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Globalectics, critical discourse studies (CDS) and Southern feminisms

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ABSTRACT
Feminist research in critical discourse studies, like other strands of CDS, has been primarily North-centric. The transdisciplinary nature of this field has led to its theories and methods travel globally, including to parts of the Global South, without being critically appropriated. This has resulted in the neglect of a vast body of knowledge that is available in the Southern world (both in a geographical and epistemic sense). The neoliberal and colonial Metadiscursive regimes that regulate knowledge production and dissemination have, however, been challenged in recent years. Southern feminism is one such response to western feminist theory that views the women of the South as a homogenous group and without agency. Southern theories, including Muslim feminism, resist patriarchy, colonialism and capitalist structures through local epistemic struggles defined by their colonial histories, religious ethos and cultural values. The feminist CDS, however, largely ignores these insights. The purpose of this article is to argue, drawing on Thiongo's *globalectics* as an inclusive theoretical vision, that the dialog of Southern feminisms with Northern epistemologies can enrich feminist research within CDS. I conclude my article by discussing three types of critical discourse analysts who can learn from globalectics to inform their work within CDS and decolonial research.

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Introduction

Due to an expansive body of theories and methods, critical discourse researchers often have difficulty choosing appropriate theories or analytical frameworks to explain data collected from various sources. For one to maintain the rigor of his or her contribution to the field, it is thought to be imperative to suggest how the data could be explained theoretically. Consequently, researchers struggle more with developing theoretically sound findings than with developing solutions to real-world problems. This is one reason why critical work in academia, including critical discourse studies (CDS) has been less successful at addressing the real-world challenges of social inequalities, injustices, xenophobia,

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Islamophobia and gender hierarchies. Kubota (2023) critiques this notion of scholarly rigor in which researchers are expected to frame the knowledge gained through data by using an academic theory (e.g. poststructuralism, new materialism, translingualism, critical race theory, etc.). She views it as one of the challenges in critical work often arising from this neoliberal thrust of academic publishing that demands universities and researchers globally to publish in high-impact journals with a specific theoretical foundation and methodological sophistication, and thus calls for criticality as *praxis* (*triad*: reflection, action and transformation) as a future agenda for critical work.

Since the neoliberal university will continue to exist in contemporary times given the stronghold of the world capitalist system, and research as an intellectual activity will surge, I believe *critical reflection* is an important call of the praxis *triad* in order to ground the research in its onto-epistemological realities and conditions. By engaging in critical reflection in the present time, we will be able to create conditions for countering colonial and neoliberal influences on education and society. It is in keeping with Freire's (1998, 33) definition of praxis as 'action upon the world to transform it'. As such, decolonial and Southern scholarship provides one such way to reconceptualize and diversify critical discourse studies (CDS) to address real-life issues in global contexts and transform oppressive realities. Macedo in relation to foreign language education asks, 'how can the field of foreign language education decolonize itself? how can it justify its vast whiteness as reflected in classrooms, teacher preparation programs, and national and international language teacher organizations?' (Macedo 2019, 14). Undoubtedly, a theory developed in the North may not adequately address problems in the South, and vice versa. CDS has traditionally been primarily North-centric, and less inclusive of the diverse epistemologies from the South. As Shi-xu (2015, 1) points out, CDA employs western worldviews, values, concepts, models, analytical tools, topics of interest, as universal and exclusive standards (see also Shi-xu, Kwaa, and Pardo 2016). According to Pennycook and Makoni (2019, 97), CDA may provide useful ideology critiques, but it is essentially a hegemonic discourse that reproduces old-fashioned colonialism and excludes alternative perspectives.

In light of the Eurocentric and Anglo-western influences of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), this article decolonizes CDS as a field through globalectics – an inclusive approach to reading and critically analyzing texts (see Thiong'o 2012) as further enriched by culturalist approach to discourse studies (Shi-xu 2022, 2023). Globalectical reading 'opens the prison house of imagination built by theories and outlooks that would seem to signify the content within as classified, open only to a few. This involves declassifying theory in the sense of making it accessible' (Thiong'o 2012, 87). A globalectical approach reveals the interaction and interconnection that exist between social phenomena in the local and global spheres, illuminating both internal and external dynamics, local and global dynamics of a social being (87). While discussing this globalectical way of reading and analyzing texts, I add to feminist research largely centered around western feminisms by offering insights to the feminist CDA (see Lazar 2007, 2014, 2021). I suggest that work of this kind could be enriched by incorporating more diverse Southern theories, especially Southern feminisms (Mohanty 1984; Roberts and Connell 2016) including Muslim feminism (Abu-Lughod 2013; Barazangi 2016; Barlas 2019), which offer insights for the Feminist CDA. I begin by briefly reviewing CDS as a field and discussing it through the lens of intellectual decolonization, followed by Southern feminism inclusive of Muslim feminism as one such theoretical strand. As a conclusion, I discuss

how the use of such work can provide a praxis in critical work for more diverse contexts that contemplate diverse forms of decolonizing politics (Canagarajah 2022) by discussing three types of critical discourse analysts in the South using three types of interpreters' analogy as suggested by Thiong'o (see Thiong'o 1998).

Critical discourse studies (CDS), feminist research and intellectual decolonization

CDS is an expanding field that draws on a variety of theoretical and methodological frameworks largely developed in the North. The field began in the early 1990s as a result of a small symposium held at the university of Amsterdam comprising researchers originating from Europe or the United Kingdom including Teun Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen, Luisa Martin Rojo and Ruth Wodak. However, this scholarly work shows a considerable variance in approaches, analytical methods and theoretical commitments. Using these theoretical slants, researchers globally have examined different aspects of social reality as being constituted in discourse, and how they influence the reality in turn. These discourses include English-centrism (Shah and Pathan, 2016), national identities (Shah, 2023), culture (Kramsch and Vinall 2015; Yuen 2011), and neoliberal economic and cultural discourses (Babaii and Sheikhi 2018; Bori 2018; Gray 2010).

With the growing body of knowledge in discourse studies, the *gender turn* emerged as an important intellectual current in critical and poststructuralist debates around gender in both outside linguistics (e.g. Butler 1990; Weedon 1997) as well as within linguistics (Baxter 2002; Lazar 2007, 2014; Wodak 1997) due to the prevalence of gender violence, injustices and inequalities worldwide. Language and gender research is on the rise in contemporary times with the separate courses and research units at universities, including the author's country of origin. Despite the fact, worth noting is how gender is theorized in different parts of the world depends on what dominant frameworks, social theories or contexts it draws on. Judith Butler (2021) writing from the Global North engaged with a poststructuralist thinking over the last few decades argues that gender is a negotiation, a struggle, a way of dealing with historical constraints and making new realities. In this framework, gender is not fixed but constantly negotiated, reconstituted and reassigned. Thus, such a framework creates an environment that accommodates gender diversity as well as diverse sexual identities associated with it, as illustrated by a growing body of literature on language, gender and sexuality studies (LGS) and trans knowledges and linguacultures, which provides recommendations for gender-just pedagogy and social spaces (e.g. Angouri and Baxter 2021; Gray 2023; Knisely 2022).

In this vein, decolonial scholars argue that all representations, colonial or anticolonial, come from discursive positions situated within socially, ideologically and historically located discursive 'loci of enunciation' (Menezes de Souza 2019; Mignolo 2009). These enunciative positions shape our understanding of the world and our relationship with it and the entities around it. In this view, our understanding of gender and its intersecting relations, and how we theorize it as a concept reflects, reinforces and redirects the social conditions and ontological commitments. For example, Lazar's work in Feminist CDA is in a way an attempt to synthesize the Northern perspective with a Southern theory combing critical and poststructuralist tendencies. However, her understanding of gender and sexuality is located within a specific Southern perspective i.e. Singapore where ways of doing

gender and sexuality appropriate national core values: nation, family, community, consensus, racial and religious harmony that runs contrary to the discourses and practices in the North (see Lazar 2017). In both North and Southern contexts, such as Singapore and alike, gender as well as sexuality are viewed as a fluid entity that is open to diversity (see Butler 2021). This line between the South and North is, however, complex one, and therefore needs a careful attention. For example, Moosavi (2020) writes, while the Global South and the non-West are often conflated, they do not always correspond. For instance, while Africa may generally be considered as both Southern and non-Western, Latin America may generally be said to be part of the Global South but Western, and parts of Asia like Japan, South Korea and Singapore may be said to be non-Western but part of the Global North. This is one reason why Lazar's feminist CDA inclines more towards the Northern epistemic commitment and may need a critical engagement to embrace more diverse southern views to reflect on gender in diverse global contexts.

Even though some researchers have advocated decolonizing CDS as a discipline in light of colonial histories (see Resende 2021; Shi-xu 2015), it remains largely a North-centric discipline with frameworks often used in studies as suggested by Northern theorists – Fairclough, Van Dijk, Gee, Lemke, Kress and Van Leeuwen, Foucault, Wodak and others (see Smith and Sheyholislami 2022 for a review study). The export of these frameworks to the Global Southern contexts explains the historical colonial relations involving knowledge production, dissemination and consumption apparent in departmentalized linguistic programs, including CDS and other subfields worldwide dominated by Northern theories and ideas (Agha 2007). Accordingly, several scholars have called for intellectual decolonization of the social sciences, including critical applied linguistics and critical discourse studies (see, for example, Moosavi 2020; Pennycook and Makoni 2019).

Halliday (1994) describes discourse as a major transdisciplinary theme in humanities and social sciences. Transdisciplinarity of the theme has allowed it to flourish in diverse ways, borrowing ideas from social sciences, humanities, legal and cultural studies, and, more recently, natural sciences as in the case of posthumanism (see, e.g. Barad 2003; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2020). While challenging modernist Enlightenment thinking through dialogic conversations with other fields, critical discourse theorists seem to lack epistemic curiosity (Lewis 2018) towards the diverse epistemologies of the non-Western world and the scholars in various social sciences and humanities disciplines. Moosavi (2020) while tracing the genealogy of intellectual decolonization warns us about the challenges involving the decolonization process explaining how several key original thinkers in decolonial scholarship from the South, for example, in East Asia (Syed Hussein Alatas, Syed Farid Alatas, Jose Rizal), in South Africa (Claude Ake, Thiong'O), in South Asia (Subaltern school – Ranajit Guha, Chandra Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak), in Latin America (Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo) and others have received a little attention. In addition, he explains how Northern decolonial scholars take credit for intellectual decolonization of the social sciences and ignore the fact that it originated in non-Western world in the 1970s. This orientation, however, is being overlooked, with possible consequences of either re-westernization of social sciences or decolonization without decolonizing. As discussed in the following section, I discuss Ngugi wa Thiong'o's view of globalectics as a more inclusive framework for CDS as a field and more specifically feminist strand as in the case of the present article.

Globalectics: an inclusive vision for discourse scholars

The intellectual decolonization of social sciences in inclusive ways will facilitate a *globalectical* approach to reading texts as proposed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (see for example, Thiong'o 2012) while offering insights to enrich CDS both theoretically and analytically. Thiong'o earlier used native languages instead of English in his scholarly outputs as a pioneering example of a decolonial scholar enacting decolonization in practice. Further, a class dimension was also introduced by Thiong'o in his analysis of linguistic hierarchies by suggesting that native elites are primarily responsible for preserving the dominance of European languages due to its benefits for them, even though the consequences of such neocolonialism are disproportionately detrimental to native populations (Moosavi 2020). To Thiong'o, intellectual decolonization is not just about undoing colonialism; it is also about undoing capitalism. In his recent works, his approach, however, shifts from 'Farewell to English' to learning from all languages, cultures and literatures (Canagarajah 2022).

Globalectics, 'derived from the shape of the globe, is the mutual containment of hereness and thereness in time and space, where time and space are also in each other' (Thiong'o 2012, 84). According to him, 'reading globalectically is a way of approaching any text from whatever times and places to allow its content and themes from a free conversation with other texts of one's time and place, the better to make it yield its maximum to the human. It is to read ***a text*** with the eyes of the world; it is to see the world with the eyes of the text' (86). According to Thiong'o (2012, 53), western intellectuals and their work occupied the center stage during the Enlightenment era. They held powerful positions in their respective academies and, in addition to their mutual intertextuality, passed along their shared perspective to their students, who in turn passed it on until it became a tradition and inheritable truth. Consequently, he argues for collapsing of the hierarchy and binaries so as to view relationship between languages, cultures and literatures in terms of a network. In a network, there is no one center, all are points balanced and related to one another by the principle of giving and receiving. A globalectical reading calls for the mutual impact and comprehension of the local and global. As Thiong'o (2012, 86) suggests, even the old classical literatures of different cultures and languages can be read globalectically. Canagarajah (2022) notes if Thiong'o talked about binary and hierarchical structures in 1986, he now writes about nonlinear *rhizomes* as more suitable for language relationships. Further, Thiong'o proposes an 'onion structure theory' and explains: 'In the Gikuyu system of thought detectable in the language, … it expresses the interdependence of all existence, physical and abstract, that people must have detected in the reality surrounding their lives' (Thiong'o 2012, 76). In this non-binary, nonhierarchical and networked approach to reality, ideas, theories and concepts from either the global north or the global south may be used, and beyond that, we might even discover that a synthesis of these two stances is the most promising approach (Alatas 2000; Spivak 1988). Thus, this concept facilitates the integration of Southern epistemologies by suggesting the abolition of hierarchical knowledge structures prevalent in the North that privilege one mode of knowing over other. Thiong'o refers to an African linguist, Zirimu, to challenge the binary notion of literate and illiterate as characterized by the Enlightenment modernist discourses. He argues that west-centric knowledge structures exclude diverse forms of knowledge in the South existing in

different modes. In his words 'orature was to orality what literature was to writing' (Thiong'o 2012, 98) which suggests, the real binary consisted of literate and orate, which were not oppositional absolutes; they were interconnected by the word; and as representations of thought and experience, they both had their adequacies and inadequacies. Orality and writing were natural allies. In this light, *globalectics* offers a range of readings relating not only to literature, but also to orature (unwritten accounts of the folk wisdom and knowledge), a rich tradition in the South. He also discusses how in the present cyberspace, knowledge advances in a different mode that he calls *cyborature* – a world of e-books and CDs – a new form of natural alliance in reality (see also, Shi-xu 2023 on technological advancements e.g. ChatGPT and other generative AI tools as a focus in CDS). In this vein, Canagarajah (2022) rightly suggests, we need to diversify decolonizing politics by looking at epistemes of social analysis other than the useful western philosophical frameworks.

This has implications for critical discourse studies (CDS) as a field that can embrace positions beyond Marxist-based critical theory and Western-influenced post'ist positions (for example, postmodern constructionist approaches, including poststructuralism, posthumanism and postcolonialism). Diverse thinkers from the Global South can be considered as part of the transdisciplinary endeavor to broaden the scope of the field while removing conceptual complexities so that it becomes more comprehensible for people outside the academe (Kubota 2023). Globalectics as a dialogical and inclusive framework allows for the explanation of situated power relations and hegemonies, as well as global ideologies, with resources derived from different theoretical perspectives – local as well as global. It aligns with cultural discourse studies (CDS), which deconstructs ethnocentrism in discourse field and tends to reconstruct and apply frameworks of cultural discourses of diverse communities around the world. This is aimed at reclaiming identity, regaining voice, and empowering the marginalized and silenced communities (see Shi-xu 2022, 2023). Such decolonial inclusive critical discourse studies (CDS) envisioned by *Globalectics* adheres to a big 'Q' organic and flexible qualitative research involving the reflexivity of the researchers (Braun and Clarke 2019). As long as the CDS is open to dialog and flexible enough to accommodate scholars from the Global South, and researchers are not expected of the academic rigor in their analysis of social problems based on Western conceptions of rigor, the researchers may come up with alternative critical reflections without obscuring the field conceptually in order to achieve the desired praxis (action and transformation) within society. As a result of the *globalectical* vision, the academic discourse will be flattened in order to reach out to the audience in postcolonial societies, helping them with the transformation processes in both classrooms and social spaces. This praxis is possible when the researchers are able to explain their findings with locally grounded and globally minded, culturally conscious and critical, study of cultural discourses with a view to foster cultural innovation in scholarship and facilitate cultural development, harmony and prosperity in society (Shi-xu 2023). This may require connecting not only with people in the academe but also outside world in simple, non-technical jargon so that they can identify with both emotionally and intellectually. As a part of the globalectics, I discuss southern feminisms in the following section that can inform the feminist research relevant to postcolonial societies, specifically the work carried along decolonial feminist lines as well as often overlooked strand of Muslim feminism.

Southern feminisms: diversifying the Southern feminist '*episteme*'

Southern feminism emerged out of need to combat the global knowledge economy, which privileges and normalizes the Northern perspective in feminist theory. Connell (2015) makes a compelling case for a more democratic global structure for feminist theory by tracing the power of North in circulating feminist ideas worldwide while overlooking the wealth of knowledge produced in the global South. The most insightful critiques of knowledge production and power relations in feminist theory have come from Talpade Mohanty's famous paper 'Under Western Eyes' (1984) associated with the Subaltern School in India, which questions the universal representation of third world women as static and unchanging, while first world women being agents of change. Mohanty (1984) argues that western scholars' discursive representations of Third World Women as a homogenous group are in conflict with their identities as material subjects of their own history. In her opinion, western scholars' myopic views misrepresent the struggle of women in third world countries. In recent times, several special issues and books on Southern feminisms have been published that explain how women in different parts of the *South* both in a geographical and epistemic sense (see Pennycook and Makoni 2019) identify their struggles with socio-historical and cultural identities to reclaim their empowerment, agency, and resistive subjectivities to counter patriarchal, colonial and neoliberal power structures that marginalize them (see e.g. Byrne and Imma 2019; Dunne et al. 2020; Hussein 2018; Milani and Lazar 2017; Roberts and Connell 2016).

Roberts and Connell (2016) explain how theory and data inform feminist thinking. They argue that theory is primarily produced in the North and exported to the periphery. It is the latter, however, that provides raw data for theorization. These patterns can be observed in all academic disciplines; feminist and gender studies are no exception. Consequently, decolonial and Southern feminist scholars advocate moving 'the locus of enunciation' (Byrne and Imma 2019). Many Southern feminists criticize western feminism and argue that alternative perspectives should be considered when theorizing feminism and feminist epistemic and material struggles and discourses around their identities. For example, Chatterjee (2018, 223) questions 'the West' for India's colonial history. As she argues, the global political landscape is characterized by strong power hierarchies with theories being grounded in power frames. In this hierarchy, *imperial feminism* is the norm, and most feminist theory/praxis tends to move in a unidirectional way, with western feminists defining issues, legitimizing struggles and drawing lines. According to Kishwar (2004, 31), western feminisms exported to the southern contexts fail to address the real issues facing women. These western-inspired feminists, she writes, are based in the urban areas and receive support from international agencies and donors but cannot address the real needs of (Indian) women. The vast majority of women in Southern contexts are unwilling to assert their rights in a manner that would isolate them not only from their family, but also from their larger kinship group and community (Kishwar 2004). In this vein, there is a growing body of Southern feminist scholarship documenting the situated feminist struggles and questioning discursive formations of their identities while unpacking coloniality of gender in different contexts, such as Latin America (Giraldo 2016) and the Middle East and Africa (Dunne et al. 2020; Mahmood 2012). While Southern feminist scholarship is expanding, Muslim feminism also

emerges as an important theoretical strand that contributes to the re-theorization of feminist thought in the South with insights into resisting patriarchal, colonial and neoliberal hegemony on both a local and global level, as is discussed in the following section.

Muslim feminism: reclaiming empowerment and agency through *Islam*

The West and many non-Western nations perceive Islam as a monolithic epistemology. It should be noted, however, that there are significant theological and philosophical differences among sects as well as how women and men interpret Islam in the Muslim world. Feminist Islam, for instance, is one epistemic strand derived from Muslim feminist work that offers post-patriarchal lens to interpret and understand Islam in the Muslim world. This is in line with Dunne et al.'s (2020) '*Pluralizing Islam*' perspective, which explores how Muslim identities are negotiated differently in different geographical contexts. Muslim feminist scholars have refuted assumptions that interpret Islam as a single epistemic perspective and link it to patriarchal structures in Muslim societies (Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013; Ahmed 1992; Barlas 2019; Hassan 1991, 2001; Mahmood 2012). Barlas (2019, 7) writes 'violence against women by husbands and family members exists in all countries. But in Muslim societies, it is often justified by appeals to the Quran and to the Sunnah (doings) attributed to the prophet Muhammad.' It is not just in the West that such justifications prevail, but also in Muslim societies in which ideological conflicts between religious and progressive secularists produce an intellectual polarization. According to Barazangi (2016, 264), Muslim women are often stigmatized as helpless groups who require outside assistance, but this overlooks the fact that their misery is a result of militarized politics supported by Western government think tanks in Muslim majority countries. In Jakobson's view (2023, 152), the entwined discourses about gender-based violence, terrorism and Islam are historically located and constituted by the Enlightenment, secularization, Christian hegemony and colonialism.

It is important to note that Muslim feminist scholars identify gender-based violence in discourse (e.g. patriarchal interpretations of religious texts as well as in colonialism and Islamophobia) and material conditions of the Muslim societies. These influences and conditions, in turn, shape social practices and gender ideology in Muslim world. Barazangi (2016, 259) points out that the majority of contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim scholars attempt to understand Muslim women's social and gender identities by following either traditional Muslim interpretations, social theorists (such as Bourdieu and Foucault; *also, western feminists, my emphasis*) or orientalist approaches that are problematic. Muslim feminists deconstruct patriarchal ontologies associated with Islam based on post-patriarchal readings and decolonial lens. In their view, Islam provides them with empowerment and agency. Based on Foucault's (1994) 'ethics of the self', Mahmood (2012) suggests, an alternative ethic is possible in different socio-cultural and sociohistorical contexts. She discusses how Muslim women in Cairo embrace and submit to the will of God through Islamic virtues such as patience and modesty. These participants exercised their agency through faith in ways that differed from the liberal notion of agency as autonomy.

Muslim feminist scholars have spoken out on a range of philosophical, social and legal topics related to gender identity in Muslim societies with varying approaches given their geopolitical and socio-cultural contexts. As an example, they have attempted to deconstruct the basic assumptions about the creation story that often privileges man as a

primary creature. According to feminist Quran scholars, the Quran reinforces the idea that human life began from an 'unsexed soul' (see Naguib 2021). The 'unsexed soul' in Naguib's view (2021) embodies a theoretical potential for thinking about human identities from the perspective of a non-gender-specific ontology of commonality rather than merely viewing bodily differences as either fixed or malleable. Considering the unsexed soul as a way to understand gender challenges the dualist framework of the European Enlightenment. According to Barlas (2019), the Quran does not endorse the dualism of the mind–body or body–soul. Nor is a sex/gender binary acknowledged in the Quran. Based on Quranic epistemology, women and men are thought to be derivatives of the same 'Self' (Barlas 2019, 133). An African Muslim feminist scholar, Amina Wadud, citing the Quran, explains the creation of human beings as follows:

> O Humankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single *nafs*, and from it created its *zawj*, and from that pair spread abroad [over the earth] a multitude of men and women. (Quran, 4:1)

The term *nafs* is used in both a common and technical sense in the Quran, according to Wadud (1999, 19). Often translated as 'self,' the word is never used in the Quran to refer to any created 'self' (male or female) other than humankind. In technical terms, *nafs* refers to the common origin of human race in the Quran. It is thus declared that humanity originated from a single *nafs*, which is part of a contingent pair system: a nafs and a zawj (mate). Muslims often consider the creation story to have originated from the Quran, and discourses surrounding male as the primary human species have become widespread. However, the Muslim feminist scholars are critical of such an interpretation deep rooted in Muslim consciousness labeling it as 'creation myth[1]' that distorts the image of the Islam as a patriarchal religion and used to rationalize male's supremacy under the facade of religion. Hassan (2001) explains that Adam, often used as the first human, is a Hebrew word that does not refer to a person but rather to humanity collectively. Aside from this, she cites three uses of the term 'Adam' in the Quran, namely (a) Adam as a vice regent, (b) Adam as a prophet and (c) Adam as a generic noun referring to humanity. Out of 25 cases, 21 instances refer to human beings in the Quran (Hassan 1991, 45; see also Barlas 2019). Adam is interpreted as a male in the Quran due to the gendered nature of the Arabic language and the androcentric culture prevalent on the Arabian Peninsula at the time of its revelation (see Ayubi 2019; Wadud 1999). According to Ayubi (2019), early Muslim ethicists and theologians did not discriminate based on gender because they utilized neutral language and discourse in their discussion of gender. The parallel existence of androcentric cultures in Muslim societies historically and currently, further exacerbated by colonialism, led to religious knowledge being primarily conceived and produced from male perspectives.

This can be seen in the context of Pakistan as a postcolonial society characterized by androcentric normative culture where Islam is the official religion of the country and regulates the social life of Muslim majority population. In 1979 Zia-ul-Haq – a military ruler – launched Islamization project that enacted *Hudood ordinances* purporting to be based on the Quran and the prophet's Sunnah (see e.g. Barlas 2019; Hassan 2001). As Hassan (2001) writes, 'for certain crimes, the only admissible evidence was that of four Muslim men. This is not what the Koran prescribes, but this is what the Hudood says (4)'. Under this ordinance, a woman who is raped will not be able to prove her case in court without the

testimony of four Muslim men. Several acts of violence against women were justified in the name of religion using these laws. This led to the emergence of a feminist resistance in Pakistan that challenged such discourses, including the Muslim feminists who felt the need to re-interpret Islam in Pakistan through feminist theology. These patriarchal power relations in theological understanding of gender still persist among several Pakistani Muslims who often use these traditional religious discourses to justify male's supremacy despite the contemporary progressive steps towards pro-women legislation by the Pakistani government over the last few years under the same Islamic banner. Similarly, using conservative patriarchal reading of the Quran, several crimes against women were justified, including murder in the name of honor killing, female genital cutting, stoning, sexual assaults, moral policing, rape, shaming in different Muslim societies despite the fact there is no mention of such practices in the Text itself. In this light, Muslim feminist scholarship counters such oppressive forms of traditional religious knowledge and reconstructs and reclaims their gendered identities and agency using post-patriarchal readings of Islam.

Empirical evidence to this end suggests that Muslim women conceive of empowerment, agency and freedom in relation to their locally and historically rooted gender identities (see Mahmood 2012). The ethnographic study conducted by Shah and Khurshid (2018) reveals how participants adopted *Islam* and *humanism* as frameworks for claiming empowerment. In their view, Islam and culture are frequently conflated in such a way that family and community are seen as embodiments of patriarchal Islamic values. These experiences, however, vary from one context to another and are socially grounded. That being said, these insights from Muslim feminists and their post-patriarchal framework have the potential to contribute to the understanding of the intersecting relations between gender, religion and other social identities in feminist critical discourse studies. These insights are helpful to understand discourses around gender in Muslim societies as well as in the West where Muslim women are often interpreted as being oppressed by religion. In the conclusion section, I discuss how these insights from the Southern feminisms including Muslim feminism can enrich the field of feminist thought in critical discourse studies, which hitherto remains North-centric and further discuss how critical discourse analysts in the South can gain insights from these perspectives to guide their theory and praxis.

Conclusion: towards globalectical feminist critical discourse studies and three types of critical discourse analysts in the Global South

As discussed earlier, gender has primarily been studied in critical discourse studies from Northern perspectives, using Marxist-based critical theory and poststructuralist thinking, such as Weedon (1997), Wodak (1997), Butler (1990) and Baxter (2002). Not only do these theories dominate Northern academic fora, including universities, academic journals and conferences, but they are also dominant in non-Western parts of the world, including the author's own country of origin. Lazar (2005, 2007) offered a theoretical eclecticism of the South and the North grounded in intersectionality, critical discourse studies and multimodality in order to understand how gender and sexual identities are constructed not only through language, but also through other semiotic modes. Recently, she has expanded her work based on critical social semiotics (Lazar 2021). This view posits that

meaning in texts is derived from multiple and heterogeneous semiotic practices (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006; Machin 2013). Although multimodal studies have grown considerably in recent years, multimodal critical analysis is still relatively marginal and is still in its infancy in the fields of language, gender and sexuality scholarship (Lazar 2021; Van Leeuwen 2014). Furthering these developments, I contend that Lazar's FCDA with a progressive move towards theoretical eclecticism needs to be further enriched by feminist epistemic and material struggles in the South by adopting a broader culturalist approach to feminist discourses where language and other communicative modes form one important category of analysis besides several others (e.g. culture, history, local experiences) instead of assigning primacy to language in discourse (see Shi-xu 2023). This will help overcome binary thinking and logocentric biases embedded in west-centric CDA. According to Milani and Lazar (2017), North–South, South–South and South–North dialogs can provide additional insights into the fields.

Taking Thiong'o's (2012) globalectical approach as a theoretical vision, I suggest that the feminist CDA can be further enhanced when it is positioned within the diverse Southern feminisms as discussed. This view that I advocate does not attempt to fundamentally separate Southern theory from Northern frameworks, but rather suggests that Northern ideas be critically appropriated in conjunction with southern epistemologies and experiences that are radically different (Connell 2015). To operationalize globalectical approach to feminist CDA, we can use insights from cultural discourse studies (CDS) (see e.g. Shi-xu 2022, 2023; Shi-xu, Kwaa, and Pardo 2016) that categorizes cultural discourse into six interlocking components: Communicators, Act, Medium, Purpose, History and Culture (CAMPHAC) (see Shi-xu 2023) as explained in Table 1 as follows. These categories together with globalectics' theoretical vision can be used to enrich our understanding of feminist discourses in the Southern contexts.

According to Shi-xu (2023), these analytical categories should not be taken as universal, but rather should be chosen based on the research purpose and the specific conditions involved. He further discusses that to monitor research practices, CDS researchers must apply a certain set of actions. For example, they should take into account the local context (concepts, perspectives, norms, values, habits, issues, etc.), ensure that native resources (experiences, wisdom, knowledge) are not neglected, and consider

Table 1. Six components in Cultural discourse studies (CDS) (Source: Shi-xu 2023).

Term	Description
Communicators	• discursive actors as cultural organizations and members, for investigating who is (not) speaking and acting, in what position and capacity and with what characteristics (e.g. world views, ways of thinking, character, past experiences)
Act	• relevant verbal and non-verbal (inter)actions, for studying what is (not) said and (not) done and how, how it is responded to, and what social representation and relation result
Medium	• the use of symbols, channels and other tools (e.g. specific languages, conventional and new media, occasion, time and place), for studying what means are (not) used and how (also in relation with language use) and why
Purpose	• causes, intentions, goals, effects and consequences, for studying why the discursive activity in question has taken place, why it has done the way it did and what impact has resulted
History	• processes involving the above discursive categories, for studying the nature, change and (ir)regularity of the discourse in question
Culture	• the sum of features in all the above categories, but in dialectic, differential and power relations to other relevant discourses, for studying the identity, distinction and intercultural relation and standing of the discourse in question

international, intercultural, global and long-term human interests. In addition, we must avoid essentializing discourses, cultures and realities in order not to monopolize scholarship. These insights can enrich feminist CDA to look into local context(s) while acknowledging the global scholarly endeavors in feminist theory as an epistemic network (Thiong'o 2012). The present author has elsewhere used feminist CDA in conjunction with insights from Muslim feminists to analyze Muslim gender identities as being constituted discursively in school textbooks by taking into account the local culture, history, purpose and epistemologies in addition to languaging practices (Shah, Forthcoming). This inclusive globalectical reading helped the present author interpret the data in terms of local socio-historical context in dialog with the global discursive and cultural signification of Muslim women.

For instance, in a western feminist perspective, *hijab* (veiling) symbolizes a universal oppression of women and violation of their basic human rights (Barlas 2019; Mohanty 1984), and such interpretations further exacerbate Islamophobic discourses while obscuring their real meanings. From a decolonial and Muslim feminist perspective, the hijab offers a rich array of meanings. Muslim feminists argue that hijab has no basis in the Quran, and that women have worn headcovers since pre-Islamic times (Barazangi 2016). Shirazi (2001, 3) provides a genealogy of hijab, contending the veil has a long history dating back to the Middle-Assyrian laws (750–612 BCE), more than 1200 years before Islam entered the world. Additionally, Shirazi writes that veil and seclusion were status symbols and marks of prestige in the Assyrian, Greco-Roman and Byzantine empires, as well as in pre-Islamic societies. The hijab is also considered to symbolize both a Muslim cultural tradition of modesty in their native countries (Barlas 2019) and a symbol of resistance against cultural imperialism and Islamophobia in western societies (Haq 2022). In this view, the unveiling of women is considered to be a colonial project. Frantz Fanon in '*A Dying Colonialism*' discusses how the French colonizers systematically targeted women's bodies and their veil in order to advance their cultural colonization. For example, he discusses how colonizers treated women and bodies as cultural targets: 'if we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and, in the houses, where the men keep them out of sight' (Fanon 1965, 38). Western colonizers desired to have these Muslim Arab women as objects of possession. Hijab consequently appeared to have been a form of resistance against colonizers during women's anti-colonial struggles. Using colonial history and feminist epistemology, such an analysis re-signifies the discursive interpretation of Muslim identity and the discourses that surround it.

An approach of this type provides two advantages: first, as Fuller (2011) indicates, these analytical endeavors can bridge the widespread polarization between the West and the Muslim world, which stereotypes Islam as a source of violence (of all forms), including violence against women. Second, these analyzes will be more comprehensible while exercising praxis for critical reflection, action and transformation of societies in the Southern world (Kubota 2023). This is where I would refer to the role of critical discourse analysts important in positioning their struggles in such a way that they not only remain grounded but also be well informed about how theory (critical reflexivity) in other parts of the world can be appropriated in their contexts through indigenous traditions (Canagarajah 2022). Using Thiongo's (1998) analogy of three types of interpreters in the postcolonial world:

interpreters as foreign agents and messengers, as double spies, and as people's scouts and guides to the stars of freedom, I believe these three types align well with critical discourse analysts in the postcolonial contexts as well.

- The first category of critical discourse analysts relates to those who become part of the intellectual machinery of critical discourse theories developed in the North and use theories and methods of the North to analyze data in the South without critically appropriating these North-centric discourse frameworks. This also resonates with what Philosopher Jean Paul Sartre in his preface to Fanon's (1963) *Wretched of the Earth* suggests 'The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite … they branded them … with principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full of high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth' (7). Accordingly, the first class of critical discourse analysts is trained in the Western academies and study critical discourse studies as a field and bring it to the South with a slogan to liberate the oppressed through CDA. As a group of analysts, they bring to their people the message of the outsider (the North – methods, topics, theories).
- A second group of analysts focuses on their own issues (topics, data, epistemologies) and rethink Northern critical discourse theories so that they are appropriate for their own contexts. Even so, they still employ the language of the North (their theories and methods), supplemented with Southern theories.
- In alignment with the globalectical perspective, however, third group of critical discourse analysts can be defined as those who collapse the intellectual hierarchy (Northern theories at the top being appropriated by Southern scholars to suit their circumstances) and instead work within a global intellectual *network* with no central point, but rather a spectrum of epistemologies from the South and the North on which issues can be understood in relation to specific global contexts. This type of analyst will not only contribute to academic theorization in the discourse field with a globalectical vision, but also use critical reflexivity and multilingual and public scholarship to engage actively with their local communities in order to address their problems without having to engage in complex conceptual debates using academic jargon. This globalectical vision will have liberating effects on critical discourse studies and pave the way for decolonial praxis. This third group has yet to emerge.

Note

1. Muslim feminist scholars highlight three myths attributed to male-centric interpretation of religion that misrepresent Islam about gender. According to these myths, (1) Adam is God's primary creation and Eve, a woman, was created from the rib of Adam, and therefore is secondary and derivative, and not equal to Adam. (2) Despite being secondary in creation, woman is primary in guilt, as she got Adam thrown out of Paradise; and (3) not only was woman created from man, but also for him (see Barlas 2019; Hassan 2001; Wadud 1999).

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