

The Cotton Is High
&
Of the Earth:
Writing *The Cotton Is High*

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This novel and exegesis are submitted
together in satisfaction of the requirements for
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Abstract

The Cotton Is High is the comedic tale of one man's quest to find happiness and contentment in an imperfect, ever-changing world. Written in the first person narrative perspective, the novel details the protagonist's descent into madness as he, Cotton Walters, strives to understand and assimilate discrepancies between his seemingly ideal upbringing and the disadvantaged lives of the characters who surround him. Taking place over the course of a single day, the opening sections introduce Cotton as well as the first major conflict in the narrative: Cotton quarrels with Bell, his girlfriend, while travelling abroad in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The novel then follows Cotton through the streets of Dhaka, as he compares his "lucky" life to the poverty-stricken characters that surround him. Further sections reveal that Cotton's life may not be as perfect as he has previously suggested. Cotton, who is already showing signs of mental instability, runs into a character he believes to be his estranged mother and, again, through confrontations with a series of local, Bangladeshi characters, Cotton's life is compared and contrasted to the lives of those who surround him. The final sections detail Cotton's absolute downfall, in which he loses his mind in an attempt to understand problems within the world and within his own biography that are well beyond his cognitive capabilities.

Of the Earth, the exegetical component of my PhD, is divided into two parts. 'Part One: Depictions of Developing Nations' highlights debates surrounding the creative representation of an 'other' culture that exists within a developing nation. As such, the benefits and pitfalls of postcolonial discourse will be discussed and will be the lens through which literary influences on *The Cotton Is High* are examined. 'Part Two: Fictionalizing a Developing Nation' will discuss geo-political research and personal experiences that informed *The Cotton Is High*. It will also discuss difficulties encountered in the writing process, strategies for overcoming these difficulties, and the intended effect of authorial techniques on the reader. By discussing all of the above, the exegesis, as a whole, will demonstrate how *The Cotton Is High* has placed itself within the context of border-crossing fiction that engages with a developing nation.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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