states that essentially, creative writing activities enable L2 learners to experience a sense of empowerment in their L2 linguistic and/or literary identities, through the self-recounted creative writing experience. In light of these theories, my practice based research on writing memory poetry in a second language can develop my artistic engagement with a new language as well as gaining a new perception of "self". And writing poetry which speaks about my life stories as a mother and a daughter allows me to draw the multiple-selves into poetic identities. The self-recounted creative writing experience, which is discussed in detail in the next sections will provide material toward the enquiry of how I develop my second language poetic identity.

Reading poems written by Asian background woman poets helps me to build self-recognition and elevate the sense of multiple-selves attached to me as an Asian woman, mother and daughter. Reading poems by Women poets of Asian background significantly transforms my creative practice from language learner to a writer. By giving the poetry of the woman poets value and appreciation, exploring them in a critical and reflective manner, I open ways to create my own choices and my own voice in second language poetry. This specific example will be discussed in a later section. Spiro writes, "to bridge between appreciation and creation when there is a climate of choice and reflection, language learner writers will find their own voice"

(2014, p. 40). An example of this model can be traced back to a study entitled “Negotiating Power from The Margins: Lesson from Years of Racial Memory”, which was conducted by Kurian (1996). She explains how the written memoir and autobiographies of other Asian American women have provided her with the self-recognition she has needed in order to tell her own stories. In relation to this, Kurian’s model is effectively followed up to develop my reflective framework which I learn from reading the poems written by Asian woman poets. While Kurian works within the genre of prose and nonfiction, my research develops second language poetry writing as the result of criticism and reflection upon poems by Asian background poets. Harper in Doloughan (2012, p.183) recognizes that creative writers are often drawn to the finished works of other creative writers for a variety of purposes such as looking for material evidence of their own desired results.

My readings on poetry of Women poets of Asian background utilize the cultural material existing in the texts of these poets and this ‘reading as a writer’ therefore offers me evidence of what I can achieve in my own work. Also, my reading of the collection of Jennifer Wong, *Summer Cicadas*, sheds light on the cultural and identity issues in the context of a study abroad setting. My reading as a writer hopefully can underpin similar and interesting issues to Wong’s poems with my own poems but also highlights interesting differences that can draw on the speciality of my working area. The reading, the analysis and the reflection upon the works of Women poets of Asian background are a crucial part of my practice-based research.

CHAPTER 2 - MOTHERHOOD, MOTHER- DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS IN MEMORY POETRY: A CRITICAL AND REFLECTIVE STUDY OF WOMEN POETS OF ASIAN BACKGROUND¹

Writing Memory, Writing back to the Mother
(Jamaica Kincaid)

This chapter reflects some conceptual frameworks on how I have conducted critical and reflective activities in order to produce a body of creative works. Moreover, it scrutinizes how reading some Women poets of Asian background opens some ways for me to develop my poetic identity when writing my memory poems. It also examines some poetic choices I make as a second language learner poet.

2.1. Introduction

Motherhood, maternal ties, the mother daughter relationship have long been recognized as recurrent themes existing throughout centuries and across cultures. Maternal issues manage to be universal and culturally specific at the same time (Chu in Maxey, 2012). Mother-daughter relationships and motherhood have been represented in diverse literary traditions. Maternal text is understood as a text deliberating on mother subjects and mother writers, focusing on women who produce auto/biography, fiction and poetry about mothering, motherhood and being mothered (Podnieks and O'Reilly, 2010, p.1). Women writers make use of this pattern to reveal

¹ Ozturk, bans. (Eds). (2015). *Proceedings from LITCRI 15: Literary Criticism International Conference on Memory and Literature*, Dakam Publisher, Istanbul 2015.

woman's subjectivity and theorize female representation through their writings, and they wrap the issues in different forms of literary texts, including in their memory poetry.

This chapter synthesizes how the memory poetry of some women writers of Asian background with their diverse literary representations have provided me with a self-recognition of motherhood, maternal ties and mother-daughter aspects when writing my own memory poetry. My critical and reflective observations focus on how the memory poems of these Women poets of Asian background subjugate as well as liberate me to present the conflicting values of maternal aspects in my memory poems.

The art of poetry has the capacity to conjure memory's power (Hetherington, 2011, p.102). In other words, the creation of a poem is sometimes inspired by the act of remembering things from the past. Poetry is so often undoubtedly connected to memory. It is an expression of the human condition and feeling when recollecting our past experiences. In relation to the maternal aspect, O'Reilly (Podnieks & O'Reilly 2010) states that a memoir is a useful source of maternal insights – a way to explore maternal subjectivity rather than to accept its impossibility (p.191). In addition, Papke (2008) asserts that mothering, maternal aspects, the mother-daughter relationships, which are expressed in memory poetry, are confronted with the painful past and present of postcolonial society.

Maternal texts by postcolonial woman writers, in this case woman poet, provides women with a different angle compared with the texts of patriarchal motherhood. Patriarchal concept describes the mother as an ideal figure. 'Mother' is closely associated with mother earth, mother land. One example occurring in African literature, the idea of "mother Africa" often found in literature written by men, is nevertheless a ploy to silence the woman (Akujobi 2011). This ploy is merely intended to eliminate women's social position. Woman in patriarchal ideology is a figure who devotes her entire life to her husbands and children, she

plugs herself into the domestic arena. Postcolonial women writers instead begin to question the value of idealised motherhood. They are not silenced by the stereotype. South Asian women poets start to interrogate traditional maternal obligations by giving negative portrayals of mother figures in their works. Woman writers write to redeem the persisting mode of men's writing on motherhood as a manifestation of so called 'idealised motherhood', the romanticized discourse of motherhood. Giving examples of some male writers such as AK Ramanujan who describes the figure of the mother as Goddess, Papke (2008) identifies the ideal mother working in the domestic area, the romanticized relationship between the mother and her male heirs.

In contrast, the romantic tale of mother-daughter consistently appears in some works of Asian Americans and South Asian Americans, thus becoming the theme of mother daughter romance, which is universal and marketable (Chu in Maxey, 2012). This theme addresses the connection between mother and daughter, maternal mystery and ancestral homeland (Wong and Santa Anna, 1999). Cultural and personal motifs usually colour this kind of writing. In line with this, Abudi (2011) states that the relationship between mother and daughter is a cultural construction that eventually finds expression and representation in literary text (p.22). But one may find that cultural repression somehow hinders the establishment of mutual relationships between mother and daughter in reality. Indeed motherhood, the mother-daughter relationship theme is wrapped in political, social, religious and cultural discourses and meanings.

I was born in a matrilineal society where the hereditary line is imposed woman to woman, upon a mother to a daughter. I have been accustomed to the old saying that the daughter serves as the host of our traditional home. My Minangkabau identity has been solidified as an Islamic and matrilineal one and in my poetry, I am overtly addressing the multi selves attached to me as Indonesian, a Moslem, a Minang daughter and a mother. However, these multiple identities are not ephemeral since there is sometimes a divergence of values occurring in my life as a Moslem and Minang woman, mother and daughter. These conditions

are becoming a valuable source of authentic materials for enabling me to write about some aspects of motherhood in my own memory poetry.

2.2. Grandmother's Mothering in the Absence of a Mother Figure (Critical and Reflective Analysis of Kamala Das's "My Grandmother House")

Akujobi (2011, p. 1) highlights that motherhood assumes different names and shapes depending on the society that is practising it. As for postcolonial women writers, they recognize motherhood as a significant part of cultural tradition, a role that is personally sustaining and that carries enormous social status and prestige (Katrak, 2006, p. 212). But Katrak continues that women writers in postcolonial society have deconstructed such a notion and revealed certain negative, even violent experiences of motherhood (p.213). The painful past details pervade different aspects of mothering.

One of the negative notions of motherhood is sometimes replaced by the figure of grandmother's mothering. Katrak (2006) points out that most grandmothers are described as strong and wise, holding some threads of the family together, but not all are romanticized (p. 241). Katrak further claims that the neglect and abnegation of the mother's responsibility are conveyed as the main cause of the grandmother's mothering. A grandmother's love is strong in the physical absence of a mother figure.

Kamala Das, one of the famous South Asian woman poets, illustrates grandmother's mothering experience in her poem entitled "My Grandmother's House". The mother's figure did not exist in Das's life, instead it was replaced by the figure of her maternal grandmother.

Tharu in Papke (2008) illustrates the life story of Kamala Das:

In Kamala Das's life, the mother was almost absent. As a child, she watched her mother "write poetry lying on her bed all day long" (Tharu, Lalita, Volume II, 1993: 393). The maternal grandmother became the substitute mother who provided the familiar, secure, loving home (p. 58).

Kamala Das's mother figure is described as a mother-poet in which the act of her writing is in conflict with the act of mothering. Writing has created a distance between the mother and Kamala Das. In her memoir, Kamala Das describes this situation, a grandmother and her house, the ancestral place where she received love and security replacing the absent mother figure.

My Grandmother's house

There is a house now far away where once
I received love..... That woman died,
The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved
Among books, I was then too young
To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon
How often I think of going
There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or
Just listen to the frozen air,
Or in wild despair, pick an armful of
Darkness to bring it here to lie (From *The old play House*, 2004 P.32)

This poem conveys nostalgia and the mourning voice of the speaker poet. Taken from Kamala Das's second collection *Summer in Calcutta*, this poem chronicles the speaker poet's life in her ancestral house and the period after leaving it. The death of the loving grandmother "where once I received love... that woman died" signifies the tragic turn of her life into misery. The blissful past is dragged into the hopeless present.

The house is described as a heavenly place though darkness overtakes it. The speaker poet feels that she was blessed by the unconditional love of the grandmother "That I lived in such a house and was proud" that makes her always want to revisit her past "How often I think of going there." The sentence "through blind eyes of windows, frozen air and my blood turned cold like the moon" represent the death and the stasis of the speaker's condition.

Life in the ancestral house was a joyful memory without the existence of the mother figure. The ancestral house epitomizes the source of motherhood itself. I want to highlight this point to reflect my personal history, my memory in my ancestral house. In one of my memory poems entitled “The Legend of the Wand”, I describe a different representation of motherhood performed by my grandmother and which is epitomized by the image of the ancestral house:

The Legend of a Wand

She was brought from hospital,
six months after I was born.
Mother took me
to the edge of her dark chamber,

close to the haunted bathroom.
She gave me a quick smile, sneaking beyond her fairy tale
leg amputated, her life and her dream too.

Take this wand and make me your alluring witch!
Her voice howled helplessly
demanding the stolen haunch
trembling,
I hid among her vacant sewing machines
the light is dim,
I make my escape in the dusk.

I heard grandma whisper the chants,
these are my legacy! Not the curse! The footsteps you must follow!
Scatter the seeds of your own rice paddy’s fields,
and raise your children with them.
You cannot go far, and cranes,
would return to their breeding ground!

I fought for the wand and won the battle,
a lottery ticket in my pocket to sail away
from home, but in return
I was drowned in the midst of my mother’s tears,
who cried aloud, for the lost wand.

(Poem 21)

I wrote this poem before I encountered the Das poem. Kamala Das and I independently selected similar themes, indicating a collective concern with grandmothers and ancestral homes. This poem has undergone several revisions before it emerged as a poem of six stanzas (see appendix

4). Though Das wrote decades ago and revealed different cultural settings compared to my Islamic and matrilineal background, I found that her poem speaks to my memory about the maternal aspects.

The house in my “The Legend of a Wand” is physically dark and dim as well, even before my grandmother died. My grandmother’s amputated leg due to her chronic diabetes troubled her physical and emotional states, nerves and frustration buried the house even more darkly. The words “haunted, dark chamber, a dim light and the dusk” convey strong visual imageries and fuel the sense of insecurity I felt as a child. Also, the words producing the same sound affect the atmosphere of the poem. It was not a safe place to live within. The mother figure is absent in Das’s poem, while I have my mother with me, a gentle figure who always accompanied me stepping in to the dark room “Mother took me by the edge of her dark chamber.” Clearly, I did not share the physical absence of the mother figure in Kamala Das’s poem. However, I can examine and interrogate the existence of the grandmother figure from Das’s poem. Similarly, the figure of grandmother existed in the maternal house with all the memories, yet the presence occurs in different voices. Das’s grandmother and her maternal house are described in melancholic and longing tones while my work evokes frightening and traumatic tones.

Kamala Das’s vivid portrayal of her ancestral home has provided me with more insight to recognize my own ancestral home. For Kamala Das, the image of windows and a door emphasizes the connection between the speaker poet’s past and present. The window is a vital image in her poem for she can peep at her past through the windows “to peer through blind eyes of windows”. But she is unable to enter the house in her present time As for my poem, the image of the wand represents a link between my past and my future. I was raised in a matrilineal kinship system where women hold major control of inherited land and ancestral houses (Blackwood 2001). The wand that my grandmother forced me to hold “Take this wand and

make me your alluring witch” is the symbol of “me” as a successor of family heritage. The wand is the burden of the past that I must carry in my present life and into my future. Wand and witch employ supernatural as well as cultural power that I keep resisting throughout my entire life. I run away from the burden of my matrilineal responsibilities. This is parallel with Das’s mother in some respect. She resisted maternal roles and the attachment to her maternal house.

Kamala Das’s definition of motherhood is discovered in the figure of her grandmother “that I lived in such a house and was proud, and loved” who was once the figure who taught her about the importance of the book and education, “snakes moved ... Among the books I was then too young.” The image of snakes itself contains cultural significance in the South Asian context. It is an expression of sacrifice (Jones, 2010). The grandmother's sacrifice of her life to raise her granddaughter ends as the old woman dies but leaves the speaker with the memory “snakes moved among the books.” In a different way, my grandmother taught me about being a mother in our cultural context, “Scatter the seeds of your own rice paddy’s fields and raise your children with them.” The words “footstep”, “the seed scattered”, “paddy field” and “breeding ground” in line 11-13 signify a sense of motherhood that my grandmother tried to instil. Unlike Kamala Das’s mother poet whose act of writing has created Das’s life as a motherless daughter, my mother, instead, was almost fully present. In spite of her full-time job as a university lecturer, my mother strived to be a full-time mother too. My mother’s modern thought, her career as an academic, introduced to me the importance of books and education rather than imparting the cultural significance of being a daughter in our matrilineal cultural context. This is in line with Das’s description of the importance of books as a means of learning, gaining knowledge. My mother’s dysfunctional figure as a cultural role model made my grandmother anxious and she decided to switch her hopes to me as her successor. However, I failed to understand these sociocultural conditions “I fought the wand and won the battle.”

I address these conflicted values in my sociocultural setting. The image of *crane* and *Azure world* are contrasted with the images of “paddy field and breeding ground.” On one hand, Crane and Azure world denote a high position which evokes the dream of most Minang girls today, they want to participate in a wider world beyond their Minang homes (Parker 2009). On the other hand, I draw the pictures of paddy fields and breeding grounds to reveal Minang women and daughters' identities as successors because the future viability of the sub-lineage rests with the women (Parker 2009).

In her memory poem, ‘My Grand Mother’s house’, Kamala Das inscribes one of the aspects of grandmothers ‘s mothering in the absence of the mother figure. Her memory of the grandmother’s love is coupled with the image of her ancestral home. I find this aspect is potentially cultivated in my memory poem. When I describe another kind of love I received from my grandmother, the nostalgic elements about the image of the ancestral house develop in my memory poem. Besides, Kamala’s strong voice, which is confessional, has motivated me to voice the silenced mother aspect in my conflicted matrilineal life history. The cultural impression I received from my grandmother diverges from the culturally dysfunctional role of my mother. Different from Kamala Das’s ‘My Grandmother’s House’, I want to emphasize this aspect to unveil my matrilineal cultural perspective from which the maternal aspect is viewed. Mirroring the physical absence of Kamala Das’s mother, I invent ways to explore the element of another mothering in my memory poetry.

2.3. Mother-Daughter Relationship (Critical and Reflective Analysis of Eunice De Souza’s “Forgive Me Mother”)

Another recurrent maternal theme which is represented in diverse literary traditions is the mother-daughter relationship. Abudi states that “the bond between the mother and daughter is defined as the most intimate, intense and lasting female relationship and this relationship is

depicted as having oppositional poles ranging from love to hate, devotion to betrayal, guilt and blame” (2011, p.23). She further claims that the life-long bond that is forged at birth between mothers and daughters is of importance to all women, whatever their ethnicity or background (p.7). This assertion seems valid since this theme reoccurs, pervading times and cultures.

Asian background women writers have often used the mothers-daughters theme as a successful literary strategy. Asian American women writers employ this strategy in creative and commercial terms (Maxey 2012). On one hand, immigration causes tension between mother and daughter, resulting in a generational gap which is very familiar in the mother-daughter plots inscribed in Asian American literature. Amy Tan, American Asian woman writer, often narrates this generational conflict. In her famous novel, *The Joy Luck Club* (1999), Tan points out the problematic life stories, and how generational tensions between mother and daughter caused socio-cultural and economic changes in the lives of Asian American women. On the other hand, South Asian American and diasporic contexts use similar discourses but make sharply resonant points about class, caste and feminism with their roots in a traditionally patriarchal culture (Maxey, 2012 p. 202). The relationship between mothers and daughters is indeed a cultural construction that is overtly addressed in such literary texts.

The unsympathetic mother’s absence is balanced by the daughter figure’s refusal to offer homage to her mother. Kristeva suggests that everyone must separate from their mother by abjecting her (Atayurt 2011). Kristeva defines the theoretical concept of abjection as an “unconscious defence mechanism used to protect the self against threats to one’s subjectivity”. Further, she suggests that the first instance of abjection in an individual’s life occurs when the child abjects the mother (McCabe et al, 2011, p.77). The daughter’s abjection to her mother, the intermingling feeling of bonding and separation, the devotion and betrayal is the underpinning maternal aspect I want to highlight from this following poem by Souza:

Forgive Me, Mother (Eunice de Souza)

Forgive me, mother,
that I left you
a life-long widow
old, alone.

It was kill or die
And you got me anyway:
The blood congeals at lover's touch
The guts dissolve in shit.

I was never young.
Now I'm old, alone.

In dreams
I hack you (From *Fix*, 1979)

Taken from Eunice de Souza's poetry collection, *Fix*, this poem chronicles some part of de Souza's life as a daughter who protests against the importance of sons and male inheritance in India's patriarchal society (Karmakar 2015). Similar to Kamala Das's "My Grandmother's house", this poem uses a confessional manner expressing a sense of loss and alienation. The relationship between a mother and daughter is addressed in rebellious and hateful moods. The speaker poet is trapped between committing revenge and at the same time is mentally bound to the mother figure, and in order to commit the act of revenge, the speaker poet leaves her mother.

There is some evidence for the abjection motif in this poem, "that I left you. a lifelong widow, old, alone". The speaker is feeling furious for the mother's disgrace when giving birth to a baby daughter. A daughter born is not welcomed in patriarchal society. The speaker dramatizes the condition. It indicates the mother's prioritising of the male figures rather than establishing an intimate relation between mother and daughter. In a patriarchal society the mother-son relationship is considered close and strong. The speaker's anger toward a mother who did not have any courage to fight against patriarchal society is reflected in this vocabulary: "the guts dissolve in shit".

An alternative reading to the meaning of “abjection” in this poem is revealed by the sentence “You got me any way.” The mother killed the speaker, “you got me” means you successfully targeted me. The colon from the preceding line suggests this sentiment, it is a continuation of that situation so it is the speaker poet's blood that congeals at the lover's touch. It refers to the condition in which she cannot enjoy a romantic or sexual life of her own. The “guts dissolve in shit” implies the speaker’s fear as she goes on to tell the reader that she is old and alone. These two possible readings clearly show how heteroglossic and dialogic poetry apply in my reading practice. The two readings occur and exist simultaneously because of the colloquial ‘You got me anyway’: it refers to ‘killing’ the daughter or to ‘having’ a child but the reader's understanding will depend upon their familiarity with colloquial English.

In spite of the abjection as the manifestation of the speaker poet's protest against the patriarchal way of raising a daughter, Eunice de Souza at the end emphasizes the lifelong bond existing in the relationship between mother-daughter. The last two lines communicate this meaning. Though in dream, the speaker poet continues to hate her mother (in dreams, I hack you), but she does not deny that history repeats (Now, I am old, alone). What might happen to a mother will likely happen to the daughter. Abjection results in further loss and despair. In exploring ‘the abjection’ theme, I may also discover a melancholic tone in my mother-daughter material that is not so prevalent elsewhere. De Souza’s work seems consistently glum and does not engage humour in the way my poetry does. This is another aspect that I interrogate from reading De Souza’s poem.

Eunice de Souza’s “Forgive me Mother” contains both personal and cultural underpinning aspects that I want to develop in my memory poetry. De Souza’s life history narrates patriarchal practice in her Catholic upbringing (Papke 2008). My matrilineal cultural tradition and Islamic practice offers different insight, into how the mother-daughter relationship has been implemented in my personal history. Focusing on the abjection theme,

my poem, which is entitled “On the day I leave you lonely”, describes the conflicting values of multi selves attached to me as a Minang and Islamic mother-daughter. The following poem delineates the conflicting values of Islam and matrilineal society. The daughter’s abjection is caused by the obligation and dedication of a wife to her husband and children.

The Day I Leave You Lonely

The day I leave you lonely,
with tears and agitation.
Remorse fills up my throat and lungs,
for not being able to expel the anguish.
I fear God’s punishment,
denying a wife’s obligation.
I am your daughter
but I am also a wife and a mother.
As if only God understands that life
should not be divided.
There is not a wall,
a red line between love and devotion,
yet to cross the boundary from hell to heaven,
I have to depart

The day I leave you lonely,
you watch the TV screen,
eyes emptied and mouth dried
by silent prayers.
I have paid the karma, you said,
once leaving your grandma.
So go! your world is no longer mine,
your absence is near to my darkness!
Like a pilgrim on her holy mission,
I rush for an unknown destination
and find the boat sailing
away from home.

The day I leave you lonely,

you give me the ring of a dragon head
folded by pearl and silver.
I am numbed by the offering.
Imagining in the next twenty years,
that I should hand it back to a daughter,
to any young woman, seeding in my womb.
But for the absence, I see the ring flickers,
the colour fades, it will be degraded.

by the passage of time.

On the day I leave you lonely,
The wind chills, breaking
my last pouring cry.
My hand grips,
the iron fence of Rumah Gadang.
Looking down the long path of the diverged road
I knew, I would come back.
Later, on the day when you leave me lonely...
(Poem 8)

The title of the poem introduces the act of abjection and the rest of the poem narrates the sense of loss and despair the speaker feels after leaving her mother. More importantly, the poem focuses on conflicted values when she performs her roles between a daughter in a Minang cultural setting and a Moslem mother and a wife. A daughter is the host of the maternal house and tradition in Minangkabau society (Parker 2009). Ironically Islamic values oppose this principle and oblige a woman to stay with her husband by leaving her maternal house and inheritance. The poem is also a part of complex gender politics which are emerging in my collection. Through this poem I become aware that the theme needs further exploration. My supervisor's comments on this poem as powerful material (appendix 5 and 6) gives more insight.

Patriarchal social customs dictate that a daughter's allegiance will be to her husband's family when she marries (Abudi 2011). This cultural construction is paralleled in a society practising Islamic faith. When reading Eunice de Souza's poem and autobiography, I discover that De Souza's Catholic upbringing within a patriarchal Indian community conflicts with her maternal thinking, and thus becomes the source of her ironic confessional manner recounted in most of her poems. I then unexpectedly gain self-recognition toward my cultural and religious setting and find that they are worth exploring.

My matrilineal upbringing validates that the daughter's physical bond to the ancestral home, which is called "Rumah Gadang" (line 36), will last even when she marries "I am your daughter", while I have been taught and believe that a wife devotes her life to her husband and children (But I am a wife and a mother). The lines "fear for God's punishment" and "pilgrim in her holy mission" communicate my Islamic faith. While the mother-daughter's intimacy and life long bond, which is symbolized by the image of "the ring of a dragon head" and the necessity for me to hand the ring to my future daughter, represent the cultural construction of my matrilineal practices. A dragon head ring is the symbol of cultural preservation. Clearly, this convergence resulting in a sense of guilt and blame creates dominant negative tones to the poem (explode the anguish, the wind chills and the pouring cry).

Eunice de Souza and most postcolonial woman writers question the sense of motherhood dictated by patriarchal communities. A true mother is a mother with a son; a male inheritance. The Indian patriarchal community supervalues the mother who successfully delivers a baby boy and raises a son in her family (Papke 2008). The act of abjection as one of the main focus in the memory poetry of Eunice de Souza is caused by this. I was struck by the fact of another agony, which represents reality in my matrilineal community. I, myself, also interrogate the centrality of the mother-daughter relationship in my cultural setting. As a daughterless mother, I question the hereditary line which is imposed upon a mother to a daughter in my Minangkabau family kinship system. The lines in the third stanza "to a daughter, to any young woman, seeding in my womb, but for the absence, I see the ring flickers" communicate the idea. Motherhood is paralyzed in the figure of a daughterless mother. Cultural heritage is preserved in the hands of female heirs, not male heirs. In most Minangkabau cities and villages, the young males (mostly during the ages of 15-20, or even younger) leave their homeland; move to other places nationwide or abroad, running

entrepreneurial activities for their daily life (Rahman, 2016) leaving the daughters to take care of the maternal house and tradition.

2.4. Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, I want to return to what Hetherington synthesizes as memory poetry. He affirms that all poems that make use of material drawn from actual events are to some extent poems of memory as they implicitly or explicitly claim to re-present or interpret what has happened (2011, p. 110).

Through their own poetry, women poets represent themselves and narrate the actual events dealing with their past experiences as mothers and daughters. My choice of the Women poets of Asian background like Kamala Das and Eunice de Souza is purposed to interrogate motherhood and mother-daughter aspects within their personal and cultural setting in order to synthesize the maternal aspects in my memory poetry. By exploring the elements of imagery, voices and memoir in the maternal texts of Kamala Das and Eunice de Souza, I quest and I am reaching toward self-knowledge and understanding toward my own creative process.

CHAPTER 3 - SELF-TRANSFORMATION FROM SECOND LANGUAGE “LEARNER WRITER” INTO A “WRITER” THROUGH ENGLISH SELF TRANSLATED POEMS (REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS)

A poet writing in two languages is still a single poet. He has two rivers flowing within him. If he feels he should take out a boat and row down one of them, the poem would be, say, in Malay, and if the boat is launched out on the other, the poem would be in English. The person is the same, and so are the experiences and the cumulative life...

(Muhammad 2000b: 13)

3.1. Introduction

In his early definition, Anton Popovic proposes self-translation as “the translation of an original work into another language by the author himself” (Popovic in Grutman & Bolderen 2014). He further states that the term is thus meant to include the process of transferring one’s own writings into another language, and the product thereof, i.e. the self-translated text. Referring to this point when someone asks me why I should include the self-translated poems in my thesis, I might answer that through some self-translated poems I am trying to highlight the process of transferring my own writing into another language which is English.

The process of working on self-translation poem is different from writing directly into my second language, yet it helps to illuminate the processes at stake. Literary translation as a creative practice is found as empowering strategi for L2 learner to creatively interact with both L1 and L2 (Loffredo Parthegella, 2014). In the light of this assertion, I allow my self to engage creatively with both L1 and L2 in the act of self-traslation process.

The focus of my writing journey is to express my memory, my autobiography in my second language. I began the journey of self-translation after some years of developing myself as a second language learner writer. But I wrote memory poems both in Indonesian and in English. Some of my memory poems were written in Indonesia. Looking back through the old documents I found that few poems are better to be translated in to English since they are rekatable to my topic. This condition challenged my self to seek other ways to learn how to write in my second language. I give myself more emphasis on the necessity of learning English as a second language through the act of translating my poems. I hope to transform myself in to a better learner writer and become a second language woman poet. In line with the point, Loffredo & Perteghella (2014) emphasize that in second language learning, translation into L2 is often used to improve the knowledge of the second language (Loffredo & Perteghella 2014). This is what has been implied as the goal of working on self- translated poems; from a language learner, I am moving towards the role of a learner writer and finally a poet so that my voice can be heard and understood through my second language.

For some Russian-American poets such as Andrey Gritzman and Katia Kapovich, self-translation serves for both poets as a means of exploring the mutation and displacement of the self through time, migration, and changing linguistic and cultural environment (Wanner 2017, p.1). The experiences of learning a second language and migration become necessary material for self-translated poems. Yet, unlike the two Russian writers, I locate myself more as being a student in a study abroad setting. Not only learning a foreign language in the context of studying abroad but also positioning myself as a student in the UK; a super economic power country with its dominnat Anglo culture.

Hokenson and Munson in Stocco (2017) define self-translation as a creative practice which articulates cultural difference and produces, negotiates and confronts meanings in a space between languages and cultures, with the particularity of the double agency of its “author

translator”. Ten self-translated poems in my collection of second language poetry reflect my practice as a second language learner.

This chapter shows how I have been engaged to make choices and negotiate throughout the practice and at the end to create the parallel poems between both versions; Indonesian and English, creating dialogue between them. As stated by Gritsman in Wanner (2018) “parallel poems” are written in two languages on the same subject and in the same “emotional waves”. The chapter also elucidates the process starting from direct translation emphasizing on the domestication method then finally makes the first language poem a parallel to the second language poem which sometimes employing foreignization along the way. Through self-translated poems one scrutinizes how choices concerning the mechanics of languages and voices, cultural and identity embodiment are shifted through time and practice. It also highlights changes of emphasis, the shifting of meanings and the loss and gain during the evolving process of my practice. More importantly, it also answers the question around the importance of self-translated poems in my practice-based research of writing poetry in a second language.

Through the process, I started with rigid and direct translation but I found that I was not being faithful with the meaning. Then I trusted my self to keep going with the process by creatively experimenting with the form and meaning of not only my second language but also altering the source text which means experimenting as well with my first language. It seems dangerous for the second language learner to play with this kind of process but self-translation helped me learn English; translating my poems into English pushed me at the beginning of the journey to study English and to make my poems sound more English, but at the end effectiveness and faithfulness is the ultimate goal.

3.2. Indonesian Poetry

Through its history, Indonesian poetry, which is commonly known as “Puisi” in Bahasa Indonesia, has undergone important changes, particularly after World War II. Before the Second World War, modern poetry was largely written in quatrains which were influenced by Malay Pantun (Aveling 2016). Pantun is a four-line poem which consists of four full words category and rhymes at the end of the lines. This Pantun was also derived from the influence of the sonnet that was brought by the Colonial Dutch writers. Unlike the sonnet with its long rhyme pattern AA BB CC D EF EF GG which we usually find in the Shakespearean form, Indonesian pantun’s rhyme, which is favoured by the Dutch colony, is distinctively AA BB (Avelling 2003).

After the 1930s, right after Indonesian independence, there was a movement to break from the traditional quatrain form, and some young poets wanted to write a freer form of a poem to bring a more authentic expression of national culture. Christensen and Levinson (2002) describe that writers rejected traditional poetic forms, such as pantun and metrical Javanese verse forms, and adopted a much freer approach to verse structure. And free verse has been dominating Indonesian poetry ever since.

Harry Aveling, in his study on *Translating Indonesian Poetry* (2003, p.11), points out that there are some definite characteristics of Indonesian Poetry as follows:

1. The phonetic shape of Indonesian words is basically a simple pattern of consonants (C) and vowels (V): CVCVC, making two syllables in all.
2. There are six vowel phonemes — a, e, i, o, u, and the short e (schwa), with no phonemic opposition of long and short vowels and very few diphthongs.
3. The major word categories are nouns and verbs (both of which may be developed from a base-word through processes of agglutination), and words relating to them (adjectives, adverbs and prepositions).
4. Nouns may be considered to be plural unless the context specifies otherwise
5. Pronouns are not marked to show gender

6. Verbs are not marked for tense, mood or to indicate the number of their subject (singular, plural, dual, etc.). They are marked for transitivity.
7. Through the use of specific prefixes, verbs may indicate active or passive mood (although there is some debate over this; some scholars prefer to speak of 'subject-focus' and 'object-focus' sentence).

Looking at the characteristics of Indonesian poetry, I draw on this heritage in my own practice (see poems 3, 10 and 44). The words consist of a simple pattern of consonants. But there are some obstacles (Poem 3 line 1: takdir, lafaz, seribu) to create the words that sound similar or rhyme because of the pattern of consonants. And my most major words are nouns and verbs (Poem 10 line 1: doa, malamku, sujud).

In terms of thematic concern, Mahmud (2011) categorizes classic Indonesian poetry into some themes, such as the theme of desire for independence, religion, unity, advice, environment, or social criticisms (p. 1). Coming into the 21st century, social critics bring poverty, politics and ideology to the front line of Indonesian poetry, not to forget a few young woman poets inventing freer expression on themes of women and culture (p. 2). I have to confess that the development of themes in my poems is more influenced by reading poems by English poets such as Sarah Howe and some Postcolonial women poets; Sujata Bhatt and Jamaica Kincaid. Those women are poets of different cultures; speakers in their poems have complicated relationship with mothers and the languages, they live in the memory of their mother, the story of their childhood and adulthood are also about geographical displacement. I am very interested in how these women poets negotiate their multiple identities in their writings.

Some obstacles which hindered me along the way of translating my Indonesian poems into English are the clarity of pronouncing gender pronouns in English and the tenses of verbs which do not exist in English. Another case is about placing the temporal and locative phrase to avoid ambiguity in English since in Indonesian, locative and temporal expressions can be placed

singly and together at either end of sentences while in English, the formal rule is to place temporal phrase at the beginning of sentence and locative phrase at the end of a sentence.

When I write my Indonesian poems, in the immediate situation, an urge inside me to express my feeling right away, I feel like I have to write them in my native tongue; such a deep and authentic feeling on words of loss and despair in my first language. I am aware of the demand to release the feeling immediately as Opitz and Degner (2012) state that it is conceivable that emotional words are processed more slowly in L2 as compared to L1. However, some of my poems arrived in English especially in this practice, and I realize and welcome the process of meaning making which takes longer if I write in my second language. Also, I begin to identify that writing in English is aimed at making me free from the sense of confinement of my Indonesian language. As I thrive in the practice of self-translation, I gain more freedom of expression if I write in English. The subsequent sub-chapter clarifies this process.

3.3. The Initial Practice: Setting up Negotiations and Making Decisions

The process of self-translation during my initial practice of writing in a second language may not meet the high standard of English as a target language. In my early practice, line by line or word by word translation is performed to preserve the faithfulness of form and rigid transition in English. I employ word by word translation rather than free translation in order to retain the faithfulness of form rather than the faithfulness of meaning. In spite of achieving the goal to retain the form, there is a lack of confidence. And to support the argument, I shall trace my working notes. My first English translated poem is entitled “Elegi Cinta Untuk Papa” (poem 2). In translating the poetry, I have put in a lot of energy to retain the form as a quatrain just like the Indonesian version. I have been so much influenced by this pattern and put great effort into writing a rhyme pattern since I wanted to make both versions look similar in terms

of form. The choice of working in a rhyme scheme pattern poem was also derived from reading Shakespeare's Sonnets and the poetry of Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson. One famous poem of Robert Frost has long inspired me as a language learner and English instructor; his work exemplifies my initial practice for being too much influenced by mainstream work. However, I have used this poem as a model to relate my second language ability to play with figurative language. The poem provided very good material for me to discuss with my students, exploring their ability to interpret the poem in a metaphorical vs a literal way. As a language learner I make use of Frost's poem to develop my literacy and Frost showed me what was possible in terms of poetry's metaphorical potential.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

(‘Road not Taken’, 1920)

Robert Frost's ‘Road Not Taken’ has been the model in my initial practice. Not only because I have been teaching this ‘canonical’ work for years, but also this is a good example for me to learn and improve stylistics and lexical use of English. However, there was a tension as I learn the language and acquire the knowledge to write in more innovative lines rather than being trapped in a canonical view of English poetry. As grow into this practice I get to know that this white, male western world view is no longer working in my framework. Frost's poem helped to establish my advanced language skill but not my identity as a learner poet who is trying to find her voice.

Thus, the following poem illustrates how I work in my early practice of self-translation. The poem “Elegi Cinta Untuk Papa” was written earlier (2009) and it is not part of the body of the collection. I decided to self-translate this poem six years after the first language version was written. My intention was to find an alternate way to write poetry in a second language, and this poem is one of my first self-translation attempts.

Elegi Cinta Untuk Papa	An Ode to Papa
<p>Kulihat lagi sketsa jejak langkah masa kecilku Terbayang Istana kau lukis diatas kanvas cinta dan harmony Kau tuangkan warna warni tawa , canda dan bahagia Bias tangis, derita dan nelangsa pun menjadi jendela Mengayuh bahtera diantara mimpi yang tertunda Melempar sauh dalam gemuruh cita dan takdir hidup Kesederhanaan adalah keanggunan Kunci keseimbangan hidup yang kau tanamkan Kugenggam sketsa hidup mu Papa Memang belum sempurna.... .tapi kan kujadikan lukisan nyata Untuk mu Papa, Segala cinta dan Doa</p>	<p>Love, harmony, and despair, You had planted them in fair Happiness, laughter, even anger Watering our castle with care As I walked down along the garden path of my childhood memory The teachings of simplicity in grace would always be your key Row the boat of life among the shattered dreams and fulfilled hopes Showing the tide of river streams for me to cope I saw the patches of blue sky and the dancing daffodils When Papa smiles to eternity without any tears Forever, I would long to embrace his life spirit To go on, living life, praying for you in my every heart beat</p>

This poem is a tribute to my late father. The Indonesian title, *Elegi*, is an expression of loss and despair, and I add the word “cinta” which means love in English. The choice of the word “cinta” was to express another sense of feeling and emotion. Love, in this case, is described through admiration toward my father’s legacy, in this case, harmony, and simplicity. The admiration is condensed in the first and second stanza. The speaker looks back to the times when her father

was still alive. The present is in the final stanza; the speaker opts to promise herself to carry on her father's positive qualities. By referring to my preference to adopt the model of poetry of some Romantic poets, I always considered the choice of language at the time of composition.

Domestication and Foreignization strategies are two terms continuously engaged in the process of my self-translated poems. Venutti defines domestication as an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the author back home and proposes the idea of foreignization as an ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad. (Venuti 1995: 20). Yet, I am using the two terms not to describe a contrast process of my self-translation practice, rather they are both employed and continuously negotiated in the translation process. The subsequent sub chapters would unfold the process.

In fact, when working with the Indonesian version, "An ode to Papa", I aimed to produce the same sound in the last syllable since in Indonesian poems the final rhyme within lines is confined to the last syllable only (Avelling, 2003). I was not really concerned about the choice of language at the time of composition since it just flowed in my mind when using the first language. Nevertheless, I am not really satisfied with the result, since some lines are not working with the other lines (Line 1 "kecilku" is not rhyming with line 2 "harmony"). However, I mostly finished up with the words ending in *a* sounds "bahagia, jendela, cinta, tertunda, sempurna, nyata". And the poetic qualities of this poem in the Indonesian version lie in the last two stanzas. I came up with the image of rivers, boat, anchor and which somehow resonate with the journey of human life. Later, I realize the image fits the metaphor of two rivers and a boat as Muhammad articulates in his image of language and the process of self-translation.

Six months after writing the Indonesian version, I decided to work on the self-translated version. My family thought that it would be interesting to put the two version of poems (Indonesian and English) as a tribute in my father's memorial book. Apart from the memorial book, when doing the self-translation, my consideration initially was just to defend the form (3 stanzas of 4 lines) and to create a rhyme pattern in English in which it belongs to a quatrain. Frank emphasizes that when the original is rhymed, the translation must also be. In the beginning, I thought it was acceptable, later on, I found this premise was quite misleading. The faithfulness of form cannot create the faithfulness of meaning. Moreover, Frank states that the translator should feel free to juggle the rhyme scheme in evenly metered poems (1998). This time, I think it is a valid statement since I experience this in the poem. Instead of ABAB rhyme scheme, I end up writing in AABB 4 lines of 3 stanzas after working on two drafts. The shift gave the effect of both poems as parallel versions in term of meaning.

The process of writing my first self-translated poem forced me to set up some negotiations and make decisions. Firstly, in the English version I selected the word *Ode* instead of elegy after finding out that in literary terms the elegy is restricted to a lament for the dead, a mournful lyric (Oxford Dictionary, 2014). I cannot just simply translate “elegi” into “elegy”. Instead, I found the word *Ode* exemplifies the English version appropriately because it is more about praise and admiration of my father's positive qualities. My intention was to employ the theory of domestication in which this kind of translation adjusts the text to the taste of the receiving community (Venutti 2008). My purpose is that the poem can sound English so it can be accepted by Anglophone readers. So at this stage I am not yet playing with “foreignness”.

As a language learner, I respond to the improvement of my English through time and practice. I work on new ways of refining and correcting the Englishness. I perhaps follow the rule of domestication of language in translating my poems in my early practice. Domestication

is used to describe “the translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target readers” (Wang 2013, p. 82). As a second language learner, I am aware of this effect. The earlier practice clarifies that my primary concern was to improve my English and living up to a standard of an advanced language learner. Thus, when working on the poem, “An Ode to Papa”, I made some decisions and changed the order of sentences. Firstly, I scrambled up the lines to preserve the sounds; some lines in the English version are no longer positioned similarly. For example, the first line “Kulihat lagi jejak sketsa masa kecilku/ As I walked down along the garden path of my childhood memory” is in a different order from the Indonesian version. I shifted the orders of sentence of the English translated version to create the effect of sounds rhyming with the lines “of the teaching of simplicity in grace would always be your key” which is originally situated in the third line of the second stanza.

Secondly, the first two lines in the last stanza do not exist in the first language version. I am “supplementing” material to communicate meaning. According to Benjamin, “the source language is supplemented by its translation, matured and developed” (Benjamin in Von Flotow, 1991 p. 75). The memory when my father takes his last breath peacefully is not from the Indonesian version (*when papa smiles to eternity without any tears*). I created the lines to pair the word (*daffodils*), even though later on I noticed that the sounds of *tears and daffodils* are not identical, they are imperfect rhyme, but I was satisfied to set up the assonance to point at the improvement of my English ear. At the end of the refining and revision, I realize that this is not about rhyme at all; I was trying to create the effect of re-living events in the poem and the opportunity emerged when writing the second language version, stronger feelings emerged which were then added to the L2 version. Wilson points out that the topic of ‘being my own translator’ takes us beyond language into the realms of nostalgia (191). Self-translation is also a form of autobiographical practice. Through the act of translation, I suddenly find ways not

only to refine language but also to re-live events and more memories. Autobiography causes us to relive experience and translation demands another layer of memory. It is almost a form of redrafting; writing my own story in my second language.

I began to consider English grammar in order to sound more English. As affirmed by Aveling (2003) in refining a rough draft from Indonesian, a decision has to be made about the tenses of verbs and the gender of pronouns, both of which English insists must be shown (2003, P. 13) and “Puisi” does not require these features .

Working with the second draft of the poem entitled “Motherless daughter” (appendix 24), I revised the punctuation (line 3 and line 7) and changed the pattern and the tenses of some sentences, (line 4: “Are old days a picture framed by the agony?” becomes “old days are picture framed by the agony”). Then, in line 5, I converted the interrogative sentence in past tense to the second person imperative with “Let me remind you of a famous folklore.” The alteration in the sentence pattern is made based on the meaning of the “famous folklore”; a daughter who eventually abjects the mother is a repeating story. The speaker in the poem simply wishes to tell the reader the story which is very familiar to the speaker’s cultural context. It is not a past event, it still exists in the present time. In addition to the grammatical correction, I made an improvement upon the subject matter; the main character of the poem. In the first place, I connected the words “my dear” with the subject *I*. Perrine articulates the theory of voice, speaker and character in English poetry (Perrine, 1974) asserting that the speaker is someone else, “I” who speaks is not I who lives. As a result, in the second draft, I in the last line has been substituted with *She / she is lonesome*. As I grow in to the practice of translating my first language poem to my second language, I have gained a more sophisticated awareness of the complex relation between the authorial “I” and the textual “I”.

I have made my way to improve my knowledge of the English language through the practice of self-translated poems. I learn that tenses are important for a verb in English, and the pronoun is necessary to indicate gender. My critical readings on the theory of speaker and voice were expanded when I found that the speaker is not necessarily the character in the poem. I consider these aspects when working with my English self-translated poems. By scrutinizing voices and speaker, I have improved on the clarity of subject and the thematic material of the poem.

3.4. Writing into a Quatrain: Rhyme; Some loss and Gain

It is confirmed by Frank (1998) that in translating poetry, “sacrifices are inevitable, the only question is how to prioritize them” (p.42). The first draft of my second self-translated poem, “A Daughterless Mother” (*page 6*), is again four lines of three stanzas and I was still building with traditional form. In the first draft, I deleted two lines in the second stanza to form a quatrain in the English version. On the one hand, it was a loss, but on the contrary, it was a gain for I was fortunate to produce an AABB rhyme scheme. In the second draft, I made the most important adjustment by putting the two missing lines back. Initially, I deleted the lines to preserve the rhyme (*jeritan hati sosok siibu/ menggeliat diranum bahagia sang menantu*). Thus, I was trapped by privileging rhyme over meanings, but suddenly realized that it brought more loss in meaning making.

<p>A Daughterless Mother</p> <p>Tengadah tangan seribu pinta Lafaz hidup gumam kan rindu Pada benih cinta perisai takdir Terbayang lara tersemam dihari tua (4)</p> <p>Lalu, lupakah dinda pada sebuah legenda? Rumah gadang Sembilan pintu,</p>	<p>A Daughterless Mother</p> <p>Draft 1 :</p> <p>The opened palm by silent prayer, life yearns for a daughter. The seed of love manifests a destiny (line 3) Are old days a picture framed by the agony?</p> <p>But my dear! Did you hear the stories? Of a big house with its nine doors?</p>
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<p>bilik kosong menjelma rumah hantu Nak budjang lari memboyong perawan, (8) tinggalkan debu dikelambu, Jeritan hati Sosok si Ibu , menggeliat diranum bahagia sang Menantu</p> <p>Apa yang dilantun dalam gurindam malam (12) Kata bijak bertuah sesal, (13) padi menguning, bulir dituai hampa (14) Tak berkawan sampai ajal menyapa</p>	<p>The bride, escaped with the bridegroom, (line 7) Leaving a pristine valance in the maid’s room</p> <p>The old saying bears her pain. The wise words end in vain. The grown seed is now out of distance: Death comes closer when I feel lonesome</p> <p>Draft 2</p> <p>The opened palm by silent prayer, life yearns for a daughter. The seed of love manifests a destiny, (line 3) old days are a picture framed by the agony. (line 4)</p> <p>My dear! Let us listen to the famous folklore, of a big house with its nine doors? The bride, escape with the bridegroom, (7) Leaving a pristine valance in the maid’s room A mourning face of sad mother, And the bright look of a lover</p> <p>The old saying bears her pain. (11) The wise words end in vain. (12) The grown seed is now out of sight: (13) Death comes closer when She feels lonesome</p>
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Later on, in the second draft, I attempted to mend the loss by translating the two missing lines. The effort does not only preserve the rhyme and follow the regular pattern of the original version but also establishes the faithfulness of cultural memory in the poem. Besides, my revision is also based upon the suggestion and recommendation of the first reader, in this case my supervisor. Some phrases such as in line 13 are substituted with more appropriate words and a better clarity, *out and gone*, (see appendix 24). The words ‘out of sight’ are substituted with ‘out and gone’, the word ‘story was replaced by ‘folklore’.

Bassnett affirms that “loss in translation, the dissolving of language boundaries, the process of loss becomes the means of finding oneself“ (2011, p.11). By recognizing the loss, I identified an aspect which is more important; my voice as a daughter who was raised in Islamic-Minangkabau culture. Instead of using the word “stories”, I found the word “folklore”

works better in this context; “Folklore” rhymes with “doors” even though they are not identical. Furthermore, Minang matrilineal society and its tradition is strongly built from generation to generation and to use the word folklore will interest readers. The two additional lines emphasize the irony of being a motherless daughter, “mourning face of anguished mother which is contrasted with the bright look of the lover” to describe the ironic situation. In this case, I am trying to be honest with the cultural memory. I have gained a lot when working on this second draft and eventually found my voice through the process of exploring the losses and gains.

Yet, the loss is still there in the second draft, even though I can control the similar sounds which are pain and vain (11-12) I was not able to translate the phrase “Gurindam malam” (line 12) and “Padi dituai hampa” (line 13). They are cultural realia which means “the words and expression from culture-specific items” (Hermans, 1985 p. 17), and they are untranslatable. The old saying does not represent the phrase *gurindam malam*. It is a literary device which contains a strong cultural resonance in Malay literature. Gurindam is known as a type of irregular verse form involving cause and effect in two lines in traditional Malay poetry. It is a combination of two clauses where the relative clause forms a line and is thus linked to the second line, or the main clause. Each pair of lines provides complete ideas within the pair and has the same rhyme in its end (Christensen and Levinson 2002). And Gurindam is not necessarily an old saying since the old saying does not have a cause and effect meaning in its construction. Moreover, I was only able to partly translate the sentence *padi dituai hampa*, since I have to stick with the word “distance” in order to preserve the rhyme. And consequently, the translation sounds odd in the L2 version (the grown seed is out of distance). I was not faithful in this case to the intention of the poem which privileges the rhyme over the meaning.

Again, the case above demonstrated that the faithfulness of form cannot achieve faithfulness of meaning. Kukkola describes faithfulness as an effort to transmit the message of the original text, another concept is evoking the same feeling and provoking the same effect on the readers of the translation as on the receiver of the original text (2008). Naively, I prefer to put the word which is rhyming rather than being honest with the original version. “Padi dituai hampa” (line 13) is a cultural symbol, and the translated sentences of “the grown seed is out of distance” cannot be fully acculturated from the Indonesian version. As a result, for the translation of the cultural symbol “padi dituai hampa” (line 13) I could not reach the faithfulness either as a message transferring or feeling evoking and effect provoking. The faithfulness of the translation of the poem cannot be achieved only because I intend to put the rhyme as a primary concern. But finding an adequate term in my second language which is close to the meaning of “Gurindam malam” may solve the problem. So that when I choose the phrase ‘old saying’ as a translation of “gurindam malam”, I employ the strategy of adequacy in translation terms. The translation of cultural words will be further discussed in the next subchapter.

Eugene Nida and William Wunderly (in Avelling, 2003) summarise that each translation passes through three stages.

1. The first stage, that of 'literal translation', begins with a rough, fairly literal draft of the original text.
2. In the second stage, that of 'minimal transfer', the draft is turned into a more grammatically recognisable version of the target language.
3. The third stage is that of 'literary transfer', in which the optional changes and modifications which make the interlinear translation into a recognisable work of literature in the target language are undertaken.

(P. 12-13)

Referring to this process, I find that the practice of translating my poems is not as simple as the “straight” translation of form, sound and meaning. Sometimes literal meanings will change in order to communicate the equivalent effect in the target language. I successfully preserved the form and sounds, but not the order of lines, and I distorted meanings in some

lines. Thus, the losses are massive in my early practice. Yet I was convinced that the loss and gain would appear in every translation discourse. In line with this, I put the emphasis more on the form rather than the meaning in my early English self-translated poem. Later on, I started to employ a more dynamic translation.

3.5. Into a more Dynamic Translation: Line Breaks to Preserve Meanings and to achieve The Structure of Grammatical English

Later on, I practised a more dynamic translation; rewriting the lines; both in Indonesian and English, and opened a dialogue between the two versions. Initially, the concept of dynamic translation left the question for me: Is not the writer-translator supposed to be closer to the original text? Wanner (2017) describes the practice of self-translation of Andrey Gritsman, a famous Russian American bilingual poet who stresses difference rather than similarities as he emphasizes :

The Russian and English versions of his poems should not be considered “direct translations”, but “parallel poems” written in two languages on the same subject and in the same “emotional waves” (p. 4).

When reading this statement, some questions arise: Is dynamic translation similar to what Gritsman practised and does it result in “parallel poems” rather than a “direct translation”? I found this so-called dynamic translation somewhat challenging because it demands more exploration on choices of words, phrase and sentence structure. However, along the way of my practice, working on a different form of poetry gave me more liberty to translate my poems in to English.

In my early practice, when writing Indonesian poetry, I made great efforts to produce the same sounds at the last syllable of the sentence. Recently I decided to apply line breaks to preserve meanings. As described in the previous sub-chapter, I experienced considerable loss

when working with the rhyme scheme. Aveling (2003, p. 14) asserts that free verse translated into free verse, perhaps offers more opportunities for effective expression and fewer challenges to adequacy than traditional verse. So, I started to think of another possibility to preserve the meanings in my English translated poem. The following description illustrates a more dynamic practice:

Draft 1:

Surat Untuk Seorang Sahabat (Kunjungan Pertama ke Cambridge)

Diantara gemelutuk ibu jari, ku menjemput pagi di Heathrow. Sapaan manja klakson si merah, gagah mengajakku menuju London, lalu kau suguhkan nikmatnya secangkir Costa, membunuh beku

Diamku, dinginku, sembari berujar “santai pren”... dia tidak singgah ke kotamu

Menyusuri “Hills road” yang sepi, Cambridge seolah tak berpenghuni. Gemerincing roda travel bagku, temani bunyi lonceng sang gereja tua. “Fish and Chip” ..., “university store”, “thick English”, kau penuh genderang telinga dengan biasanya frase2 yang tak kupahami.

Tidak kah kau rindu kawan ujarmu, pada nyanyian “raven” yang memecah malam, rasakan lagi hembusan angin musim panas ditingkahi gerimis mengundang. Bau-i aroma “Thai food” yang malu2 menyeruak di “market place”, Menatap angkuhnya “King college” dari tepian sungai Cambridge, “ayuhkan sauhmu “??? jelangi mimpi itu sekali lagi!!! Teriakan mu menghujam sampai ke uluhati..., merengsek asa yang sudah mati.

Kawan, kan kutenggarai gelap jiwaku, sempurnakan pertahanan hidupku

Lalu...

Moving toward a more dynamic translation, I have altered my first language practice to employ a different translation strategy. The unwritten translation already influences the first language version. Looking in more detail, the poem entitled “Surat Untuk Seorang Sahabat/ A Letter to an Old Friend (The First Visit to Cambridge)” is my free verse self-translated poem in Indonesian. It took five years for me to decide to translate this free verse and include it in the collection of second language poems. Hence, by doing this, I am showing the formal development as a result of development as a learner writer. The practice of writing in L2 for

years, and having improved the mechanics of my English made me confident enough to depart from traditional forms and rhyme schemes into a freer expression.

In the very first place, I intended to write it as prose poetry. The longest lines provide the narrative of a young woman arriving in the new land in which they resonate with most Indonesian youths' dreams about studying abroad in English-speaking countries. There are two speakers in the poem and the second speaker only talks in the last two lines. Through the lines, I attempted to give an authentic voice to learning the English language and British culture. In the first translation, I decided to lay out the poem as a free verse consisting of 4 long lines in each stanza. Then, in the second phase of translation, I thought about rewriting the poem and cut the lines to give me more room in the translational process and hope for a better self-translation. Thus, when working with shorter line breaks, I gave myself more room which clearly resulted in more effective translations. The following table describes the adjustment of line breaking that began with the Indonesian version.

<p>Surat Untuk Seorang Sahabat (Kunjungan Pertama ke Cambridge)</p> <p>Diantara gemelutuk ibu jari/ ku menjemput pagi di Heathrow/ Sapaan manja klakson si merah/ gagah mengajakku menuju London/ Lalu kau suguhkan nikmatnya secangkir Costa/ membunuh beku Diamku/ dinginku/ sembari berujar “santai pren”/... .dia tidak singgah kekotamu</p> <p>Menyusuri “Hills road” yang sepi,/Cambridge seolah tak berpenghuni/ Gemerincing roda travel bagku /temani bunyi lonceng sang gereja tua/ “Fish and Chip”, “university store“, “thick English” kau penuh genderang telingaku/ dengan biasanya frase2 yang tak kupahami</p> <p>Tidak kah kau rindu kawan ujarmu/ pada nyanyian “raven” yang memecah malam/ Rasakan lagi hembusan angin musim panas/ ditingkahi gerimis mengundang Bau-i aroma “Thai food”/ yang malu2 menyeruak di “market place” Menatap angkuhnya “King college” /dari tepian sungai Cambridge , “ayuhkan sauhmu “??? /jelangi mimpi itu sekali lagi!!!/ Teriakan mu menghujam sampai ke uluhati/ merengsek asa yang sudah mati/ <i>Kawan, kan kutenggarai gelap jiwaku/ sempurnakan pertahanan hidupku...Lalu</i></p>

The earliest translated version of this poem into English (Clutched my frozen thumbs/ I witnessed the morning dew/ hug Heathrow softly) was changed a bit by adding I. Thus the sentence becomes: I clutched my frozen thumbs. Having rewritten the poem in shorter lines, I found more freedom and more possibility. It turned out well to translate every line as faithfully as possible. There are clear breaks in the long prose poetry version so I cut the lines. I was surprised to discover the fact that cutting the line breaks, changing the structure of the poem, made my translational process somewhat easier. The longer the line in a sentence with multiple word categorizations, the more complex the message transfer to L2 will be achieved. Still I met difficulties to position the subject in compound sentences, locative and temporal phrases, which should be clearly ordered in English.

In Line 1 to line 2 of the poem, I previously ignored the absence of subjects in the compound sentence and did not attempt to resolve the issue of placing the subject appropriately. I translate “Diantara gemelutuk ibu jari /kumenjemput pagi di Hethrow/ /sapaan simerah/gagah mengajak ku ke *London*” into “The morning dew hugs heathrow softly/heading to London /the old red blew its horn”. Thanks to the line breaking, I began to be aware of this matter; by breaking the line, I found it easier to identify, determine and place the subject appropriately. By splitting the first line into two lines, I recognized that I disregarded the existence of the subject in a compound sentence, *I (ku)* in English (Diantara gemelutuk ibu jari/ku menjemput pagi di Heathrow). *I* in the compound sentence is hidden in the Indonesian version but it should be made clear in English (Avelling, 2003). My recent practice to break the lines has pushed me to rewrite a grammatically correct sentence ,” witnessed the morning dew/ hugging Heathrow softly” is perhaps much better. By making the subject explicit, I gave the poem a perceiving consciousness, which is perhaps needed to situate the implied listener.

The same case occurs in the second stanza in which I again ignored the absence of “I” in a compound sentence. The sentence in line 5-6 (Menyusuri “Hills road” yang sepi,

/Cambridge seolah tak berpenghuni) has been translated into (Invading the quiet Hills Street in unoccupied Cambridge). The translation seems vague since it is in fact a compound sentence. The Indonesian version emphasizes the movement of "I" who seized every inch of the long Hills Street and finds herself, the only occupier who walked lonely along the empty streets. Thus, by adding "I" in the second line of the stanza, I thought I made everything clear; the doer, the place and the atmosphere. The second phase of translation with some line breaking results as follows:

I clutched my frozen thumbs,
and witnessed the morning dew
hugging Heathrow softly,
heading to London,
the old red blew its horn.
A cup of hot Costa,
the melting cold and silence,
while you smiled and said,
Calm down "Pren",
Cambridge is in another direction!

invading the quiet Hills street,
I captured unoccupied Cambridge.
Listen!
The broken wheel of my suitcase,
accompanied the jingling bell from an old church.
Thick English, Fish and chips and University store,
were too foreign in my ears,
sweetly squeezing in my tongue.

My dear old Friend !
Do not you miss the song of raven,
in peaceful lonesome nights!
Do not you long for the aroma of Thai Food,
stealing your attention along the market place
and staring at the arrogant King college
from the river bank?
Come!
seize the dream once again!

*My dear old friend!
I will set my-self free,
unchain my death spirit!
Then...I...*

Different from the early free verse, the following practice reflects how everything seems much easier if I cut the lines using enjambment in the poem right before translating it. When drafting another memory poem entitled ‘Poem for Ibunda’, my first intention is to create sound effects in the first two lines of each stanza. However, when it came to locate temporal and locative phrases in English, I began to think about breaking the longer lines before conducting the self-translation in order to solve the problem in English. Appendix 35 describes my working process to break the line, to minimize the error and ambiguity before reaching the third revision. Appendix 35 is the third attempt of translation after I altered the first language version.

POEM FOR IBUNDA

Kuselipkan doa / disetiap sujud malamku
Allah maha tau /betapa aku merindu
Senyuman hangat / petuah bijak /ditingkahi senandung kecil untuk si cucu

Kembali kutelusuri /jejak masa lalu
pekatnya bau insulin /dan Aroma kasihmu
Adalah serpihan sketsa kenangan,/yang terangkum pilu dalam ruang batinku

Dibalik dingin/ yang merasuk raga dan sukma
Dari balik jendela/ kutatap nanar dedaunan kering pohon Oak /
Menguning/ jatuh ditimpali buliran es yang membeku/lenyap disapu angin musim
dingin

Dan gamang /kuretas hari ke depan tanpamu, Ibunda
Layaknya kapal dari kertas kecil berlayar/ tanpa nahkoda
Namun kan kubangun /perahu atas nama layar kasih /yang kau wariskan
Kukayuh /tak henti dalam / alunan Al-Fatihah
Untuk mu bunda/Segenap Cinta dan Doa

By changing the poem’s layout before conducting self-translation, I successfully followed some grammatical rules in English. The adaptation includes the aspect of locating

temporal and locative phrases which should be made clear in English. Avelling asserts that “In Indonesia, locative and temporal phrases can be placed singly and together at either end of the Indonesian sentence” (2003,p.13). When breaking the lines in the Indonesian version, I locate the temporal and locative phrases in different places to adjust the English rules which position the temporal phrase at the beginning of the sentence and the locative phrase at the end (13). In order to adapt English grammatical rules, I changed the position of the locative phrase right at the end of the sentence which in fact does not trouble the proper arrangement in the Indonesia version (1) (Dibalik dingin yang merasuk raga dan sukma/ dari balik jendela Kutatap nanar dedaunan kering pohon oak into (2) Dibalik dingin yang merasuk raga dan sukma/ Kutatap nanar dedaunan kering pohon oak /dari balik jendela). Afterwards, I felt like the sentence is smoothly transferred into English and I finally translated it into “through the frosty hours/ I examine the dry leaves /across the windows/.” Thus I rearranged the source language before translating it into English. I made changes in term of spatial aspects. Apart from locating the temporal and locative phrases properly in the poem, I have also considered revising the words (Sang cucu/ the grandson line 7) into “your grandson” after knowing that “the grandson” sounds odd in English. I thought the grandson emphasizes the fact that the lullaby from the grandmother to my boys is necessary to express the sense of belonging. Soon I came to realize that English insists the pronoun be shown (Avelling, 2016). In English “the grandson” could be anyone's, it sounds impersonal and doesn't reflect kinship. I made the correction by changing “the grandson” into “your grandson” which also implied a listener. After working on some drafts the final version of self-translated poems appears as follows:

<p>PUISI UNTUK IBUNDA</p> <p>Kuselipkan doa disetiap sujud malamku Allah maha tau betapa aku merindu</p>	<p>Poem for Ibunda</p> <p>I send you a prayer in my night worship. Heaven knows! How much I long for the warm smile gentle expression</p>
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<p>Senyuman hangat , petuah bijak ditingkahi senandung kecil untuk si cucu</p> <p>Kembali kutelusuri jejak masa lalu Aroma kasih dan pekatnya bau insulin. Adalah serpihan kenangan, yang terangkum pilu dalam ruang batinku</p> <p>Dibalik dingin yang merasuk raga dan sukma Kutatap nanar dedaunan kering pohon Oak dari balik jendela. Menguning, jatuh ditimpali buliran es yang membeku, lenyap disapu angin musim dingin</p> <p>Dan gamang kuretas hari ke depan tanpamu, Ibunda Layaknya perahu kertas berlayar tanpa nahkoda Namun kan kubangun bahtera atas nama layar kasih yang kau wariskan, Kukayuh ...tak henti dalam alunan Al-Fatihah Untukmu Ibunda, . segenap cinta dan doa</p>	<p>and the lullaby to your grandson</p> <p>As I trace the memory, back to the old days. The scent of love and the aroma of Insulin are the fragmented recollections sadly awake in my heart and soul</p> <p>Through the frosty hours, I contemplate the dry leaves Across the window, Falling from the oak tree, The yellow layer of life Descended and demonised by the cold.</p> <p>The fear crawls, within me. For the days to come, without you Like a paper ship, adrift. But I will build another one in the name of love and row the boat Never stop. For you... Ibunda! This heavenly verse Al-Fatihah</p>
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3.6. Translating Cultures in English Self -Translated Poems: Employing the Foreignization Method

One of the meaningful processes of doing self-translation into English is when to decide whether to translate or to retain some specific terms which have cultural significance in the Indonesian version. By doing this, I employ the foreignization method. Laurence Venuti established the term to refer to an act which “is highly desirable, as it seeks to resist the dominant target-language cultural values and signify the linguistic and cultural difference of

the foreign text instead of eliminating them” (Venuti 2008). Salamon states that for the translator, the cultural aspect is always the most difficult, especially when the source culture seems exotic to the target language (2015, p. 214). I might refer to this case to some poems I wrote directly in my second language. In most cases for my second language poetry, I leave the cultural expression untouched so that I assume my reader can learn the culture other than theirs. In the end, in the collection, I do not offer notes to help the reader define immediately the foreign words, yet I put the foreign words in one page of a glossary in order to offer choices to my Anglophone reader; educating them to be familiarized with language and culture other than theirs or letting them explore and analyse the poem without knowing the meaning of foreign words. However, foreign words in the self-translation are purposed to achieve faithfulness and fidelity. I just do not want to distort the meaning if I translate the foreign words.

In the case of the poem entitled ‘A Letter to an Old Friend: The first visit to Cambridge’ the letter accentuates persuasion from a young woman to her best friend to revisit memory in Cambridge. In this poem I decide to keep the word *pren* to maintain the significance of this colloquial expression. *Friend* in English cannot automatically replace *pren* since it is both a warm as well as a mocking expression to say “hello” to any best friend among teenagers living in Indonesia’s big cities. By using the word *Pren*, I signify the close relationship of two friends in the past in Indonesian youthful tradition.

However, I experienced a barrier in the early practice of my self-translated poems. When translating the poem entitled *Daughterless mother* (page 3), I chose to employ the method of domestication (which is adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers (Yang 2010). For example, I failed to translate the phrase *Gurindam malam and Padi dituai hampa*. In the beginning, I thought that the failure was because of my intention to preserve rhyme in English (subchapter 2). I assumed that it was a loss to balance the gain in the translational process. Indeed, it is not all about creating the sounds' effect, but it

happens because the words *Gurindam malam* and *padi dituai hampa* (page 3, line 12-13) are untranslatable. *The old saying* (12) cannot represent what is actually *gurindam malam*. Both words, “Gurindam” and “old saying” are not faithful, they exhibit two different characteristics. As mentioned before, Gurindam is cause and effect of 12 stanzas of poetry in two lines and malam (night) indicates the habit of old tradition to recite *gurindam* on the nights of cultural celebration such as a wedding party. As a result, the translation of the poem “Daughterless Mother” emphasises the principles of domestication rather than being faithful to the cultural element of the source text.

The poem actually narrates the story of the daughter leaving the house and the family after the wedding in spite of the tradition of West Sumatera which ties a woman to live and to stay at her maternal house, and *Gurindam malam* which is usually recited on the wedding night represents the ironic story of the abjected mother. Thus, the intercultural text exchange cannot be performed in this case. Also, the sentence *padi dituai hampa* (line 13) contains symbolic and exotic material. The case above is evident to point at the limitation of self-translation as a practice. On one hand, I found that the term *grown seed* epitomizes the figure of a daughter who is mature enough to marry a man, on the other hand, I failed to exchange the word *hampa* since it is closely related to the cultural setting which means the seed is no longer provided to the one who planted it, and no matter how much time, energy and dedication a mother may have spent to raise the daughter, still when she gets married, the daughter abjects the mother. Thus, the translation of *padi dituai hampa* has not been sufficiently addressed the target language. In this case, I was only able to translate the words into *out and gone* to evoke the feeling and the affect; the sadness a mother feels when the daughter leaves her after the marriage.

Al jabri (2013) claims that the choice of the various approaches and methods that deal with the issues of cultural and linguistic differences in poetic translation is governed by a

number of factors related to the translator herself, including their ideology (p. 447). Concerning this point, I might argue that some culture-based words I retain in my latter practice are those which are central to Islamic-Minangkabau culture. Narey-Davey (2016) states that a fundamental shift in understanding toward the Other can happen through the reading of translated literature. This is another intention I want to achieve in my self-translated poem. My Anglophone reader may understand ‘the Other’, in this case the cultural elements of my Islamic-Minangkabau identity. I hope them experience the unknown.

One of the striking examples of otherness is from the word *Al-Fatiha* in the poem entitled “Poem for Ibunda” (poem no 9). *Al-fatiha* in English means *In every beginning*, but the translation into verse cannot replace the importance of *Al fatiha* in the Islamic context. Every action in human life shall begin by uttering *Alfatiha* to hope for God’s protection. Instead, I created the words “heavenly verse” as a cultural relia and introduced this new expression into the target language without omitting *Alfatiha*. I am trying to depart much further from the original to find an equivalent. Loffredo and Parteghella (2014) imply that literary translation is not just a useful tool in L2, but is an activity where the creativity occurs and therefore where new meanings at the intercultural level are created as a result of dialogic engagement between languages (p. 43). This is what I have done, by introducing new expressions, I become more creative, confident and responsible for handling the new meanings both in L1 and L2.

3.7. Conclusion

To conclude, I shall return to what is emphasized by Wilson (2009) that the act of self-translation is thus a creative transfiguration of an author’s becoming (p.197). The intersection of L2 learner and self-translation is perhaps unusual since most critical material assumes self-

translators are bilingual. But I am a L2 learner writer and my identity is evolving as the language develops. The initial practice reflects my capacity as a second language learner and through time and practice I am moving to a more dynamic translation practice and be ready for further steps as a writer. The creativity of working in a second language, the metamorphosis into a second language poet is strengthened when I include in my practice some self-translated works. Yet, there are choices especially the dilemma when working with foreignness deliberately as a creative choice. Self-translation demands creativity to negotiate choices and confront meaning. To retain the foreignness, I have been very active to negotiate and confront meaning and it shows the multiple aspects of learning a second language. At the end the decision whether to convert or to retain the foreign words is eventually increasing my ability to handle the meanings in my second language but also in my first language. It is indeed a trial and error, a process-orientated work through time and practice.

The development of the knowledge of a second language appears in between the cumulative experience of the loss and the gain in the translational process. Indeed, all practices enhance the creative process, to create new expression and meaning both in the first and second language context. Despite the loss and gain, the failure and the mending, I am glad that I was finally able to produce a self-translated poem; the translated version is a co-text to the Indonesian version, it is not subordinate to the other. The later practice seems to show that the two versions can destabilize one another. I altered the Indonesian version to achieve a more effective and adequate translation. It is a long process of practice. I started from doing the rigid translation, privileging the form rather than the meaning, but then moving into a freer translation, moving further to alter the first text in order to achieve effectiveness, faithfulness to the feelings at stake, delivering true meaning behind the words. I negotiate meaning and I made choices to transform from a language learner into a learner writer.

CHAPTER 4 - THE POETIC IDENTITY OF STUDY ABROAD SETTING: A CRITICAL AND REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF JENNIFER WONG'S *SUMMER CICADAS*

4.1 Introduction

Study Abroad (SA) has been recently called a global movement of a specific people, moving into new territory for some particular reasons. Doerr (2013) explains some aims for the study abroad programme. He categorises the goals for people travelling to the other side of the world, and among them are “intercultural” experience or acquisition of a foreign language, credentials or degrees (p. 51). International Students which are commonly named as the ‘doer’ of the program may experience different challenges of life in a new area than encountered by diaspora communities.

Learning a new language and culture while pursuing a higher degree may provide interesting life stories of international students. Benson argues that students’ study abroad narratives will provide some insight into the development of their identities (2013, p.14). In the light of this assertion, my experience as an international student trying to pursue a PhD contains some interesting and underpinning life stories of learning a second language and immersion in a new culture. As Benson further argues:

When we examine these narratives, our aim is not to look through them in search of experiences that have had an impact on their identity before the telling, but to look at them in search of processes of identity development that are inseparable from their narration. (2013, p. 17).

It is the first collection of Jennifer Wong, *Summer Cicadas*, which brought my attention to delineate the relationship of second language identity development with the experience of

study abroad (SA) in the narrative of a second language poet. Jennifer Wong is an Asian woman poet who was raised in Hong Kong, but educated at Oxford in English Literature. *Summer Cicadas* is a collection of Wong's personal stories. Her poetry is drawn from the intimate moments of her conflicting aspects of gaining and losing memory, the reflection of her new becoming as a result of her global movement; the vivid portrayal of her relationship with her second language and the new culture.

This chapter is the critical and reflective analysis of the poetic identity of the 'Study abroad setting' in some poems by Jennifer Wong, an established second language woman poet. This chapter accentuates the aspects of being a student in the context of the study abroad setting as found in her first collection. More importantly the analysis draws on the way I critically reflect and respond to the notions of a 'fluent fool', 'cultural fluency', 'cultural Other' and 'foreign tongue' to mark the poetic identity of 'study abroad' and second language identity development in Wong's poems through my second language poems.

4.2. Second Language identity and poetic identity in a Study Abroad Setting.

Pallegrino Aveni (2005) defines second language identity in study abroad as an overarching experience of self-presentation in a second language and the maintenance of security (i.e. status, validation, safety, and control) in a second culture. Echoing in a similar way, but more generally, Benson et al. (2013) clarify that second language identity refers to any kind of a person's identity that is connected to their knowledge or use of a second language. What is implied in the two definitions is that second language identity is self-representation when using the second language. Hanauer adds that this self-representation can be analysed through the examination of a writer's personal narrative. He mentions that one way of exploring the types of identity present within the second language learning and migration experience is through

the collection and analysis of personal narratives (2010; 57). By scrutinising this kind of narrative, one can see the history of developing subject positions designed to explore, understand and negotiate different ways of being in the world (p.73).

In relation to the analysis of Jennifer Wong's poetry, what then can be defined by the poetic identity of the second language in a study abroad setting? Again, I might refer to what Hanauer discusses as poetic identity. In a simple definition, he identifies poetic identity as the identity (or identities) that can be found within a poetic text. Later he specifies that poetic identity is the result of deliberate choices concerning what to include and how to present the written poem. And finally, he draws a definite term about poetic identity, as he states that 'poetic identity is a participant's subject position on autobiographical events and experiences expressed through the focusing potential of literary language resulting from a specific physical and discursive context of writing' (2010; 62). Having read Wong's *Summer Cicadas*, I argue the early definition Hanauer summarizes; the latest definition might fit into Wong's *Summer Cicadas* since this collection reflects her subject position on autobiographical element in this case the experience of life as an foreign student in a study abroad setting,

Hanauer conceptualises the similarity between this definition to what Ivanic (1998) classifies about the discoursal self; the poem, as a written text, reflects the choices consciously or unconsciously made concerning the subject positions, community affiliations, and meaning-making activities of self-understanding, represented in written language. This is valid, as by scrutinising these aspects I have a key concept of how poetic identity in a study abroad setting, as presented in the poetry of Jennifer Wong. Also, by relying on these aspects, I can define my own setting of poetic identities in a study abroad context in my collection.

Summer Cicadas

Summer Cicadas is a story of Wong's poetic journey through homeland, cultural upbringing and personal identity (Lam in Wong, 2006). However, I focus on how her study abroad period illuminates the process of learning language, culture and all its complexity, reaching into her own second language identity. The speaker in *Summer Cicadas*, is moving back and forth, between Hong Kong and Oxford, and finds that this journey is not merely a journey.

Six thousand miles, Twelve hours.

From summer to winter (From *Summer Cicadas*, p. 3, line 8-9)

The journey between Hong Kong and England means more than moving into the new geographical location. The speaker in *Summer Cicadas* moves back and forth during her period of study. Doerr explains that relationships between study-abroad students' host and home societies matter in constructions of space and time in study abroad (2016). Travelling twelve hours, six thousand miles, the speaker experienced different areas "a busy city to a quiet and old one" and various seasons "from summer to winter", the speaker even skips autumn during her moving back and forth "lost autumn on the plane". The word "lost" indicates the disorientation and dislocation, and it happens to the returnee as returnee literature, works written by those who come back from abroad usually from European countries, thus suggests a narrowing (even loss) of identity with successive migrations back and forth (Haines, 2013).

More importantly, moving back and forth between two different countries and societies describes the situatedness of how the experience of the 'cultural Other' is perceived and articulated through the intersections of space and time in different settings (Doerr, 2016 P.53). The speaker in Jennifer Wong's poems behaves herself differently, showing some variation of attitude in different contexts. I think that it is accurate and this situation may refer to the concept of identity changing while learning a second language and a second culture. Identity is not

fixed, it is relative and contextual. Haines again points out that despite a loss of identity the returnee faced during his/her moving back and forth, much of the literature also suggests an expansion of identity as people come to incorporate different experiences, expectations, and values (2013, p.21). I might agree with this statement when analysing how the character in Wong's poems encounters complexities of dislocation and disorientation as the result of her "going home and returns from home".

4.3. Second Language Learning, Foreign tongue and Cultural Assimilation

Summer Cicadas

Snow does not come.
It is there only in the English novels;
Dickens, Hardy, Elliot and Gaskell
I read for their culture, hoping my reading
To come more effortless with time and practice,
The way local finds it: a hobby, a native leisure

Daily I am reading and speaking
Their mother tongue. I am learning
To call the same things by new names.
I must remember to translate the tense
Or else they will not understand, Every week
I call home. Mother can understand
And I speak in Chinese, a language oblivious of tense

(From Summer Cicadas, 2006 p.32)

Lines quoted from "Summer Cicadas", a long poem which became the title of the collection, depict the journey of learning a second language as a long process. It may not only involve the repertoire of language elements "reading and speaking/ their mother tongue, calling the same things by the new names/ translating the tense", but also, as stated by Benson et al. (2013) "with the act of beginning to learn a second language, the learner even begins the process of becoming a different person." It is illustrated in the line "hoping my reading, to come more effortless with time and practice/the way local finds it: a hobby, native leisure". For sure, the

cultural element becomes another crucial element of learning. In other words, the necessity to acquire a second language is driven more by the need to understand the second culture: “Dickens, Hardy, Elliot and Gaskell/ I read for their culture”. However, I might argue that the readings of Dickens, Elliot and Gaskell are canonical literature which shows the hegemony of Western narratives.

Within the long journey of language and cultural learning, the sense of Otherness is perceived by the speaker in Wong’s poems. This is then the complexity of learning a second articulates the term ‘Cultural Other’. The speaker here refers to host society as “them” , “I read for their culture and speak their mother tongue.” The word ‘their’ indicates the discourse of minority within bilingual communities, and the opposition of ‘we’ and ‘they’ have long been reflecting a particular relationship between minority and majority communities. In this poem, it is evident that the speaker positions herself as ‘the Other’.

In “Affinity”, a short poem in the collection, Wong again elucidates the sense of cultural other as a sudden awakening after listening to her African neighbour speaking her first language while she, herself has almost forgotten her native language.

Yesterday, an old friend came to visit me,
And we talked and talked
To the beat of the Pop songs
Then, suddenly, in the middle of the sentence,
Interrupting me and the radio,
He said, “Do you have a Chinese album here?”
And I asked,
“Why?”
He replied, “Just put it on.” (*from Summer Cicadas p.28*)

Listening to the Pop songs as a part of language learning has then turned into a habit. The question from her friend “Do you have a Chinese album here” and the request to play the Chinese album “Just put it on” are intriguing. Not only do they cut the flow of music and conversation but also later on the speaker realises that the question and the requests are a slap

to her face, making her aware of the fact that she has forgotten her mother tongue: this interruption, demanding L1 popular culture seems to speak to a need or a lack that is beyond spoken articulation – is carried by the music. Music is a cultural marker, even realia that carries a very local overtone (Hermans, 1985)

Today, through the sunny window
Down on my balcony,
A brown and black bob
Are conversing in a foreign tongue-
The surrounding brick walls regurgitate
All the echoes and the vowels
Somehow their voices penetrate me,
Send forth
A sense of affinity
That I can understand (Summer Cicadas, P. 29)

The second stanza of “Affinity” makes the tension in situating the speaker, herself as a cultural other apparent. The pressure appears as a sudden awakening after the speaker incidentally hears her Brown and Black Bob neighbour speak in their tongue. A brown is the racial identification of south Asian communities, and the Black refers to the African community. But this is interesting to connect the Black Bob as a hairstyle which shows Western expansion to the minority. The Bob hairstyle has long been popular since the 1930s in American popular culture and has become a part of mainstream hairstyles for decades. This is again showing the cultural immersion of the minority into the host culture.

Earlier the character denied and did not recognise the question and the request from her Chinese friend to play the Chinese album instead of the American pop song as the reminder for her to maintain her native language and culture. She situates herself as a speaker of the second language after a moment of recognition “the vowels and echoes/ penetrate me, send forth/ a sense of affinity.” The speaker now elicits various emotions; an embarrassment, a sudden thrill yet a strong feeling of solidarity. She is now able to position herself as someone who speaks in

her second language and negotiates herself in a second culture. This condition is conveyed in the last stanza:

This, or maybe not only this
Stirs memory, like dust motes in the air,
I remember the way my mother used to talk to me
And then suddenly,
The sunspot on the window

(From *Summer Cicadas* p. 30)

The sound of her neighbour talking in a foreign language brought the speaker to the memory when she spoke in her native language every day “Stirs memory, like dust motes in the air.” The moment when her mother speaks to her in Chinese strengthens the idea of being a cultural Other in the second cultural setting. Her awareness raises through a sudden awakening then here comes the moment of recognition “then suddenly/ the sunspot on the window.” On one hand, the sunspot symbolises the growing consciousness, but on the other hand, this is showing the fluctuation, the complexity of learning a second language. The sunspots signals refraction emphasising that this insight is not ephemeral. Benson emphasises that studying abroad in these countries may present complex questions regarding accent, identity and ideologies (Benson, et al, 2013 p. 40). The speaker in Wong’s poems has undergone this kind of complexity dealing with identity and ideology. In “*Summer Cicadas*” the period of study abroad is filled with a hard time of learning a second language and practising the second culture, immersing herself daily into the habit of “reading as leisure” just like a native speaker. She changes the way she thought about learning a language, the necessity to understand the second culture more than the language.

Moving into her other poem, “*Affinity*”, the speaker uncovers the risk of learning a second language and culture. The foreign tongue, the term she used to signify her otherness,

is now being used to point at her recognition as a cultural Other. She starts to feel ironic about her goal; successfully learns her second language but forgets her native culture.

Confronting Otherness when learning a second language is the recurrent theme in my study abroad poems. This is a typical phenomenon for being an outsider and a stranger. However, distinct from the speaker in Jennifer Wong's poems, I discuss the complexity of learning the language concerning some crucial issues like accent, identity and ideology in more solitary and fixed voices which are overwhelmed, anxious and lonely.

My first poem about study abroad is in Bahasa Indonesia; after three years of doing practice-based research on writing poetry in a second language, I decided to translate the poem into English. 'The first visit to Cambridge' chronicles my first ever visit to England. Thus, the moment is captured by the mixture of anxiety and being overwhelmed.

invading the quiet Hills street,
I captured unoccupied Cambridge.
Listen!
The broken wheel of my suitcase,
accompanied the jingling bell from an old church.
Thick English, Fish and chips and University store
were too foreign in my ears,
sweetly squeezing my tongue

(Poem 31)

Setting foot in the host society for the very first time makes the speaker in the poem feel anxious and overwhelmed. She feels the sensation of empty Cambridge streets (unoccupied Cambridge), but the anxiety is more on the understanding of the second language. The anxiety includes not only the new vocabularies of second culture atmosphere (*Thick English, fish and chips and University stores ... foreign in my tongue*). But also, the accent (*sweetly squeezing my tongue*). The mixture and complex feelings are represented by the act of sweetly squeezing since it implies the sensation of experiencing the new flavour in the state of being pushed through which is English as the second language.

Every moment of learning triggers distinct perspectives of looking at one's self, and students' narratives will provide some insights into how their identity develops as they fluctuate (Block 2002). Similar to the speaker in Wong's poems, the difficulty of learning a second language, practising a second culture then realizing the status of being a cultural other is also pronounced as the subject matter in my poem. But unlike the speaker in Wong's "Affinity" which captures the sense of cultural other when dealing with her attempt to learn the second culture, the character in my following poem feels the sense of otherness from different sources; when practising the second culture and at the moment of her academic life. The overwhelmed feeling has disappeared, this time, the learning turns out to be a lonely, solitary and draining experience:

It is Friday the twenty-seventh
Ten days overdue for submission, yes!
It is 2015
and I am far away from the place where I belong
because at six,
confusion has to be resolute

(Poem 32)

The poem entitled 'The Only Pressure I Feel is the Pressure I Put on Myself' is written in the form of O'Hara's 'The Day Lady Died'. Taking the solitary voice of O'Hara, the speaker in my poem lives a hard academic life; writing and the deadline, she is isolated from the host society and feels sad for not feeling at "home" in the host society.

Besides the academic pressure, another pressure arrives from the need to understand the second culture, as the cultural goal might also be important (Benson et al. 2013). To achieve the goal, the character in my poem demonstrate a range of cultural assimilation which means as a "change of cultural patterns to those of the host society (Gordon, 1978). The following lines express this aspect clearly:

the only pressure I feel is the pressure I put on myself.
Find the best toast with SUITABLE FOR VEGETARIAN,

Ok, let me deal with the cheese only and work with 190 DEGREE CELSIUS.
Pass FISH AND CHIPS for lunch and stick with SUGAR-FREE.
While for the racist neighbours, I care for their NEXT delivery,
drop in our door just embolden me with TESCO.
Grin toward PRIMARK, drown in REDUCTION without grief!
Take a deep breath, just glance at DEBENHAMS.

(Poem no 32)

Some terms are cultural things which are new to the speaker in my poem. From eating rice as the primary food, the speaker shifts herself to consume toast and cheese replaces Cassava from the home country. Even though they are new for her, the speaker is actively taking the habit of having specific meals of people in British society (*suitable for vegetarian and sugar-free, fish and chips*) and the ritual of food warming, the technology (*190-degree celsius*).

The speaker in my poem conducts the act of cultural assimilation to create a place in the host culture. Yet, the practice of the second culture seems smooth but leaves the feeling of being marginalised “while for the Racist neighbour, I care for their Next delivery”. The first four of the quoted lines is contradicted by the following four lines. This time, the speaker seems to hide her feeling. There is hypocrisy in the learned behaviour “embolden me with TESCO, grin toward PRIMARK, Drown in REDUCTION without Grief.” They describe the situation that making life in the host society is not as easy as practising its culture. The speaker in my poem imprints the sense of ‘otherness’ while trying hard to push herself to use British brands. The line showing the brand names (*Tesco, Primark, Next and Debenhams*) unravels the life of a minority who is trying not only to learn the language but also receiving and practicing the second culture culture. This is another complexity of studying abroad. The speaker changes the way she identifies herself when using the second language and the second culture.

The solitary ways of observing new things, which result in positioning oneself in a second language and second culture are apparent in my poems. Characters represented in a

long solitary poem make me able to draw the distinct line between my poetry of study abroad with the poetry of Jennifer Wong.

At 135 Piccadilly Bus Stop

i.

Two young ladies,
in the aroma of curry,
speak in their hyphenated language.
Boasting about the fertility,
of planting words,
bridging the gap
between worlds.

(Poem 33)

In one long poem entitled “At 135 Picadilly Bus stop”, I narrate some characters and put more emphasis on my otherness, acting as a cultural other, defining them in my first language identity. Technically, there are three episodes in this poem with different characters. The opening scene describes the two young ladies with South-Asian heritage (*in the aroma of curry*). Their existence in the bus stop reminds the speaker of this poem of her own position, Asian heritage, but learning again from the language of the two young ladies, the speaker suddenly realizes that they are different (*speak in their hyphenated language*). The sound of their ability to speak in good English but with the Indian accent (*boasting about the fertility of planting words and bridging the gap between worlds*) makes me aware of hyphenated identity: they are unique.

Scrutinising the lines in more detail, the last four represent the story of the bilingual and how people perceive them differently. Bilinguals according to Kanno (2000) are speakers of two languages, and therefore by definition members (central or marginal) of multiple language communities, the L1 world and the L2 world exist for them side by side, each just as

relevant to them as the other (p.3). So the ability of ladies in the aroma of curry to present themselves at once in two worlds at some point makes the speaker think that they are unique.

4.4. A Fluent fool and Cultural fluency

Some interesting issues discussed in the poetry of Jennifer Wong relate to the so-called notions of a 'fluent fool' and 'cultural fluency'. Speakers in Wong's poems are in conflicting positions, an interwoven status of being a fluent fool as well as someone who is able to perform a cultural fluency. The notion of 'fluent fool' is more populated with the word 'exoticization' since it applies not only to the aspect of language and culture but also to the world of art like painting and dances. Generally, it is the representation of one's culture for consumption by another. Whereas referring to my experience recognising this kind of term during my study abroad period, it describes the need to speak English fluently and use some elements of British culture to survive during the period of study abroad.

In her poem entitled "Reinvention", Jennifer Wong describes the situation and speaks of her mixed feelings; of her developing cultural identity.

To my friends, it is a suspicious sign
That I am getting westernised
(Line 1-2)

The first two lines of the poem exemplify the speaker's anxiety for being "a fluent fool", a term introduced by Milton Bennet (Einbeck 2002). It is defined as "an ability to adopt the host culture completely" (p, 59). A suspicious sign conveys negative feeling, an unexpected change that was not supposed to happen to the speaker. The thought of the speaker's friend that the speaker is "getting westernized" points at her changing identity which is nevertheless recognised by the way a person sees her/self in a changing world. 'Getting westernized' suggests that the speaker has lost her distinctive identity, becoming 'A fluent fool' who immerses herself totally into the host society.

In spite of the anxiety for her being a fluent fool, the speaker in the poem expresses the positive energy of experiencing the fluency of mediating between cultures; her own culture and the host culture, in this case, East and West. The speaker experiments with new tastes in cultures, relishing cultural fusion. Food and the way of eating as a culture vigorously work through images and symbols. The following lines illustrate the situation:

I've come to look forward to
The variation of
Chicken ala King, or
Sweet and sour pork
On the menu of the Buttery
The way we'd play
A modified version of mah-jong
With Singaporean Chinese and British friends
In a college room plastered all over with
The faces of Leonardo DiCaprio and Oasis. (3-12)

The notion of mediation between cultures is depicted from the above lines. The speaker in the poem smoothly straddles her Chinese culture and Western culture creating a third culture. The words "variation" (line 4) and a "modified version" (line 9) pronounces the ability of person intersecting between Chinese and American meals (*Chicken a la King and sweet and sour pork*), enjoying the multi-ethnic acquaintances (*Singaporean Chinese and British friend*) while playing the modified version of the traditional Chinese card game (mah-jong) in a modern Western physical setting (*a college room plastered all over with the faces of Leonardo Dicaprio and Oasis*). This certainly refers to an intercultural speaker who can mediate between cultures (Steele quoted in Einbeck 2002).

Yet, coming back to the food and the way of eating as a culture, the speaker in Wong's poem demonstrates mixed experiences, mixed feelings with the act of 'cultural fluency' performed by an intercultural speaker. One example is the image of China hotpot which does not only represent the willingness to share and eat from the same pot, but metaphorically the

hot pot symbolizes the warm feeling of people surrounding the pot. And the intention of the speaker to reinvent this kind of eating style in the context of British culture indicates her cultural fluency. The use of the word “hotpot” also seems to resonate with the mixture of cultures since the image of a UK hotpot can imply a dish containing varied and mixed ingredients in one bowl.

The speaker in this poem continues to develop the skills of mediating between cultures in the latter half of the poem:

After all, they are there to be symbolic.
Reinvention of a Chinese hotpot experience:
Making do with Chinese cabbage brought from Mark and Spencer,
Economy Shitake mushrooms from Sainsbury’s,
Boiling an assortment of frozen meats
In an old-fashioned national rice cooker.... (line 13-20)

The Chinese things always accompany the daily routine of the British way. Chinese cabbage from Marks and Spencer, mushrooms from Sainsbury’s results in the new flavour of Chinese hotpot. Often the speaker speaks of her ability inventing and performing elements of two cultures at the same time. The speaker in this poem is eager to immerse herself into the host culture but is still able to preserve the element of her home culture. And at last, she gains the desired identities as the result of her period of studying abroad.

Despite the satisfaction when being able to act as an intercultural person, the last two lines of the second stanza in the poem seem to conclude with the conflicted ideas of learning a language which can destabilise a learner’s identity.

Intimate. Delicious.
Barely authentic. (line 19-20)

The last two lines (*Intimate, delicious and barely authentic*) are conflicted. The positive words represented by ‘intimate’ and ‘delicious’ implies speaker’s happiness for her

reinvention, and it expresses speaker's satisfaction with her new developing identities. However, the word 'barely authentic' sounds highly critical and suggest an irony; in spite of the reinvention, the speaker has lost the authenticity of Chinese culture.

Another prevalent notion of study abroad is the so-called 'exoticization' of culture in a study abroad setting where the student values almost any experience of the host society's mundane daily life as the most important way of learning because it is unattainable in one's home country (Doerr, 2016 p.53). I might argue that it is similar to what has been perceived as a 'fluent fool' which is clearly revealed in this poem. In the third stanza, the Speaker again behaves in her initial identity as 'a fluent fool', and at the end she points at her dry condition for the loss of distinctive identities. It reveals that along the course of her study abroad, she has faced conflicted identities. The speaker in the poem appears to perform instability, without a robust grip of identities.

During weekends we will go
Down to London, three hours by coach,
For shopping
Of the familiar labels-
H&M, French Connection, Zara and Kooka
Like locals, like anyone else; to be followed. (line 21-26)

Stanza three depicts that shopping and brand names (*H &M, French Connection, Zara and Kooka*) point toward the speaker's effort to immerse into the host society. Yet the shopping and the brand names seem to be implicated in a critique of late capitalism which works to press the minority with its hegemonic power. The sentence like locals, *like anyone else to be followed* is the unconscious working system of capitalism that underlines 'the idea of change' as a mask to dominate. The familiar labels where the speaker always spends her time during the weekends loosen the grip of such robust desired identity of the second language speaker which is intercultural ability; performing the mediation between two cultures. It appears that the speaker behaves more as a 'fluent fool' rather than performing cultural fluency as she adopted the habit

of grocery shopping among British people. The global brands and the life style of shopping is a mode of material consumption which has become a cultural experience and leisure activity in the UK. Adopting this kind of life style may stand against cultural distinctiveness and contribute to capitalist homogenisation. But again, Pellegrino Aveni (Benson et al. 2013) finds that students' ability to project desired identities 'continues to fluctuate and improve with experience and growth' (p.39). This may happen to the speaker in Jennifer Wong's poems as identity changes in a changing world, and it is not immediately shaped.

Drawing on my own experience, I strongly agree with Aveni's assertion dealing with this fluctuation and improvement. I have been struggling to reconcile the sense not only as a second language speaker but as a learner writer whose identity as a Moslem-matrilineal mother and daughter wants to be recognised in my poems. Yet the negotiation and the fluctuation of identity in my poems is also evident (see the next sub chapter). At the end, the loss of distinctive identity appears to be problematic when learning a second language and second culture. The statement is valid as I read the last four lines of Wong's "Reinvention":

We'd scarcely forget
What it's like
Being Chinese
Overseas. (line 31-34)

In contrast with the speaker's reinvention of cultures in the second stanza, this time she criticizes herself for being someone new. The words 'scarcely forget' refer to her critical condition; almost forgetting her native culture because of living abroad (*Being Chinese overseas*). But being Chinese overseas also applies to a stereotype identified as a specific Chinese who lives in Britain exhibiting values different from the Chinese in the mainland. The word "scarcely forget" also implies different social realities, in a way that is heteroglossic. On one hand, for a second language speaker "scarcely forget" may imply the condition that the speaker remembers few things about being Chinese. On the other hand, the host culture would

never let her forget her status because of this stereotyped identity of “the Chinese abroad”. The words “scarcely forget” are an idiom which means unlikely to forget. Thus, different realities result from this expression.

Jennifer Wong’s ‘Reinvention’ is a fascinating discourse to exemplify the destabilisation of a learner’s identity because of learning a second language and culture (Block 2009; Hanauer 2010). Through this poem, the speaker points at her ability to be a cultural fluent, a cultural speaker; someone in whom the notion of desired identities should be; but in the same time through her diction and voices, she is in the conflicted position of trying to avoid becoming fluent fool, the learner who immerses herself entirely in the host culture.

The attitude of the speaker in Wong’s ‘Reinvention’ seems to bring the positive emotional state despite the destabilisation of her cultural identity during the period of her study abroad. The verb “looks forward to”, and adjectives “delicious, intimate, authentic” convey positive feelings, but they are juxtaposed with “scarcely forget” and conflicted. Moreover the adjectives “suspicious” and “conflicted” and the verb “scarcely forget” implies different acts and feelings. Still, the speaker’s voice accentuates meaningful lived experience of studying abroad.

Learning a second language should be accompanied by cultural learning. Peipei in Gidden points at the study abroad setting doer needing courage to take on the challenges of living and learning in an unfamiliar environment, a thrilling risk taking (1991). The speaker in Jennifer Wong’s poem resonates the experience of being a fluent fool but at the same time performing the ability to mediate between two cultures. She is brave to take a thrilling risk, encounter herself to come across new things. Yet, her identity is not stable, destabilisation is implied by the inconsistency of her voice when expressing her changes. Words conveying negative and positive feelings in the poems (*a suspicious sign, getting westernised, look*

forward to, Intimate, delicious, barely authentic, like locals to be followed and scarcely forget)
capture the inconsistency of voice.

Jennifer Wong's 'Reinvention' takes me back to the time I first recognised that language had changed me personally and culturally. In a long visual poem entitled 'Study Abroad Setting: Bear in mind', I explore and describe the thrill of risk-taking to experience new things in the new environment. However, unlike Wong's poem, through the speaker's voices in my second language poems, I want to emphasise that living abroad contains almost a dialogic aspect; learning new languages and cultures is always followed up by moments of retaining native values. This is actually in line with the idea of 'authenticity' that Wong has tried to pursue yet finds herself fail to attach to the idea. The following lines exemplify the experience:

Bear in mind that life is not only
a matter of an afternoon tea with a pack
of half-price crisps from a spring Sale, but it is also the morning
Errand with two bags of groceries from the Halal market nearby. Bear in mind that life is not
a matter of evening spelling practice with mainstream fairy tales to read, but it is also an issue
of night lullabies to some husky boys with the same old songs.

(Poem 35)

The first five lines of my poem show a mixture of my British routine (*an afternoon tea and crisps*) with Asian lifestyle represented by the routine of doing groceries (*Halal market nearby*). They are not interested in each other; one is not immersing into the other. The speaker in this poem convinces herself that identity in study abroad becomes a task that individuals must work upon (Benson et al. 2013). For me, the dual aims learning the second language and the second culture but at the same time retaining the native values, become the task that I must work upon.

The next two lines make the point clearer, when evening English spelling practice which needs mainstream fairy tales to read, should be supplemented with Indonesian night lullabies and the same old native song. The speaker in this poem is not trying to mediate between cultures, intervening one to another but attempts to give both values the corresponding portion, practising new life but later on preserving old ones, retaining the old values for the children.

The destabilisation of identity in a period of study abroad especially when learning a language and culture also exists in my collection. Unlike the speaker in Wong's poem who feels uneasy about the sense of authenticity as a Chinese background woman after learning a second language and culture, the speaker in my poems has been busy dragging herself around the topic of sustaining multiple identities. The key point of my study abroad poems is the existence of my children as the agent of preserving native heritage.

Similar to Wong's poems, a thrilling risk-taking has to be performed, for example mediating between cultures. Unlike the speaker in Wong's poem ,who underlines positive voices of the thrilling risk task, the speaker in my poetry expresses her self-situating as a more draining experience:

Bear in mind that life is not about adopting, adapting but also taking some risk of disintegrating native values. Bear in mind that

life is not a
matter of
successfully
executing a
receipt for fish
and chips but also
conjuring up British
kale into the flavour
of curry Cassava
leaves. (poem 35)

This is a shape poem. The lines are shaped to draw the picture of the human mind. However, reading the lines in more detail, the poems are about the struggle of a student mother

who is living in a dominant British culture trying to learn some elements of the second culture but grabbing every single chance to retain the native culture in the family setting.

The binary positions of living abroad are not apparent in the rest of this poem. The speaker this time craves an image of being the intercultural speaker, no matter how hard and how big the risk is since the emphasis is on the value and the effect of 'risk-taking action'. Learning English and fitting it into her home's needs implies a status quo of the learner; thus, the act of adapting and adopting cultures takes the risk of disintegrating native value. The status quo is further described in the line when the speaker feels satisfied with the flavour of British kale which can be transferred into the taste of curry cassava leaves from her native land. The image of curry cassava leaves becomes essential when talking about food as a culture, and I successfully create this image into a metaphor for the second language practice.

4.5. Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I want to restate Benson et al.'s assertion on the concept of study abroad. Benson et al. (2013) emphasise the idea that study needs only be a part of the purpose of living abroad; however, they highlight other possible goals, including personal, intercultural and academic developments (p. 13). Thus, the complexity of learning a second language and second culture may often destabilise a student's identity which is inseparable to his/her writing identities; the writing identity is crafted by the way she or he sees the changing world but one should see the identities in the narrative of study abroad as the developing discourse.

The complexity of learning a second language and culture as found in Wong's poems covers crucial aspects such as confronting the sense of Otherness, mediating between cultures while avoiding the tension of being a fluent fool; and forgetting their native culture. This, however, happens to the speaker in Jennifer Wong's poems. *Summer Cicadas reveals* this

complexity obviously through some study abroad poems in the collection. The speaker's accomplishment in Jennifer Wong's *Summer Cicadas* for some cultural matters reveals what has happened to the speaker in my study abroad poems. Similarly, characters in both Wong's poems and my poems are caught in the complexity of academic and domestic atmospheres; learning a second language is accompanied by achieving another goal which is cultural learning. Often, the characters are trapped to perform the British Western lifestyle which is nevertheless a description of cultural hegemony represented by the habit of shopping for brand names. These aspects which are found in Wong's poems resonate the aspect of study abroad setting in my poems.

Immersing into the new culture, and sometimes acting as a fluent fool but then being able to mediate between cultures are the key figures of the speaker in Wong's poems. Still, the quest for identity is central in the collection. Different from Wong's character, I found some different elements of subject matter. My poetry works in a solitary way, the single journey assuming the self as other but bringing the spirit of devotion to learn and to survive. In short, the sense of otherness is more apparent in my collection. My characters work upon cultural appropriation, yet the feelings of loneliness and otherness occur among the hard work of language and cultural learning. The existence of family life makes the struggle of the speaker in my poem even harder since she has to work hard to negotiate toward her multiple identities as a language learner, a student and a mother. In short, the speaker in Wong poems has stepped out of her "cultural accomplishment" while the speaker in my study abroad poems still lingers in the observation of British culture.

CHAPTER 5 - MOTHERHOOD PHD

I settle in the corner of the world
where poetry subjugates breast milk
and midnight kisses,
my children dine from the menu
of symbols and imageries.

5.1. Introduction

I was in the bathroom, intending to leave home earlier for a morning workshop. Suddenly, I heard the sound of cracking next door, right in the main bedroom. The youngest frantically cried when I opened the door, still in his pyjamas, pointing at his older brother who has punched him in the face. The older one is a statue in front of the laptop grinning toward me with his tricky confession. He did not see anything, he was too busy surfing the world of the imaginary, leaving me with the traffic of words, regurgitating the anguish, again morning has been broken!

I am a mother of three children who was raised in a family which regards higher education as one of the most important achievements a woman can have in society. My matrilineal kinship today appreciates women to have both domestic and economic roles in the family. My mother was a university lecturer, and the memory of capturing her figure, going out and coming into our maternal house while I was comforted by the nanny has imprinted in my mind. Some decades after, I have lived a life just like my mother; an academia mom, I started to discover life's struggle for being a mother who tried to balance academic and family life.

This struggle became even more apparent when I decided to sail away from my homeland, Indonesia, to pursue a PhD degree in English literature in England. My husband and my siblings, those are among the few people who supported a choice I made, none of the

members of my big matrilineal family thought that it was a right decision, even my colleagues disqualified the option to study abroad, for they thought that it would ruin the life of my family.

Doing a PhD far away from the homeland, is considered “challenging and extraordinary” while you have young children. Things would be more complicated, a second language speaker, pursues the degree in English Literature and Creative Writing, a subject which is not dealt with in your first language. The complexity of learning and living as a Mama PhD is even more apparent and burdensome. However, the motherhood PhD episodes drive me more into creativity to write some poems about my life as a Mama PhD while bearing the work of child raising.

This chapter chronicles the episodes of my life as a Mama PhD in the context of a study abroad setting. This chapter underpins some aspects of being a Mama PhD concerning the language and poetic choice reflected in my Motherhood PhD poems. It reveals how I come to some choices of vocabularies, voices and imagery when illustrating my life here as a PhD mom, the hard effort to balance the academic life and family life, negotiating identities of being a student and a mother, trying to learn not only language but kids' psychology for their wellbeing. In this context, I am going to argue that far from blocking the creative process, the chaos and madness of bearing children in the turmoil of my PhD are creative enablers, driving more poems as a result.

5.2. Sailing Away from the Comfort Zone

In 2013, among the leisure and relaxing moments, I was browsing the internet and found the scholarship application for young lecturers offering the opportunity to take a higher degree abroad. The offer covers the opportunity to bring the family and the government sponsor would grant the awardee with two years full family's allowance. At that time, I was in my most comfortable position as a mother of three boys so I was not too ambitious to have the academic

promotion. I was satisfied enough with my job as a junior lecturer in the English Department, State University of North Sumatera, Indonesia. I was too busy spending time with three canaries, my boys, and I was unwilling to leave my sickly mother because my Islamic-matrilineal society imposed upon me the knowledge and tradition that it is a daughter who is usually responsible for the ageing parent and this is morally embedded in my mind as a daughter.

The very private conversations with my husband shrivelled my initial commitment to remaining at home and made me consider his suggestion to take the chance. His positive words slowly convinced me that it is possible to take the kids abroad and there is nothing to worry about while he would be there to accompany me sailing the world. My husband thought that it was wiser to take my mother back to our hometown in the west province, to my twin sister, another daughter in the family. It took six weeks for me to decide to take the opportunity finally.

To which country can you go to enrich your knowledge of English literature? The thrilling and vibrant thought of revisiting England after spending two months in Cambridge in 2009 made my mind just go directly to the United Kingdom. I passed the scholarship written selection and academic interview after getting the unconditional offer from Salford. And we, as a nuclear family, finally arrived at Manchester in 2014.

From then and now, my life has changed drastically. I was moving into a new territory. From east to west, from my most comfortable zone into a space of uncertainty and anxiety; grabbing every chance to unify my two selves; Mother and PhD student. Long before in my home country, as a junior lecturer, I was not too worried about my academic career; having three days teaching in a week, made me able to spend more time with my boys, devoting myself as a perfect mom. I let my husband work hard for us, holding his role as the breadwinner in the family while I acted only to secure my position in academia. For decades, the institutions in

Indonesia has relied on senior woman workers/ academics rather than to young and junior staff since they are pressured by the matters of childbearing and raising. The conflicting interest between career and children became problems for young and junior staff to progress in their career. I suppose I would be able to have a better career in academia when the boys grow up and no longer need my full attention so that the condition for being a full-time mom had been a perfect position for me at that time.

Thus, sailing away from my comfort has been another tell-tale episode of my autobiographical layer. In so many western discourses today, there are no easy answers for those who are seeking to balance their role as a mother and their role as an academic. Evans and Grant (2013) emphasize that a career in higher education is still not nearly as family-friendly as it should be.

In addition to this, Paksi et al. confirm that the years spent in education play a crucial role in women's lives in all developed countries (2016, p. 287). They further affirm the accepted opinion that youth would be able to establish family after they have finished school (p. 287). Drawing the point from the statement above, one can understand that a woman would be able to have and raise children if they finished their education. This is an accepted opinion thus by the time I started my PhD program at Salford, I was going against the accepted sequences of life. I decided to raise the boys at the same time I entered higher education. This was frightening for me initially to think about it; a family and children would be trouble, the obstacle that would hinder my PhD journey, or even vice versa, I flunked my motherhood because of this PhD making.

I have chosen the road and there is no way to turn back. The road got bumpier when I heard news about my husband that he was about to be expelled from his home university due to his "unclear leave". New leadership in our home university confirmed their policy, leaving

us with the only choice; my husband should leave Manchester and go back to Indonesia in order not to lose his academic career. In my second year of the PhD, I stepped out of another boundary, moving away into another territory of discomfort; into a temporary single Mama PhD.

5.3. The Poetic of Motherhood

Motherhood and its relationship with writing have a long and complex history. There are ongoing debates over the topic of writing and motherhood. Dienstfrey and Hillman in Duplessis mention that writing and motherhood, two rigid poles diametrically apart, imply that by choosing one, the other is abandoned (2003, p.19). The statement has existed ever since the earliest works of literature. The ancient Greek poet Sappho implicates motherhood as destructive to female friendship:

Before they were mothers
Leto and Niobe
had been the most
devoted of friends (From Barnard, M., 1986. *Sappho*.).

In her poem entitled ‘Before They were Mothers’ , Sappho does not point directly to Motherhood as an opposing discourse to the writing, but in this case she raises the issue of motherhood as a destruction and interruption to a friendship. Leto and Niobe, (the characters in the poem) chose motherhood and abandoned their friendship.

Another example is from the famous British woman poet in the Victorian era, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning who wrote about the division between writing and motherhood especially in the period of war:

Yet I was a poetess only last year,
And good at my art, for a woman, men said;
But *this* woman, *this*, who is agonized here,

— The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head
For ever instead.

(*From Grand Permission p. 64*)

Browning wrote the poem as a meditation about difficulties of being a woman, a writer and a mother in the time of war (Dienstfrey and Hillman., 2003). Both elements are opposing loyalties, at the end the speaker left ‘writing’ for devoting herself to a ‘motherhood’ (*Yet I was a poetess only last year*). The first line of the poem “I was a poetess” implies the speaker’s ability with poetic language and art as her past prestigious status. The word “poet” has been ostentatiously feminised by male commentators to draw attention to her status. But splitting from “I” to “this woman”, the speaker is deprived of her external status as a “poetess”. Yet the poem remains forever in her mind: “The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head”. I (as poetess) no longer exists in a public space. Poetess nevertheless remains a private identity while “this woman” turns outward to be a public identity, a mother defined biologically.

The issue of motherhood as an opposing discourse to writing is nevertheless strongly connected to the representation of the mid-19th century’s standard of motherhood which implies the Christian concept of mother as ‘an angel in the house’ (Rigg, 2012 p. 508). The representation of an angelic mother was enduring. Moreover, the features of pregnancy and childbirth in woman’s poetry became the poetic representation of themselves. For example, in the second stanza Browning ironically emphasised more the loyalty to child breast feeding; instead of art produced by poetry writing, breast feeding is an art and a test for mothering.

What art can a woman be good at ? Oh, vain !
What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast
With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain ?
Ah boys, how you hurt ! you were strong as you pressed,
And I proud, by that test.

(Donaldson, 1980)

The portrait of an angelic mother is defined through an image of a woman breast-feeding her children. The speaker points at an opposing position between the art of writing poetry and the

values of breast-feeding as an art itself. The figures of “*milk teeth of babes*”, “*smile at pain*”, “*how you hurt*” problematise the moment of angelic motherhood, which is not like creating art when writing a poem. There is a space here although arguably Browning subverts angelic motherhood by speaking openly about the pain and difficulty of being a mother.

In the British western context, there was indeed an increasing number of women who combined writing and motherhood but the basic conflict between these two roles still existed (Rubi, 2002). After the 1950s and 60s the default figuration of working class mother as ‘an angel in the house’ seemed as an impossible reality since only few of them were able to devote themselves exclusively to mothering (Anderson in Hieber, 2016). The figuration broke the aspects of writing and research which have been muted to contextualize the maternal experiences. Olsen emphasizes the idea of Motherhood and writing (in Rubin, 2002, p. 19) “It is distraction, not meditation, that becomes habitual; interruption, not continuity . . . Work interrupted, deferred, postponed makes blockage at best, lesser accomplishment.” So, this is one paradigm which puts motherhood and writing in opposition to each other.

Slightly different from the British context, maternal experiences are still being silenced until today in the Indonesian context. Indonesian woman writers have worked really hard to grab chances to discuss women’s equality in all aspects of life. For instance, Indonesian women poets today have stepped out from the formal boundary set by male writers. The famous Ayu Utami and Djaenar Meesa Ayu are among Indonesian women writers who discuss some aspects as they are seen by patriarchal society as “taboo” and “immoral”. Arguing against this patriarchal view, Djaenar describes their intention to expose the fact that woman has become the object of sexual exploitation (in Budianta, 2011). Focusing on physical, cultural and sexual dependence on man, the aspect of maternal experiences is still left untouched by Indonesian woman writers.

Coming into the new century, some woman poets attempted to expel the old myth about the angelic mother. New concepts of motherhood appear at the turn of century, which breaks the value of the “mommy myth” of intensive parenting; what being a good mommy means with anxiety about being a bad mother (Faulkner, 2014). New concept of motherhood also triggered newness in creative art and it is vice versa; the newness, the innovation in art also changed perceptions of motherhood. The poetry of motherhood by mothers expressing their own experience in the maternal moment is an experiment (Souffrant, 2009). This is obvious, I have experienced the distraction, interruption so many times in my PhD period because of child raising. In my case, motherhood PhD is the source of creativity, in which I have space to explore feelings with new language, it gives me a challenge to synthesize this motherhood PhD with the act of making poetry in a second language. For me, motherhood and writing are not oppositional discourses. Supporting this argument, Rubin states that mothers experience “at least one positive effect of motherhood – in content, focus or enrichment – on their writing” (2002, p. 25). Children, and family experiences can provide women with the subject matter of their writing. And this is my departing point to claim a space for my own motherhood experience, the conflicting interests during my maternal moments; my motherhood PhD context which became the source of experiment and creativity toward my second language poetry. This positive experience is unfolded in the next section.

5.4 My Three Canaries; the Poetics of Love and Madness

My three canaries are three recurring figures in my Motherhood PhD poems. Small birds chirp and make irritating sounds. Armitage and Dee state that birds are the most obvious wild things we have around us, they are much watched and much loved not only by the poet (2003, p. iii). In Indonesian culture, birds are strongly connected to the figure of the male who usually demonstrates ‘an active movement’ (Budianta, 2012). I draw on the concept of my cultural

heritage to describe the nature of my three canaries, my three boys in my motherhood PhD poems.

The three canaries, they are always there whether to destroy or to make my days. There are still two sides of the coin when it deals with my three canaries: love and madness. They are all for the conversation of my poems, the source of strength to survive. I include their existence in some parts of my collection (see poem 2, 22, 23, 29, 32, 38, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 55, 56, 57, 58) . Their sadness is my tears, and their laughter is my happiness. Often, I end up with some beautiful heart-touching lines, writing the lyrics for them in a night bus from Salford to Cheetham Hill, thinking about them waiting for my night kisses before bed time. The absence of their father has made them cling to my existence. I narrate some moments of losing quality time with them in a symbolic way:

the tapping of their tiny feet
complicates my turning world.

After all, their boisterous beaks
give voice, calling me home.
(Poem 43)

I invented the image of three canaries, small birds with their loud voices demanding the attention from their female protector when watching them sleeping after my bedtime absences. Hearing their feet playing football in our rented home in Cheetham Hill has been wearisome. This is interesting, I was trying to invent some images which are small in scale but potentially able to perform a huge function. The figure of tiny feet affects the turning word, the small beaks of my three canaries have the power to physically move me to return home. Those images suggest a cosmology – my world revolving around them.

The act of running up the stairs once became problematic, the neighbour complained about the slam-bang noise which becomes more delicate in its onomatopoeic line (*The tapping of their tiny feet*), and I have to ask for their forgiveness and compromise (*complicates my*

turning world). At the same time, the sounds of their speaking to me on the phone mumbling about running out of food, empty refrigerator, and unfinished homework create the effect of animated voices. I resemble that sort of sound with the boisterous beaks of small birds, and the sounds keep reminding me to go home even if it was in my rush hour of deadline and submission (*give voice calling me home*). Indeed, in transforming this kind of experience into poetry, I have chosen to emphasise the delicacy, the vulnerability of my three canaries rather than the robust energy of their voices.

In my other poem, ‘135 Piccadilly Bus stop’, along lines narrating a study abroad poem interrogating some points of observation about people, language and culture, finally I narrate that the culminating feature of the view is by a sudden recognition of the sound of three small birds :

I catch one particular sound
of three birds
chirping and yelling.
My poetry terminates
in its luminous stop
and finds its way back
home

(Poem 34)

Love always brought me home. These motherhood PhD poems have one thing in common; a concern with moving outside of and returning to the domestic space. I conduct a journey both physical and mental; I experience the transition and the voyage will always return home.

The above poem conveys the process of outdoor-learning that always guides me to identify the role of a mother for her children. The poem starts from the concrete description of people and places in my study abroad setting which then finally shifts to abstract description (*my poetry terminates in its luminous stop*). This phrase becomes abstract, the bus stop

becoming a poetry stop shifting my role from a student in to a mother again at the end of the day.

The fear of failure to recognise the moments when they need me haunts my unconscious mind, whether it was the instinct of a mother or guilty feelings for not being there for them in some critical moments of their childhood. Above all the labour of the day; early morning domestic work, the school run, groceries shopping, bus catching, the deadline and submission; the journey of the exhausted day always guided me back to them.

I remember well when my little one cried aloud when I missed his dancing recital. It made me feel disgust, hating myself and I kept blaming myself. What to do to gain a release from this guilty feeling? I wrote poems and more poems to express the sadness and my love to the three canaries. Once, they would not understand when I brought papers and a collection of journals to read. As the years have gone by, my three canaries started to value my PhD education; they begin to recognise my frequent absence which means I am approaching some deadlines.

There have been more times to deal with the anger and frustration when confronting their common traits as small boys. It is energy-taking, and every day-errands become madness to restrain. Surprisingly, I write more poems about them to create a space for exploring solutions and I was surprised to read back my poems, finding that the explosion of anger and frustration are wrapped in humour and a comical tone.

In one of my motherhood PhD poems, I wrote one humorous episode of how I spent the 2016 summer holiday when I was due to submit the report for my second-year examination. It is about my madness; desperation and fury but a witty expression toward the failure to catch up with the deadline. I conjure the abstract metaphysic of a poem to explore imaginary solutions, some imaginary solution to overcome my three canaries; my summer distraction, to

thrive among the submission. Thus poetry becomes a creative space in which solutions to domestic problems can be worked out.

Can you skip July to September?
Tape them in the calendar blacklist
So the 60 days never exist
(Poem 49)

From July to September 2016, I was provoked by their demanding expressions for my attention. That summer holiday they could not go anywhere and were trapped at home playing games and other indoor activities. While everybody was going out for the long holiday, I was left alone without assistance to take care of three canaries. Two months of hustle-bustle which I never expected before (*so the 60 days never exist*) ruined my summer.

Are you willing to be?
A ten-year-old friendly girl next door?
Who is good at playing X Box and PS 4?

Or should you speak about it out loud?
The story of the haunted laptop
which the bad spirit tangled on its monitor

Or be the witch
with her magic broomstick,
your charms could make them fall asleep (Poem 49)

The poem is in the form of ten stanzas of three lines epitomizing the figure of my three canaries. In this poem, I articulate my multiple selves engaged in the service of mothering (*a girl next door, a liar, a witch*). I compose some questions to ensure the right ways to overcoming the problems of my summer distraction. The first line of the poem echoes an intact sense of self which continues throughout the poem (*Are you willing to be?*). Ottewell (2003) refers this intact sense of self as an attempt of woman to maintain a creative, soul-affirming existence amidst the conflicting time and emotional demands inherent in the role of mother (p. 359).

The comic and ironic voices are distinct, picturing my desire to change into the variety of human figures who could be able to redeem their active movement. From the figure of a ten-year old friendly girl next door, a witch, even a liar who was ready to tell them a story of the haunted laptop. I again open a space for exploring the solutions. The words are honed after experiencing the madness, a frustration, on one hand, being trapped in an inactive situation of reading and writing but on the other hand, forced me to spend the summer holiday with them actively. This is exactly what is implied by a double-edged-dynamic: the loss and gain of mothering caused by the PhD.

Giving up time to study in the university and to read and to write is the source of restlessness and my madness. Sometimes I communicate the anger to them, but I repeatedly left it unspoken. In one of my poems entitled “When buyung have their circumcision”, I articulate the anger, again in comical voice:

They said it is too painful to be a decent grown-up man, for they are locked in the cage, wrapped by antiseptic creams and drowned by the ecstasy of Paracetamol. An obligation is paid in the midst of fear and pain, through some anguished nights.

In return, I said it is not secure to have the restless humming birds, in spite of the maternal chores and massive subsidy. Their drone defeats the taunting lines and classroom invitation...circumcising my body of works.

(Poem 44)

Circumcision is a religious practice that most of moslem family have chosen to adhere to. In some countries, the circumcision is expected to conduct in the earlier days of the boy's life. Learning from the tradition of Moslems in the United Kingdom, my husband and I decided to send my two boys to a clinic where they had the circumcising done. The post-surgery was a disaster not only for them but also for me. The Canaries were not able to play or move actively, they had gone through some pain which cannot be endured (*An obligation is paid in the midst of fear and pain, through some anguished nights*). This situation is again provoking but left me

with the ideas of writing poetically about “the bird in the cage” which is cultural and points at the new look of their penis (*they are locked in the cage, wrapped by antiseptics*).

Arguing is sometimes futile with young boys, but in this poem, I communicate my madness to silence their time-consuming speech. Again, the figure of the bird became the poetic of madness in this poetry (*It is not secure to have the restless hummingbird*). I then again should go back to a cultural symbol of the bird in the Indonesian context which sometimes conveys the active movement of a male figure. I was asking for their sympathy as they needed me in their most crucial moment (*Maternal chores and massive subsidy*) but not their unreasonable whimper obstructing my attempt to attend classes and to block my writing progress (*circumcising my body of work*). The last line works well to shift the poem from physical to abstract description and the shifting represents the poetics of motherhood which is itself both a physical and mythical role.

5.5. My Three Canaries; the Poetic of Tongues and Identity

There are, of course, side-effects of bringing the children with me abroad. These cover positive and negative outcomes. My three canaries have learned English faster than their father. They have become multilingual children. Coming into the third year of my study, the oldest habitually corrected my English articulation. The debate against a correct English pronunciation have coloured morning conversation. I was happy about their progress in English. However, I have been astonished but quite desolate about their new tongue and cultural hybridity eradicating their native one.

Referring back to the concept of ‘fluent fool’, the three canaries start to speak English much better than ‘Bahasa Indonesia’. It shows the supremacy of English substituting their first language hence slowly diminishing their native culture. Not to mention that language is an integral part of the colonised culture, the coloniser reduces the value of the culture of the

colonized through this linguistic domination (Wallinger, 2011 p. 76). But the problematic fact about their tongue and identity heightens the complexity of the act of mothering the three canaries. Kristeva discusses motherhood as a literal and figurative means of language division, in her concept of the sacredness of maternal love and the mother tongue. Kristeva states that Motherhood is a primary means of preserving language acquisition and ethical development (in Lemma, 2010 p. 92). Then again, it has become interesting subject matter in my motherhood poem. I interrogate the aspects of the mother tongue not only in the case of second language acquisition but also as an element of motherhood.

In the poem entitled “My second Canary and his denying tongues”, I recall my anger toward the falsehood my second boy had committed. The idea is not about a young boy trying to make some lies toward the mother. I was so inspired by a load of his words, and the multi-language he used to convince me:

“I swear to God, I did not do it!”
“ Bunda, sumpah, demi Allah!”
And he is again sticking his other tongue out
“Wal – la-hi qasam!”

(Poem 69)

In the act of his denial, my second boy speaks English and switches to Bahasa Indonesia, his used-to-be-native language, and then tries another attempt in Urdu. Different fonts represent different languages. At that time, I was examining his languages as his means to communicate, and I questioned the cultural aspect loaded in his words. Ever since I am aware of the fact that for years he has been living in a multicultural side of North Manchester, and that multilingual tongues shape his cultural identity. His everyday multilingual practice then is another exciting aspect of my motherhood PhD period.

Another inspiring episode of raising children in western society is the sudden change of the tongue. It happened to my youngest one when he started his first/early days at School.

He exhibited so-called “resistance” when learning English in his early days at school. But in the end, this sudden change triggers another thing that I could not resist. What makes me sometimes worried about the problematic aspect of raising the children in the western setting is that they eventually forget Bahasa Indonesia. The following poem, entitled “the story of resistance”, illustrates this event:

Once Mrs Rogers found it hard
to tell me the truth,
about his denying tongue,
absorbing the thick English.
With a and the double ee,
he asked, “what can you see”.
The double oo matches “kangaroo in the zoo”.
He resisted the blending sounds,
then I pointed to the autumn leaves,
and added aubergine (Poem 46)

When writing the poem, I had just got back from “parent's evening”, a special meeting between the class teacher and all the parents. Mrs Rogers (anonymised) had to work hard for my youngest. He unconsciously resisted “English”, “*his denying tongue, absorbing the thick English*”, and Mrs Rogers suggested that I assist my boy at home. On the way to school and along the street back home, I have been trying to point at some subjects containing the phonic lesson he learned at school , “I pointed autumn and added Aubergine.” His sudden change of tongue eventually made me regret a thing that I did not anticipate before which is his losing connection with his native tongue, ‘Bahasa Indonesia’.

Should not we refuse the first tongue?
Now, I feel guilty
I wish I pointed home that day.
I am not a fertile mother,
unable to provide him with double tongues (Poem 46)

Divakaruni points at the fact that people are being changed by the language (quoted in Wallinger, 2011). This is in line with the story about my third canary gaining his English and

my ignorance not to retain the elements of our national identity(language and culture) to him (*should not we refuse the first tongue, I wish I pointed home that day*), results in the condition of forgetting his 'Bahasa Indonesia'. Home is a recurrent image in my motherhood poems, but this time, I use the image of home to point at geographical space rather than domestic space. In this poetry the meaning of home is shifted into a territory of identity.

Unlike the other two canaries who retain the element of their native tongue and become the global citizens of multi-languages, my third canary faced so called "language deprivation". I regret this fact, my impotence, my inability (*I am not a fertile mother, unable to provide him with the double tongue*), yet nevertheless I find it as once again a story worth telling through my second language poetry.

5.6. Conclusion

Negotiation and adaptation continue to empower mothers, recognizing that both mothers and children benefit when the mother lives her life and practices mothering from a position of agency, authority, authenticity, and autonomy (Middleton, 2006). This concept has slowly shifted the old myth of the angelic mother or intensive mother in the past thirty years. Haratyan (2017) describes that the guilt mothers feel owing to the contradictory feelings provoked by maternal ambivalence is rooted in cultural representations of the "perfect" mother, constantly loving, patient, and available towards her children. And there is always an urge within me to be the perfect mother in spite of the fact that I am pursuing a PhD far away from my home country. Often the two forces collide, leaving me with the only option to choose what I have missed, which is full attention to my three canaries. Cooley and Kasdorf in Evans and Grant (2008) point out that to be a mother, you need to forget or at least subdue your previous intellectual life and devote yourself entirely to your children and to building a stable

environment for the family (p. 205). I might agree with the risk of an inability to create a stable environment for my three canaries. But I have always sought for some ways to negotiate, standing in between two roles and hoping that through these hard times, difficulty will end up in joy and laughter, watching my three canaries finally able to spread their wings to fly.

The illustrated condition nevertheless triggers more ideas to transfer into some lines of poetry. It is not that easy to communicate my feeling about this personal problem, a sensitive subject if it deals with my choice to take a PhD in the turmoil of my motherhood period. And again, in the three canaries, there are always ideas, energy to write about them in the moment of panicking and desperation. I guess my poetic choice of love and madness, tongue and identity is strongly honed by this wave of autobiographical events; Motherhood PhD.

CHAPTER 6 - MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE OF WRITING MEMORY POETRY IN A SECOND LANGUAGE: REFLECTIVE STATEMENT²

“arte poetica fungor dumfingo poema”

(While I make a poem, I am being made by poetry)

Graecismus (1212):

6.1. Background

Three years ago, having locked myself among the books and piles of journals, I stumbled upon the thin pages of a book entitled *Poetry as a Foreign Language*, an EFL poetry anthology which is edited by Martin Bates (1999). I could not help but hold the book and decided to go on and finished reading it in three hours. In the book Bates writes that for some learners, the foreign language offers a new freedom of expression that is not available in the mother tongue (p.6). I was struck by the statement and suddenly realized that I have been doing some part of what is so-called “new expression”.

I have found myself developing literarily and linguistically at the same time making friends with oddity and inaccuracy. There were times I faced the failure as well as the success of communicating my poetry in my second language and there were other times I followed my intuition and wrote things that sounded right for me. Through reading other poets, I begin to recognize oddity, error and foreignness. Can this experience result in the freedom of new expression? Can this freedom be appreciated when writing in English as a second language?

Coming to the practice-based research of writing poetry in a second language, I experienced the shift from being a language learner to being a writer. It has involved insecurity,

² Book of Abstract. *From The Second International Life Writing*; Imperial College London, July 2017.

uneasiness and fear when dealing with the foreignness, inaccuracy, oddity and mistakes but at the same time finding strengths and good qualities of poetic practice beneath them.

This chapter therefore addresses the meaningful experience of writing memory poetry in a second language. It intertwines the constraints, challenges and the strengths emphasizing the process of my emerging voice as a second language poet. It also highlights my English improvement as a language learner and some aspects of second language that later on become my writerly identity.

6.2 Memory and autobiographical exploration as one of the critical conditions of meaningful writing in a second language

I first encountered memoir written by one of the Women poets of Asian background, when reading Cathy Song's "The youngest Daughter" more than a decade ago. In the poem, Song explores the relationship between mother and daughter; the speaker poet describes the concept of ageing in a mother-daughter aspect, which links to cultural context. The poem thrilled me immediately, reminded me of my ageing parent and their expectation to be taken care of by their daughters in our cultural-religious context. When reading "The youngest Daughter", I had a sense that I would also be able to transfer my memory, my personal history into a piece of poetry. I finally ended up with 12 lines of memory poetry entitled "An Ode to Papa".

AN ODE TO PAPA

Love, harmony and despair,
You had planted them in fair
Happiness, laughter, even anger
Watering our castle with care

As I walked down along the garden path of my childhood memory
The teachings of simplicity in grace would always be your key
Row the boat of life among the shattered dreams and fulfilled hopes
Showing the tide of river streams for me to cope

I saw the patches of blue sky and the dancing daffodils

When Papa smiles to eternity without any tears
Forever , I would long to embrace his life spirit
To go on , living a life, praying for you in my every heart be

This is a short poem devoted to my late father. The poem itself describes the moment when my father closed his eyes and passed away peacefully in front of me. The moment lasted for years and is captured like a movie in my head. At the moment of writing the poem, I felt like I was drawn to it, smoothly pouring the words of deepest sadness, lost and recalled. The day my father died, made it particularly urgent for me to respond to this traumatic event. Lida (2015) strongly points out that L2 writers, even not at the levels of advanced ability, can successfully communicate their experiences relating to traumatic events through poetry. Poetry becomes a form of expression, as Cohen emphasizes that poetry is just the evidence of life (2007).

I used to write in the conventional form of three stanzas, making 12 lines of poetry per poem. At first, in my mind, this conventional form relates to my sense of living up to standards. My English literature academic undergraduate background taught me that some classic poets such as Robert Frost and William Wordsworth usually write poems in three stanzas and they are considered as writing high literature. But then, I found this three stanzas poem seems to reflect the limitation of my experiment to write a more innovative poem. I stopped writing and decided to end the lines when I did not have any words to say.

Despite the traditional form, I had begun to play with rhyme and assonance (*Despair and Fair, anger and care, hope and cope* etc) long before writing some other poems to fight the assumption that second language writers are unable to play with literary features. Fecteu in Hanauer (2010) assumes that advanced second language learners who read English literature are “inconsistent” in their ability to define and use literary concepts. When I first practised writing my English poem almost a decade ago, I had already paid attention to the linguistic and

literary features I read in English poetry written by first speakers and I developed some ways to produce the features. However, I sometimes fail to find literary features in my poetry. It is probably true; the inconsistency may be defined as inability. I fear for this limitation. The fear of the limitation also draws on the canonical view of literary work.

When I continued tracing my memory and autobiography in my creative writing, I started to get used to the fear and the limitation, convincing myself that the meaning of my poem would be more appreciated than the oddity and the foreignness

As a language learner, I have made use of every opportunity to expand my creative writing ability and find that my unique cultural and religious background are worthy of exploration. Spiro (2014) suggests that the learner writer is able to arrive at creative ideas which are honed and shaped but draw from a deep autobiographical source. I decided to concentrate on motherhood and mother-daughter aspects in my memory poetry since this sort of personal history and autobiography constitute a meaningful life experience for me.

6.3. Playing with the language: Oddity, foreignness and inaccuracy can have poetic strength and a unique voice

In the poem, “An Ode to Papa”, I used some phrases which later on are understood as odd or bizarre in English, they are English but they do not sound “English”. The words “in fair” Line 1 and “with care” line 4 sound foreign. Initially, I created the words to honour a rhyme scheme, to follow the rhyming pattern. After finding out that the words are bizarre, I felt like my world is limited. Years later, I still used the same pattern of oddity when writing a poem in the class assignment called **New Departures: Innovative Poetry**:

*While for the racist neighbours, I care for their NEXT delivery,
drop in our door just embolden myself with TESCO.
Grin toward PRIMARK, drown in REDUCTION without a grief! (Poem 32)*

Initially, I did not notice the phrase “without a grief” sounds foreign until I was told by my supervisor. The term grief is unquantifiable and so cannot have the article ‘a’ or ‘the’ in conventional terms. It is quite embarrassing because I did not notice this technical term; that minor error points at my weakness as a second language learner, but I was convinced that, rather than being a weakness, it may appear as the voice that characterizes my poems. So, I chose to retain the phrase ‘without a grief’ because it contributes to the effect I wish to create – the experience of being foreign. I looked back, searched and found some types of phrases I once used in my poems that sound similar. I then gain self-confidence to pursue other striking characteristics of second language poetry, this is a part of the enquiry, of experiment in second language creative writing. As Bates (1999) claims that “...even mistakes can have poetic strength.” Perhaps, the oddity I have created may turn into a unique voice, an identity.

I developed myself linguistically and improved the mechanics of English grammar; yet grammatical mistakes are another obvious inaccuracy. Memory poetry bridges the past with present; I often blend them inconsistently. I should make a choice whether to apply one single tense or let the tenses blend but in controlled ways (see appendix 16). The different tense means passing time and space and I am standing on the bridge of time. The more I thrive into the practice, the more confidently I resist grammatical correctness and ‘making sense’ in conventional form.

Yet, there are more times when I chose to correct the inaccuracy and mistake (see appendix 22). One example is when I wrote the English words *so much beauties* in my poem entitled ‘Poetry of Biography’. Then I learned that it should be “so many beauties” or “so much beauty”. I was thinking that I needed to correct the mistake and pursue the goal to be the language learner initially, then after that, I improved my sense of writerly identity as a second language writer, learned to identify what sounds foreign. The process seems to be working quite well. Another case in appendix 22 refer to the same case; I was reminded that the

construction ‘distinguish from’ is the more usual construction rather than ‘distinguish and’. It is a mistake and I chose to correct it.

The intention to improve my English initially then to seek ways to play with the language as subsequent step encourages the shift from language learner to writer. In addition to this, Maxim in Spiro (2014) asserts that giving language learners the opportunity to regard the foreign language as “an object of play”, activates the sense of freedom and ownership in their mother tongue (27). This is again a supporting argument for me to seek ways to encourage myself when dealing with the playfulness of English as my second language. The playfulness of my second language seems dangerous since I am dealing with writing poetry in a second language for whom the potential reader is the Anglophone audience. Also, English has more power and this is intimidating for me. Yet I am practising and making this experience meaningful for me as a language learner.

Meeting my supervisor and listening to her feedback is another episode of meaningful experience in writing in a second language. She responds to the foreignness and oddity of lines in a different way from a second language instructor, thinking that they can contribute as a unique voice in my writing. She means that by giving encouragement, I might reach to the ultimate point of my creative writing process which is the emerging voice of second language poetry. There are times when I choose to correct the error and incorrectness. But I often produce one or two bizarre words that blemish whole lines. The following poem illustrates the effects:

DRINK THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

Drink the elixir of life. Lollypop squeezed, little girls with red ribbons laughed in the bubbling mind. An air balloon reached the azure world. **Stinky insulin** departed, vanishing among the whispered nursery rhymes with ABCDEF and G. The H is hard to curve in the tongue.

Drink the elixir of life. The juvenile delinquency rode the lingering sweet, twisting young woman’s tail of fortune. **Appetizing insulin** appeared, cunningly offered

Barbie's world, a creation of every young man's intention. Chew the last drop of honey bee.

Drink the elixir of life. Making love is a mountain explosion. The timid dove and the howling wolf, the roller coaster hangs and sways, suck the pipe of hunger and thirst. The beauty of falsehood and immaturity crawl a note in the doctor's room. **Ravishing insulin nigh**, glorious in its frequent visits and sailing across the sea, found the harbour where life is ephemeral.

Drink the elixir of life. The light is dim, and I ask for directions from so many soulless creatures. A widely opened gate, **stinky insulin** joins the parade.

(Poem 22)

The poem above is taken from the second part of my creative work in which I explore my diabetic heritage. The phrases "stinky", "appetizing" and "ravishing insulin nigh" may sound strange or odd in English. But again, I am convinced that poetry frequently breaks the rules of language. It is deviant. In this poem, the words describe the development of diabetes as an inherited illness which slowly destroys a girl, a lady, even an old woman; transmitted genetically from a woman to another woman. These, however, may indicate a poetic strength since there is also the effect of evoking a young girl whose language may reflect her innocence and naivety. The phrases actually reconstruct my experience as a woman with diabetes inherited from my maternal grandmother and mother. This is also to define the irony of the matrilineal heredity I possess. The "beauty spots" emerge as a voice when writing in a second language.

Another example is when I use the phrase "alluring witch" in my poem entitled "The Legend of the Wand". It is not common to mix the word "Alluring" with "witch", they are not a common combination in English but I apply the phrase to describe my maternal grandmother as well as to depict the experience of facing a paradoxical grandmother. "Witch" is not commonly alluring in the English context. The Oxford Dictionary describes witch as a woman thought to have evil magic powers, popularly depicted as wearing a black cloak and pointed

hat, and flying on a broomstick (2004), its shared image in English culture and folklore is for example the wicked witch. But in my context, my grandmother is morally alluring and also magical, if somewhat frightening; a figure who enforced matrilineal cultural value in our family, and this could emerge as a voice in my second language memory poetry.

6.4. Making use of first language to explore the aesthetic quality of a second language memory poetry: The heteroglossic element of second language poetry

As a learner writer, my research develops by learning from the poetry of Women poets of Asian background. I read the works of Kamala Das, Eugene de Souza and Sujata Bhatt. I then conducted a series of studies on these women's memoirs. They have unique characters, but what interests me most is that they employ the heteroglossic element of language in such a way that they make use of their first language to enhance the meaning of their English poems.

Bakhtin formulates (1981) the following definition of heteroglossia:

another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author (p.324).

Speaker poets are comparable as narrative constructs, where the narrative voice in the poem is not the unmediated voice of the poet and is not necessarily intended to represent the poet directly. So there is a similar kind of duality, amplified when applied to second language poets because of their multiselves-double identities. Also, in the light of this concept, consciously heteroglossic practice can create an aesthetic quality in a second language poem (Hanauer, 2010). I begin to think about developing these kinds of practice when reading Sujata Bhatt's poem entitled Search for My tongue. In her poem, Bhatt incorporates English with

Gujarati to refer to the speaker's identity and cultural conflict; her bilingual practice is clearly evoked through the following poem:

I thought I spit it out
but over night while I dream,

(munay hutoo kay aakhee jeebh aakhee bhasha)
(may thoonky nakhi chay)
(parantoo rattray svupnama mari bhasha pachi aavay chay)

From Poems for the Millennium, 1998

Bhatt's poem shows us how interestingly a poet can write at the interface of some languages. There are three linguistic registers in the poem -- the 'I' speaks Standard English, the unreadable 'foreign' script of the dream state, and the phonetic translation in parentheses. The latter is more accessible but still comprehensible only as sound rather than meaning for many readers. Thereby, it is clear that the concept of heteroglossia in Bhatt's poem is more than using different languages. It is understood as a heteroglot presentation of a variety of voices and discourses which relies upon simultaneous representation of discourse from past and present (Crews, 1998 p.17). In addition, Bakhtin in Evans defines that these languages of heteroglossia stand on particular points of view of the world and of oneself, the position enabling a person to interpret and evaluate her own self and her surrounding reality (1998, p.42). So, this aspect is particularly suited to the multiselves of second language writers.

This is what might be implied by the speaker's identity in the poetry of Sujata Bhatt. Regardless of her intention when writing her poem, the poetry of Bhatt contains aesthetic qualities that may not appear in any other text. Bhatt is one of the Asian women poets who blend their first language with their English. This syncretic practice can develop into a renewed expression of voice and identity (Aschroft et. al. 2003). Bhatt employs Gujarati transcript and re-writes it again into a phonetic English transcript. Following this example, I have found some ways to move toward a more experimental and innovative second language poetry writing.

These creative models give me permission to experiment with ‘reading as a writer’. Ivancu (2011) emphasizes that language and words in both personal and impersonal manners shape identity and otherness in multiple layers; thus, shaping cultural and linguistic identity.

In relation to this point, my close analysis of the Women poets of Asian background has led me into increased literary productivity. Their heteroglossic creative practice may direct me to acquire voices and identities in my memory poetry. But for me, personally, the reason for employing my first language is whenever I cannot find any suitable words to express my authentic feeling, I found that the words in the first language can describe my writerly identity. The use of a variety of voices and languages may construct my identity as a second language poet. In addition, making use of my first language in my English poems may elicit an aesthetic quality as well as destabilise English, as found in the following poem:

THE LOST OF FEMALE FOETUS

The rain water wipes cassava leaves, the drying soil leans on the guava tree. I hide beneath the green shadow, for the unborn foetus, poured out the darkness. Mother tears her last Songket, the false hope haunts the dying hours.

Little nieces hold their kingdom, for the acres of paddy fields, sketch a buffalo head with pride. The greedy aunty smiles cunningly, her days ahead, kick off the victory.

The three canaries rose to ask a question, for the anonymous story, forced them to leave their own Nagari. (Poem 3)

My Islamic and my matrilineal cultures materialize in most of my poems. This poem employs some words in my first language to express two images that are difficult to describe in English. The words “Songket” and “Nagari” are employed to illustrate the authenticity of my matrilineal Minang cultural context. “Songket” is a cultural quilt inherited from woman to woman, a mother to a daughter symbolizing woman’s legal ownership of the maternal traditional house and legacy, while the word “Nagari” is an extended village where the role of woman is very precious. As Disney affirms, promoting heteroglossic creative practice incorporates

experimentation and exploration in a second language context (2014). Also, by interposing the words, I attempt to give the effect of multiple identities and authenticity as a multilingual speaker. This is, perhaps, one of the advantages I can utilize as a second language poet. Through the usage of English, I introduce my local culture and the understanding of this local culture can be expanded by using some words in the first language (Mansoor, 2013). I am writing a poem that can generate an emancipatory exploration both in my second language as well as in my mother tongue. The exploration results in an authentic second language poetry.

Apart from my Minang local cultures, I also explore Islamic value and identities in my memory poetry. The convergence of both values continues to exist in the practice of my poetry. In the poem entitled “To the memory of June 5” (see Appendix), I use the words “Wudhu” and “Kaffan”. Taking words in Holy Qur’an, I am trying to create cross cultural creative literacies and authenticity to represent my identity.

The words taken from my native tongue and Holy Qur’an are ‘glossed’ in one page at the end of the thesis. There was actually a debate prior to my decision to put the foreign words in the glossary. Initially, I created a footnote at the bottom of the page. However, footnotes can sound too academic for a piece of creative writing and to include text at the bottom of the page distracts the reader by forcing them to decide a reading strategy – in what order should they decode poem and footnote? It also denies the reader the chance to inhabit “foreignness” in a space of uncertain meaning, by immediately providing the “meaning” rather than allowing the reader to engage with sound, rhythm and context. Providing a glossary of these first language words allows the reader choice in how and when they encounter these definitions, and can benefit the English reader by helping them to learn about the ‘other’ as well as to make them able to understand the cultural aspects of my world.

The cultural load in my poems consists of voices to identify my writerly identity. Still, I doubt this practice when it comes to mentioning bilingual practice in a second language context. Bilingual practice is not totally reflected in my creative practice. Furthermore, I load my poems with my cultural contexts but do not transcend them totally in my first language. I thought, the practice of bilingualism can slow down the development of my English literacy as a language learner, but then I convince myself that this is somehow part of the process and the transformation of the working poet. A quest for a poetic language based on foreignness turns into a creative principle (Kelbert, 2015). I am learning, I am practising but then I must decide what to include and to write.

6.5. Notes during the Practice of Writing Poetry as Second Language Learner

6.5.1 Line Break and Punctuation as common errors

Adjusting the line breaks and making the lines shorter to achieve more effective form and clarity in English syntax has been a battle for me from my earliest practice of writing my second language poems. Not to mention any technical errors like space, indent, capital letter and punctuation, I put in a great effort to work on the line break.

My first poem in the collection (On the birth of twin daughters/ poem 1) was initially a poem of three stanzas (see appendix 1). Both my supervisors had initiated suggestions to break the line. I was still so much influenced by Indonesian poems that echo four full elements in a sentence which are subject, verb, temporal and locative phrases. This poem has been reviewed three times for so many corrections; I tend to call it an improvement in terms of my second language, an improvement so that I can communicate my poem better in my second language. I keep writing poems with long lines till I discover that this is not effective to convey the idea, the shorter line is more powerful (see also appendix 4). In the poem entitled “The Legend of

the Wand”, the long lines complicate the meaning-making. Suggestions to shorten the line were again given, and I learned from reading some poetry in Innovative poetry class; some poets today whose English is their first language such as Robert Sheppard and discover that line breaks are also a source of tension to create freer expression. In appendix 4, the first draft consisted of four stanzas in four and five long lines. Again, I had to be very sensitive to the sounds and where to put the line break.

One time correction and review were not enough, I needed a good ear and to put myself more into the sounds of English. The more I practice to position the line breaks the more I can communicate my idea. My initial intention is to improve my English, yet years after, I finally discovered that line breaks also function to support the emotion I wanted to create in the poem. Cutting the line brought positive effect in my self-translated poems (Chapter 4). The energy to be more creative increased exponentially at the moment I realised that line breaks did not only help me to establish the emotion of my second language poem, but it also worked in the translational process.

Apart from the line break, errors in punctuation and capital letters have been reoccurred in my practice. One of the common errors is in the positioning of commas and the function of a full stop in a sentence, followed by the decision about whether to have the capital letter at the beginning of the line. It seemed unnecessary in the very first place yet the reminder to write consistently to preserve the meaning of my poems made me shudder at once. Appendix 26 illustrates the problem. In the poem entitled “After the Funeral” I made so many errors revealing that I am a language learner and a learner writer. Punctuation and capital letters are technical mistakes that I should improve. The poem only consists of 3 lines in 3 stanzas, yet the errors appear in most of the lines.

Another example is in Appendix 15; I wrote unnecessary commas and full stops, it created more oddity that I should repair. Different from the case of the line break, this time I learned fast and committed to the betterment of the punctuation, and capital letters since this is more about technical matters rather than the sense of my second languages.

6.5.2 Grammatical Errors, using the right tense and right determiners, but creating L2 Effects

For a second language learner, the burden to write in proper English without committing any grammatical mistakes is essential. My earliest practice shows so many errors in tenses and determiners. Appendix 16 illustrates the failures; the uncontrolled shift between past and present and I did it so many times throughout the practice. In the poem entitled “The memory of Songket Shawl” (Appendix 16), the correction is absolute since by writing wrong tenses misplaced between past and present effects, the result is the failure to communicate the ideas. And suggestions to control the tenses and to establish meaning-making are a must in the poetry. The shift to present time is not appropriate and the inconsistency marked the failure. The poem in appendix 16 started with past tense (mother murmured) and I suddenly shifted the tense (her tears resemble the dew drop) into present and went back again to a past time (I knew she won’t tell me). They are all uncontrollable and showed contradiction, thus I failed to make meaning of the poem.

However, there are times when I was left with some choices whether to delete or to retain the mistakes to create the second language (L2 effects) and to sound foreign. In the poem entitled “The Poetry of Biography”, I was left with choices in the case of tenses and determiners (Appendix 22). Finally, I made a decision to delete and to revise the errors; I revised the determiners *so much beauties* to *so many beauties*, I deleted the word *been* in the sentence *I have been travelled* and I change the determiners *in a urban place* to *in an urban place*. Yet, the decision, my intention to learn the language initially and later on to become the second

language learner writer would enshrine this practice. In contrast, in “The Making of Second Language Poetry 1” (appendix 51), I decided not to correct any single grammatical mistake in the poem and I considered the suggestion from my supervisor that this poem is self-reflexive, it reflects on and embodies my process as a second language learner (see notes in appendix 51).

6.5.3 High-Frequency Words

Examining second language poetry in his corpus, Hanauer claims that it is short poetry with a high-frequency word (2010). I doubt it initially but I am unable to argue more when I discover this characteristic in my collection. When finishing almost half of my collection, my supervisor reviewed the poems in our supervisory meeting. She found the word “aroma” occurring more than 5 times in the collection (see appendix 8, 14, 15, 35) and the word “chamber” in the same poem (Appendix 38). I was astonished and suddenly relate this to the high-frequency word as one of the features of second language poetry. Again, it signifies the limitation, yet it also points to my identity as a second language learner. In fact, all writers can over-use certain words but as a second language learner, it signifies the limitation. I made some effort to vary the verb and noun, thanks to the thesaurus, Oxford online dictionary and some websites enhancing second language learner vocabulary, which I often utilise after recognising high-frequency words in my poems. As I develop more in practice, vocabulary development has become one of my progression points.

6.5.4 Inaccuracy and lack of Clarity: Moving from Second Language ambiguity into a Poetic ambiguity

Inaccuracy and a lack of clarity has been one of the apparent weaknesses in my second language poetry. Often, the inaccuracy results in the ambiguity which characterizes my poem as a second language learner. In the end, the second language ambiguity becomes pleasurable and results in the emerging voice of my second language identity (notes in appendix 30). Referring to

appendix 30, the ambiguity now has turned into a strength rather than a weakness. I kept exploring and I was surprised to find out that the ambiguities turned into a poetic ambiguity.

In “the making of second language poetry 2” (appendix 17) suggestions to sound foreign are acceptable to create second language strangeness, while at the next stage, the ambiguity and foreignness presented a more positive development which is poetic strangeness. In the poem entitled “Late Afternoon at Adelphi”, I compose an image of writing poetry and create an image to perform between two tensions; second language strangeness and poetic strangeness (see notes on appendix 31). So, the argument to improve my Englishness and then continue to perform the playfulness of my second language is valid.

6.6. Conclusion

To sum up, writing poetry in a second language can turn into meaningful experience for a second language poet when memory and personal history are involved. But then again, the writing practice of a language learner is hindered by the complex processes of learning and knowing. Foreignness, oddity and inaccuracy are the challenges I identify within the practice but inevitably these challenges appear as a striking characteristic of second language poetry, this emerging voice. Surprisingly, the challenge is converted into a strength.

The close analysis of other writers is another process of learning and writing. Harper (2010) recognizes that creative writers are often drawn to the finished works of other creative writers for a variety of purposes such as looking for “material evidence of their own desired result” (25). I am working on some poetry of Women poets of Asian background and reflecting back to the way they excavate their cultural context and promote heteroglossic elements of language in their poetry. I view their practices as indicative of both the advantages and disadvantages of being a second language poet. On one hand, by putting some words from my first language in

my poem, I explore another possibility to enhance the authenticity and aesthetic quality of my second language memory poetry. On the other hand, I question the practice of bilingualism that may obstruct the Englishness of my poetry.

The notes included in the appendix deliberately show the improvement of my second language element as well as emphasising the poetic skilfulness of my writerly identity. The challenges and the strengths are there to colour the journey of my writing practice. This is surely what has been implied as a meaningful experience of writing poetry in a second language.

CHAPTER 7 – CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

A Practice-Based Research on Writing Poetry in a Second Language

Hoe the dry land,	never been cultivated before
Rain it,	with your advanced second language
Dig it,	the memory and your life stories
Examine but do not steal	the tractor from the green field of another poet
Plant it,	the seeds of consistency and persistence
Stick it,	your identity and authenticity
Do not pull them out,	the wild grass of foreignness and oddity
Nourish it,	the new recipes of your English words
Repel the sounds,	of annoying crow that might whisper the hard life of study abroad
Eventually reap it,	your true rice field of a poetry collection

I realize that I should permit myself to stop researching, writing, and refining, since I have reached my conclusion. However, I have come to think that this practice-based research on writing poetry as a second language deserves further research. I have opened a new field which has rarely been cultivated before. And this is it. I have started to hoe the dry land, departing from Hanauer's idea that there is a beauty in a second language poem (Hanauer 2010). This is not enough; through his long project, Hanauer has produced a corpus of the characteristics of second language poetry: a second language poetry is a series of short poems, commonly written in two stanzas and high-frequency words with limitation in figurative language except for imagery. Yes, Hanauer's research opens up a new way of poetry writing as a methodology. And writing poetry in classroom instruction has long been known as one medium to increase student's English literacy. But my uncultivated land is about writing a second language in

creative practice. I am trying to reposition the tradition of writing second language poetry from classroom instruction to creative practice in its own right. I am bridging the gap.

Looking back, I was standing at the intersection when starting this journey convincing myself whether to continue exploring my students' ability to write poetry in classroom language or if me, myself should come forward, not as a guide but as a traveller myself, not as an instructor but as the only actor in a big imaginary classroom. Yes, I had been writing poetry for a few years before this journey. Before drawing on the ideas of practising writing poetry in a second language with my own story, with my advances in the second language, I faced boredom, a stagnant condition, did not know what and how to explore further, to write poetry as good as the native writer, or to find ways to cope with the limitation of my language. And I needed to find ways and I discovered new ways.

When hoeing this dry land, you need to find suitable equipment to work in the field. The question around the beauty of English in the second language of creative writing has long been established, not to mention that this is the status quo, brought by those who validate that English poetry is only owned by the very first native speaker. But then poetry itself is deviant, the language of poetry betrays standard English. Post-Colonial critics on second language creative writing such as Dan Disney (2014) view the canonical imperialistic process of the linguistic establishment as not necessarily existing in the process of second language creative writing. I agree with this. Learning a language and thriving on the creativity of your second language is interchangeable. But being creative in your second language in the process of your practice does not mean that you cannot invent a new English. Through research, I have wrapped together my multiple identities as an English poetry lecturer in a local university far away in a northern part of Sumatera Island and my personal history as a learner writer. I step into the land that has never been cultivated before, digging every possibility to develop, to illuminate my practice-based research of writing poetry in a second language.

I am not bilingual, like those who grew up in two languages, like those who dream in Spanish and articulate it into English. English is not my first language. My exposure to English started when I was 13. However, I bring the identity of an advanced language learner. Once they are asking, who you are; are you a poet, a language learner, and I surely answer them, say it out loud that I am a learner writer.

Initially, I thought my passion for English could not be enough to develop this practice. Is an advanced second language learner able to write poems? But language evolves, and exploration of English is rapidly enhanced as the language grows. An advanced language learner can write a poem with the complexity of language. Linguistic features of an advanced language learner cover not only the ability to communicate in a second language but also the socio-pragmatic ability to position their identity in a written form.

The idea of the advanced language learner is in line with Hanauer's concept of the characteristics of this learner. The definition is varied in terms of their nationality, experiences, profession, motivation, language exposure, linguistic aptitude and personality (Hanauer 2010). This definition cannot be synthesized as the guidance to define the characteristics of an advanced second language learner. However, having been in this practice, I have come to know what makes an advanced learner or second language learner writer different from the novice writer. An advanced second language learner writer can write poetry in an extended form and with appropriate expression. A second language learner needs courage to explore and experiment with languages, and perhaps only an advanced second language learner writer can do so. When you only have the basic skill of a foreign language, you may not be able to play with it. You need to refine mistakes and oddities in order to achieve meaning-making. It does not mean that as an advanced language learner, you do not have mistakes but language is evolving and renewed and an advanced second language learner fits the condition.

The anxiety of not being able to communicate in the first language setting once hindered my creative spirit. However, as I learned and involved more deeply in the investigation of English poetry and gained the richness of language, the more I feel confident to explore myself and discover my voice. The journey of writing poetry in a second language opens a space to tell; I have focused myself to develop my English yet I took the risk if my exploration breaks the rules of standard English. I discovered my new Englishness; the multilingual content which points at the multiple selves attached to me, the poetic ambiguity resulting from the long process of creativity and second language improvement which are harvested from this practice.

The act of using improper English bring about new creativity. I have been trying to be persistent with this kind of believe. Every time I recognized the fallacy, error and ambiguity, I convinced my self that there would be suprising element of language experiment in the moment of practice. It is OK to sound foreign; I frequently experience the fear of failing to communicate in my poems. And it is OK to subvert standard English because the space of creative writing in a second language permits you to do so. Beyond the foreignness, I gain my authenticity as a second language learner writer. As a learner I let my English develop because this is the essential element of my writings, and I reckon that I developed tremendously. I lost “me” sometimes, then again, I found another “me”.

What makes a person want to write a poem in his/her broken English? It is, of course, their memory and their life stories. Spiro (2014) states that the second language writers will arrive at their ideas which were honed and shaped but drew from the deep of the autobiographical aspect. So have I. The memory of my mother is the gate of some other stories. My life story as a daughter who grew up in my Islamic and matrilineal society triggers some other episodes of my life. I am connecting my past as a daughter with my present condition as a PhD mom in a study abroad context, both as a mother and a student who struggles to learn the second language while negotiating the first culture and the other culture.

The creative work and the supplementary discourses are interrelated. The critical and reflective statement illuminates the journey of writing seventy poems in the collection. And the statements represent what happens during the complex moments of practice. Through the process of analysis, I am now in control of my poetic voice. I was amazed by invention, choices, decisions, refinement, the loss and the gain. The collection is indeed a material to explore what is in the critical and reflective statements.

The first chapter of my autobiographical source is clustered around the life of my dying mother, her expectation to have a granddaughter so as she can secure a family heir. The matrilineal way of life has influenced the way Minangkabau society thinks about the importance of a daughter in a family. The memory of my mother both in my childhood and in my adulthood packs the bitter moments of her last days, the tormenting moment when she lost her granddaughter from my fourth pregnancy; the memory is also contradicted by her precious day when delivering me as a twin baby. The past bridges another past and I mirror them, facing the shadow directly to my present condition; a daughterless mother.

This first layer of my autobiographical source is nostalgia poems. Aaron (2006) defined a standard nostalgia today as it might be an intimate personal longing for the past—a stylized form of homesickness (p. 13). He also mentions about longing for childhood pleasures, pastoral view, the importance of melancholy and the reviving past. However, I don't restrict my nostalgia poem into those standards of Nostalgia. In the collection, twenty poems of mother-daughter in Islamic-Matrilineal society are nostalgic in a sense that the poems reflect my intimate personal longing for the past in this case personal longing to the figure of my mother and they are away from the childhood pleasures and pastoral view. My nostalgia poems are dark, melancholic and mourning and I have established the mood and voices of a daughter living in the haunted memory of her family and tradition.

The second part of the collection is my personal history of being a diabetic. My grandmother, my mother, imprint this kind of heritage within the family that I could not resist, not to blame but I am standing here in the present looking back at some painful episodes of how my grandmother lost her knee and how the aroma of insulin has long been stranded in family lineage while standing, fighting against this sudden killer for the sake of my boys; my three canaries.

The third chapter of my autobiographical layer is now and then, situated abroad as a sponsored student in a study abroad setting. This is more about how I negotiate with my second language and my second culture, making a living in a host society. It chronicles mixed feelings; a thrilling and overwhelming sensation for living abroad, sadness and disappointment for paradoxically being accepted as well as rejected in British society. The dynamic life of being a mother and a postgraduate student cursing the loneliness and draining experience of spending most of the time studying but celebrating the isolation in solitude.

The fourth part of my life story is the central role of being a mother; the motherhood PhD poems resonate with everyday detail of my life challenges as a PhD mother with three canaries. The poetics of seasons, tongue and hybridity dominate this episode. Voices in hue; frustrated, caring, madness, sadness, irony and humor frame my other identity as a mother raising three boys in western and diaspora communities. The choice of being 'mama PhD' deconstructs a borderline between feminism and devotion, breaking through the gap between these two values.

Finally, lying at the heart of my collection, I locate some turning points, the moments I face but celebrate the challenges, obstacles, discoveries, ambiguities when writing my second language poetry. What lies behind heart-breaking and witty poems is the voice of a language learner, grabbing every chance to become a learner writer, struggling to find her unique voice,

a developing second language woman poet. Through time and space, her practice-based research illuminates her voice and identity.

Ten self-translated poems in the collection also mark my journey from a second language learner into a learner writer. I wrote some poems in my first language in my early practice but I have to confess that it took some years for me to translate the poems into English. I needed to improve my English, be a better language learner and then move slowly to gain the identity of a learner writer. The necessity to translate the poems into English is not only to communicate my Indonesian poems to English reader but also that the process of translation is a part of learning and creativity. I learn to handle the meaning both in my first and second language, the translated version eventually appears as a co-text of the first language poem.

My practice-based research combines poetry writing in a second language resulting from critical and reflective analysis of Women poets of Asian background. The reading of the poems from woman poets helps me to establish my multiple identities as an Asian, Islamic and matrilineal woman poet. Among them are Kamala Das and Jennifer Wong. In seeking for the similarity and underpinning interesting differences between the poetry of woman poets and my practice, I read their poems and scrutinise the aspects of memory, autobiography and language; in addition to stylistic elements such as tone, voices and imageries in the poems. The last element is most essential for it reveals the subject matter, their attitude toward the subject matters of their life story, memory and autobiography. More importantly, post-colonial critics on gender, sexuality and colonialism views that what is inhabited in the poetry of woman poets is mostly about the cultural-gender issue of woman's function in the society, especially the role of daughter in the hegemony of patriarchal society. For example, the work of Jamaica Kincaid, who portrays her family life especially in her relationship with her mother in a post-colonial context. Drawing from this issue, the reading of their poems made me able to delineate the cultural-gender issues in my Islamic-Matrilineal society.

Kamala Das, a bilingual, south Asian woman poet, chronicles her life story as a daughter who lost the connection with her mother. In her poems I examine one painful episode when the speaker lost her grandmother, leaving her with the good memory of her maternal house. I delineate Kamala Das's poetry with my memory about my maternal house. Similarities are there to connect my poetry with Kamala Das's but, differences exist to unpick and interrogate in my poetry. I examine Das's voices and find that mine is more about the memory of my mother while she is more about the subjugate figure of a mother; I analyse these interesting differences and discover that my mother is the source of the memory.

Jennifer Wong, an established second language woman poet with an Oxford academic background, has become another key figure in my reflective statement. It took a longer time for me to locate her as an established second language poet. When I found her first collection, *Summer Cicadas*, I discovered that her collection is worth a more in-depth investigation and reflection. In some of her poems, the speaker straddles two countries; Hong Kong and England while trying to negotiate her second language and her first language within the study abroad setting. On one hand, the problematic view of language and identity which became the subject matter in Wong's poems occurs as well in my poetry. Like my poems, otherness is provoked in her poems almost silently. But on the other hand, the speaker's accomplishment for some cultural matters reveals what has not happened to the speaker in my study abroad poems.

My observation, a more profound investigation, is that a comprehensive analysis and deliberate reflection can avoid the act of imitating these woman poets. I once had been trapped in mirroring their stylistic performance, luckily the deeper investigation and continuous reflection toward the detail of their poetry makes me aware of my voice and identity; from them, I learn, from them I move toward originality and authenticity.

This practice-based research needs a sense of resilience. You not only have to stay in practice but also to be persistence to find new things among the act of language's improvement and exploration. Sometimes, I see the boredom and an intention to stop and get out of the pressure of time frame and another language being pushed to my first language setting. Inferior poems were triggered, in this case, colouring the journey of my creative practice. But the only way to stay is to be consistent and persistent.

The second language poetry I produce in this practice based research is more than a form of ten lines of a poem with 5 words each line, describing personal experiences in a reflective and emotional manner (Hanauer, 2010); they are a variety of poems signifying the development of my writerly identity. I wrote short poems initially because of the limitation, but at the end of the shortness there comes a huge effect accompanying the meaning making. Longer forms are mostly narrative, a nostalgia of the past when being a daughter. Prose poetry and innovative form break the conventional form of one stanza in 4 lines indicating the improvement of my English as a second language. Hybrid, multilingual and dialogic forms open up dialogue between my first and second language, pointing at my identity as an Islamic-matrilineal background woman poet.

Unlike the characteristics of the second language poetry corpus offered by Hanauer, I dare to say that my second language poetry inhabits poetic features. I develop a distinctive poetics of mother-daughter relationships, poetics of the other in my study abroad setting poem, and poetics of three canaries in my motherhood poems. They are not instantly-produced as they result from my continuous activity of reading as a writer. I pick and interrogate similarities and differences from reading the works from other poets and finally discover my identity.

Writing poetry in a second language is an arduous task. Earlier, this perception was persistently embedded in my mind. It is not easy to monitor the progress of your practice when

the boredom, limitation burdens this practice. The trust within me, to believe that this practice will contribute significantly to the world of creative method in a second language and knowledge makes me thrive on this journey. I keep telling myself this, giving a compliment to myself that this is a brave and heroic journey. What I plant is the seed, which is not harvested by me only in some years ahead, but to other creative practitioners in a second language who would be able to utilise this research.

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GLOSSARIES

1. Songket : Traditional cloth worn in a traditional ceremony
2. Nagari : Hometown/extended village
3. Wudhu : The [Islamic](#) procedure for washing parts of the body using water, typically in preparation for formal prayers (*salat*), but also before handling and reading the Qur'an
4. Kafan : a shroud in which a corpse is wrapped for Moslem burial
5. Oik Nak Kandung : My dear daughter (traditional reference to the dearest child in West Sumatera dialect)
6. Pusako gadang : Lineage property right in Minangkabau tradition owned by woman
7. A Rumah gadang : Serves as a residence, a hall for family meetings, and for ceremonial activities. In the Minangkabau society, the rumah gadang is owned by the women of the family who live there; ownership is passed from mother to daughter
8. *Maso tuo sanang dek baranak padusi.*
: It is a daughter who fills the happiness of the parent in their aging times.
9. *batambah anak laki-laki nan ka maninggaan nagari.*
: The tradition for a son to leave their home town when they grow up.
10. *dima tanah dipijak, disitu langik dijunjuang*
when in Rome, do as the Romans do.

11. *Hujan ameh nigari urang, hujan batu nigari kito, kampong halaman takana juo)*

: golden rain in the land of the people, hailstones in the land itself

13. *Alfatiha* : The Beginning

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

ON THE BIRTH OF TWIN DAUGHTERS

We were two eggs, in a warm platter

carried by ^a five ^{feet} feet two inches young mother.

But they said, she held a sack to the university

where she learned about women, ^{the} baby boom and mortality.

We grew too large, slipped free from cracking the shell,

a bleeding thigh in a clamorous classroom, she, let out a wail.

The hospital ceilings ^{here} cluttered with her three small boys,

Giggling ^{at} in their jokes of possessing two new toys.

For the untold truth, the doctor whispered,

to a blissful father who rose up from the long bench, tottered,

out of the cold chamber, approaching the ^{er} praying room.

His eyes were bright, peered in to the departing gloom.

We are the survivors of family history, ✓

Winning two acres of rice fields as our life royalty.

Now, we fail to grow the eggs in the same barn,

Leaving the scornful smile, radiating from the matrilineal clan.

use
single
spacing

Really strong and intriguing poem — just
needed some control with the punctuation.

Appendix 2

or FOETUS

THE LOST OF FEMALE FETUS

The rain water wipes cassava leaves, the drying soil leans on to the guava tree.
I hide beneath the green shadow, for the unborn fetus, poured out the darkness. Mother tears her last Songket, the false hope haunts the dying hours.

Little nieces hold their kingdom, for the acres of paddy fields, sketch buffalo head with pride. The greedy aunty smiles cunningly, her days ahead, kick off the victory.

The three canaries rose to ask a question, for the anonymous story forced them to leave their own Nagari.

clarify slightly?

or would force

Note :

sketch buffalo heads or sketch a buffalo head

Songket : Traditional cloth worn in traditional ceremonies

Nagari : Hometown/ extended village

A gain, intriguingly work - mysterious and peaceful atmosphere

Appendix 3

To the Memory of June, 5

I said farewell to her —
such an intimate celebration .
I weep for losing the beloved soul.

coordinate of punctuation

I bathe her dead body ,
this time without the wheel chair .
the trail of [laughter replaced by solemnity.

I prick the last Wudhu ,
the blue bruise of Insulin ;
discover the new [apparition on my arm.

I wrap her
from sole to crown
in a ^(u)Kafan^(s), ready to meet the ground.

I watch her lying
in the cold cradle
with? — (would) blow the heaven's verses to warm the bed.

I name the red roses
without thorns —
a good company [when visiting] the swelling soil.

I trace the childhood memory ,
find the broken attic
silenced by the dust from old photographs.

And I ... I dig the buried path —
fear for the story of [replacement [of]?
→ a mother to a daughter, an absence.
by ✓

right word?

Very poignant and
well-measured piece

Note :

- Wudhu is The Islamic procedure for washing parts of the body using water, typically in preparation for formal prayers (salat), but also before handling and reading the Qur'an
- Kafan: a sheet in which a corpse is wrapped for Moslem burial

— a shroud

again consider using style-spacing

The Legend of a Wand

She was brought from hospital, six months after I was born,

mother took me by the edge of her dark chamber,

close to the haunted restroom. - toilet? bathroom?

She gave me a quick smile sneaking beyond her fairy tale,

leg amputated, her life and her dream too.

Take this wand and make me your alluring witch!

Her voice howled helplessly demanded the stolen haunch,

trembling, I hide among her vacant sewing machines

the light is dim, I make an escape in the dusk..

I heard grandma whisper the chants,

these are my legacy! Not the curse! The footsteps you must follow!

Scatter the seeds of your own rice paddy's fields and raise your children with them.

You cannot go that far, and cranes,

would eventually return to their breeding ground!

I fought the wand and won a battle,

a lottery ticket in my pocket to sail away from home, but in return

I was drowned in the midst of my mother's tears who cried aloud

for the lost wand, failing to embrace its legend.

Handwritten annotations: 'the?', 'who - the mother?', 'starting detail', 'past / beside?', 'right word?', 'amazing + brutal line', 'right word?', 'abandoned', 'my', 'my', 'distance?', 'annually?', 'for?', 'the', 'shorten lines a bit', 'feels a little too formal at end too much information? leave sthng slightly unsaid'

Appendix 5

The Day I Leave You Lonely

Epigraph : A rumah gadang serves as a residence, a hall for family meetings, and for ceremonial activities. In the matrilineal Minangkabau society, the rumah gadang is owned by the women of the family who live there; ownership is passed from mother to daughter

A possible future day or a specific past day?

The day I leave you lonely,
with tears and agitation.

Remorse fills up my throat and lungs, ^{expel?}
for not being able to explode the anguish.

I fear for God's punishment,
denying ^uwife's obligation.

I am your ^{also} daughter
but I am ^a wife and a mother.

a complex gender politics emerging

As? If only God understands that life should not be divided,

→ continue idea?

There is not a wall,
a red line between love and devotion,
yet to cross the boundary from hell to heaven,
I have to depart .

reconsider the extra-long lines

The day I leave you lonely, ✓
you watch the TV screen,
eyes emptied and mouth dried
by the ^{to}silence prayers.

I have paid the karma, you said, ✓ once leaving your grandma,
so go! ✓ your world is no longer mine,
your absence is near to my darkness!

Like a pilgrim on her holy mission,
I rush for ^{an}the unknown destination
and find the boat sailing
away from home .

The day I leave you lonely,
you give me the ring of a dragon head,
folded by pearl and silver . 218

I am amazed in the numbness.
Imagining the next twenty years,
that I should hand it back to a daughter.

— clarify — are you numbed by the offering?

Appendix 6

to any young woman, seeding in my womb.
But for the absence, I see the ring flickers,
the colour shades, it will be degraded,
by the passage of time.

clearly - because of the absence or
except for the absence?
fades

On the day I leave you lonely,
The wind chills, breaking
my last pouring cry.
My hand grips the iron fence of Rumah Gadang.
Looking down the grassy path of the road taken,
I knew, I would come back.
Later, on the day when you leave me lonely... ✓

another word?
| vary line breaks

very effective variation
to conclude

Really powerful piece of writing
and a very satisfying sequence
exploring this material.

Appendix 7

IN THE DYALYSIS UNIT

If I had not made you stay

alone, in your dark chamber Mother!

— regressing previous poem

↳ I would not have heard your sharp breath, ~~dragging~~ me in to the madness.

If I had served you ^{with} a plenty of breakfast earlier,

a cup of hot tea and a plate of rice as your last wish,

I would not have recalled the moment when ~~your~~ agitated hands rejected a gulp and a spoon.

Think about love

If I had prevented them ^{from taking} to take you

into the theatre room, witnessing the knife flat against your flesh,

I would not have watched you in my dream, ~~shedding~~ the tears of pain.

If I had stopped ~~it~~ from operating,

[the machine,] squeezing the last drop of your blood,

I would not have stared at the pale moon as your face.

Forgive me Mother, the walls remain silent...

I track the trail of the flash white shadow *flashing? fleeing?*

(And find the past echoed) — *not sure you need to say this*

(Poetry, memory and repetition, first language to second language)

Evocative poem of grief

Appendix 8

MY DEAR DIABETES 1

is it needed?
— nice title

You have come, visiting
us; (the late) grand mother, mom and
you fly to me secretly.

What's the use of your visit?
licking my bones, lungs and heart ?
Or simply build our shattered dream?
ing _____ or re-building?

My dear diabetes :
I have slammed the door but why slammed the door and closed
and closed all the windows. the windows
for your aroma/...no longer occupies the dining room

I have made friend with the bitter taste of your enemy
make love with the [chemic] insulin
sleep well, tight, [chemical? - could cut
and wake up by the sweet humming of my canaries .
woken by

My dear diabetes.....

Appendix 10

MY DEAR DIABETES 2

SWEET

Lingering thought of] hunger.....

SWEAT

Fulfilling the sense of thirst.....

SLEEPY

Dreaming of life without limitation

SO] FINALLY FATIGUE

Lying and digging your own grave.....

—
/

but lying ~~is~~ in sense of untruth?

use same number of
ellipses - three dots is fine

| a brutal turn in the
argument

Appendix 11

MY DEAR DIABETES 3 (Just a silly thought after the visit of my dear damn diabetes)

Hulla!

Long time no see!

My most cunning enemy,

the devil is with you,

To come along before the morning dew.

Hiii!

No need to hurry, stay close to me,
stick to my blood, feast upon my misery.

I will show you my last defence, the ruining courage —
then win the trophy, preserving family's legacy and heritage

try to avoid making
lines longer and
longer

Hurrah!

After the victory, are you going to depart?

or Just go on, your latent adventure within my heart?

We adrift in the boat of lingering sweetness

an end up in an eternal harbour entitled "RIP"

feels slightly clumsy as a line

Damn It!

You thought you had won this everlasting battle —

rape the insulin and seize me in to the cold cradle

— or 'folded me into the cold cradle?'

My dear love foe! — loving foe?

must I say the farewell to you

for I would live again and drink the remedies,

for the sake of my three canaries.

right word?

lovely funny and touching
closing line

AN ODE TO INSULIN

Last night was tremendous,

I made love with the super penis — — surprising image

parted the defence of thick blood,

seized the bruised belly,

you are my guardian angel .

you melt the frozen heart .

For the odour of your sperm

Releases me from the smell of the abyss.

Profound and unsettling poem —
I could almost imagine a
third verse of four lines?

perhaps vary past tense ~~verbs~~?

DRINK THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

Drink the elixir of life. Lollypop squeezed, little girls with red ribbons laughed in the bubbling mind. An air balloon reached the azure world. Stinky insulin departed, vanishing among the whispered nursery rhymes with ABCDEF and G. ✓
 The H is hard to curve in the tongue. ✓

OK so reminder of the New Departures experiment
 Drink the elixir of life. The juvenile delinquency rode the lingering sweet, twisting young woman's tail of fortune. Appetizing insulin appeared, cunningly offered Barbie's world, a creation of every young man's intention. Chew the last drop of honey bee. ✓ *great variations here*

✓ Drink the elixir of life. Making love is a mountain explosion. The timid dove and the howling wolf, the roller coaster hangs and sways, suck the pipe of hunger and thirst. The beauty of falsehood and immaturity crawl a note in the doctor's room. Ravishing insulin nigh, glorious in its frequent visits and sailing across the sea, found the harbour where life is ephemeral. ✓ *superb*

Drink the elixir of life. The light is dim, and I ask for directions from so many soulless creatures. A widely opened gate, stinky insulin joins the parade.

some really satisfying and unpredictable, yet suggestive phrasing here

Appendix 14

My Three Canaries

Watching them

in their deep sleep,

the wounded wings

engraved by my frequent absences.

striking image

The fragile furs

spread the aroma of heaven,

The king of the cage

provides them with plenty of foods.

The tapping of their tiny feet

complicates my turning world. ✓

But their boisterous beaks

are a voice, calling me home. ✓

*Poignant and elegant
piece*

*vary
the
pattern*

whilst?

Appendix 23

1. ON THE BIRTH OF TWIN DAUGHTERS

We were two eggs, in a warm platter
carried by a five foot two inches young mother.
But they said, she held a sack to the university
where she learned about women, the baby boom and mortality.

We grew too large, slipped free from the cracked shell,
a bleeding thigh in a clamorous classroom, she let out a wail.
The hospital ceilings were cluttered with her three small boys,
giggling at their jokes of possessing two new toys.

For the untold truth, the doctor whispered,
to a blissful father who rose up from the long bench, tottered
out of the cold chamber, approaching the prayer room.
His eyes were bright, peered in to the departing gloom.

We are the survivors of family history,
Winning two acres of rice fields as our life royalty,
Now, we fail to grow the eggs in the same barn,
Leaving the scornful smile radiating from the matrilineal clan.

felt too academic

2. THE LOSS OF A FEMALE FOETUS

The rain water wipes cassava leaves, the drying soil leans on the guava tree. I hide beneath
the green shadow, for the unborn foetus, poured out of the darkness. Mother tears her last
Songket, the false hope haunts the dying hours.

Little nieces hold their kingdom, for the acres of paddy fields, sketch a buffalo head with
pride. The greedy aunty smiles cunningly, her days ahead, kick off the victory.

The three canaries rose to ask a question, for the anonymous story, forced them to leave
their own Nagari.

Note :

Songket : Traditional cloth worn in traditional ceremonies

Nagari : Hometown/ extended village

*Small and far away so it doesn't overshadow
the meaning of the poem.*

*one poem per page - use the white
space as your canvas.*

3. A Daughterless Mother

Tengadah tangan seribu pinta
Lafaz hidup gumam kan rindu
Pada benih cinta perisai takdir
Terbayang lara tersemai dihari tua

Lalu, lupakah dinda pada sebuah legenda?
Rumah gadang Sembilan pintu,
bilik kosong menjelma rumah hantu
Nak budjang lari memboyong perawan,
tinggalkan debu dikelambu, Jeritan hati Sosok si Ibu,
menggeliat diranum bahagia sang Menantu

Apa yang dilantun dalam gurindam malam
Kata bijak bertuah sesal,
padi menguning, bulir dituai hampa
Tak berkawan sampai ajal menyapa

4. A Daughterless Mother (Self translated poem)

The opened palm by silent prayer,
life yearns for a daughter.
The seed of love manifests a destiny;
Are old days a picture framed by the agony?

But my dear! Have you heard about the stories?
Of a big house with its nine doors?
The bride escaped with the bridegroom,
Leaving a pristine valance in the maid's room!

The old saying bears her pain.
The wise words end in vain.
The grown seed is now out of distance: ^{sights} → ^{out} and gone;
Death comes closer when she is lonesome,

6. I Used to Live.... in A Door ^{way} between Two Unlocked Rooms

The first room had a promising door to heaven,
away from the smell of the abyss.

^{she} My mom ^{kneel} kneeled at the door,
holding it with her dry hand and said Come!
You would be free from this ... a karma... Oik Nak kanduang!
I examined what was inside the room,
- the windows illuminated ^{is? comma changes meaning - per decision.}
- the long and dark hours of devotion and tradition.

The other room ^{had?} was a widely open door,
to a place I once heard in ^a my lullaby.

✓ The aroma of toast, occupying and roasting the rice steam.
You, conquer it!
Be the emperor of your own ~~good and bad~~ fortunes!
The dark angel ^{to?} whispered the west wind,
blowing away the last defence.
I looked through its provoking wall
and discovered bad women escaped from the bars.

I weighed the two sides of the coin,
not knowing which one to choose.
Roamed back and forth
ended up again in the doorway .
Traced back the line of Pusako Gadang
echoing the life after death.
Yet, the wheels of my carriage stopped
remained swinging...
In a door way between the two unlocked rooms.

Note:

- *Oik Nak Kandung: My dear daughter (traditional reference to the dearest child in West Sumatera dialect)*
- *Pusako gadang: Lineage property right in Minangkabau tradition owned by woman*

19.

After The Funeral

A wooden box, old furnished,

t These trembling fingers

v Unwillingly open the lid.

Beneath the twinkling silver earrings

I catch the sight of it ;

^{golden}
The dragon head golden ring. ✓

A sudden chill comes over me

p Pictures framed by vanishing lineage,

h Holding back, I withdraw.

20. The Memory of Songket Shawl

1.

In her last days

Mother murmured

words I could not comprehend.

Lying quietly

she wept.

Her tears,

they resemble the dew drops;

undetectable and odourless.

I touched the tip of her *hijab*

and discovered clamminess.

The dialogues between us

often evaporated.

I knew she would not tell me

how it felt,

to ease two portions of pain ;

pain of loss and pain of loneliness,

but I can name them now,

clearly and bluntly.

Appendix 27

Your first Heartbreaks

Your first Serendipity

Your first epiphany

And your first sacrifice

I have thought so much about the girl

Her radiant smile

Her energetic soul

Her perky breast

Her childish whining

The vision of her dark lingerie

Her seductive eyelid

Her wicked moves

Toward you, testing my civility

A hunch comes over

My mythic configuration exists

Atrocity greets me

Animosity deepens

I would say No... to the Missy: your life catastrophe

Comment [Ursula Hu45]: This is an interesting and unexpected development.

Comment [Ursula Hu46]: Nicely done – self-aware voice, which is very engaging and effective in performing the complexity of these emotions.

7. **Motherhood PhD's life Depiction**

ALLAH is the perfectness

Angels are awake gals

Prophet's life is everyday guidance

Comment [Ursula Hu48]: Is this the word you mean? Colloquial English for 'girls'?

Mother is a printed memory

Comment [Ursula Hu49]: There is so much in here about images and portraits, I wonder if you can make it a consistent theme throughout?

Three canaries are all for conversation

Twin sister is the self portrait

Husband is a picture of devotion and rebellion

Kitchen door is a wall between domesticity and radicalism

I reach the end

And concede

that poetry

Appendix 29

fools me

Comment [Ursula Hu50]: Lovely ending!

8. POETRY OF BIOGRAPHY

I come from a territory

where we cannot distinguish

people and sun rise.

So much beauties by the rice paddies

and river flow.

Comment [Ursula Hu51]: Great opening line, but distinguish people from is the more usual construction

Comment [Ursula Hu52]: Perhaps you intend this to sound 'foreign' – in 'correct' English it would be 'so much beauty' or 'so many beauties'

I grew up in a city

where mothers and daughters

are the only queens and servants ,

in their own kingdom

rule out the tradition and legacy.

Comment [Ursula Hu53]: Slightly odd meaning here – 'rule out' usually means to discount something

I lived in a house

where memory remained quiet.

The house never has its own remedy

to break the chain, getting rid

of diabetes heritage

Comment [Ursula Hu54]: This feels a bit blunt. I think you can find a subtler and more eloquent way of expressing this.

I used to labour myself

through the art of my second languages

in a urban place

where boys and girl learn,

how to pronounce love and laugh.

Comment [Ursula Hu55]: An – unless you intend foreignness in relation to second language.

I might have been travelled

to the unknown countries

Comment [Ursula Hu56]: Delete 'been', unless, again, you intend L2 effects.

* MILESTONE POEM

AFTER THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Blood glucose is another name for memory awakes

an institution that manages the rhetoric of

a2 ^{tl} silence killer, it can contort facts,

the smooth of skin, the regular beat of the heart and a piece of mind.

it can plunge them into the well of the ossuary,

the artefact of recurrent tales

~~of~~ a voracious appetite for ~~the~~ sweetness,

I swing over past and present, but then I dread my future

I sought it in the old cupboard, discovered the list.

Some names along genetic hierarchy,

memory strips off the old scars, and I celebrate it;

The bleeding and I dress my heart in motley forces

to delude, to tag me in the name of another label.

Just as I might break the curse of my sure name,

I fight the lifetime battle, yet,

like solid molecules, it remains.

the
ambiguity
is pleasurable

projective 2

by removing all punctuation
to read aloud.

^I
LATE AFTERNOON AT ADELPHY

Had I examine^d other poem,
I would seize different texture,^s
Flavour and tune.
The rhyme matches the pulse
Clarity forbids drowsiness

I have climbed all the seven stairs
and turn^{ed} off the sounds
that might awake ... fallacy
ear closed but cold fastens
memory installation

Poetic
Strangeness

I curve the body of poetry
This time, the batter conjures
white-like, mimic mode on
as if my darling betrays.
He hides behind the corpse
of my second language identity

Poetic ambiguity
↓

'making strange'
Shklovsky

consistency

This poem performs the tension
between 2 kinds of strangeness.

2 L strangeness

Poetic strangeness

STUDY ABROAD SETTING

Bear in mind that life is not only a matter of an afternoon tea with a pack of half price crisp from Spring Sale, but it is also the issue of morning errand with two bags of groceries from the Halal market nearby. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of evening spelling practice with mainstream fairy tales to read, but it is also a matter of night lullaby to some husky boys with the same old songs. Bear in mind that life is not only a matter of readings and writing, reflecting back has also been a tough part. Keep in mind that life is not only a matter of learning English but fitting the language into the home's needs is a separate section. Remember that life is not a matter of desiring and longing with a sudden burst of tears falling, the struggle to wipe the tears away is another sad chronicle. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of experiencing the ecstasy of the first snow, but it contains some episodes of life surviving in the winter cold. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of taking two tablets of Metformin, but it is also a matter of resisting lingering sweet. Bear in mind that life is not only a matter of counting the autumn leaves but also about leaving all the yellowish memory behind. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of catching 135 buses at Smedley Lane on one early dramatic morning but also coping with the feeling of horror when missing the late evening buses back home. Bear in mind that life is not about adopting, adapting but also taking some risk of disintegrating native values. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of losing weight but also gaining it through some big midnight meals. Bear in mind that life is not an issue of parental BT guide but also refers to any supervisory routine toward latent Youtube Vlogs. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of successfully executing fish and chips receipt but also conjuring up British kale into the flavour of curried Cassava leaves. And bear in mind that life is not a matter of making hopes and prayers but sustaining them till the end of this journey Bear it in mind, bear them in mind, Bear Bear Be... ar.. be .. ar .. be arrrrrggghhhhhhhhh

need a frame

relate to TV

a receipt for fish + chips

think about the ending.

RAMADHAN VENTURE

Take a promenade

when the sun rises

boys are bees,

husband is a statue

and I am a hen.

School gate entails freedom

~~of~~ running away from the buzzing,

the bees beg ^{to} for feast and sip.

~~The~~ sun ~~heat~~ complicates the waiting,

rain ~~drop~~ enforces the commitment.

Afterschool can jeopardize the entire mission. ✓

To anticipate, I negotiate.

X-box is an excellent remedy

much better than having a nap. ✓

~~Even~~ I am willing to take a risk,

one poem to sacrifice.

When the sun sets,

boys are chicks

husband is a ~~good~~ comedian

~~to~~ play his ⁱⁿⁿ innocent part,

I am now as white as ^a cucumber.

And find few words to mutter.

7. THE CHILDREN IN THE BORDERLAND

The children in their borderland
Put on the shoes midget . — not quite sure of meaning here?
To learn the unknown British shoes ,
A latent destruction of their shoes lace, shoelaces?
for reaching out shoes' sky.
why latent?

The shoe children
in a faraway shoe land ✓
Roam back and forth, nice development
without Cinderella shoes
Echoing shoes' sweat,
shoes torn and shoes' status .

The children in a grey land
Step in to confusion,
of choosing and sacrifice
Between west and east, ✓✓
Cassava and cheese
Bread and Rice
Still, they murmur, in their dream state of pursuit!
Shoes bacon... shoes salmon... and their Elizabeth shoes

possessive case? Shoes' bacon

perhaps only use capitals at
beginning of line

Intriguing piece but needs a lot
more revision (I think to get
grammatical relationship right of
shoes' (possessive case)

Translated version

POEM FOR IBUNDA

I send you a prayer
in my night worship.
Heaven knows! - !) but could also run-on
How much I long for
the warm smile
gentle expression
and the lullaby to your grandson.

As I trace the memory,
back to the old days,
The scent of love
and the aroma of Insulin
are the fragmented recollections
sadly awake in my heart and soul.

Through the frosty hours,
I contemplate the dry leaves
Falling from the oak tree,
The yellow layer of life
Descended and
demonised by the cold.

strong image / idea

The fear crawls within me.
Fear for the days to come,
without you
Like a paper ship, adrift.
But I will build another one
In the name of love
and row the boat
Never stop.
For you... Ibunda!
This heavenly Surah
Al-Fatiha!

Very elegant and controlled
tracing of grief and its
movement

Appendix 37

4. A CUP OF TEA WITHOUT SUGAR IN ONE RAINY AFTERNOON

A cup of tea minus sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, ~~in~~ one rainy afternoon. You set your troubling toes ~~lower~~ to the white tiles of my new home. Lying down on the floor, my hand reached ^{you} the ankle, and up to the wrinkled calf, giving them ^{both} a firm and soft massages. When it came to your thigh, I usually get up and here we go! The same old story flowed! An elegy, of how the grand nanny lost her precious knee. Mother thought she was lucky.

lovely opening

evocative connection

A cup of tea ^{without} (except) sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, ~~in~~ one rainy afternoon. We moved ~~to~~ to the front terrace of my tiny house so you could view the colour of the clouds beneath the pouring rain. My mind shuttled for a while, you did not want to be lifted. Let this four-legged stick carry me! I look through the slender figure, of the palm which was once caked with ~~the~~ chalks powder, ~~you~~ brought them home, and when I reminded you of the little episode, here we go! The same old story flowed! A success story of a woman, \int crossing academic duty, bordered by domestic demand. \int Mother thought she was progressive.

✓ great to repeat Mrs pattern

A cup of tea in the absence [✓] of sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava ~~in~~ one rainy afternoon. \int I always loved these intimate minutes when my chin pressed against the arm chair. You leaned your head back and stroked my hair. What we talk about when we do not \int talk about food, the toddlers, and insulin in the refrigerator. \int The rain stopped, but we did not toast your health. \int Mother thought she was fine. ✓

A cup of tea with no added sugar, two pieces of oat biscuits \int , one pack of potatoes ~~crisp~~ and one tablet of Metformin, ready to swallow in one snowy afternoon. \int My eyes are staring at the cotton drop while counting the invisible curtain of space between us. ✓

A cup of tea without you, (Mother! (I am now the abandoned daughter.)

- not sure you need it?

Very effective use of structure here and a rich atmosphere conveyed

Appendix 38

5. From The old photograph (After Margaret Atwood's This is a Photograph of Me)

← One dark chamber.

The diminished light,
the odour of black coffee,
dominate the sleeping room.

Someone might put it right behind the bed.

But if you stayed a bit longer here,

in this gloomy chamber

the aroma of Arabicas

would fade away,

soon right after you sniff

the story of a gangrene

(foul ^m spelling pus) the diabetic heritage ✓

Anyway, that is not the point!!

Come closer, Can you see it?

The long smear of one object,

Almost 25 inches long — two feet (?)

Lift your finger up, a bit!

Examine the two dots!

Yes, the twin little girls

holding each other's hands,

shivering and

hiding behind

the prosthetic leg .

✓ Very strong ending

Mysterious poem — very effective focus on
the image

8. SUMMER DISTRACTIONS

Can you skip July to September?
Tape them in the calendar blacklist
So the ^{sixty}60 days never exist. ✓

Strong opening

Would you dare to stop?
The musical sound of the bed cracking,
sheet and bed movement by half dozen feet. ✓

unusual image

Do you have enough energy?
To shut the prince's frog's throat,
Croaking behind the kitchen's cupboard. ?

Can you conjure yourself daily?
To be a ^{ut?}(narrow eyes) Chinese waitress,
Preparing for them the rice steam and baked fish ..

Are you willing to be
A ^{ten}10 years old friendly girl next door
who is good at playing Xbox and PS4. ?

Or should you speak about it out loud?
The story of the haunted laptop
which the bad spirit tangled on its monitor. ✓

Be the witch
with her magic broomstick,
your charms could make them fall asleep. —

shll a question ?

Otherwise, play your antagonist part!
Slap them on the back
and make them all regret. ✓

And when summer ends, invite
the blowing wind and yellow leaves
to build the fence in school back yard. ✓

After all, can you survive?
Against the distractions?..
To alter and to revise ?

Really terrific poem -
I really like the sustained
questions and the use of
images here.

Winda

THE MAKING OF SECOND LANGUAGE POETRY 2

Inaccuracy, the turmoil of inconsistency ;
 Foreignness works to uncover impotence .
 My heart blushes .
 The colour is pink, and it turns grey ,
 Epitomizing fear and fragility .

think about
 punctuation for
 control of
 meaning
 + use single spacing

space >

Scepticism is a good company,
 Disproportion between shape and sense .
 My eyes blink .

They draw ^hpanic attack , ^{clarity}
 Devil works ^r(at this stage) in the ^{ful}unrest mind .

space >

Turbulence, when paper and pen collide ;
 Crossing border, zone transit, vacuum space . ✓
 My head blows up .
 It burns identity and uniqueness . ✓
 I am now anonymous...

strong images

Strong poem but perhaps work
 on line-breaks a bit more -
 here most lines coincide with
 a syntactical unit. Try, for
 example :

Scepticism is
 good company.
 Disproportion between
 shape and sense.
 My eyes
 blink.

Poetry Wales
 Winter 2015

Appendix 42

A Motherhood Ph.D.'s seasons

Spring is a gift .

A marriage proposal

With promises^w

to bear and to endure.

The spirit glows.

I am a flourishing hibiscus,

self-cultivated in the foreign ground.

again consider
single spacing

✓ lovely image

> one linespace less

Summer gives me opportunity

to inhale Petrichor,

to witness the cactus growing

in my kitchen window.

The [solitude of dryness :

outpour my vitality . out pours ?

Autumn allows me

to crave the leaves

on the yellowing surfaces.

I gather every inch

of courage,

to fight the blowing wind

and yell at the noisy sweep . — sweeper ?

Appendix 43

The winter, behold
It's magic of cold .
it Ruin^s the defence
a And I got drenched
i In the stream of uncertainty
a And distrust .
L Like the last petals
of magnolia ,
I restrain and subside .

Very elegant and effective
poem

5. A CUP OF TEA WITHOUT SUGAR ONE RAINY AFTERNOON

A cup of tea minus sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, one rainy afternoon. You set your troubling toes lower to the white tile of my new home. Lying down on the floor, my hand reached your ankle, and up to the wrinkled calf, giving them both firm and soft massages. When it came to your thigh, I [usually] get up and here we go! The same old story flowed! An elegy of how the grand nanny lost her precious knee. Mother thought she was lucky.

A cup of tea without sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, one rainy afternoon. We moved to the front terrace of my tiny house so you could view the colour of the clouds beneath the pouring rain. My mind shuttled for a while, you did not want to be lifted. [Let this four-legged stick carry me! I look through the slender figure of the palm which was once caked with chalk powder. You brought them home, and when I reminded you of the little episode, here we go! The same old story flowed! [A success story of a woman, crossing academic duty, bordered by domestic demand. Mother thought she was progressive.

*Keep tense
consistent?*

right word?

✓
- daisy?

A cup of tea in the absence of sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava one rainy afternoon. [I always loved these intimate minutes when my chin pressed against the arm chair. You leaned your head back and stroked my hair. What we talk about when we do not talk about food, the toddlers, and insulin in the refrigerator. The rain stopped, but we did not toast your health. Mother thought she was fine.

A cup of tea with no added sugar, two pieces of oat biscuits, one pack of potatoes crisp and one tablet of Metformin, ready to swallow in one snowy afternoon. My eyes are staring at the cotton drop while counting the invisible curtain of space between us.

or measuring?

A cup of tea without you, Mother!

*very poignant
moment*

5. A CUP OF TEA WITHOUT SUGAR ONE RAINY AFTERNOON

A cup of tea minus sugar, two pieces of fried banana and boiled cassava, one rainy afternoon. You set your troubling toes lower to the white tile of my new home. Lying down on the floor, my hand reached your ankle, and up to the wrinkled calf, giving them both firm and soft massages. When it came to your thigh, I [usually] get up and here we go! The same old story flowed! An elegy of how the grand nanny lost her precious knee. Mother thought she was lucky.

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A cup of tea without you, Mother!

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moment*

6. From 'The Old photograph' (After Margaret Atwood's 'This is a Photograph of Me')

One dark chamber:

(Diminished light,

the odour of black coffee,

dominate^s the sleeping room. ~~by~~

Someone might put it right behind the bed.

But if you stayed^{ed} a bit longer here^{ed}

| in this gloomy chamber,

the aroma of Arabica^s

would fade away.

Soon right after you sniff^{'d}

the story of gangrene,

foul smelling pus, the diabetic heritage.

Anyway, that is not the point!!

Come closer, Can you see it? ✓

The long smear of one object,

Almost two feet. - two feet or two foot long?

Lift your finger up^d a bit!

Examine the two dots!

Yes, the twin little girls

holding each other's hands,

shivering and

hiding behind

the prosthetic leg .

use some verse breaks?

| shorten lines ~~the~~

Very powerful conclusion

1. After The Funeral

A wooden Box, old furnished,

These trembling fingers

Unwillingly open the lid.

> Beneath the twinkling silver [earrings

I catch the sight of it :

○ The dragon head golden ring ,

> A sudden chill comes over ^{me} .

Pictures framed by vanishing lineage,

Holding back, I withdrew ^a .

perhaps present
as three verses?

Poignant, well-captured image

Appendix 47 (self translation)

even translated

- so you could reflect on the process + the results

Translated version

POEM FOR IBUNDA

I send you a prayer
in my night worship.
Heaven knows!
How much I long for
the warm smile
gentle expression
and the lullaby to the grandson

Sounds odd
'your' grandson?

As I trace the memory,
back to the old days,
The scent of love
and the aroma of Insulin
are the fragmented recollections
sadly awake in my heart and soul

Through the frosty hours,
I contemplate of the dry leaves,
Falling from the oak tree,
The yellow layer of life
Descended and
demonised by cold winter.

one or the other, not both?
winter implies cold.

The fear crawls within me
For the days to come
without you, Ibunda!
Like a paper ship
adrift (with the absence of a guidance)
But I will build another one
In the name of love
(That you inherit)
I'll row the boat
Al-Fathiha!
And sending you this heaven verses ?
My Ibunda... for you...
love and prayer!

adrift implies this

perhaps rethink the final line?

I wonder where the ! comes from?

Kepada Almarhumah Kenari Kecilku

Sekelabat bayangan akan cantiknya lekuk tubuhmu
terdengar kicauan mu, lirik menyentak sesalku
tak ku renda sangkar cinta untukmu
fikirku, asa yang kurajut akan sirna karna hadirmu,

Ampuni daku, wahai kenari
Pada paruh mu yang kulukai
Pada cangkangmu yang ku nodai
Pada kepek sayapmu yang patah, sebelum arungi langit azuri

Sebelum pagi ku jelang
ku titip pada rindu pada malaikat kecil penghuni surga
Setiap denyut nadi, kulantunkan nyanyian jiwa

change in layput

To My Late Female Canary (Extract)

To the figure of my late canary, I shall think of your beauty, your first cry and your first humour. But regret awakes. I failed to wrap the lace of love and protection around your fragile cage. I am now being punished for my vanity and blindness of glittering life. Forgive me dear love, for your cracked shell, for your crippled beaks and for your broken wings, you failed to spread them high to the azure world. Before the dawn, I will crave this longing, compose you a song of divinity, and send it through your guardian angel, seven stairs up to heaven.

Lovely!

At 135 Piccadilly Bus Stop

I.

Two young ladies,
in the aroma of curry,
speak in their hyphenated language.

Boasting about the fertility,
of planting words,
bridging the gap
between worlds. ✓

But Vanity is a great excuse.

authentic ^{then} Just wish Mahatma Gandhi appears

~~The dead spirit,~~

to revolve the bullet ✓

of nation and dignity

right at the dark gleaming hairs. *Great!*

II.

A homeless

Mancunian man shivers,
among his scattered elements. ✓

Cigarettes butts, bottles of Cola,
And two cups of last night Starbuck.

Behind the dirty blankets,

he perhaps ejaculates

the coldness, ✓ *Great!*

and his nothingness. ✓

People know his story,

Once, wishing for the better future,

he said yes to Racism)

he chose to exit.

But, the good fortune
has not yet existed.

*Be aware being too didactic
or explicit in political allegory.
keep him human!*

*Don't mix political
statements*

explicit

Appendix 50

make clear that they're old

III.

The street musician

In the garden

play the music of their heart.

White man and woman

sitting on a wooden bench

who have lived long

in a solitary place,

requesting a heavenly tune,

As soon as

musicians blow the saxophone

they restrain

the heavy breath

and terrible coughing.

if the
story
needed?

expand
relationship

IV.

As the bus wheels

up to Cheetham Hill,

I button my jacket.

This country turns grey. ✓ Yes!

All the way,

out of the bus window,

faces? eyes are searching,

figuring out

? capturing smell and sounds

? covering each other though

And seen from all perspective,

I catch one particular sound

of three birds

Chirping and yelling.

My poetry terminates - nice!

in its luminous stop

} shift from sight to sound?

KS - keep the line times

(A)

THE MAKING OF SECOND LANGUAGE POEM

My first three lines

are savourless,

I mix one salty words

from my native ground.

In vain,

they turn out sour.

Then I catch the glimpse

of delicacy in the next stanzas,

sweet and strong,

but the smeary

sounds artificial.

It is rain and dark,

and my poetry

is almost soak.

← self-reflexive

Yes! Brilliant!!

Very strong when your poems
reflect on and embody your
process.

THE CHILDREN IN THE BORDERLINE

↑ why the change?
↓

The children in their border land
Put on the shoes midget?
To learn the unknown British shoes
A latent destruction of their shoes lace,
for reaching out shoes sky.

Ha! I see what you're doing!

^{shoe} The children in a faraway land
Roam back and forth,
without Cinderella shoes
Echoing shoes sweat,
shoes torn and shoes status

The children in a grey land
Step in to confusion,
of choosing and sacrifice
Between west and east,
Cassava and cheese ✓
Bread and Rice ✓
Still, they murmur, in their dream state of pursuit!
Shoes bacon... shoes salmon... and their Elizabeth shoes

This could work
but perhaps the
confusion or
need for shoes
is exaggerating

THE STORY OF RESISTANCE

Once Mrs Rogers found it hard
to tell me the truth,
about his denying tongue,
absorbing the thick English. ✓

With a and the double ee,
he uttered, "what can you see".

The double oo match "kangaroo in the zoo".

He resisted the blending sounds,
then I pointed ^{to} the autumn leaves,
and added aubergine.

But he had his sort of song, ✓

Aubergine is purple without exemption, Bunda!

Confusing words with tender voice,

I was told, they laughed at him at dinner time,

^m Mocked him to return to reception .

Not even a cry, but his silent frown.?

Should not we refuse the first tongue?

Now , I feel guilty

I wish I ^{sd} pointed home that day

I am not a fertile mother,

unable to provide him with double tongues. ✓

watch
punctuation.

Rich idea,
eloquently expressed.

SUMMER DISTRACTIONS

Can you skip July to September?
Tape them in the calendar blacklist ✓
So the 60 days never exist.

Would you dare to stop? ^{the}
The musical sound of bed cracking,
sheet and bed movement by dozen feet.

Do you have enough energy?
To shut the prince's frog's throat,
Croaking behind the kitchen's cupboard.

Can you conjure yourself daily?
To be a narrow eyes Chinese waitress,
Preparing them ^{for} the rice steam and baked fish.

Are you willing to be?
A 10 years old friendly girl next door?
who is good at playing domino and Nintendo.

Or should you speak about it out loud?
the story of the haunted laptop
which the bad spirit tangled on its monitor.

Or be the witch?
with her magic broomstick,
your charms could make them fall asleep.

Otherwise, play your antagonist part!
Slap them on the back
and make them all regret.

And when summer ends, invite
the blowing wind and yellow leaves
to build the fence in school back yard, ✓

After all, can you survive?
Against the distractions...
to alter and to revise
among a pile of books and journals. ?

Appendix 55

2.

Three months earlier

We had a serious conversation

staring up to
the white ceiling.

With a deep look *looking deeply*
upon my eyes
and my belly.

"Maso tuo sanang dek baranak padusi".

I did not respond, but I

listened to her echoing urge.

I fear of the failure,

I knew she would tell me

how to react

when the midwives

giggled the tortured lines

under the bleeding sheet,

"batambah anak laki-laki nan ka maninggaan nagari".

3. Afterwards,

we stopped trying,

and ~~the~~ door has closed.

It's no use crying over the spilt milk

Mother took off the dragon head golden ring

and folded her *Songket* shawl,

she spoke about

disconnection and desolation.

The explosion of despair.

She did not ask,

but I knew she would let me

lay down the shawl

over her dead body.

39.

The Making of a Second Language Poetry 3

The poems are not dead
They exist in my left fallopian tube,
They are mute in solitude
The vicious fluid is stranded inactive
To ruin my time frame

Some were born prematurely
~~And be the~~ orphan even on their first day
Ambiguous genetic variation
distinctiveness is paralyzed
By ~~the~~ double citizenship

In the end, when they survive
The poems are condemned to death
Words spit in a mother's face
Triggering a senseless bickering,
over family and subjectivity.

Handwritten notes:
The poems are not dead
They exist in my left fallopian tube,
They are mute in solitude
The vicious fluid is stranded inactive
To ruin my time frame



Great sign of progression here.

40.

A Motherhood Ph.D.'s seasons

Spring is a gift.
A marriage proposal
with promises
to bear and to endure.
The spirit glows.
I am a flourishing hibiscus,
self-cultivated in the foreign ground. ✓

Handwritten notes:
A marriage proposal
with promises
to bear and to endure.
The spirit glows.
I am a flourishing hibiscus,
self-cultivated in the foreign ground.

Summer gives me opportunity

50.

what if you frame it like a photograph?

STUDY ABROAD SETTING

Bear in mind that life is not only a matter of an afternoon tea with a pack of half price crisps from a spring Sale, but it is also the issue of a morning errand with two bags of groceries from the Halal market nearby. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of evening spelling practice with mainstream fairy tales to read, but it is also an issue of night lullabies to some husky boys with the same old songs. Bear in mind that life is not only a matter of readings and writing, reflecting back has also been a tough part. Remember that life is not only a matter of learning English but fitting the language into the home's needs is a separate section. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of desiring and longing with a sudden burst of tears falling, the struggle to wipe the tears away is another sad chronicle. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of experiencing the ecstasy of the first snow, but it contains some episodes of life surviving in the winter cold. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of taking two tablets of Metformin, but it is also a matter of resisting lingering sweetness. Remember that life is not only a matter of counting the autumn leaves but also about leaving all the yellowish memory behind. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of catching a 135 bus at Smedley Lane on one early dramatic morning but also coping with the feeling of horror when missing the late evening bus back home. Bear in mind that life is not about adopting, adapting but also taking some risk of disintegrating native values. Keep in mind that life is not a matter of losing weight but also gaining it through some big midnight meals. Bear in mind that life is not an issue of parental TV guide but also refers to any supervisory routine toward latent Youtube Vlogs. Bear in mind that life is not a matter of successfully executing a receipt for fish and chips but also conjuring up British kale into the flavor of curry Cassava leaves. And bear in mind that life is not a matter of making hopes and prayers but sustaining them till the end of this journey Bear it in mind, bear them in mind, Bear Bear Be... ar.. be .. ar .. be arrrrgghhhhhhhhh

51.LATE AFTERNOON AT ADELPHY

Had I examined other poem,
I would seize different textures,
flavour and tune.
The rhyme matches the pulse
Clarity forbids drowsiness